

Global Citizenship Education

Actively engaged citizenship through political
education with a global perspective in non-formal
and informal fields

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Introduction

Our globalised world presents opportunities but also poses very evident risks. Global challenges can clearly no longer be met exclusively by individual states. In addition to the increasingly globalised economy, an active civil society and engaged citizens are needed to develop new ideas and approaches to create a fair global society independently of a power-related and profit-oriented ethos. The non-formal and informal area of education, in particular, presents a major potential for *Global Citizenship Education*: with a participative approach and high degree of self-organised learning, dialogic processes, critical thinking, receptiveness to reflective action and thus ultimately global shared responsibility are promoted.

Citizenship means engaging and participating politically. *Global citizenship* signifies that challenges of global relevance are tackled through social engagement. ***Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is thus understood as political education with a global perspective.***

The Swiss Commission for UNESCO has identified *Global Citizenship Education* in the non-formal and informal area as an important issue for the next few years. Through its focus on this area it wishes to carry out pioneering work, in order to firmly establish *Global Citizenship Education* in Switzerland, promote relevant competences and strengthen partners.

As a first contribution to its commitment this policy brief explains the following points clearly and concisely:

WHAT *Global Citizenship Education* means. **4**

WHY *Global Citizenship Education* makes sense in the Swiss context. **6**

WHY non-formal and informal education offers great potential for strengthening *Global Citizenship Education*. **8**

WHAT *Global Citizenship Education* can contribute to (→ policy messages). **10**

WHAT role the Swiss Commission for UNESCO can play. **12**

What is Global Citizenship Education? Three dimensions.

Based on the international debate (see box 1, p. 6), *Global Citizenship Education* is guided by the following interpretation:

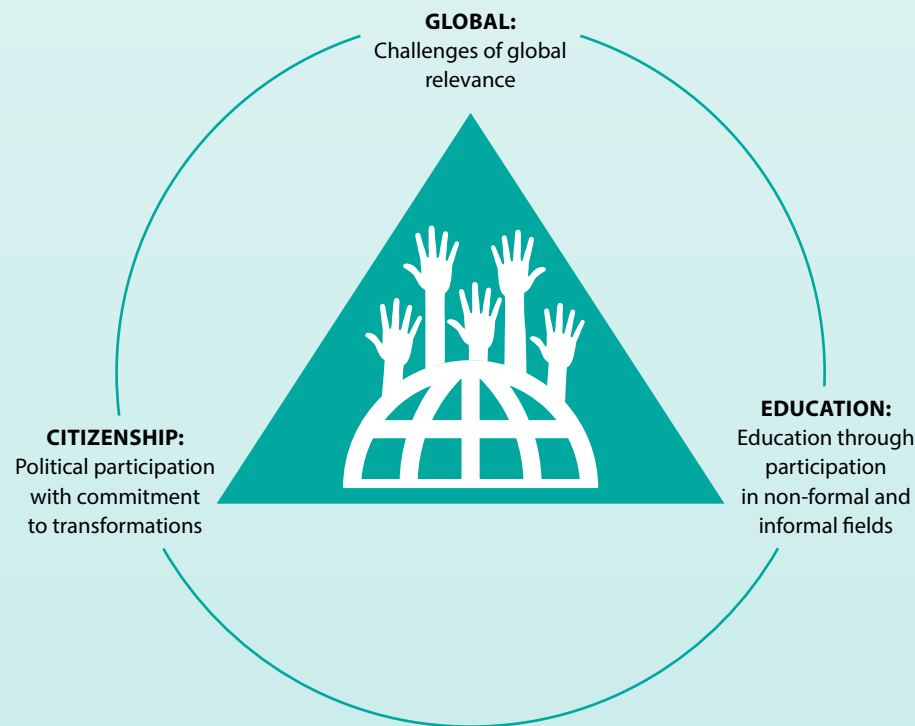


Fig. 1: The three dimensions of *Global Citizenship Education*

GLOBAL challenges are those relevant to everyone on the planet but which cannot be resolved at national level, such as human rights, equality, migration, climate change, nuclear threat, digitisation ... (see the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development).

CITIZENSHIP means social engagement that develops through participation and inclusion – on the basis of rights and obligations – and contributes effectively to the transformation towards a more peaceful and fairer world. The idea of global citizenship is not to replace the rights and obligations of national citizens. It is much more a question of developing citizenship at the appropriate level: local, regional, national, supranational and global issues require appropriate responses.

EDUCATION means encouraging learning and education processes which result in the development of knowledge, capabilities and skills. The development of interest, critical thinking and the willingness to participate and act must also be inspired. In particular, **non-formal and informal fields of education** are characterised by low barriers of entry, (organised) volunteering, peer learning and self-managed learning opportunities.

The aim of *Global Citizenship Education* is to enable active, well-informed, reflective and responsible participation in global society. In this sense, we understand *Global Citizenship Education* as political education with a global perspective.

GLOBAL	CITIZENSHIP	EDUCATION
Transnational/global challenges and opportunities (2030 Agenda)	Social commitment through participation and inclusion	Activities of non-formal and informal education
Human rights and human dignity	Opening up points of entry	(Organised) volunteering
Social and economic justice, peace and international solidarity	Providing a voice (=empowerment)	Low barriers of entry
Diversity, equality, tolerance and fairness	Advocacy	Peer learning
Sustainability	Enabling involvement	Self-managed learning opportunities

Fig. 2: Definition (blue) and markers (green) of the three dimensions of *Global Citizenship Education*

Why provide Global Citizenship Education in Switzerland? The context.

The international debate on Global Citizenship Education

In 2012, the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched the “Global Education First Initiative” in which *Global Citizenship Education* was defined as a priority. This meant the education concept received increasing international attention. In 2014, UNESCO made *Global Citizenship Education* a main objective of education policy and has since promoted it under the slogan “learning to live together”. According to UNESCO, the aim of *Global Citizenship Education* is to promote competencies for tackling global challenges and to foster a more inclusive, peaceful, sustainable and thus safer world. *Global Citizenship Education* aims to activate social, cognitive and emotional abilities which promote mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, cooperation with other countries, solidarity and respect for diversity. It seeks to enhance critical and creative thinking, analytical capabilities and to encourage responsible participation and action at local, national and global level.

Global Citizenship Education – together with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) – is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in target 4.7. Both educational concepts mutually complement and support one another. Under the 2030 Agenda, Switzerland has also committed itself to implement measures in the field of *Global Citizenship Education*. In this respect, the Swiss Commission for UNESCO aims to take advantage of the special conditions and potential that exist in Switzerland.



Fig. 3: Logo of target 4.7 of the 2030 Agenda

OPPORTUNITIES

- Switzerland is one of the most globalised nations in the world economically, technologically, culturally and in terms of tourism and the make-up of its population. In consideration of this global integration, current migratory movements as well as Switzerland’s humanitarian tradition, the benefits of *Global Citizenship Education* can be easily perceived and impact positively in tackling global issues with local solutions.
- With its system of direct democracy, well-established federalism and trust in the principle of subsidiarity, Switzerland has vast experience of active citizenship with decision-making processes at the appropriate level, which may provide resources and inspiration.
- The vibrant and also often critical civil society reflects the diversity of Swiss society and is an actor with significant influence. The principle of freedom of expression is fundamental in this regard. In countless associations, initiatives and foundations, the extensive engagement of civil society is very well organised. These strengths can be built upon.
- Switzerland is not just an attractive market, but also the location and head office of many international companies. *Global Citizenship Education* can help to adopt a more sustainable approach to economic, social and environmental aspects of production, consumption and recycling and – with Swiss expertise – can help to act in an innovative, fair, integrative and marketable way.

CHALLENGES

- Two tendencies have coexisted for some time in the small nation of Switzerland. On the one hand, Switzerland is a major player in international markets with a high degree of dependence on good relations. On the other, great emphasis is placed on national independence. The approach to these conflicting priorities presents great potential for *Global Citizenship Education*. It is a question of harmonising global, national and local levels.
 - Inequality, discrimination and racism are also omnipresent in Switzerland. *Global Citizenship Education* can make a contribution to countering such phenomena.
 - As many other countries, Switzerland is also familiar with nationalist movements favouring national solutions to address global risks. *Global Citizenship Education* can contribute to entering into dialogue with various actors in order to elaborate joint solutions for a more just and sustainable globalisation.
 - The for the most part high standard of living in Switzerland and consequent high level of consumption of resources and energy and large ecological footprint indicates that the current lifestyle is not sustainable and fair globally. *Global Citizenship Education* can make a contribution to a change of direction in this respect.
- Conscious of these challenges, the focus should be on bolstering capabilities to take advantage of the exceptional opportunities presented for and through *Global Citizenship Education* in Switzerland.

Why non-formal and informal education? The opportunities.

Non-formal and informal areas of education provide tremendous potential for promoting and using *Global Citizenship Education* thanks to their voluntary, participative and exploratory characteristics and open-ended nature in terms of structure and results.

FORMAL EDUCATION focuses on educational objectives and curricula as part of an institution adopting a pedagogic approach. Learning achievements are generally certified (diplomas, certificates, etc.).

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION is voluntary, is usually managed by an organisation and follows a programme. Formalised forms of recognition are possible but not mandatory.

INFORMAL EDUCATION is acquired through everyday experiences at the workplace, during leisure time and as part of social relationships (partnerships, families and circles of friends) but also personal interests. It is largely unorganised and does not result in any formal recognition.

Non-formal and, in particular, informal learning shape people lifelong. Studies indicate the human learning process or the way in which learning is internalised and applied can be described using the 70/20/10 formula:

- 70% of our learning comes from day-to-day life, the workplace and solving problems and challenges,
- 20% comes from feedback, observations and role models,
- 10% comes from formal learning environments.

Above all, the strengths of non-formal and informal learning lie in the intrinsic motivation of participants, the freedom with regard to requirements and structures and the lack of (performance) obligations. They also offer potential for reaching people who feel uncomfortable in formal educational environments.

The actors in non-formal and informal education are for example: cultural and sporting associations, environmental and human

- rights initiatives, youth associations, adult education centres and organisations for the elderly, the LGBTI* community and against racism. The actors in non-formal and informal education are usually well established in civil society, innovative and can invite interested parties to participate.
- Civil society refers to activities which are not organised by the state or its entities (authorities, administrations) but which also extend beyond kinship networks. The media also plays an important role.



Why Global Citizenship Education?

Policy messages in brief.

GCED can strengthen the population to find adequate solutions to global challenges.

GCED contributes towards a **fair global society**.

GCED makes a significant contribution to **sustainable development** (implementation of the 2030 Agenda).

GCED provides a joint **intellectual framework** for a broad spectrum of actors with different objectives.

GCED can be adapted to the local context and developed and embedded **together** with various actors.

GCED offers great potential in **non-formal and informal areas of education** in Switzerland.

GCED and basic principles of the **Swiss political system (federalism, subsidiarity and direct democracy)** can complement and strengthen each other.

The roles the Swiss Commission for UNESCO will play.

By promoting *Global Citizenship Education*, the Swiss Commission for UNESCO aims to encourage Switzerland's diverse population to demonstrate commitment to global justice, fairness and responsibility through civil society initiatives. To reach this goal, the Swiss Commission for UNESCO will perform three key roles:

NETWORKING: To provide the issue of *Global Citizenship Education* with the required competences, contacts and access to creative fields, partnerships with civil society actors, politicians and the private sector – incl. foundations – are to be established.

HUB: In order to provide actors in the field of *Global Citizenship Education* in Switzerland with the opportunity for inspiration and reflection, international exchange with UNESCO commissions and *Global Citizenship Education* actors from other countries should be promoted.

AMBASSADOR: To extensively embed the issue of *Global Citizenship Education* in society, operational priorities and practical measures have to be developed, for example the introduction of a *Global Citizenship Education* label, the recognition and valorisation of lead projects, conferences and other events on the topic, the promotion of *Global Citizenship Education* through a media/marketing campaign or the development of a charter.

In order to strengthen *Global Citizenship Education* in non-formal and informal fields of education in Switzerland, the participation of decision-makers, social entrepreneurs, civil society and other key persons is required, as well as investments in political education with a global perspective.



FURTHER READING ...

Global Citizenship Education

Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) 2017: Global Citizenship Education. A Guide for Policymakers, Seoul.

Bernecker, R., Grätz, R., (eds.) 2018: Global Citizenship: Perspectives of a World Community, Göttingen.

UNESCO 2014: Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century, Paris.

UNESCO 2015a: Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?, Paris.

UNESCO 2015b: Global Citizenship Education: Topics and learning objectives, Paris.

UNESCO 2016a: Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education 2030, guide, Paris.

UNESCO 2016b: A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism, Paris.

UNESCO 2017a: Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide for policy-makers, Paris.

UNESCO 2017b: Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning objectives, Paris.

UNESCO 2018a: Global Citizenship Education and the rise of nationalist perspectives: Reflections and possible ways forward, Paris.

UNESCO 2018b: Global Citizenship Education: Taking it local, Paris.

UNESCO 2018c: Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, displacement and education – building bridges, not walls, Paris.

Wintersteiner, W., Grobbauer, H., Diendorfer, G., Reitmair-Juárez, S., 2014: Global Citizenship Education. Politische Bildung für die Weltgesellschaft, Wien.

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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://www.eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/en/home/berichterstattung/nationale-berichterstattung.html>, accessed in April 2019.

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