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## EDUCATION FOR 'GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP': A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

The notion of 'global citizenship' has recently gained prominence in international development discourse with the recently-adopted United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (2012). Among the three priority areas outlined in this global initiative, the third aims to 'foster global citizenship'.

Education must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It must give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century.<sup>2</sup>

The notion of 'global citizenship', however, remains very broad, if not contested, and consequently difficult to operationalize in education. There are two possible reasons for this. Firstly, it is unclear whether the very notion of 'global citizenship' is a metaphor, a contradiction of terms, or an oxymoron (Davies, 2006). What does 'global citizenship' possibly imply both from a legal perspective, as well as from that of collective identity, sense of belonging, and civic engagement? Secondly, when applied to education, the notion of 'global citizenship' implies a certain degree of confusion. Is 'global citizenship education' (or 'education for global citizenship') merely an expression of a fundamental purpose of education systems? Does it also refer to a broad area

<sup>1</sup> A slightly adapted version of this paper has been published in French in the *Revue Internationale d'Education de Sèvres*.  
<sup>2</sup> [http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/files/GEFI\\_Brochure\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/files/GEFI_Brochure_ENG.pdf)

of teaching and learning? If so, what are the contours of this domain? How does it relate to other often overlapping areas of learning associated with civic and political socialization?

## CITIZENSHIP: A CONTESTED NOTION

The notion of citizenship has traditionally referred to membership of an individual to a political community defined within the contours of the Nation-State. Such membership involves both a sense of belonging to the national political community, as well as a form of action. Moreover, as a form of action, the notion of citizenship has implications for rights and entitlements, as well as for duties and responsibilities within the context of the nation-state (Lynch, 1992; Davies, 2006). Having said this, citizenship is a contested notion, subject to a variety of interpretations, not only in divided societies, but also in the case of the relationship between indigenous populations and other cultural minorities and the State. Moreover, the rights associated with citizenship are often denied to migrant groups, in particular to refugees. Any attempt to transpose the notion of citizenship beyond the nation-State to the global level thus becomes even more problematic, particularly from a legal perspective.

## RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS: THE LEGAL DIMENSION

Indeed, the transposition of the notion of (national) citizenship to the global level can be problematic from a legal perspective, simply because individual citizens are not legal members of any global polity that fully transcends the judicial powers of national states (Lagos, 2003). Even if the creation of the United Nations announced the emergence of a global political community, it is one whose members are composed of nation-states, and not of individuals. Having said this, this emerging global political community also implies certain individual rights and responsibilities as defined by international normative human rights instruments, even if these rights are still largely mediated through the nation-state. As it deals within a state, the international human rights regime “destabilizes older notions of exclusive state sovereignty articulated in international law which posit that matters internal to a country are solely to be determined by the state” (Sassen, 2002). From a purely legal perspective then, and despite the way in which globalization is affecting traditional conceptions of citizenship within the contours of the nation-state, the notion of ‘global citizenship’ remains a metaphor.

## THE EMERGENCE OF POST-NATIONAL FORMS OF CITIZENSHIP?

It is however important to recognize that the traditional conception of national citizenship is changing under the influence of the multiple processes associated with globalization. These include the internationalisation of trade and finance, greater access to information, knowledge and values disseminated worldwide through the new digital media, increased migration and mobility across borders, environmental degradation associated with global climate

change, as well as the consolidation of international bodies of global governance. The increased acceleration, complexity, and interdependence of the multiple processes of economic, technological, environmental, social, and political change are all contributing to the expansion of social relations across the world. Globalization is creating new economic, social and cultural arenas beyond national borders (Law, 2004) and to “the emergence of locations of citizenship outside the confines of the national state” (Sassen, 2002). These “post-national conceptions of citizenship” are partly linked to transnational social and political communities, civil society and activism, and emerging forms of global identification and mobilization. However, despite these transformations, it is important to stress that the State remains the most important location for citizenship, both “as a formal legal status and a normative project or an aspiration” (Sassen, 2002).

## TOWARDS COSMOPOLITAN CITIZENSHIP: THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL DIMENSION

If the notion of ‘global citizenship’ cannot be expressed in any legal manner, it can be “expressed in other ways that may have a significant and profound impact on the development of civic engagement and citizen-state relations” (Lagos, 2003). Citizens may, for instance, develop a sense of belonging to a global political community through identification with the humanistic values that inspire such principles as equality of rights, respect for human dignity, social justice, and international solidarity, upon which the ethos of international normative frameworks are based. It has therefore been argued that while global citizens are not legally recognized individuals, they do exist in practice. Indeed, already in the 1990s, Falk (1994) had proposed categories of ‘global citizens’ which included transnational and global activists, or an emerging ‘cosmopolitan community of individuals’ which was seen as expressing new forms of post-national citizenship (Keck & Sikkink 1998). More recently, it has been argued that such categorizations are too restrictive and that every human being should be considered to be a potential global citizen ‘by virtue of living on planet Earth’ (Meyer & Sandy, 2009).

Globalization, and the growing acknowledgement that individuals around the world are increasingly, directly and indirectly, interconnected and interdependent beyond the local communities and nation-States to which they belong, is making cosmopolitanism not only a reality, but a necessity (Appiah, 2008). Cosmopolitanism is based on an acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the principle of universality. Indeed, the principle of universality is fundamental to humanist, humanitarian, and human rights perspectives where, in addition to being members of local communities and citizens of nation-states, individuals are also seen as members of a *global* community of human beings.

“To insist on universality is only to say that every human being has certain minimum entitlements – many of them expressed in the vocabulary of human rights; and that it is also the obligation of every human being to do his or her fair share in making sure that everybody gets what they are entitled to.” (Appiah, 2008: 95).

While the principle of universality is central to cosmopolitanism, the latter also implies an acknowledgement of difference, a commitment to pluralism, and to the principles of respect for diversity. Cosmopolitanism, then, may, as proposed by Appiah, be seen as ‘universality plus difference’.<sup>3</sup> It could therefore be argued that ‘*cosmopolitan citizenship*’, rather than ‘*global citizenship*’, may be a more accurate and appropriate way of capturing the transformation of citizenship in the context of globalization.

### EDUCATION AS A PROCESS OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Education can be broadly conceptualized as a process of socialization through the transmission of knowledge, skills and values. In this broader perspective, a range of social agents and institutions, such as the family, peers, the media, the workplace, religious and other civil society organizations, as well as formal and non-formal education systems are all involved in this process of socialisation in a more or less explicit manner. While formal education is by no means the only, or even the most important, vector for such socialization, educational institutions remain key to this process for they translate an explicit public policy at the heart of the reproduction of all societies. Indeed, beyond socio-economic development rationales, national education systems have fundamental social, civic and political functions related to the formation of citizenship, and to the strengthening of nation cohesion. In doing so, they have a crucial role in promoting the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to enable learners:

- to develop a sense of shared destiny through identification with their social, cultural, and political environments.
- to become aware of the challenges posed to the development of their communities through an understanding of issues related to patterns of social, economic and environmental change.
- to engage in civic and social action in view of positive societal participation and/or transformation based on a sense of individual responsibility towards their communities.

### CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: A CONTINUUM OF POSSIBLE APPROACHES

This social, civic and political function of education is most commonly explicitly articulated in curriculum policy and design as *citizenship education*, not necessarily as an explicit academic discipline, but often as a broad area of teaching and learning. This area of teaching and learning also overlaps, to varying degrees, with subject areas such as geography, history, social studies, religion, literature, science, environmental studies. For the purposes of this discussion, citizenship education is

understood as an area of teaching and learning, both formal and non-formal, for children, youth, and adults, which is centred on the social, civic and political education that is considered to be an essential part of the formation of citizenship in any given context.

Having said this, the broad and often contested nature of citizenship education can lead to a range of interpretations and approaches. These diverse interpretations represent a continuum of educational approaches to citizenship that go from more minimalistic and conservative ones aimed at the reproduction of the existing social order, to more ambitious and critical ones aimed at adaptation to change, if not transformation of existing social dynamics (McLaughlin, 1992; Kennedy, 1997; Kerr, 1999;). Conservative approaches, often referred to as ‘*civics*’ or ‘*civic education*’, are focused on teaching and the transmission of information and knowledge about history of the social order and the functioning of national institutions. Critical approaches, on the other hand, more readily referred to as ‘*citizenship education*’, are focused on the learner and the development of skills and attitudes to participate in and contribute to a changing social order. While ‘*civic education*’ tends to be largely based on national and cultural values, citizenship education is inspired by ethical principles in reference, in part at least, to civil, social, and political rights. It is important to note that these two approaches are not necessarily distinct categories but, rather, represent two extremes in a continuum of possible approaches.

Figure 1 Continuum of approaches to citizenship in education

From more conservative approaches	To more progressive approaches
Civics education	Citizenship education
Education <i>about</i> citizenship	Education <i>through/for</i> citizenship
Reproduction of social order	Transformation/ Adaptation to change
Conformity/Compliance	Action & civic engagement
Content-led	Process-led
Knowledge-based	Principles-based
Didactic transmission	Interactive approaches Critical interpretation

Note: Inspired and adapted from Kerr (1999) & McLaughlin (1992).

### THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Regardless of the approach adopted, citizenship education remains a key policy domain of national importance. As such, the scope of citizenship education is very much determined by the nature of national political systems, power constellations, and public policy decision-making processes. How are the social, civic and political functions of public education systems defined? Which stakeholders take part in the process of

3 This form of ‘moral cosmopolitanism’ based on the assumption of a global or world ethic is to be differentiated from other more political or economic conceptions of cosmopolitan global citizenship See Johnson’s (nd) ‘Towards a Framework for Global Citizenship Education’ for her excellent review of different approaches to cosmopolitan global citizenship. [http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/documents/About\\_Overview/Johnson\\_L.pdf](http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/documents/About_Overview/Johnson_L.pdf)

policy dialogue and who is excluded? How are competing/conflicting views about the basic social, civic and political goals of education reconciled? Indeed, as Davies (2006) rightly asks “who decides what a citizenship curriculum should look like [...] and in whose interests do such definitions operate?” This key socio-political dimension of education is often overlooked in international development discourse in favour of a focus on the more a-political socio-economic purposes of education. This oversight by international and regional development partners has traditionally been justified by the fact that the forging of citizenship through education is a policy domain of national sovereignty.<sup>4</sup> The issue of national sovereignty explains, in part, the reservations, if not the resistance, that may be expressed by some when a notion such as ‘global citizenship’ is introduced in international education discourse. Acknowledging that the notion of ‘global citizenship’ – in a strictly legal sense – remains a metaphor, is an important step towards dispelling possible misunderstandings about a potential global ‘hidden agenda’. What is arguably more relevant for education are the psycho-social dimensions of (national) citizenship and forms of civic engagement which are increasingly being impacted by global trends.

## INTEGRATING GLOBAL ‘CIVIC MEGATRENDS’ INTO CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Indeed, if citizenship education remains the preserve of sovereign states, it has been argued that a number of ‘global trends’ present a set of common challenges for all societies and countries around the world. The intensification of globalization is leading to greater collective acknowledgement that individuals and local communities are affected by global processes, and, in turn, that they may also affect them. An international comparison of citizenship education, for instance, indicated that a number of global trends are perceived to be impacting citizenship and presenting all sixteen countries surveyed with common challenges (Kerr 1999).<sup>5</sup> Carried out in the late 1990s, the study indicated a shared concern with a perception of unprecedented global change across many of the countries and a resulting common set of challenges, relative to:

- the rapid movement of people within and across national boundaries;
- a growing recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities;
- the collapse of political structures and the birth of new ones;

- the changing role of women in society;
- the impact of the global economy and changing patterns of work;
- the effect of a revolution in information and communications technologies;
- an increasing global population; and
- the creation of new forms of community

Not only do these trends remain valid in the current context, but many of them have also intensified and become more complex. This is particularly true of the new emerging spaces and forms of socialization, learning, and civic and political mobilization in today’s digital world.

These global phenomena or ‘civic megatrends’ (Kennedy, 1997) are being increasingly acknowledged as constituting important components of citizenship education in many countries of the North. In this perspective, rather than use the more ambiguous term of ‘global citizenship education’ that may potentially be perceived to be separate from national efforts in social, civic and political education, it may be more useful, and less contentious, to refer to ‘education for local and global citizenship’. ‘Global citizenship education’ is arguably nothing more than ensuring that this global dimension enriches and strengthens the relevance of existing national or local citizenship education. Adapting what was outlined above, it can be said that education systems contribute to forging local and global citizenship by promoting the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to enable learners to develop:

- **Identification:** a sense of shared destiny both with their local/national social, cultural, and political environments as well as with humanity and the global community, as a whole.
- **Understanding and awareness:** an awareness of the challenges posed to the development of their communities through an understanding of the interdependence of patterns of social, economic and environmental change at the local and global levels.
- **Commitment to act:** engagement in civic and social action in view of positive societal participation and/or transformation based on a sense of individual responsibility towards their communities, at the local, national and/or global levels.

## EDUCATION FOR ‘GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP’: FRAMING CONCEPT OR AN AREA OF LEARNING?

‘Education for global citizenship’ then is clearly a framing concept or paradigm that expresses a collective purpose of education. It highlights an essential function of education related to the formation of citizenship in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world spurred on by the multiple processes associated with globalization. It is a concern with the relevance of knowledge, skills, and values for the participation of citizens in, and their contribution to, dimensions of societal development which are linked at local and global levels. It is directly related to the civic, social and

4 Having said this, the emergence of regional organizations in the latter part of the twentieth century have begun introducing a certain degree of integration of supra-national content in national curricula in the form, for instance in the case of Europe, of ‘Education for Democratic Citizenship’ (See Council of Europe).

5 The 1999 international comparison of citizenship education through an examination of curricula and assessment frameworks covered sixteen countries, essentially from the North: England, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA. No countries from the global South were represented.

political socialisation function of education, and ultimately, to the contribution of education in preparing children and young people to deal with the challenges of today's increasingly interconnected and interdependent world.

But does this framing concept also refer to a distinct domain of teaching and learning? If so, what is its specificity and how does it relate to other domains of learning/programs? Arguably, concern for various dimensions of citizenship in a globalized world is also weaved into a wide range of education programs. These may include programs related to civics, citizenship, values, human rights, peace, environmental, or global education, and many others. While a limited number of recent education programs explicitly refer to the notion of 'global citizenship',<sup>6</sup> many others may aim towards similar outcomes in terms of skills and attitudinal orientation while focusing on specific themes related, for instance, to cultural diversity, human rights, or the environment. Despite this diversity in thematic focus, these programs have overlapping concerns in terms attitudinal orientation and behavioural change in that they all aim for: an awareness of societal issues considered to be important in a given context; a sense of personal responsibility towards such issues, and ultimately; a positive engagement with such issues beyond the learning environment.

## POSSIBLE ETHICAL APPROACHES

As for possible ethical approaches to the global dimension of citizenship education, it is possible to combine the useful distinction between 'soft' and 'critical' global citizenship education (Andreotti, 2006) with categories of cosmopolitan global citizenship (Johnson, nd). In 'softer' approaches, the starting point for global dimensions of citizenship education is of a more moral variety based on the notion of a common humanity and a global or world ethic. In more 'critical' approaches, the ethical starting point is the concept of social justice as farmed by the international normative instruments of human rights. A median position is perhaps that of what Johnson (nd) refers to as 'environmental global citizenship' based on the central notion of sustainable development. All three posit, albeit in different ways, the interconnectedness of local, national and global realities, as well as individual responsibility at these various levels. They all arguably imply a sense of local and global solidarity and a commitment to action.

Figure 2 Broad ethical approaches to citizenship in the context of globalization

Ethical approaches	Humanistic	Environmental	Political
Fundamental principles	Common Humanity Universality in diversity	Sustainable Development	Social Justice Equal rights

## KEY THEMATIC AREAS AND VALUE/ ATTITUDINAL ORIENTATION

The themes covered by the educational programmes reviewed may be clustered into four broad areas. These categories are not clear-cut and there are obvious interrelations between the various issues and themes which can either be the main focus of specific programmes [see examples in parentheses], or interweaved into other programmes or disciplines.

1. **Human rights issues:** fundamental human rights and responsibilities; child's rights; gender equality; cultural rights; freedom of expression [human rights education; humanitarian education...]
2. **Environmental issues:** sustainable management of natural resources; impact of patterns of production and consumption; climate change; biodiversity [environmental education; education for sustainable development...].
3. **Issues of social and economic justice:** poverty; health and well-being; inequality; rural transformation; migration; patterns of discrimination & exclusion [global education; development education; health education...].
4. **Intercultural issues:** identity; cultural diversity; world heritage; arts; languages; world history; indigenous knowledge systems; peace and conflict [intercultural/international understanding; learning to live together; peace education; conflict resolution<sup>7</sup>...].

The formulation of learning outcomes in terms of value and attitudinal orientations are expressed in many different ways ranging from more modest formulations of value orientations in terms of "empathy" or "care", to more committed formulations in terms of a "willingness to challenge injustice".<sup>8</sup> These various formulations that touch upon the four thematic areas of human rights, social, environmental, and cultural issues can be summarized and synthesized in the following manner:

6 See, for example, the International Baccalaureat Organization (2011), *Learning Without Borders : A curriculum for global citizenship*, or OXFAM (2006). *Education for Global Citizenship: A guide for schools*.

7 It is to be noted that issues of peace and conflict resolution are often simplistically associated with 'culture', when issues of violent conflict are arguably rooted in issues of control of political, economic, cultural and natural resources. Cultural identities may serve as ideologies for political mobilisation in the context of conflicts where the root issues lie elsewhere.

8 See, for instance, formulations of expected learning outcomes in OXFAM 2006.

- Awareness of the wider world and a sense of own role both as a citizen with rights and responsibilities, and as a member of the global human community.
- Valuation of the diversity of cultures and of their languages, arts, religions, and philosophies as components the common heritage of humanity.
- Commitment to sustainable development and sense of environmental responsibility.
- Commitment to social justice and sense of social responsibility.
- Willingness to challenge injustice, discrimination, inequality and exclusion at the local/national and global level in order to make the world a more just place.

Much of this is echoed and neatly summed up in the International Implementation Scheme for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development which interweaves the four strands of human rights, social and economic justice, environmental issues, and cultural diversity.<sup>9</sup>

- 'respect for the dignity and human rights of all people throughout the world and a commitment to social and economic justice for all;
- respect for the human rights of future generations and a commitment to intergenerational responsibility;
- respect and care for the greater community of life in all its diversity which involves the protection and restoration of the Earth's ecosystems;
- respect for cultural diversity and a commitment to build locally and globally a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace;'

This observation begs the question of the link, and potential overlap, between 'Education for Sustainable Development' and the less well-established notion of 'Global Citizenship Education'. Understood in its broad acceptance encompassing environmental, social and economic 'pillars', the term 'Education for Sustainable Development' expresses the ultimate aim of education systems, both in their economic, as well as in their civic and socio-political functions. As such, all aspects of education are meant to contribute to sustainable development, be it through general basic education, vocational skills development and preparation for the world of work, or through higher education, research and scientific innovation. On the other hand, 'Global Citizenship Education', pertains more particularly to the moral, civic and political socialization function of education. In this perspective, it refers to the integration of dimensions associated with globalization into local and/or national civic or citizenship education efforts. In short, the notion of sustainable development frames the ultimate aim of education, while 'local and global citizenship

education' is only one of the means of working towards this aim.

## CONCLUSION

The multiple processes of globalization - whether economic, technological, environmental, or political - are progressively transforming traditional conceptions and practices of citizenship. The consolidation of the international human rights regime, the greater interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals and groups across the world, and the emergence of new forms of transnational or post-national civic engagement are all expressions of this transformation. However, despite these transformations spurred on by globalization, the legal basis for the definition of citizenship, as well as its practice, remains very much located within the nation-State. It is the tensions related to this changing reality that explain, at least in part, the possible confusion and potential resistance encountered when a notion such as 'global citizenship' is introduced within international education development discourse. In reality, the notion of 'global citizenship education' refers to attempts to introduce issues of global concern, and elements of an emerging global civic culture, into existing formal or non-formal education programs. In short, 'global citizenship education' is nothing more than an adaptation and enrichment of local and national citizenship education programs, whatever their approach, to the context of the intensified globalization. The articulation of local/national and global realities affecting citizenship are making cosmopolitanism all the more relevant in the early 21st century: cosmopolitanism that is based on the principles of diversity/difference in universality. Rather than the potentially contested notion of "global citizenship education", it may perhaps be more appropriate to refer to education for 'cosmopolitan citizenship', or to citizenship education in a global world.

9 [http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/esd/documents/ESD\\_IIS.pdf](http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/esd/documents/ESD_IIS.pdf)

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