Global Citizenship Education

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Definition

The globality of everyday life, living conditions, working environments, and economic systems, the crises which have developed in the wake of globalization itself, and the resulting difficulties for individuals are presenting mounting challenges to education systems. International programs, such as the current Global Agenda 2030 (United Nations 2015), highlight the importance of education and science in responding to global challenges and transitioning to an ecologically sustainable and more just world. In this context, Global Citizenship Education has become an internationally established field of education research and practice, most notably within UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon's Global Education First Initiative, which called for the promotion of Global Citizenship Education as one of its three focus areas (UNESCO 2014, 11). UNESCO made Global Citizenship Education one of its educational priorities in 2013 (UNESCO 2014, 12), and it is an element of the Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015 (United Nations 2015).

The complexity of Global Citizenship Education, which can be described more as a field of research and practice than as an educational concept, cannot be captured in one all-encompassing definition. UNESCO describes Global Citizenship Education as a "framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable" (2014, 9). Global Citizenship Education includes the term citizenship, initially a concept of political philosophy. The idea of citizenship can be traced back to the notions of state and *civitas* in ancient Greece and Rome (Turner 2016, 679). Aristotle points to people's need to belong to a political community such as the πόλις (*polis*, city-state). Citizenship in a Greek city-state was characterized by participation in the political community, those who were qualified as citizens constituted the ruling class, an early form of δημοκρατία (*dēmokratía*, democracy) and δῆμος (*dêmos*). However, citizenship was exclusive and determined by place of residence, descent, gender,

age, and socioeconomic status. The Roman concept of citizenship was initially similar; citizens were native free men, the legitimate sons of other native free men. During the expansion of the Roman Empire within Italy and Europe and finally into Africa and Asia, "two important innovations came about. First, the populations of conquered territories were given a version of Roman citizenship while being allowed to retain their own forms of government … Second, the version of Roman citizenship given was of a legal rather than a political kind – *civitas sine suffragio or citizenship without the vote*. So, the Empire allowed dual citizenship, though it reduced Roman citizenship to a legal status" (Bellamy 2015, 6).

These two classic conceptions form the basis for the later development of various forms of citizenship. Both the historical concept and newer interpretations of citizenship emphasize the following three dimensions. First, a legal status, which defines the relationship between an individual and the state. Citizenship implies membership in a political community (city-state, empire, or later the nation state), which endows a citizen with rights, but also with responsibilities. The legal status is, secondly, closely linked to the right to political participation. Social relationships in society result, thirdly, in a feeling of belonging (Osler and Starkey 2005, 9–16). While membership leads to the formation of a symbolic community, it also implies the exclusion of all those who live within the geographic boundaries of a national state, but have not acquired formal citizenship, and are thus barred from exercising certain rights (for example, the right to vote). In the context of international migration, both the concept of citizenship and democracy, as a concept of political participation of the "demos", are increasingly under pressure.

In response to globalization, the associated transnationalization of political decision-making, and the challenges to citizenship and democracy in the context of growing international migration, various alternative concepts of global citizenship have emerged (Wintersteiner et al. 2015, 16–18). The idea of global citizenship refers above all to belonging to a global community. In the context of this global community, it is also possible to discuss the rights and duties of global citizens, as well as opportunities for political participation.

Background

The informed analysis of global crises, and the discussion of potentials for transformation, involve immense factual and ethical complexity. Fostering an understanding of global developments and potentials for change has thus become the recognized goal of educational approaches such as education for sustainable development (UNESCO 2014), Global Education (Bourn 2021) and Global Citizenship Education (Wintersteiner et al. 2015). Currently, the transformative potential of education is emphasized in Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Target

4.7 places the following obligation on all states: "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and an appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development" (United Nations 2015, 21). As Target 4.7 shows, a transdisciplinary approach will be necessary to enable young people to develop the knowledge and competence (and the authors would also add the ethical values) needed for the socio-ecological transformation.

A global perspective in education has a long, nonlinear, record. Global Citizenship Education was developed primarily in the English-speaking world in the context of citizenship education and development education (Tarozzi and Torres 2016), but it also has roots in peace education (Reardon 1988) and concepts of cosmopolitan education (Seitz 2002). In education practice, a social-justice orientation implies a stronger emphasis on Global Citizenship Education as civic education for a world society, a continuation of the internationally established practice of Global Education. Both concepts address the issues of political, economic, social, and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness, and the understanding that global, national, and local well-being are strongly tied to one another, as well as emphasizing the necessity of addressing the historical origins of the current world order. While Global Education employs a more holistic approach, the educational goals and focus areas of Global Citizenship Education are more closely related to the traditional practice of civic education, with a focus on the political aspects of global citizenship (Böhme 2019, 165–69; Wintersteiner et al. 2015).

With the *Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace* (1974, currently under revision), UNESCO has presented an international milestone for the global perspective on education (UNESCO n.d.; Wintersteiner et al. 2015, 6). The declaration examines the connection between international understanding, human rights, cultural, and environmental education, and calls for the inclusion of the global perspective at all levels of education. Since 2013, UNESCO has fostered Global Citizenship Education as a multifaceted approach, to be implemented in national education systems.

The theoretical discussion of concepts and approaches to Global Citizenship Education, as well as of different perspectives on programmatic goals and perceptions, has intensified in recent years. This is manifested in the increased relevance of Global Citizenship Education to educational systems, and the often very differing concepts which are shaping both theory and practice (Davies et al. 2018) and constitute a highly controversial field of work and research (Akkari and Maleq 2020a; Torres and Bosio 2020).

Criticism and debate

Concepts of Global Citizenship Education vary mainly in three points, which are explained in more detail below – in particular with regard to the implications of the term *global*, the interpretation of (global) citizenship and the underlying educational philosophies. On the one hand, neoliberal or entrepreneurial approaches focus on the globalized economy and the need to prepare young people to participate in global markets. This reinforces largely depoliticized interpretations of global citizenship (Pashby et al. 2020; Shultz 2007; Stein 2015). In contrast, other perspectives of Global Citizenship Education emphasize global solidarity or a vision of global social justice, accentuating the need to address global challenges and crises and the underlying power relations and ideologies; they address the potential role of education in solutions, and for making a stronger distinction between local, national, and global dimensions of global developments, while also being sensitive to their interconnectedness. This orientation is referred to as liberal-humanist or critical Global Citizenship Education (Pashby et al. 2020; Stein 2015). Other differentiations are seen in the comparison of a humanitarian versus a political approach (Dobson 2005), or a soft versus critical approach (De Oliveira Andreotti 2014). The differences can be summed up as a focus either on forming individual values and attitudes of cosmopolitan and responsible global citizens or on power relations and global inequalities that need to be changed so that global citizenship may become a tangible option (Wintersteiner et al. 2015, 11–13).

The term *citizenship* adds an already controversial element to the concept of global education. The idea of global citizenship focuses on the idea of community and belonging beyond the nation state, without implying a legal status or a formal global state. Contemporary examples of how a world society could function are the UN and international human rights conventions (Wintersteiner et al. 2015, 13). The work of philosophers like Nussbaum (1996) and Appiah (2005) has influenced the ethical foundations of the concept and linked it to the cosmopolitan tradition of antiquity. In the educational context, the concept of global citizenship, even if it is only an idea or a utopia, can open new individual frameworks for thinking and taking action, as well as spaces for collective discourse.

Many research papers frame global citizenship in a narrow regional context, where specific focal points are elaborated, such as citizenship in multicultural societies or in conflict or post-conflict societies, or the connections between (global) citizenship and human rights or social inequalities (Akkari and Maleq 2020a; Isin and Nyers 2014). In societies with a high level of immigration, issues of political rights and political participation of migrants move to the foreground. High immigration rates may awaken resentment toward migrants and refugees, and lead to strong manifestations of nationalism. In this case, Global Citizenship Education can provide an opportunity "to value multiple identities within national citizenship,

and move away from the view that membership of a nation-state is earned through cultural assimilation, rather than an acquired right" (Akkari and Maleq 2020b, 206).

With regard to the underlying educational philosophies, the concepts of Global Citizenship Education differ according to a more instrumental understanding of education and competence development or a more strongly emancipatory approach. Neoliberal approaches are more prevalent in state-controlled implementation of Global Citizenship Education, such as in South Korea (Kim 2019), or in the programs of international organizations, such as the OECD's Global Competence Framework (OECD 2018).

Postcolonial criticism and theory have also added an extremely important component to the current discourse on Global Citizenship Education. Education systems were essential to the enforcement of colonial regimes and colonial domination, and the construction of "white" or "Western" superiority as an effective means of colonial domination still influences contemporary thoughts and actions. The criticism of Global Citizenship Education mirrors this debate, especially regarding the referencing of traditions of cosmopolitanism in ancient Greece and in the writings of Immanuel Kant, which led to a Eurocentric worldview of our origins and the *Enlightenment* as a universal concept. International institutions such as Oxfam, UNESCO, OECD, and others have integrated these ideas into their conceptions of Global Citizenship Education and "now purport to apply [them] to 'the rest' of the world in a universalizing fashion" (Szakács-Behling 2020, 105).

Global Citizenship Education also operationalizes such powerful concepts and expressions as globalization, globality, sustainability, justice, and citizenship, often without questioning its own perspective: "Whose citizenship? Whose global?" (Szakács-Behling 2020, 104). In conjunction with criticism from a postcolonial perspective (Akkari and Maleq 2020a; De Oliveira Andreotti and Souza 2011), the call for historical contextualization, as well as demands for a consequent decentralization or decolonization of Global Citizenship Education (Abdi 2015), and the consideration of historically marginalized philosophies and systems of thought (e.g. Ubuntu and indigenous perspectives) have become more vehement (Szakács-Behling 2020, 105).

Current forms of implementation in higher education

Global Citizenship Education is a broad pedagogical field of research and practice with very diverse perspectives. Accordingly, programs and strategies for implementing the concept in the education system are numerous and multifaceted. The following examples provide insights into three key areas of higher education: UNESCO initiatives, especially master's programs to strengthen Global Citizenship Education, university research, and teacher training.

UNESCO has established chairs to promote higher education for international understanding and global citizenship towards a culture of peace at Universidad de San Andrés (Argentina), the University of the Region of Joinville (Brazil), Université du Québec en Outaouais (Canada), the University of Bologna (Italy), the National University Corporation Kyushu University (Japan), Universidad Veracruzana and the University of Guadalajara (Mexico), the University of Montenegro, the University of Klagenfurt (Austria), and the University of California (USA). In cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Korea, UNESCO has also founded the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU). These higher-level UNESCO institutions undertake research and policy development, capacity-building, development of teaching and learning materials, international teacher exchange, and information sharing and networking.

The UNESCO Chair at the University of Klagenfurt has established the Master's Program *Global Citizenship Education* (Grobbauer and Wintersteiner 2019) in cooperation with the nongovernmental organization KommEnt and the University College of Teacher Education Carinthia. The program is primarily aimed at teaching staff, teacher trainers, and other professionals in extra-curricular education, thus increasing the number of committed, well-trained professionals in the field. The curriculum is characterized by its interdisciplinarity: social sciences form a central part of the course, and the examination of the concept of (global) citizenship and the associated issues of transnational democracy are based on political science and political theory. The foundations of educational science and the knowledge and critical reflection of pedagogical concepts are fundamental. Moreover, the understanding of Global Citizenship Education is also based on the normative principle of global justice, whereby philosophy and ethics offer important theoretical points of reference. The critical orientation of the program questions concepts of Western hegemony, provides insights into European legacies of colonialism and neo-colonialism, and fosters the discussion of postcolonialism.

The field of research has expanded significantly in recent years, with an emphasis on teaching about ethical global issues. Based on Andreotti's critical education approach, Pashby and Sund (2019) have conducted research with teachers in England, Sweden, and Finland, with the goal of connecting decolonial theory with classroom experience in Europe. A particular focus was placed on identifying mainstream, as well as marginalized or underrepresented perspectives, and recognizing enabling factors and challenges in addressing barriers to teaching critical Global Citizenship Education. Their findings show that secondary and upper secondary schoolteachers welcome teaching guides that can be easily adapted to the classroom. The result of the ensuing participatory process is a resource which enables teachers to critically reflect upon their own teaching practice, guide students to understand the origins of different perspectives and worldviews, including their own, identify mainstream viewpoints and appreciate marginalized per-

spectives, recognize the complexity and root causes of global issues, and discuss possible activities or responses following the lessons.

Students' critical understanding of their roles as global citizens is a crucial element of international study programs at schools and universities, and has become an established focus of teacher training programs at the University of Alberta (Canada). Here, Schultz trains educators to examine theories and case studies focusing on the "constructions of global citizenship, and how citizenship is (has been) lived, denied, recreated and/or re-imagined" (University of Alberta 2023). Teachers learn to develop empathy for diverse opinions, analyze the interconnectedness of global events and problem-solving strategies, and understand the potential of the concept of global citizenship for their future students and the increasingly diverse social, economic, and political communities and contexts that they will deal with professionally.

The Center for Global Education (EPIZ) is involved in a number of transdisciplinary endeavors, including teacher training programs at the Berlin Department of Education and Master of Education programs at TU Berlin and the School of Vocational Education at the Münster University of Applied Sciences, and the project *Vocational Education Meets University* at the Otto-Suhr-Institute of the Freie Universität Berlin. Study tours and online conferences for teacher trainers in Berlin and at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa, enable an academic exchange on topics such as community-based approaches to climate education, and decolonial perspectives on structural inequality in South Africa's education system. The goal of a current lighthouse project with the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin is to identify core competencies crucial for the implementation of climate change prevention and mitigation in three vocational fields, and to design teaching strategies for developing these competencies within existing curriculum frameworks. These programs represent the vital contributions of current transdisciplinary collaborations between academic disciplines, civil society actors, and the field of education to the advancement of Global Citizenship Education in theory and practice.

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