Chapter 12

Global Citizenship Education

1 Introduction

The school has an indisputable role in the preparation of future generations for the exercise of citizenship. This responsibility goes well beyond the traditional national frameworks of civic instruction or education for citizenship. On the one hand, various threats which trouble our planet (ecological, economic, extremist, etc.), without precedent for some peoples and renewed for others, require that education should tackle the interdependencies and cohesions bringing all peoples and countries of the world together. On the other hand, the flow of global migrations and the increasing mix of diverse national populations requires that citizenship, political participation and democracy should be reconsidered. In this chapter, we will attempt in the first place to define the concept of Global Citizenship Education (GCE). Next, we will draw attention to the passage from civic instruction to citizenship education and then, more recently, to GCE. We will finish by presenting a certain number of on-going discussions about the implementation of GCE within the school.

2 Exploring Global Citizenship Education

The idea of global citizenship education featured prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Education, as well as in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted by all the countries in the world under aegis of the United Nations. This idea also figures in executing the guidelines inspired by international organizations, particularly UNESCO. Moreover, for Oxley and Morris (2013), it is particularly the United Nations and the European Union that have participated in and motivated the development of a citizenship described as supranational, based on shared values. Despite its ideological foundations, this idea is nevertheless controversial and functions with difficulty in national education systems (Akkari & Maleq, 2019).

Even so, the concept of GCE is auspicious. It reflects the need to provide learners with the tools to understand global issues and to become responsible and active citizens in a globalized world. It transmits the values of respect, tolerance and solidarity; it is, moreover, for these reasons that one can observe linkages in the literature between GCE and education for human rights, peace education and even intercultural education (see, for example, Bourn et al., 2017).

Despite the universal spread of these humanist values, the conceptions and exercise of citizenship are even more closely associated with specific national situations. Indeed, the actual concept of citizenship is historically linked to belonging to a nation as well as to its internalization (Tawil, 2013). As a result, it is necessary to adapt GCE to the national contexts in which it is located, as well as to the regional, national and global dimensions of citizenship. This adaptation will not take place without difficulty given the issues that it raises: recognition of minority populations (what citizenship?); the lack of a “legal” space concerning global citizenship (how can one be a world citizen without any legislation on the subject?), etc. (Tawil, 2013).

Beyond the issues raised by the implementation of such a notion, one should be aware of the complexity of evaluating the objectives that GCE intends to achieve. How then to guarantee development and follow-up? The measuring instruments, as well as the specificity of national educational curricula, make any form of comparison complicated, despite the lobbying of institutions like UNESCO.

3 Global Citizenship Education Within the International 2030 Agenda for Education

It was from 2012 that GCE began to occupy a central place in the field of international development. It already occupied an important place in the three priorities of the Global Education Initiatives. The former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, is the instigator of the concept's dissemination:

We must foster global citizenship. Education is about more than literacy and numeracy. It is also about citizenry. Education must fully assume its essential role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful and tolerant societies (Ban Ki-moon, 2012, cited by UNESCO, 2014, p. 11)

GCE, even though a recent occurrence in UNESCO's discourse, can trace its origins to the organization's founding documents. Indeed, the initial objectives of UNESCO, as described in its Constitution (1945), and those intended for GCE have numerous points in common, such as peace, human rights and equality.

The purpose of the Organization is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion (UNESCO, 2018b, p. 6).

Already in 1974, the “Recommendation on Education for Comprehension, Cooperation and International Peace” foresaw an education that developed the attitude of social responsibility, while solidarity with the least-favoured groups, links between peoples and the idea of solidarity seemed at that time to be arguments that supported education for global citizenship.

In 1987, during an international congress “Peace in the Minds of Men” in Côte d’Ivoire, the concept of a “culture of peace” emerged. This concept reappeared again in 1999 in the form of the resolution “Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace”. It was in this domain, among other places, that GCE began to emerge. Education is henceforth approached in a global perspective which defends not only civic education, education for democracy, human rights education, intercultural education and understanding, but militates in favour of all of these dimensions in a global perspective, in other words, with an awareness of global interconnections (Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

Since 2012, we have seen a change intervene in this paradigm. Education is conceived in a more comprehensive manner, aiming to provide learners with the tools for understanding the global issues and to develop modes of action. In fact, “this investigation of the relationship between micro- and macro-level issues and developments is a critical element in equipping learners to fulfil their potential in a fast-changing and interdependent world” (UNESCO, 2015b, p. 16).

Today, GCE appears among the official priorities of UNESCO. In the framework of its strategy for education 2014–2021, it represents one of the principal objectives designed to give learners the means to be creative and responsible world citizens (UNESCO, 2014). UNESCO has dragged the international community in its wake. Thus, one of the most striking innovations of the Incheon Declaration and the 2030 Education Agenda is the commitment of UNESCO’s member states to promote and implement GCE. In order to guide countries when introducing the 2030 Education Agenda, UNESCO has developed a framework for action. This contains targets as well as the means to implement, coordinate, finance and evaluate them. The GCE forms part of the objectives in the Sustainable Development Goals, target 4.7:

By 2030 ensure 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 (United Nations, 2015, p. 19).

Target 4.7 presents a list of ambitious objectives to promote sustainable development without any pattern or ranking enabling the educators to grasp the order of importance and convert them into action. Even more important, the way target 4.7 is expressed implies a universal validity. However, each term will be understood, employed and defined in a specific way in each national context. For example, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence will not be understood in the same way in a country that has not experienced war for decades and another country just emerging from a civil war or an armed conflict. Similarly, the concept of human rights needs to be interpreted according to each national context.

In short, we observe that the idea of education for global citizenship is not new and represents one of the founding rationales of the UN and UNESCO. However, what is new is that its implementation should be subject to indicators and measuring instruments at the level of each country. Then, as complete as it seems, GCE requires more conceptual consolidation, a true agreement between States and countries on its exact meaning and, above all, that the educational partners should appropriate it in local and national educational initiatives.

Beyond the United Nations and its agencies, the Council of Europe's North-South Centre was founded in 1990 with the objective of encouraging dialogue and solidarity, and to raise people's awareness about global interdependencies through intercultural dialogue and education for democratic citizenship. In 1997, the Centre published a Global Education Charter for the Council of Europe's member states, as a result of the recommendations arising from the international seminar on "Partnership on Education for Global Citizenship—education for global citizenship in secondary schools", Athens, 1996. This was the first reference text in the field of GCE (North-South Centre, 2012).

In 2002, the Council of Europe published a second reference text, the Maastricht Declaration, a European strategic framework to improve and strengthen GCE between that date and 2015 (North-South Centre, 2012). There followed two congresses, 2012 in Lisbon and 2015 in Zagreb, to review the work that had been accomplished in the field of GCE and to suggest strategic recommendations. The 2015 congress also gave itself the task of delineating the objectives beyond 2015 and of establishing connections with the concept of GCE as defined by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2015a).

In parallel with the work achieved in the field of global citizenship, in 2010 the Council of Europe adopted a charter on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC-HRE). The principal objective was to train citizens for democracy and living together in a multicultural society. This type of education was presented as "a way of combatting the rise of violence, racism, extremism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance" (Council of Europe, 2016). It is noticeable that the Council of Europe did not align itself with the 2030 Agenda by adopting its conception of democratic citizenship, even though the North-South Centre in Lisbon, as a subsidiary organization of the Council of Europe, had published a report on global education (North-South Centre, 2012).

The history of the Council of Europe, as an international organization that has fought to support human rights and democracy in Europe and elsewhere in the world, has resulted in it maintaining the two pillars of its educational approach to citizenship: democracy and human rights.

4 From Civic Education to Education for Global Citizenship

Citizenship is not a new concept in the school. In fact, since the inception of compulsory schooling, curricula have often included a discipline designed to develop the civic spirit and the commitment of future citizens to political participation. Most often, civic instruction was a matter of inculcating the rights and duties of a citizen and increasing the pupils’ knowledge about political institutions and the way they functioned. Tawil (2013) described this form of civic education as rooted in a conservative type of paradigm. He does not contrast it with citizenship education, but explains that the latter forms part of a progression moving on from the first paradigm by adopting a more critical perspective.

It was in this way that citizenship education took over from civic instruction by incorporating—among other things—the necessity to oppose incivility and violence at the school. In this way, the school became a place to learn about democracy (Feyfant, 2010; Akkari, 2002).

As shown in Table 1, education for global citizenship differs from civic instruction and citizenship education in that it places the citizen’s commitment on a global and interdependent scale.

What this table does not show is the interdependence and exchanges between these two columns. Today, some of the activities described in the left-hand column would seem perfectly appropriate for the development of global citizenship. For example, to encourage the pupils’ democratic participation and commitment, even that of the youngest ones, through such arrangements as the class council, seems to represent a first step towards the exercise of citizenship and, ultimately, global citizenship. The objective is, in our opinion, learning to analyse and to reflect upon the world, to work towards changing it and to make a commitment as an active citizen: changes of scale can take place later on during schooling. This educational technique (the class

Table 1 From civic instruction to education for global citizenship

Civic instruction/Education for citizenship	Education for global citizenship
Nation-State	The world
The pupils learn about political institutions	Sustainable development
A citizen’s respect for rules and duties	Living together in an independent and peaceful world
Development of patriotic/national feelings	North-South solidarity
Development of national solidarity (for disadvantaged social groups)	Human rights
The school organized in a participative manner (class councils, volunteering, etc.)	International and democratic values
Development of the pupils’ capacity to live together in the school despite their differences, and as future citizens	

council), while rooted in the domain of civic or citizenship education, seems to us capable of “setting the scene” for global citizenship education.

Even if the concept of GCE is relatively new, it is relevant to seek a way of connecting it with earlier activities typical of the education system. Inspired by various authors who have referred to the links between different fields of education and the development of GCE (see, for example, Tawil (2013) or Bourn et al. (2017)), we have attempted to implement this concept by combining three approaches: education for sustainable development; education for citizenship; and intercultural education. It seems to us vital to develop these three domains within the school context and, even if GCE is a new concept, it is important to understand that it can build upon the disciplines already forming a solid part of the educational landscape; in other words, they should be modernized and adapted to the world’s present issues—it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. Figure 1 develops this idea that GCE has

Fig. 1 Ways of implementing Global Citizenship Education

many foundations on which it can base itself, and that it seems necessary to exploit it through the curriculum, through teaching techniques, teacher training, etc., so that this concept can be implemented in different education systems.

For its own part, the Council of Europe (2016) proposed the implementation of global citizenship education through the construction of competences permitting living together on an equal footing in democratic and culturally diverse societies. These competences draw on (1) values, (2) attitudes, (3) aptitudes and (4) knowledge and critical understanding. Values consist of cultural diversity, democracy, justice and the rule of law. Attitudes include openness to cultural otherness, respect and tolerance of ambiguity. Aptitudes refer to the abilities of analysis and critical reflection, as well as those of communication, language and multi-languages, and empathy. Knowledge and critical understanding cover knowledge and critical understanding of oneself and of the world. If some of these elements are already present in national curricula, GCE allows them, in our opinion, to be impregnated with this global dimension and by the interdependencies typical of the world in which the pupils live.

Another concept that can be observed in this Council of Europe model is the centrality of matters concerning democracy, human rights and justice. Similarly, the recognition of “tolerance of ambiguity” in people’s attitudes draws attention to the need to accept otherness and multiple identities.

5 On-Going Discussions

Even if it has appeared as an innovative concept and, in certain respects, pertinent, GCE has provoked numerous discussions.

In the first place, as we have already shown in Chap. 2, international migrations have aroused increasing anxiety and rejection in public opinion, which favoured the rise to power of xenophobic political movements and their occupation of the political limelight. These movements make the rejection of globalization and a return to a narrow and exclusive conception of citizenship their trademark. Is it possible to speak of education for global citizenship in a world where frontiers and minds are increasingly closed, taking the form of a swing to the extreme right in numerous national contexts?

In the second place, the countries of the North seek to increase the effectiveness of their education systems through comparative international surveys based on standardized tests focused on the principle educational disciplines: maths, science, languages. While the PISA 2018 international survey attempted to measure the pupils’ overall competences, the place devoted to education for global citizenship, as for many other “educations for ...”, was not particularly remarkable.

The countries of the South that have education systems under construction or consolidation may feel that education for global citizenship is not a priority and they may ignore this innovation on the pretext that they do not wish to disturb the school and the teachers.

In the third place, it is teacher training that for us appears to be the most challenging aspect. If the elements that make up GCE are already present in their training programmes (as with intercultural education) (Bourn et al., 2017), it remains that the lack of a shared definition of the concept and ways of implementing it do not encourage teacher trainers to take an interest in it, nor the teachers themselves. It is therefore crucial to establish concrete projects that would support education systems so as to make GCE a vital part of the school's daily routine. Moreover, we believe that it is also necessary to establish the true teaching practices that would correspond to the objectives of GCE (for example: during one of our research projects, we met a teacher so much in favour of global education that she included it in the planning of the pupils' lessons; another example would be the creation of a class newspaper, reflecting human rights education and freedom of expression; these two examples could have been understood as activities supporting the development of GCE).

Finally, it seems that the supranational conception of GCE, particularly as conveyed by organizations such as UNESCO, must find a partner in the national context; this may represent yet another challenge for implementing this theme. On this subject, UNESCO (2018a) has suggested three fundamental concepts for GCE: (1) respect for diversity; (2) solidarity; and (3) a shared feeling of humanity. In addition, this organization has observed that already in numerous countries and societies, there are national/local/traditional concepts whose purpose was to promote ideas resembling those of GCE, such as *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* in France, *Hongik-Ingan* in the Republic of Korea, and *Ubuntu* in South Africa. It could be useful to mobilize these national concepts so as to situate the global dimension of GCE at the local level.

As shown in Fig. 2, it would be useful to overcome resistance to the utopian idea of global citizenship education by articulating it with the more well-known concepts of civic education and citizenship education. Moreover, higher education seems particularly suitable for implementing learning projects using global citizenship.

Fig. 2 Articulation between civic education, citizenship education and global citizenship education

6 Conclusion

Global citizenship education, combining and placing the three notions of globalization/citizenship/education in tension, is a risky exercise due to the difficulty of their juxtaposition. Formal education and citizenship often have the national or local context as their primary setting. Their linkage with globalization poses a challenge.

The concept of global citizenship education confronts two unfavourable currents present everywhere in the world. In the first place, there is a certain scepticism or even a certain hostility with regard to the construction of multicultural societies open to otherness (not forgetting religion). On this subject, it should be stated that there is no place for GCE in societies that refuse to recognize pluralism and cultural diversity. In the second place, there is an increase in defending one's identity, a rise in populisms, ethnic conflicts, religious extremism and the rejection of some peoples due to their differences. Nevertheless, the concept of global citizenship education could be a fruitful source for intercultural approaches in education, since the majority of contemporary societies are multicultural and display multiple identities. Globalization and the actual or virtual mobility of ideas and people provide us with an unprecedented opportunity to introduce and promote GCE projects.

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