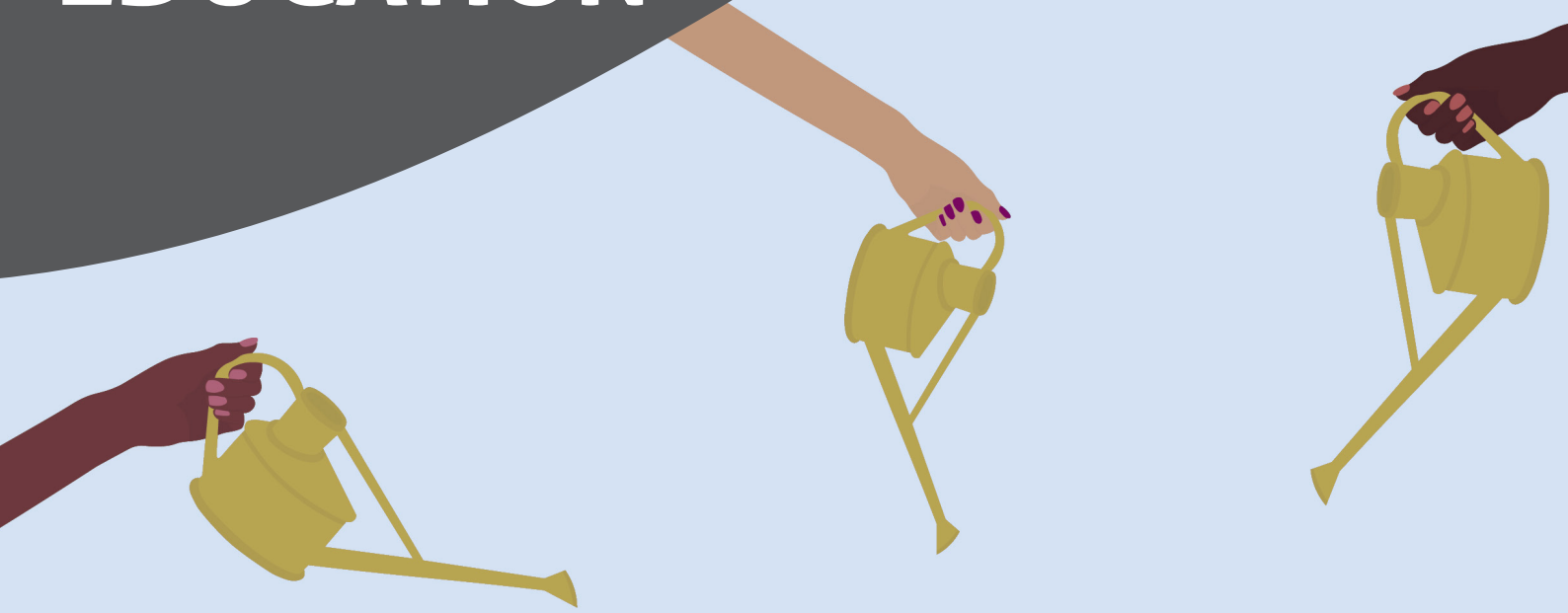


# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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## TENSIONS IN GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Enabel 

Global Citizenship Education Centre of expertise

# INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 was, for several reasons, a special year for Kruit/Annoncer la Couleur, the federal program for global citizenship education in Belgium. The Covid-19 pandemic became yet another illustration of how the world has become increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Once again we were made aware that the great challenges of our time are global in nature and can therefore only be tackled through a global response.

This is also the starting point of Enabel, the Belgian development agency of which the Kruit/Annoncer la Couleur program is part. In 2020, Enabel identified five major global challenges around which it organizes its work: climate change and environment, peace and security, urbanisation, social and economic inequalities, and human mobility. At the same time, Enabel also explicitly puts forward global citizenship as a transversal challenge. Kruit and Annoncer la Couleur see their mission to anchor global citizenship education in education in Belgium integrated into Enabel's overall strategy. Global citizenship education is rightly seen as an indispensable link in the pursuit of a more just and sustainable global society.

Furthermore, 2020 was also the first year in which the reoriented program of Kruit and Annoncer la Couleur was rolled out. Central to this is the ambition to develop into a centre of expertise for global citizenship education in both Dutch-speaking and French-speaking Belgium. This has previously resulted in a shared vision of global citizenship education. Another fruit is the annual magazine on global citizenship education, of which you are currently browsing or scrolling through the first issue.

As a centre of expertise, one of our main objectives is to bring existing knowledge on global citizenship education as much as possible to our educational partners (teacher educators, education providers, educational NGOs, etc.) in the broad global citizenship sector. After all, a lot of interesting study and writing is happening today on global citizenship education. Too much, probably, to be adequately monitored by those who are active in practice. They usually have their hands full in realizing their valuable educational offer. Yet these practitioners are increasingly asking to be fed with insights that help them to further enrich, strengthen and deepen their practice.

A look at the multitude of existing information shows that today, within the broad domain of global citizenship education, there are roughly two largely separate worlds and ditto categories of publications. On the one hand, global citizenship education has grown into its own research domain within which a lively academic debate has started. Everyone agrees on one thing, namely that there is no unanimity. Not about what exactly global citizenship education entails, and certainly not about how it should be put into practice. Divergent views on globalization, citizenship and the role of education give global citizenship education a controversial character. The approach of these essential discussions is usually theoretical and conceptual. Its immediate significance for practice is not always clear.

On the other hand, there are numerous handy publications that are explicitly aimed at the application of global citizenship education. Such practical guidelines often originate from international and national educational organizations with the mission to promote and support the implementation of global citizenship education. They offer an indispensable basis for educational practice, but in doing so they are forced to partly ignore the complexity and controversial nature of global citizenship education.

Investing in global citizenship education is urgently needed – more than ever in this increasingly interconnected world – with a view to a more sustainable and just global society. But at the same time it must be recognized that putting it into practice is not free from challenges. For example, how can you stimulate engagement in a pedagogically responsible way? How socially critical should global citizenship education be? Can and should you measure global citizenship just like that? And is there a risk that with global citizenship education we reinforce existing dichotomies and paternalistic world views within the sector of development cooperation?

Anyone who sets to work with the necessary self-reflection on global citizenship education will soon be confronted with such tensions. That is because they are actually inherent to its rich, controversial and layered nature. Insight into academic debates can then help to consciously deal with these areas of tension. This is the aim of this first issue of our annual magazine. We want to zoom in on a number of these areas of tension and bridge the gap between theoretical discussions on the one hand and the practice of global citizenship education on the other.

Specifically, we asked a number of Belgian experts to outline some of these areas of tension for us in an accessible way.

Katrien Van Poeck and Eva Roelandt (UGent) reflect in their contribution on the purpose of education. Should the school be a place for learning only, or is it acceptable to make it a place where students are encouraged to feel responsible for the global problems caused by the generations that preceded them? How do you bring global citizenship education to school without instrumentalizing young people?

Sarah Croché and Jean-Emile Charlier (Université de Picardie Jules Verne and UCLouvain), in turn, focus on the logic underlying global citizenship education and education for sustainable development. More specifically, they address the question of what kind of human the sustainable development goals have in mind and whether this means that global citizenship education must remain critical of these goals?

Gautier Pirotte (ULiège) researches the evolution from development education to global citizenship education. Is this just a change of terminology, or does it indicate a shift from one paradigm to another? How can people in the field adapt their practices in light of this change?

Finally, Ellen Claes (KU Leuven) addresses the question of the measurability and evaluation of global citizenship education. What is the purpose of examining its effects and how can we do this?

Foremost, we hope to stimulate our partners with these contributions, by offering them starting points to promote and facilitate reflection on their practice. In this way, we hope to play our part as a centre of expertise in the further development of a well thought-out and high-quality implementation of global citizenship education in Belgium.

Kevin Goris & Cécile Giraud

Experts Global Citizenship Education - Enabel

# EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE OR AS AN END IN ITSELF? MOVING BEYOND A DICHOTOMIST APPROACH

*Katrien Van Poeck & Eva Roelandt (UGent)*

## Introduction

The role of education in relation to major societal challenges such as global inequality, climate change, migration, poverty, health crises, etc. is the topic of a lively debate. There is a growing consensus about the need for education to address these issues. Global Citizenship Education (GCE), Environmental and Sustainability Education (ESE), Health Education, etc. are omnipresent in policy texts as well as in academic literature. Worldwide, this trickles down into curricula, learning objectives, syllabuses, textbooks and classroom practices.

Less consensus seems to exist, however, on how education should engage with such societal problems. The debate on the topic can be characterised as a tension between, on the one hand, a radical emphasis on the urgent need for education to help transforming our society in a more fair, sustainable and healthy direction and, on the other hand, a radical pedagogical perspective that emphasises the intrinsic value of education and the undesirability of reducing it to an instrument for predetermined societal change. After illuminating this tension by juxtaposing two opposite positions in the debate, we will argue for moving beyond a dichotomist approach and propose a perspective that tries to do justice to the very legitimate concerns underlying both positions. We end the paper by putting forward some questions for reflection on the topic.

## Position 1 : Education as a global problem-solver?

In global policy initiatives education is attributed a vital role in the pursuit of tackling societal problems. For example, the UN's 'World Programme for Human Rights Education' states that 'education is essential to the realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and contributes significantly

to promoting equality, preventing conflict and human rights violations and enhancing participation and democratic processes' (United Nations, 2004). Similarly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aim to 'take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world on to a sustainable and resilient path' (United Nations, 2015) highlight the importance of education.

The ambition is to ensure that everybody acquires the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, peace, global citizenship, etc. (SDG 4, target 4.7) and education is considered a vital catalyst for realising all SDGs (UNESCO, 2014). More and more educational researchers conduct studies aimed at contributing to such ambitions by revealing 'what works' in order to effectively teach students the knowledge, skills, values and behaviour that is assumed to contribute to a more fair, sustainable, healthy, etc. society. In teaching practice, this position is reflected in a so-called 'normative' approach focused on conveying the proper competences so as to assure that students adopt the desired standpoints, values and lifestyles (Öhman & Östman, 2019).

## Position 2: Education as an end in itself

A very different position in this debate is taken by educational scholars who criticise the tendency to translate social and political problems into issues that need 'educational solutions'. Such an 'instrumentalisation' of education, they argue, renders students and schools into objects of desires and goals determined by others. Masschelein and Simons (2013), for example, make a plea to preserve the school as 'free time' – one of the meanings of the ancient Greek word *scholè* – for study and practice.

They defend the specificity of education as a time and space that is 'non-productive', where the demands of the household, labour market, society and government are suspended, placed between brackets for the time being. Approaching the school as a place to remedy societal problems, they argue, is in sharp contrast to the idea of education as free time for study and practice. By holding students responsible for solving social problems and for realising the political dream of another, better society, an irresponsible old generation passes the burden that it is not able or willing to bear to the young generation. Instead of taking responsibility themselves, the young generation is denied its free

The didactical and pedagogical choices involved are not a matter of either choosing for engagement with societal problems and, thus, falling into instrumentalised or even 'indoctrinating' forms of education, or choosing to prioritise education as an end in itself and, thus, banning the quest for solutions for real-world problems from the classroom. Reducing the above elaborated tension to such a dichotomy, in our experience, has more often resulted in confusion, frustration and polarisation than in finding fruitful ways to handle the challenges it brings about in our teaching practice.

After all, we are dealing here with two very legitimate concerns: A concern for the urgent need of widespread mobilisation to cope with the consequences of severe global problems, and a concern about the 'instrumentalisation' of education that threatens essential values such as democracy, freedom, pluralism and creativity. Hence, rather than an either/or choice, a more relevant question arising is how we can think and practice forms of education where students can engage with urgent and far-reaching societal challenges without being reduced to instruments for realising externally determined objectives. We believe that addressing real-world problems in education, and engaging students in the pursuit to tackle these, offers unique educative opportunities. Yet, realising this potential does not happen automatically. It requires specific didactical work, specific forms of teaching.



time in the name of addressing exceptional, urgent societal challenges.

### **Not a matter of either/or: Taking two legitimate concerns seriously**

Despite the many nuances that characterise most arguments within both positions in the academic debate, we often observed rather polarised and dichotomist discussions about the tension between so-called 'instrumental', 'normative' education on the one hand and 'open-ended', 'pluralistic', 'emancipatory' education on the other. Policymakers and especially practitioners are struggling with this tension. This is perhaps not surprising, as both above described positions are underpinned by concerns that are utmost legitimate, yet often perceived as mutually exclusive. However, in our view, an adequate response to this tension should not be sought in an either/or approach (see also Van Poeck & Östman, 2020).

The scope of this paper does not allow us to elaborate this didactical work in detail (see Van Poeck & Östman, 2020 for an in-depth discussion), but drawing on John Dewey's (1938/2015) writings on 'Experience and education' we can summarise it as taking up societal problems for 'inquiry'. Education based on inquiry, Dewey explains, stimulates careful observation and reflective review. Also, it approaches ideas as ideas, as hypotheses that are the subject of continuous, scrupulous examination, testing and revision instead of as final truths that are offered to be taken for granted. Education based on inquiry thus leads to judgement based on a wide range of information and to the creative development of new ideas.

In some on-going projects, we are implementing and further developing such an approach in close collaboration with teachers. The focus is on addressing locally relevant socio-ecological challenges in collaboration with actors in the local community. The method used – LORET (locally relevant teaching): see [www.loret.se](http://www.loret.se) – is designed to support teachers in using real-world problems as a starting point for fascinating education and in balancing engagement with societal problems and the realisation of pedagogical aims and objectives. With LORET, teachers develop a plan for implementing locally relevant teaching and design a series of lessons that take students along in an authentic problem-solving process. This offers them opportunities for 'study and practice' through exploring the problem, generating possible solutions, selecting a solution proposal to implement, and evaluating the problem-solving.

## Reflection questions

We end this paper with two questions that are meant to nourish further reflection on the topic. First, should we formulate clear goals and predetermined outcomes for GCE and, if so, which ones? A frequently voiced claim in response to the risk of indoctrinating students' with predetermined ways of thinking and acting, is that education should be 'open-ended'. One can wonder, however, if open-ended education actually exists. Isn't education always, inevitably, in one way or another always purposeful? Or, to put it boldly, if there is no purpose, why investing time and energy in organising or attending it in the first place?

Rather than dichotomist thinking about open-endedness versus predefined learning outcomes, we believe it is more fruitful to reflect on which purposes are desirable and justifiable from a democratic and pedagogical point of view. There are, after all, vital differences between a variety of goals that can be pursued. Acquiring skills to reduce waste or being willing to donate for development aid, for example, reflect a very different pedagogical approach – with less space for freedom, creativity and pluralism (Öhman & Östman, 2019) – than, for instance, feeling empathy for people who are discriminated against, or being able to reflect on the impact of gender roles, or being able to develop a personal vision for a just and equal world. Which are the purposes you are striving for? Are all of them justifiable if you take both above elaborated concerns seriously? Should additional purposes be formulated?

A second question is how to organise education as an authentic inquiry into global problems? Often, so-called inquiry-based teaching and learning practices are well-planned endeavours designed to let the students 'discover' something that the

teacher already knew very well in advance. Engaging students in an authentic problem-solving process is different. It offers students the opportunity to address problems for which nor they, neither the teacher knows the answer or solution and which thus require an authentic inquiry – and not a pseudo-inquiry that systematically guides students towards the 'right' solution or predefined answers on the question what is 'sustainable', 'fair', etc.

An important didactic challenge is therefore to choose 'suitable' problems that allow for such an inquiry: Is it still a genuine problem or are clear-cut solutions already available, waiting for being implemented? Do you, as a teachers, already know how to solve it or does it require further exploration and experimentation for you too? Is there one single-right answer or can diverse solution ideas be explored and compared? But also: Is the problem graspable for the students? Can they get access to information? Is there any possibility for them to influence decision-making or to take action (directly or indirectly)?

These questions, we hope, may inspire education professionals to find ways of engaging with global problems in the classroom without turning the students, the new generation, into instruments for realising the old generation's vision and plans for a better world.

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# WHAT KIND OF HUMANS DO EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP HOPE TO PRODUCE?<sup>1</sup>

*Sarah Croché (Université de Picardie Jules Verne) & Jean-Émile Charlier (UCLouvain)*

## **A brief background to the emergence of the sustainability imperative**

Beginning in the 1980s, awareness of the socio-economic implications of ecological problems prompted the United Nations to place increasing emphasis on sustainable development (Pallemarts, 2011). In 2002, it became clear that the environmental goals they had set could not be achieved without a profound change in the organisation of society and the implementation of tools to control this global change (Rumpala, 2011). Sustainable development was then gradually integrated into the programmes of international organisations and education policies.

- In 2002, the United Nations launched a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (2005-2014).
- In 2005, the Council of Europe published its Recommendation on Education for Sustainable Development which proposes to integrate ESD modules into curricula.
- In 2006, the Council of the European Union adopted a plan which states that 'education is essential for [...] equipping all citizens with the essential skills that are needed to achieve sustainable development.'
- In 2014, the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya recalled 'the need to respect [...] local and traditional knowledge'.
- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in September 2015 in New York. They are imposed to all countries and will have to be achieved by 2030.

These developments – marked by debates over the meaning of the word 'sustainable', the measures to be taken, the timetable and funding – have helped draw attention to sustainable development and made it a beacon for any contemporary reflection on public policy.

## **Sustainable development and its effects on education**

The adoption of the SDGs confirms the place that the issue of sustainable development has taken in the global political culture. The SDGs are presented as integrated and indivisible and cover a wide range of areas. Education is one of these areas, it is called to promote critical thinking and autonomy and emancipation in learners as conditions for sustainable development.

SDG 4 has ten sub-goals. In order to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (United Nations, 2015: 14) by 2030, all children will need to benefit from quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning. The SDG integrates various learning methods, pays attention to non-formal and private teaching, stresses the need to develop innovative curricula focused on sustainability and develops among learners the knowledge and skills that will enable them to promote sustainable development. The universality and inclusion of all individuals is central to the new agenda, which specifies the need to pay attention to the education of girls and vulnerable populations, specifically persons with disabilities, indigenous people and refugees.

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a lighter and reorganised version (and translation in English) of an article that we have published in French in *Éducation et Sociétés* (Charlier & Croché, 2018). It focuses on global citizenship.

In order to achieve and measure progress, SDG 4 suggests that policies should focus on results and quality control of education.

### **The future of humanity, forming *Homo sustainabilis***

The SDGs are person-centred and aim to form a change-oriented *Homo sustainabilis* (Croché, 2015), who are asked to assume the legacy of individualism bequeathed to them whilst avoiding possibly associated excesses (Charlier & Croché, 2018). *Homo sustainabilis* are expected to constantly demonstrate a keen sense of responsibility in their interactions with other individuals in a setting that exceeds the framework of nation states to take decisions for the future of the planet.

Teaching is called upon to form *Homo sustainabilis*. It is to shape citizens who have integrated the basics of sustainable development and who will behave predictably, because sustainability will have become the first criterion in their daily actions.

In recent years, evaluation instruments (PISA programme, quality assessment agencies, competency approach, etc.) have been introduced. These innovations have been accompanied by a discourse that constantly empowers individuals.

### **The OECD wants to control the development of *Homo sustainabilis***

SDG 4.7. aims to 'ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development'. It intends to address global issues and seek solutions to global problems through education for sustainable development that teaches global citizenship, cultivates sensitivity to peace, human rights and intercultural and international issues.



As a result, education for sustainable development is now frequently integrated into international requirements and attention is paid to the skills students acquire in this area. In 2018, the PISA survey included an assessment of the 'global competence' of 15-year-olds, which aims to measure their sensitivity to sustainable development (OECD, 2018).

Students were asked to complete a questionnaire that tested their knowledge and skills on the environment, health, migration, poverty and gender equality and their ability to manage conflict, their openness to other cultures, etc. to have social and economic effects and believes that achieving SDG 4 will 'change life on the planet'.

The effects of the actions of *Homo sustainabilis* will be assessed and controlled. Sustainable development is based on quality, which depends upon constant evaluation and control. It requires predicting and preventing potentially problematic situations and implementing techniques to reduce risks. Technical quality control and risk mitigating systems already exist in education.

Countries could survey teachers on their practice of teaching multiculturalism, their training in conflict resolution, teaching issues related to the environment, poverty, migration, etc. The OECD (2016: 14) expects its support for education for sustainable development to have social and economic effects and believes that achieving SDG 4 will 'change life on the planet'.

## What education in politics is offered in education for sustainable development?

SDG 4 promotes broad education for sustainable development incorporating a global citizenship education component that is supposed to attract youth support for the 17 SDGs. Such global citizenship education aims to build eco-responsible citizens who have a critical and reflective attitude. In this sense, global citizenship education has an undeniable political dimension and risks often being criticised like sustainable development for carrying 'a project of a fundamentally «social-democratic-ecological» nature' (Pestre, 2011).

Young people and civil society have not waited for international requirements for education for sustainable development and global citizenship. In several countries on various continents (e.g. Australia, Canada, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium), as early as the start of the 2018 school year, pupils and students, sometimes joined by workers' unions, senior citizen associations and social movements, demonstrated during school days, often on Fridays (Fridays for Future), calling for more ambitious climate policies and fairer societies.

School principals and parent associations have accompanied the movement in trying to give it educational added value. Young Swedish Greta Thunberg sparked a global climate strike on 15 March 2019, which was accompanied by youth protests in 123 countries. Organised by various movements (e.g. Youth for Climate, Students for Climate, School Strike 4 Climate), these strikes have gradually outgrown the climate issue and included broad issues (refusal of overconsumption and capitalism, demand for more social justice, protection of human rights, etc.).

The situation might seem paradoxical: SDG 4 aimed at putting sustainable development concerns in school curricula and train future generations in the right behaviours but young people respond that they do not need to go to school to adopt these behaviours and hold the adult world responsible for the necessary decisions to limit damage to nature by human activities. Such mobilisation shows that the sustainability dimension is now part of the global political culture. All messages from institutions, the media and individuals go in the same direction, which reinforces the evidence of the merits of the direction taken. Even disagreement seems to reinforce overall coherence.

The OECD's focus on education for sustainable development and global citizenship will reinforce this direction. The results of the OECD's global competence PISA test will, like those of the other tests, benefit from wide publicity. It is highly plausible that countries that achieve poor results in this area will be encouraged to undertake reforms of their systems in order to meet the goal of educating young people to become global citizens that are aware of sustainable development.

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# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION OR DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION 2.0?

*Gautier Pirotte (Uliège)*

Since the end of the Cold War, the international development system has taken a strong interest in Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Between 1992 and 2015, a dozen texts on this approach were adopted on the international scene, particularly by UNESCO (Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, adopted in 1995), by the Council of Europe's North-South Centre (Global Education Charter (1997) and Maastricht Declaration (2002), which set out the European strategic framework to strengthen Global Citizenship Education in Europe by 2015) and by the United Nations (including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's 'Education First Initiative' of 2012 and of course the inclusion of Global Citizenship Education in SDG 4).<sup>1</sup> This institutional recognition reflects mainly Western (North American, British and Australian, among others) pedagogical work and experience (Sant et al., 2018).

The institutional formatting of Global Citizenship Education is reflected in its definition by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe's which intends to bring together a set of types of educations (peace, environmental, intercultural relations and racism, and development). Thus, Development Education, which in Belgium has been mainly implemented by NGOs, has gained recognition and become encompassed in broader issues that are no longer limited to raising citizens' awareness of North/South issues.

Belgium followed this institutional recognition process and 'top-down' development of GCE. In 1997, Belgium's State Secretary of Development Cooperation, Reginald Moreels, launched an information campaign for development and global education called *Annoncer la Couleur/Kleur Bekennen*, which as from 2003 operated from within the Belgian Technical Cooperation (later called *Enabel*) and promotes Global Citizenship Education.

The non-governmental development cooperation sector opened up to Global Citizenship Education later and resulted mainly from NGO action.

On the Belgian French-speaking side, a working group on development education at ACODEV's gave birth in 2016 to a framework for *l'éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale et solidaire* or ECM(S) (Social and Global Citizenship Education).<sup>2</sup> This framework (ACODEV, 2016) defines the scope of ECM(S) by defining its aims ('contributing to the construction of just, sustainable, inclusive and supportive societies by strengthening the individual and collective action of citizens'), its missions (education, citizen mobilisation and advocacy) and its strategies in relation to its missions. ACODEV's framework positions Global Citizenship Education at the junction of three sectors: development cooperation, (formal and informal) education and 'the social' (summarised here by 'social movements').

At the same time, this framework of Belgium's French-speaking NGOs reveals a triple opportunity for them. First, by placing their outreach, education and advocacy activities under the Global Citizenship Education banner, NGOs endeavour to boost support in society, with the framework stating that 'by fostering and relaying certain indignation and discontent, Global Citizenship Education promotes the engagement of citizens in social movements and in other forms of social participation'.

NGOs would thus reposition themselves as organisations facilitating collective mobilisation and support for contemporary social movements. Second, the adoption of the framework occurred shortly before the creation of citizenship courses in Belgian French-speaking primary and secondary education in September 2017. The aim here was to consolidate the presence of NGOs in formal education even if the pedagogical skills of their

1. 'By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development' ([https://www.sdgs.be/sites/default/files/content/brochure/brochure\\_sdgs\\_fr.pdf](https://www.sdgs.be/sites/default/files/content/brochure/brochure_sdgs_fr.pdf))

2. The term 'social' ('solidaire') is added by French-speaking Belgian NGOs to emphasise the dimension of solidarity that this transformative education must entail. It does not, however, challenge the traditional institutional concepts of GCE. It is why we place the S of solidarity in brackets to underline the kinship between SGCE and GCE.

programme managers are not always assured and need to be strengthened (North-South Centre Council of Europe, s.d.).

Finally, in the field of development cooperation, the shift from Development Education to Global Citizenship Education marks two significant breaking points seeking to renew the position of NGOs in the field of cooperation, which are not without risk. On the one hand, the adoption of ECM(S) implies that the North-South axis, which had been the philosophical basis legitimising the intervention of NGOs in the field of international aid since their emergence, is dissolved into the 'new'<sup>3</sup> dominant paradigm of interdependence.

This concept, allegedly originating in the era of globalisation that we live in, emphasises the emerging planetary issues and the appearance of new aid actors (especially in the South) and the complexity of explanatory schemes to the planetary problems encountered but above it emphasises the reciprocal influence of social, economic, political or environmental problems observed in the four corners of the planet.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the shift from Development Education to Global Citizenship Education implies new legitimisation efforts on the part of NGOs whose main expertise until then had been based on their experience in developing countries and their capacity to mobilise around and advocate North/South issues.

On the other hand, the adoption of Global Citizenship Education allowed abandoning the ambiguous and cumbersome concept of development, which had much criticised for so long (well-known French examples are: Sachs & Esteva, 1996; Latouche, 1986).

But does replacing Development Education with Global Citizenship Education suffice to free it from criticism of blind and destructive universalism, eurocentrism and hints of postcolonial paternalism so often associated with 'development'? How to avoid that Global Citizenship Education in the end is no more than just Development Education 2.0.? The answer is probably in the way in which Global Citizenship Education actors in Belgium and elsewhere will face three challenges.

The first of these challenges is related to an inertia effect in the cooperation field. In just over half a century, NGOs have accumulated a solid expertise in the area of Development Education, to the point that it is not always easy for them to get rid of some (nasty)



habits that are deeply entrenched (privileged school networks, linking Global Citizenship Education with fundraising, etc.).

This inertia also impacts the gradual and delicate pushback of the North/South axis, which guaranteed NGOs a coherent framework of thought and intervention and, ultimately, their legitimacy to intervene in the public space.

Using clichés on our globalised and interconnected world will not by itself be enough to rebuild legitimacy and coherence.

Secondly, it is not at all certain that Global Citizenship Education is exempt like Development Education (and most types of transformative education) from criticism regarding its blind universalism and its Western-centred nature.

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<sup>3</sup> The roots of this paradigm are not new; it goes back as far as for instance the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation report 'What now? Another Development'.

<sup>4</sup> In this sense, the shift towards GCE is fully in line with the political note produced by ACODEV and its Dutch-speaking counterpart NGO-federatie and discussed at the 2015 development cooperation conference 'What future for NGOs in the 21st century?' That note clearly advocates abandoning the North/South analysis and intervention approach, which is deemed definitely 'has been' because of its association with 'Daddy's cooperation' (sic!) based on so-called 'traditional' development that would have 'exceeded its expiration date' (re-sic).

Global citizenship itself has been the subject of much postcolonial criticism (among others: Jefferess, 2008; Andreotti & De Souza, 2013), which questioned the universal representativeness of the concept of global citizenship to the point of asking, like the philosopher Nigel Dower (2008) did: 'Are we all global citizens or only some of us are global citizens?'

And these critics point out that there are non-Western approaches to Global Citizenship Education<sup>5</sup> which have been around longer than the turn of the millennium institutional awareness. Taking these non-Western approaches into consideration in a collective de-Westernised Global Citizenship Education building project is the second challenge that Global Citizenship Education actors must tackle now.

This second challenge resonates with a third one that involves responding to the top-down formatting of Global Citizenship Education by means of a popular bottom-up re-appropriation which reaches out better at the planetary level. Global Citizenship Education has been rethought by international institutions from a particularly liberal perspective, with a particular emphasis on individual responsibility for how our planet evolves.

This institutional process has rewritten the history of Global Citizenship Education, leaving aside its past and present popular dynamics and weakening the political and even protest dimension of Global Citizenship Education.<sup>6</sup> Without that foundation, top-down Global Citizenship Education only has an artificial basis that is borne from generous ideas but is disconnected from the realities of a rich and complex terrain. Without democratising Global Citizenship Education, it will remain at best a generous project that is promoted by western altruists seeking to get rid of their blinders, a project that is limited by a deforming, paternalistic and destructive universalist institutional bias.

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<sup>5</sup> Approaches inspired by the African Ubuntu philosophy are often evoked in this matter. Note that international agencies like UNESCO are aware of the criticism (cf. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265456>).

Let us just think of the coup de force of Gary Davis' 'Declaration of Oran' before the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in 1946 and the 'World Government of World Citizens' which gave birth at the beginning of the Cold War to a first globalised civil status and a globalised charter of 'world territories'.

<sup>6</sup> Let us just think of the coup de force of Gary Davis' 'Declaration of Oran' before the United Nations General Assembly in Paris in 1946 and the 'World Government of World Citizens' which gave birth at the beginning of the Cold War to a first globalised civil status and a globalised charter of 'world territories'.

# CAN YOU MEASURE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION?

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## Introduction

In recent years a lot has been said about the (un) desirability of education for citizenship outside the private sphere. Citizenship as a concept, however, is not limited to the solitary individual. Citizenship, in its core, is always defined in relation to others and institutions. While (global) citizenship education is present in a lot of schools today, it is necessary to know if what is done in this type of education fosters 'good' or even 'better' citizenship for future generations.

In a time where young people are confronted with a lot of challenges linked to the sustainability of society, one should not claim that citizenship is something they should figure out themselves. We have the responsibility to provide them with some direction on a road they will have to build together with and for future generations. We hence as a society have the responsibility to make citizenship more concrete also in our attempts to measure it.

In this text, we are looking into how we can measure citizenship practices in education. We also discuss possible pitfalls and make suggestions for improving our knowledge of measuring (global) citizenship education.

## The importance of defining citizenship (education)

When thinking about global citizenship education, most people have a hard time defining it. Indeed, many definitions of (global) citizenship exist, and it is already in the first step, when determining the concept for operationalization, that (global) citizenship is contested. When measuring global citizenship, it is hence essential to indicate which definition of the concept you use and why, in your view, this definition is the most correct one.

In a European context, a definition of citizenship and citizenship education can be found in legal documents such as the 'Charter of the fundamental rights of the European Union' (European Union, 2012) and reference frameworks such as the 'Reference Framework of

Competences for Democratic Culture' (RFCDC) (Council of Europe, 2016). The latter has the advantage of being the result of careful expert analysis and audit of over 101 existing models of democratic competence and intercultural competence and distilling only those aspects that were found to be theoretically sound and of relevance to educational policy and practice in a large number of European countries (47 member states).

Assessing these texts, it becomes apparent that when citizenship education is concerned, the main goals of this kind of education are focused on Citizenship Competence development. Citizenship competence can be defined as "the ability to mobilize and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/or understanding to respond appropriately

and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations. Competence is treated as a dynamic process in which a competent individual mobilizes and deploys clusters of psychological resources in an active and adaptive manner in order to respond to new circumstances as they arise." (Council of Europe, 2016: 10).

## The challenge of operationalization

While linking citizenship education to overall frameworks that provide us with a more precise scope of what to measure, good operationalization is often not self-evident. In the operationalization step, one should always consider for which purpose one is measuring citizenship education. When the aim is to draw general conclusions about citizenship education in the country, working with large scale surveys is more appropriate. When wanting to refine ones' citizenship teaching, open-ended questions or interviews with pupils can do the trick. In both instances, it is key to look at the definition you will use to derive appropriated indicators.

For large scale educational assessment, it is necessary to look for validated and scaled descriptors in previous studies that fit with the theoretical framework. In some frameworks (like the



RFDC) scholars already identified these indicators. An example of these descriptors can be found in Barrett (2020). Assessing these descriptors, you will see they are formulated in a way that they are observable and assessable using the 'SMART' language of formulating learning outcomes. A next step then is to see if instruments linked to these descriptors (i.e., surveys with scales and items) already exist. To assess global citizenship education in schools, one can think of the International Civic

and Citizenship Education Study (2009, 2016) and the PISA 2018 Global Competence Questionnaire.

For the use in a more qualitative study, the step of linking the latent constructs you're interested in, to the descriptors is also necessary. You should hence know what exactly you want to measure before you can ask a good question to your students. For example, while we know from large scale assessment studies that open discussions in a classroom about political and social issues go together with higher civic knowledge, we don't understand how the process works.

We lack information about the quality of the discussions to make more substantial claims. When you, for example, want to check if, in class, you have created a good 'open classroom climate' it will not suffice to ask students if they feel they can speak freely in class. Probably you will get a lot of socially desirable answers that are not linked to the interventions you did trying to stimulate this climate.

The questions you ask students should hence be more linked to what you did in class. When you discussed the 'Black Lives Matter' movement, for example, you have first to assess what students remember of the topic, to then determine how they felt about the specific discussion on the subject in class. Your questions will have to depend on the particular goals you set out in an observable and assessable manner.

In sum, measuring can be knowing, but you will have to know what you want to measure very precisely before this is the case.

## Interpreting results linked to operationalization choices

After carefully considering the goals of measuring global citizenship education and linking definitions to specific indicators and instruments, these choices shouldn't be forgotten when discussing the possible impact of citizenship education practices.

First of all, regarding interpretations of large-scale assessment outcomes, often no real causal claims can be made. On the one hand, causal claims are possible when one uses longitudinal, large-scale panel studies or more experimental designs. On the other hand, longitudinal studies on citizenship education are often missing or hampered by attrition.

While (small scale) cross-sectional studies can contribute to our understanding of global citizenship education, they do not allow us to say something about the development of global citizenship competencies throughout secondary school. Especially regarding the sustainable impact of citizenship education, more longitudinal research is necessary. In Belgium, we can refer to the 'Belgian Political Panel Study', internationally the 'Citizenship Education Longitudinal Survey' is an important resource.

When reading the results of cross-sectional research, one should therefore consider that results discuss correlations and that we can't rule out self-selection effects and/or reversed causality. In the example of open classroom climate for discussion above, this can mean that more civic knowledgeable students report the classroom climate to be more open or that students with a higher knowledge self-select in schools with an open discussion culture. These alternative explanations should be kept in mind when discussing good citizenship education practices based on large scale assessments.

Next to this, more qualitative evaluations of teachers in a classroom, clearly have their limits especially when it comes to the generalizability of findings towards other groups, but definitely can teach the teacher something about his/her citizenship educational practices in that year for the specific group he or she instructs.

Last but not least, assessing global citizenship education, remains a tricky endeavour because a lot of the goals relate to actual behaviour (for example civic engagement) and/ or attitudes (for example political efficacy). It is always harder to measure latent concepts related to behaviour and attitudes. Moreover, different then with other final attainment goals, with (global) citizenship knowledge, it is harder to establish what is considered

'enough knowledge' to be a good democratic (future) citizen. However, reasonable efforts have been made to do so in recent years (for example, in ICCS 2016).

## Conclusion

When we choose to educate children for (global) citizenship at schools, we also should know what we are doing is linked to reaching the goals this kind of education prescribes. In that sense (global) citizenship education should be approached as each other subject (e.g., as mathematics) when it comes to measuring students' performance. Without measuring what we do, we will not be able also to consider the adverse effects of education for global citizenship at school might have.

The way to measure it depends upon the goals one has. In general, it would be best when overall quantitative assessments (that may serve as a thermometer for the quality of citizenship education in a country) are complemented with more qualitative in-depth studies (that can look at more specific goals in particular contexts).

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