



World Citizenship

Out of school experiences citizenship and working capacity are result of medium-long term educational project requiring the personal commitment of involved youth. Public policy and public-private partnerships should support non formal education and lifelong learning programs crucial contribution to building up social and economical inclusion and active, responsible citizenship. In particular the contribution of the international voluntary sector and civil welfare organizations to the formation of a shared culture geared towards communal wellbeing and peace through experiences of solidarity, protection of community assets, mobility and care for the most vulnerable.

I. The Necessity of World Citizenship

"Our 21st century Globalization, characterized by the increased frequency and speed of exchanges among civilizational streams, the growing integration of the world economy, the competition for energy and water, demographic changes and flows, climate change and political conflict, call for concerted action across national divides." [Fernando M. Reimers]¹

I.1. To face global issues, we need Global Governance

One of the consequences of globalization (including immigration, increasing use of telecommunication technologies and new ways in which goods and services are produced and traded) has been the increase in the frequency of interactions among people of different cultural origins.

These interactions impact social expectations, self and national identities as well as political processes. They can generate anxieties that translate into trying to "close the door" or narrowing the definition of "national identity".

Therefore, we need global governance and strong transnational institutions that make such governance possible in order to:

- Develop a new political culture fostering the rule of international law and respect of human rights.
- Develop international understanding to support fair trade and economic exchanges as well as peaceful diplomacy to solve international disputes.
- Overcome national divides in order to be able to devise effective forms of international cooperation to address the issue of developing sustainable forms of human-environmental interactions required by the survival of life on the planet.

¹ This paper is largely inspired from the article written by Fernando M. Reimers "Developing Global Citizenship: Contemporary Challenges and Opportunities for the World Scout Movement".

1.2. To support Global Governance, we need Global Citizenship

The failure of the recent World Climate Conference, held in Copenhagen in December 2009, demonstrated that to make global governance possible we need a strong pressure coming from global citizens.

Global citizenship will not only enable the effective work of global institutions, but will support those actions at the local and national level that permit global cooperation, governance and stability. The connection between the local and the global is indeed increasingly porous and increasingly there are important dimensions of citizenship that are global.

1.3. The present globalization requires global citizen skills among the majority of the population

The development of global citizenship skills among the majority of the population is consequently an important challenge. The globalization of the past could be served by the specialized global knowledge and competency of a few individuals in the foreign service or in business, the globalization of the present and of the future requires a widely shared set of competencies that help us seize the opportunities made possible by globalization, and that permit to manage wisely the conflicts that are already resulting as a result of it.

2. Globalization and Citizenship Education

2.1. World Citizenship Education

There are three core dimensions of global citizenship: Knowledge, Attitudes and Competencies.

2.1.1. Knowledge

- About world history, geography, cultures and religions
- Knowledge of specific aspects of the process of globalization itself such as world trade, global economic and social development, global health, global poverty, global conflicts and the role of institutions of global governance

2.1.2. Attitudes

- Positive disposition that embraces the opportunities as well as the challenges of globalization,
- Positive orientation towards the many forms of difference with which globalization brings us into contact, at the very least empathy and tolerance.
- Internalization of a set of global values, including universal human rights and tolerance.

2.1.3. Competencies

- Ability to speak and understand fluently a range of languages to be able to communicate across cultures and civilizational streams,
- Address peacefully and effectively political conflicts, such as border disputes or conflicts arising out of historical and political differences among cultural or national groups,
- The competencies that allow different cultural groups to collaborate effectively in addressing the challenges of world trade, of competition for natural resources such as fossil fuels or water, or the challenges caused to the ecosystem by human-environmental interactions such as the atmospheric impact of growing carbon emissions or the ecological impact of waste disposal or the health impact of global epidemics.

2.2. Weaknesses of the School System

2.2.1. Dissociation from social goals and conservative inertia

Today, within the school system, much educational practice is dissociated from an explicit articulation with larger social goals such as preparing young people for the knowledge economy, promoting citizenship, contributing to national cohesion and international understanding. It seems that the educators' aims at any given level are simply to help students learn the objectives of the curriculum or prepare for the next level of education.

In a number of countries the curriculum has been narrowed towards an almost exclusive emphasis in language and mathematics.

In developing countries, the debate about education seems to be focused on the factors that influence student attendance to school and the attainment of more years of schooling, a flawed self-referenced notion that assumes that education is valuable irrespective of purpose.

2.2.2. Competitive purposes

When educational purposes are stated, they are more often focused on educating for economic competitiveness, educating for the formation of national identity and educating for local relevance.

- Economic competitiveness is largely about competition while global civility is largely about solidarity and empathy with others.
- Sometimes, nationalisms compete with the purpose of educating for global civility. Perhaps as a result of some of the dislocations caused by globalization, there is a reemergence of nationalist and populist leaders around the world.
- The recent decentralizations in many parts of the world have opened up school governance to local representatives who bring in the agendas of community organizations: religious views, local welfare agencies, community and political groups. Some of the most traditional and tribal cultural conflicts find expression at the local, subnational level, where some communities have clear incentives to conserve the values and memories that are at the root of many of these ethnic, cultural and religious conflicts.

2.2.3. New Generations at Risk

Schools thus continue producing graduates that are, in fundamental ways, ill equipped to meet the contemporary demands of citizenship. This places new generations at risk, particularly when the larger social context is changing at unprecedented speed in ways that make effective and tolerant collective action across cultural divides essential for survival.

The consequences of the deficient citizenship capabilities of school graduates around the world contribute to poor government, to poor public understanding and deliberation of important policy issues—such as immigration or international conflicts—and as a result to exacerbate conflicts at local, national and international levels.

2.3. The Need for a Global Educational Framework

Progress in educating for global civility has to occur simultaneously in different places because it is extremely risky to commit unilaterally to educating one's children for tolerance and global values when some States and groups actively socialize children for hatred. The most tolerant children would be at a serious disadvantage if only some commit to the enterprise. Therefore, in order to educate globally and for global civility it is imperative to use a common framework that informs the enterprise.

2.3.1. Defining citizenship education

To some, citizenship education is about instilling patriotism, love for country, internalization of the institutions of the nation State and participating in elections in democratic regimes. To others, citizenship education is about recognizing basic rights of all persons, irrespective of their membership in particular States, it is an education for egalitarian cosmopolitanism and participation in civic and community associations or social movement.

One could argue that countries could implement citizenship education programs each drawing on their own political and historical traditions. However, this would be insufficient to prepare students for the increased interactions with others who are different resulting from globalization. These local interpretations would negate the very purpose of preparing students for global civility and would give the opportunity to states to use schools to indoctrinate students in views prejudiced about citizens of other states, in the name of advancing national interests or historical destinies.

2.3.2. Identifying Global Values

The definition of what should be taught to develop citizenship capabilities is one that reflects values. Which values should an education to prepare people for citizenship and for global citizenship reflect? Which values should be considered global values?

Common values are essential to the survival of every society and they are recognizable across societies. These values are essential to support cross-cultural dialogue and human coexistence at all levels of interaction, from personal and family, to national and international relations it is therefore possible to define a minimalist ethic that cuts across cultures and civilizations and is therefore universal.

The best approximation we have at present to this common framework of values is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2.3.3. Weakness of International Institutions

It has proven extremely difficult for international institutions part of the United Nations to develop a global agreement on the purposes of schools probably because these multilateral institutions were often a political arena for ideological battles between the superpowers.

It is not that the task has not been attempted, but that the instruments under the control of international institutions are too weak to influence implementation of substantial qualitative changes.

However some UN agencies like UNICEF and UNESCO are very active in working with youth organizations to develop international programs and opportunities for global citizenship education.

3. Youth organizations and active learning processes for responsible citizenship

Direct instruction is an important aspect of a citizenship curriculum. Opportunity to learn about history and about government and social institutions and issues develops part of the cognitive repertoire necessary for citizenship. Opportunity to know what is contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is certainly an important component of education for tolerance.

However, citizenship education is not just about fact knowing, but about understanding the implications of that knowledge for the capacity and disposition for personal responsibility and action.

National and international youth organizations have a large experience in developing active learning programs focused on global citizenship education.

3.1. International Networks for Citizenship Education

First of all, youth organizations have developed national and international networks providing young people with many opportunities for intercultural relations and transnational projects: every year, hundreds of thousand youngsters are involved in twinning and exchange programs, international gatherings, international work camps, cooperation and development projects, etc. These activities are prepared, promoted and evaluated within regional or world youth platforms and networks involving a large number of youth organizations from various religious, political and ideological backgrounds.

Youth organizations have developed national and international platforms often supported by intergovernmental organizations and agencies which provide concrete opportunities and means to develop these programs. This is the case for example of the European Youth Forum working in close co-operation with the European Commission and the Council of Europe. These networks organize international events and produce documentation and training materials focused on world citizenship.

3.2. Non-formal education programs

Formal learning usually takes place inside a formally organized school: it refers to a structured and well defined educational system provided for from an outside entity (it takes place from instructor-led programs, not from who is interested in learning) which also awards a certificate.

On the opposite side, informal education is an ongoing learning process which occurs almost by chance, such as learning through daily interactions, shared relationships, chitchats, without any planning.

Halfway there is non-formal education and this position represents its strengths and weakness: being halfway could mean being in the right place as a link between various types of learning but it also means not being well defined, being impalpable.

What is needed to enhance this halfway position of non formal education, meant as approach and method aiming at developing non formal learning processes?

- *Acknowledged learners as the centre of the learning process.* Non-formal education is based on people's free and optional choice to participate, due to their expectations to improve their condition (on a short or long run, or just for a single specific initiative). Therefore who choose to participate should be supported to consciously define what he/she can learn (objectives), his/her learning conditions (ways and methods), the reached results and their importance in everyday life (assessment).
- *Planning together and to measure.* Non-formal education requires flexible planning: planning enables defining clear objectives and methods and checking useful conditions to reach the expected results; flexibility allows to constantly take into account participants' peculiarities, the point of time of the followed path, the connection to what they are experiencing outside the proposed activities. Only the exchange between the organizers and the participants will assure not to impose planning and not to be overwhelmed by flexibility.
- *Enhancing direct experience and its reprocessing.* Non-formal education, as willful and not bound as formal education, offers the opportunity of different sort of experiences which can involve participants on different levels (at cognitive, emotional, practical level and on the base of their values). In order to reach a conscious learning, experiencing is not enough, but it is essential to link that experience to the individual's previous experiences (background): being able to revise is possible when someone can contribute to the learning process, actively looking for it and not just bearing it.

- *Taking into account several facets of the human experience.* Non-formal education does not just deal with rudiments, but with thoughts, emotions, acts, because they are part of the human experience. Taking into account all those facets implies understanding their weaves, links, involvements.
- *Each experience can be interpreted at different levels and this second reading will enrich it, improving learning opportunities.* Taking into account just one level of the experience means impoverish the learning process, hoping to better control it.
- *Integrate several languages and intelligences.* Non-formal education offers opportunities to participants as long as it enhances their abilities and well-known preferences but also allowing them to find out new ways of relating to the external world. Variety in used methods reflects the need to recognize several types of intelligence (rational, emotional, social, artistic intelligence) which everyone can have and to use several languages to learn (verbal, symbolic, musical, corporal languages) which represent as many ways to relate to reality.
- *Employing group experiences.* Non-formal education consider the group as the main place and tool to generate learning processes. It is not by chance. As a matter of fact the group allows that several languages and intelligence meet each other; it allows to experience and to revise the experience from several points of view and from different interpretive keys; it also support participants through integration of diversity and through inclusion; it improves the possibility of organizing and experience; it allows relating to that social dimension which is constitutional and fundamental to every human being.
- *Creating a setting to relate to everyday life context.* Non-formal education does not separate participants from their context (as it happens in formal education), but redefines a setting suitable for developing activities which are functional to the learning process (as it does not happen in formal education). The setting, as a set of fixed rules and instructions, gives the group the freedom of internally experiencing and of keeping at the same time links with the external world, to take part in it without closing themselves into the comfortable experience of a protected nest.
- *Bridging formal and informal learning.* Non-formal education is an alternative to other types of education, in view of integrating them, not opposing to them. It has to pay attention to those abilities which come to light partially and confusingly but strongly experienced into informal learning processes; it has to be able to interpret the pre-eminent knowledge of formal education which is at time isolated from reality, and to reallocate it in the people's life experience. So doing, non-formal education fully hits the opportunity of the human being's comprehensive learning process.
- *Having good "animators" as trainers.* Non-formal education requires well prepared staff, either they are professionals or volunteers. They should have ideas and take the initiative and be able to keep a delicate balance between: attention to the individual and to the group; between planning and flexibility to enhance processes; between several knowledge and languages; between emphatic closeness to the participants and right distance which helps to revise; between productive periods and relaxing periods; between their hopes and the comparison with the reality.

These programs therefore offer opportunities to participate in action settings which are engaging and help develop and practice skills and to connect abstract knowledge to action. Service learning projects are examples of activities which can bridge the acquisition of knowledge with an orientation to service and a disposition to assume personal responsibility for community needs.

3.3. Intercultural and transnational contexts

Beyond direct instruction, engaged opportunities for moral deliberation and reflection and service learning opportunities, the context of educational institutions is a fundamental component of citizenship education. This includes the opportunities young people have to get to know, take part in decision-making, interact and collaborate with other young people of diverse cultural, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds—and the social norms that govern those interactions—the climate in the group in terms of relationships among youth workers and young people as well as other members of the community. These multiple opportunities to develop citizenship competencies are embedded in a community and larger cultural and social context that influences how young peoples interpret what they experience and the choices they make about the roles they want to take outside the school at present and in the future. All of this is to say that the approaches to citizenship education are also varied and contested terrain but also that we should aim at developing international standards of best practice that can guide efforts in the same way as those exist to guide efforts to develop mathematical or scientific literacy.

4. Further developments

4.1. Use International networks to develop a body of good practices

Telecommunication technologies make possible for many people to be part of communities that span large geographical distances, and well beyond the territorial limits of nation states. This creates further opportunities, and challenges, to the definition of “citizenship”. It is more apparent today than in times past that there is a global aspect to the definition of “citizenship”. Cosmopolitanism is arguably both more necessary and more possible than in years past because the enhanced forms of interaction that are available make it possible to sustain cosmopolitan identities that challenge nationalist conceptions of citizenship and other forms of racial or ethnic tribalism.

These new opportunities provide international networks, like youth organizations, with the possibility to identify and recognize the groups that are doing good work at local level and to learn from that work. An established body of practice can be codified from this work and developed to support efforts at large scale. The challenge then is to identify and codify good practice, and use it to build communities of practice that can support members and grow, with more or less government approval.

4.2. Mobilization and empowerment of social entrepreneurs

Many organizations, like youth movements, that build transnational social capital could stimulate further innovation in this field. The mobilization and empowerment of social entrepreneurs - such as youth workers - working to educate for global civility is potentially the most effective short term strategy to scale up what is already known in this area. Educational innovators, publishers, and social movements together could get individuals, international organizations and other groups focused on the goal of educating for tolerance, human rights and global civility.

International institutions could develop standards of civic and tolerance education and expose governments that teach bigotry and intolerance, for example. More important they could learn from and support successful efforts to teach human rights, tolerance and global civility. Engaging international institutions should be easy since the UN system was created to establish conditions for global peace and stability.

4.3. Focus on teenagers and young people

The incorporation in the vision of the goal to attract increasing number of youth of both genders and from broader segments of society is particularly important. Teenagers and young people are a critical demographic group, not only because there are so many of them, particularly in developing countries where most of them live, but because in many places they are not engaged in productive occupations or in social activities that engage them in positive ways with their communities and societies.

In the preoccupation with the early stages of education which has dominated most of the last 50 years, we have neglected middle schools and high schools. Our understanding of the importance of interventions in the early stages in life, has led us to neglect the young. There has been more worldwide attention to the importance of advancing pre-school education, than to thinking through how to make middle schools and high schools places where students can develop valuable skills and places where they can be engaged. The many youth who drop out of high school, either because they never learned to read or because they found what was taught in high school uninteresting, are a good target for disaffected groups that offer in crime or political violence excitement and a purpose that many of these young people did not find in school or in legitimate work.

4.4. Five challenges for future action

4.4.1. Integrate action and service learning with conceptual learning in the development of global skills

- A number of the activities already included in the programs of youth organizations foster global citizenship, international gatherings, environmental activities, the partnerships with UN agencies. It would be helpful if those activities were clearly part of a curriculum with explicit objectives and with a full set of activities that integrated action with conceptual learning and with development of knowledge.
- For instance, getting youth to communicate with other youth in distant places is an excellent activity to foster global awareness and to stimulate interest in geography and culture. This activity could provide the foundation for serious and academically rigorous instruction of world geography, history or of aspects of the process of globalization itself.
- The same could be done with the numerous activities to foster environmental awareness, complement them with rigorous curriculum for serious study of these issues.
- The youth leaders to support this kind of study might expand to include not just those most adept at expeditionary activities, but college students or graduates with strong academic skills who could support the cognitive development of the scouts as they pursue the conceptual dimensions of these activities.

4.4.2. Attending the challenges of implementation

- In large organizations such as school systems, and probably also in youth organizations the process of implementation can substantially alter the intended objectives of programmatic initiatives. As programs and policies are transmitted from one level of the organization to the next, each person in that level makes sense of those programs based on their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and based on the incentives they face in their communities.

- The impact of the implementation process in transforming policies can be substantial, often turning the purpose of a policy on its head. It is for this very reason that it is critical to attend to the process of implementation, and not just to hope for the best.
- This requires careful definition of standards, monitoring of implementation and evaluation, formative evaluation and evaluation of results. If done with care and sensitivity, these processes can help organizations learn from their experience and become better at what they do. The development of global skills and values is a challenge that, in some ways, runs counter existing norms and institutions in many contexts.

4.4.3. Scientific evaluation

- Youth organizations should have a strong body of scientific knowledge documenting what works well, with what effects, in what contexts and at what cost. Perhaps this should be a more important priority for the second century.
- To see the work of this important social movement as an incubator of ideas and practices that can be systematized with the purpose of been shared and extended to other institutions. This will require more scientific study and evaluation of the good work taking place now and to take place in the future.

4.4.4. Technology

- Technology can support the work of youth organizations in the coming years in multiple ways, from supporting the creation of professional communities to allow leaders and youth to develop their skills (for instance knowledge about world geography, or learning foreign languages), to disseminating high quality curriculum and instructional materials, to allowing communication among young people and interactions across geographic and linguistic divides, to the development of virtual activities and complex computer based simulations.

4.4.5. Building bridges with schools and other educational institutions

- If global skills are indispensable in the 21st century it is necessary to scale up the opportunities for all youth to develop these skills.
- Schools reach at present, and are likely to reach in the future, most children. The knowledge developed in the youth organizations could be scaled up in schools. To do this will require developing strong partnerships that permit the exchange of ideas and best practice. Reaching out to teachers and principals would be an excellent avenue to facilitate this exchange.