

# GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS

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# **Global Citizenship Education in Today's Schools**

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## Foreword:

"GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS" is, at the date of print of this document, still a *draft* Position Paper.

This document has been written by the members of the Conectando Mundos International Scientific Committee.

Furthermore, it has been revised by the national Scientific Committees, set up by the Conectando Mundos Consortium partners, namely Inizjamed (Malta), Cidac (Portugal), Intermón Oxfam (Spain) and Ucodep (Italy).

"GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS" is based on the four Manifestos which were created by the national Scientific Committees during the past two years.

In Malta, Conectando Mundos has published the "MANIFESTO FOR THE GLOBAL DIMENSION OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN MALTA", written by (in alphabetical order) Josephine Vassallo, Paul Pace, Philip Caruana, Philip Said, Rita DeBattista and Vince Caruana, with the support of Dominik Kalweit, William Grech and Bernardette Mizzi (Inizjamed - CMM Project Management).

This draft Position Paper shall serve as a basis for a broad discussion amongst teachers, academics and educators of all levels and sectors. The inputs delivered by this dialogue will then enable Conectando Mundos to finalise the document by mid 2008.

# 1. The World we Live in and its Challenges

The awareness about an unsustainable development pattern has increased exponentially over the last forty years. This is coupled with an understanding of the fact that we are living beyond our own means and beyond our planet's and our ecosystem's capacity to sustain us.

Over one billion persons live on less than a dollar (€0.67) per day, more than 800 million people are undernourished and over two and a half billion persons do not have access to safe and clean water or to sewage systems. Poverty and social exclusion are however not exclusive to the South and have also an impact on economies that are in transition and on industrialised countries.

Gender discrimination remains a wide-spread 'phenomenon' across the world at the social, cultural and economic levels. Sometimes it even permeates the institutions of a country.

The world is going through historical processes that are transforming our habitat from its foundations in a fast manner. The fact that today's men and women are more connected and interdependent could give rise to an increased awareness of interconnectedness of a single community with a common past and a common destiny. It seems easier to understand for them that they form part of humanity as earth's inhabitants. Some of the predominant trends of our contemporary world offer us a number of 'new' opportunities, but at the same time they raise questions that make us aware of a number of challenges for us and for the future generations.

## **The challenge posed by globalisation**

We are living in an ever globalised world, from the trade market to communications. This brings about great risks to participative politics, for economies and for local cultures. Capital is undergoing centralisation efforts bringing about disproportionate poverty, social exclusion and forced migration as it obeys the logic of the free market and neo-liberal ideology (based on individualism, instability and competitiveness). We are also aware that there is not only one unequivocal interpretation of globalisation. This calls for discernment between several points of view, some of which actually emphasize the enormous participatory and potential of global processes.

## **The challenge posed by the media**

The advent of information and communication technology (ICT) and its ever increasing sophistication has widened the opportunities of many but it has also widened the divide between those who have access to knowledge and information and those who do not have such access. This has further increased social exclusion. Information is playing an ever increasing role in forming public opinion and social consensus: mass media and the new media are ever more significant and the key towards public debate in the modern day global "agora". It is therefore fundamental to analyse the rules governing the global communication system, to reduce as much as possible the digital divide and to encourage and promote information models and channels that are more accessible, more democratic and pluralistic. The vast opportunities resulting from the new technologies call for citizens, who besides being competent, need also to be critical and responsible.

## **The multicultural challenge**

The cultural interests and identities of minorities are more and more being excluded from the global economic system. The global societies are increasingly becoming more pluralistic and heterogeneous giving the opportunity for diverse identities, cultures and religions to live together. The multicultural challenge is simultaneously educational and political while addressing the model of integration and social cohesion that is planned to be reached. It is necessary to develop together a shared civic ethos, regulations for a public ethical system, which makes it possible for everyone to share the same pluralistic society in cohesion.

## **The challenge posed by the relationship between technology and ethics**

It currently seems that technological progress has become imperative and that it is taking precedence even over the health or life of persons. Technical research and investments many a times do not have the common good as an overarching aim: the creation of genetically modified organisms, for example, has at times enriched the producer and forcing those communities that have used them into commercial traps, moreover without any guarantee about the safety to the health of consumers; pharmaceuticals that are essential for saving lives remain inaccessible to a large part of the world's population because they are "protected" by patents.

Is it possible to reconcile technical research and progress with an ethics that is in favour of persons and the planet?

## **The environmental challenge**

The ecological texture of our time is beginning to tear. This is witnessed by a loss in biodiversity brought about by deforestation, uncontrolled exploitation of fishing and the negative effects of our consumerist and wasteful lifestyles on the environment, on the air we breathe and on our health. There cannot be any future for the human race without it being respectful of and caring for the environmental system that all of us make part of: this is the reason why any future project must be eco-compatible. The myth of economic growth and progress has not as yet guaranteed its own promise of a high quality of life and the eradication of poverty, but is on the other hand putting the future of the planet at risk. Fighting environmental damage, climate change, the decrease in biodiversity and advocating for the right to access to water by everyone entail a commitment to build a new cultural, social and political context besides new personal and communal lifestyles.

## **The challenge posed by violence and war**

Violence and war have been rehabilitated as plausible options within the mind of an increasing number of people and communities: armed humanitarian missions, preventive war against fundamentalist terrorism, surgical war, missions with the aim of implanting democracy and the clash of civilisations are concepts that are increasingly being popularised across the world by the political and economic powers that be. Whole populations are living excessively violent situations with several conflicts being triggered or perpetuated by the interests of the few. Only a prudent and sensible multilateral policy, restoring the primacy to the UN, can give any hope for the ditching of war as a solution and the support of all of the human rights for everyone. However, this must be accompanied by growing and maturing vigil civil society able to denounce and mobilize itself and aware of its own strength.

## **The challenge posed by governance**

This is a challenge for the political class at all levels: local, national, European and international. The traditional political categories have become obsolete and a new conceptual architecture increasingly appears to be needed should we want the future institutions to be based on active participation by the citizens favouring civil society and other effective direct or representative means of participative democracy.

## 2. The Educational Challenge

All the above challenges are levelled at all of us and we all have to carry our own responsibilities. However, certain educational contexts have a strategic value and occupy an essential role and have to be sustained in all possible manners.

School is the main educational actor and as such it must be furnished with all the necessary resources in order for it to assume a positive and active role in enabling persons to reply to these challenges. Those persons who are working in schools must be provided with more resources, more tools, more thought provoking contexts especially if these same persons are interested and committed in strengthening the school's social and political significance.

Civil society and non-governmental organisations are yet another means whereby persons can live up to the challenges under focus here. Such organisations work contemporarily in geographic, economic, social, political and cultural contexts that are very diverse and they are aware of both sides of the human experience. Civil society has for the last couple of decades assisted committed teachers and educators and has all the intention to continue doing so. However, it has to learn to work more with the school instead of within the school.

School and civil society must find an educational working relationship that would enable them to deal with the challenges of our world in a coherent and cooperative manner.

In this view, let us look at the educational scenario to define our proposals for the evaluation of the educational system in order for it to become the most efficient and effective response to the contemporary challenges.

### 2.1 The Current Educational System

Notwithstanding regular enlightened visions brought forward by small groups of educators or by particular educational institutes, the prevalent dominant educational reality in our countries is still very far away in its characteristics from the one that is actually needed to prepare citizens to face the challenges already mentioned.

In fact, at present:

- education is not about understanding reality but **about accumulating compartmentalised knowledge through specific subjects presented as unconnected from each other** and detached from any context;
- **the text book** plays a dominant role, actually replacing the teacher, in defining and choosing the educational 'conceptual contents' and in selecting the material which is most suitable for students to work on, missing out on the key education elements of practical and behavioural processes;
- **the twentieth century languages** (audiovisual, informatics) have been integrated in an irrelevant, improper and counterproductive manner due to the fact that the educational system is still almost always verbal;
- the educational system does not provide a democratic experience, being still based on **hierarchical relationships** and on a disciplinary organisation of the school that is isolated from the cultural and social contexts;
- **the teacher-student relationship is the most critical**. The teacher is still the one that passes on strictly pre-defined subject-related knowledge to a student who is not as yet considered a "person" in its completeness (i.e. intellectually, emotionally and physically). The student is expected only to receive, categorise and show "possession" of the contents, without being given the opportunity to participate in the construction of knowledge;
- school remains **a place of instruction, ever more addressing employability**, while the **conversational and transformational learning method is sidelined** which would require from the teacher to adopt a more complex role of experimentation, tutorship, animation, etc.

## 2.2 From Development Education to Global Citizenship Education

Within the above-mentioned environment, fortunately there are a small number of teachers and educational officers at managerial level that carry out innovative experiments and proposals that tend to promote a different type of education; an education that is open to activities that usually take place outside of schools.

This has been happening since a couple of decades also with the cooperation of extracurricular educators who, for example, work with non-governmental organisations and who bring to the classrooms "a taste of the world" through what is known as Development Education. Through this, they raise the awareness of students (but also that of the teachers) on issues regarding the unbalances between the political and economic global North and South and on their interdependence.

Actually, it is Development Education that acts as our starting point given our commitment in the educational field as non-governmental organisations.

This document embraces and utilises the 2004 definition suggested by the Development Education Forum according to which "Development Education is an active learning process based on the values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and cooperation. It presents people with an opportunity to set on an educational voyage that starts from a basic awareness of the priorities of international development and of sustainable human development, passes through the understanding of the causes and effects of global issues, and ends with a personal commitment through informed action. It encourages a full participation of all citizens towards the eradication of poverty from anywhere in the world and towards the fight against exclusion. It's aim is to influence economic, social and environmental policies at both the national and international levels in order that these same policies be fair, sustainable and based on respect for human rights."

The evolution of Development Education is a historical process with clearly identifiable of stages and approaches. Some of these stages (or there characteristic features) have followed each other in a linear manner within a number of activities of the various actors that were involved, while in others they have converged. We will now try to provide a historical overview of the five generations or approaches of Global Citizenship Education.

The first generation of Development Education (1940s and 50s) is characterised by a mainly **charitable and somewhat patronising approach**. The organisations were mainly humanitarian and religious in nature and focused on conflicts and humanitarian aid. The 1960s gave way to the **developmental approach** advocating for phased growth and believing in the need for underdeveloped nations to modernise in order for them to reach the prosperous level of the North. This period witnesses the birth of development NGOs that begin to propose collective participation of the beneficiary population as a strategy. They also started to disseminate information on their projects in the South. They are criticised for their Eurocentric perspective and for their failure to criticise the existing model of development. During the seventies **development education** became more **critical** and promoted **solidarity**. Together with the decolonisation processes that entail front-line participation of citizens, the contemporary model of development is criticised and a new economic order is advocated for. Underdevelopment is interpreted as a structural consequence of international relations and of the unbridled development of rich countries. The **humane and sustainable model of development** of the eighties developed in the light of increasingly proven social inequalities. It throws doubts over economic globalisation and the hegemonic model. Alternative models of sustainable and humane development are proposed from the social movements of the North and the South. The UN Conference on the Environment and Development in 1992 defines the essential role of education in the adoption of a respectful development of the common natural environment. All these principles were reaffirmed by the 2003 Johannesburg Summit which highlights once and for all the primacy of **an education for sustainable development**. In the meantime, through the World Social Forum and the 2003 protests against the war in Iraq, millions of citizens from across the globe make a strong request for global justice. At this point, Development Education is challenged to provide educational proposals that would support a global vision of international problems. This is why many organisations, including us four, are feeling an urgent need to sustain and implement a Global Citizenship Education that provides all the tools that will help the citizens understand globalisation and its effects. They are proposing an instrument that presents a wide variety of alternative proposals while developing strategies of cooperation that entail political activism on generic as well as specific themes. Today we can consider **Global Citizenship Education** as a common heritage of Peace Education, Human Rights Education, Environmental Education, and so on, that have evolved and interacted.

### **3. Global Citizenship Education: a Realistic Solution**

#### **3.1 A Number of Characteristics of Global Citizenship Education**

##### **In defence of human dignity**

Human dignity is a value shared by all persons and which gives them the fundamental right to live freely and in appropriate conditions for developing themselves as individuals and as members of their community, in respect of all the human dimensions.

##### **A perspective on human rights**

Global Citizenship Education is built on the premise that a better and just world is possible only if Human Rights will be respected in full. It is essential to develop further the strategies that will break the vicious circle of poverty, lack of capacity, powerlessness and conflicts, transforming it into a virtuous circle within which all persons are able to hold responsible those people that are responsible, are willing and who have the capacity to protect, defend and put into action human rights.

##### **Global and local interdependence**

Educating global citizens implies raising awareness and understanding of the interdependence of problems afflicting the planet: local actions have a global effect; and vice versa. Any activity we do or stop doing has a direct effect on the future of others; this makes us responsible of the future of mankind and of the planet, within a concept of global citizenship that integrates the local and the global dimensions (citizen of the planet / citizen of the area where one lives). Global Citizenship Education supports exchange and twinning opportunities within the school environment precisely to facilitate an understanding of the above concept.

##### **Cosmopolitanism and complementary identities**

We promote the respect for diversity as a form of mutual respect of a complex vision of identities.

Identities are dynamic and are built around multiple and different senses of belonging. Global Citizenship Education tries to develop a cosmopolitan or global citizenship within children and youths in order to bring to an end the current bipolar logic that contrasts universal and particular identities and proposes an "us and them" approach. A cosmopolitan or global citizenship opens itself to "the other" and to the common good. It feels it has to fight against all types of injustices and discrimination.

## **A political and ethical proposal**

Global Citizenship Education is an ethical and political proposal to transform society through the development of a committed citizenship, starting from the school.

Many a times the educational system has been considered as one of those key institutions responsible for dishing out dominant values and social inequalities.

However, Global Citizenship Education emphasises that the educational system can be a central element for change, a space for communication and for the creation of knowledge. It can help the students to build visions that would stop the unjust dynamics such as neo-liberalism or cultural hegemony.

This has helped the development of the concept of schools as "public democratic spheres" directly related with the concept of teachers as "intellectuals who bring about change", public intellectuals, on the basis of a conception of school life as a "form of cultural politics": far off from a neutral or technocratic concept, the educational system is committed to the values of equality, critical citizenship, democracy and economic and social justice.

## **A bet in favour of democracy and dialogue**

Global Citizenship Education challenges the traditional relationships between the various actors in the educational system. It is a proposal that believes in democracy and dialogue at all levels. The educational system is seen as an opportunity to develop a global and democratic citizenship that succeeds in involving all the actors. However, this concept needs a radical change in the traditional relationships between students and teachers, between teachers and educational authorities, etc, in the organisation of the school and in the elaboration of the curriculum.

## **Towards a model of global citizenship**

The citizens are persons capable of LERANING through connecting, of DOING through thinking, of LIVING TOGETHER through awareness, of BEING through becoming, of CHANGING through imagination.

## **3.2 The Importance of Global Citizenship Education in Today's Schools**

The proposal of Global Citizenship Education developed by several organisations from around the world seeks to integrate in a coherent manner development education and human rights, education on sustainable development, peace education, intercultural education and gender education, while respecting the direct relationships between all these areas as well as the ever increasing interdependence between human beings on a planet whose sustainability is threatened.

**DOING through thinking** means

- being coherent between means and ends
- working with others and networking
- active listening

**LEARNING through connecting** requires

- understanding the relationship between the different aspects of reality
- being curious
- being able to identify problems
- being critical
- being able to empathise
- being able to deconstruct

**LIVING TOGETHER through awareness** means being

- able to debate
- able to cooperate
- democratic
- non-violent
- expressing solidarity
- responsible
- able to respect diversity and differences
- able to respect the rules

**BEING through becoming**

assumes

- an open and developing identity
- an ability to be critical
- autonomy
- thoughtfulness
- coherence
- responsible
- able to respect diversity and differences
- able to respect the rules

**CHANGING through imagination**

means having

- creativity
- a vision for the future
- an ability to condemn
- an ability to challenge the rules
- an awareness of living within a global dimension

Within the educational system, Global Citizenship Education is a proposal that goes beyond the study of some material from a minor subject within a huge body of subjects of compulsory schooling. It also goes beyond regular "incursions" by educators from outside the school environment introducing awareness raising courses within extracurricular activities. It is an educational option that aims at developing a coherent proposal on the way to educate.

In its opening part, the *Delors Report* states that, when faced by the several challenges of our times, *the educational system represents an essential tool for the progress of humanity in its path towards peace, liberty and social justice, and it is a path towards an appropriate human development that could help bring about the eradication of poverty, of misunderstandings, of injustices, of inequalities, of oppression and of war.*

This is why there exists the necessity to change the central vision of education and to reconsider its function in its entirety: the development of a person, that in its wholeness learns to be, to think, to feel and to act. The educational system needs to reclaim its humanising and global dimension, giving a sense to our lives, to our actions, to our relationships, and taking responsibility for the creation of a just and sustainable world.

We are in favour of an educational system that stimulates within the student a wide understanding of himself and of the world, while offering him elements to contribute towards a fair society. The student would thus be able to question about the structural causes of poverty and exclusion and, consequently, on how to fight these, recognising in the school a central social actor.

If we want to attain this goal, the educational system must be changed and it must move towards a critical approach based on dialogue, through the use of **methodology**, creating conversational and participative relationships, promoting educational spaces built around the human dimension which children and youths would be known and appreciated as individual persons. It must bring about greater flexibility in the time and place of the school, establishing more democratic relationships in the **roles and relationships** between students and teachers, making life for them much easier when accepting the role of targets of the pedagogical processes.

In short, this means that we need to change the educational system until the curriculum and the school itself become a learning and participative "community" that leaves room for the integration of students, teachers, families, local youths, associations and NGOs. The educational system needs to change with the aim of becoming part of the solution to the problems identified until now.

## 4. Recommendations

We will take part as actors in dialogue with all the other stakeholders to sustain, affirm and implement Global Citizenship Education within the educational system;

Keeping in mind and recalling all the published European documents and commitments, particularly: the Council of the European Union Resolution on Development Education (2001); the Maastricht Declaration (2002) that had promoted the recognition and integration of Global Education as an essential tool for the citizens to understand and participate in a critical manner to a global society; the European Conference on Public Awareness Raising (2005) and the one on Development Education (2006) during which all the participating European Member States committed themselves to elaborate at the same time a European strategy and national strategies on Development Education and agreed on the necessity to integrate Development Education within formal and informal curricula of the educational systems; the European Consensus on Development (2005) promoting a communitarian vision on global development, reaffirming the commitments of the EU towards the eradication of poverty, and indicating the eradication of poverty and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals as primary objectives of the Community's development policy;

Keeping in mind and recalling the significant commitment of those teachers, educators and civil society organisations that worked incessantly with children and youths emphasising together with us the urgent need to introduce Global Citizenship Education in schools as a concept and also in practical terms.

We ask for an ever wider recognition of Global Citizenship Education. In this view, we highlight a number of specific areas within the formal educational system that could be improved and we propose the following recommendations:

### **Educational organisation**

Within a world in which contemporary life and knowledge are ever evolving and ever more complex, there is an urgent need for a Global Citizenship Education meant as a cross-cutting and interdisciplinary educational process that finds its way into existing subjects as well as in new interdisciplinary projects promoting learning through themes that are socially relevant.

We are living in a time wherein diverse levels and identities intersect on the individual and the collective level. In this light, Global Citizenship Education calls the educational system to be rooted in local experiences, and to give more attention, offer a wider understanding and present relevant experiences from persons and communities while involving all the socio-educational actors.

We call upon the national and local political authorities, together with the teachers and civil society to commit themselves to put into practice these recommendations.

## **Methodology**

Due to its inherent characteristics, Global Citizenship Education is compatible with methodologies that are

- active (learning to be, to know and to do);

- interactive (through discussions and debates);

- relevant (focused on real challenges for children and youths and for the whole society);

- critical (encouraging critical thinking based on values and beliefs while supporting autonomy);

- collaborative and cooperative (strengthening the joy of mutual learning, for networking and for solidarity); and

- participative (giving voice to different actors, while recognising their roles and encouraging their commitment).

The methodologies proper to Global Citizenship Education develop all these abilities that are to be passed on to children and youths in order for them to be able to respond well to today's challenges.

Within this educational process the students must act as the converging points of all objectives, all motivating factors and all exigencies.

In order to face this challenge and this responsibility, the teachers and all the educational actors are to be granted the opportunity to achieve and strengthen adequate abilities in relation to their mission. Initial and ongoing training in Global Citizenship Education is a key factor for the whole of the educational process.

As didactic material has an effect on the day-to-day educational practices and constitute an essential help for the teachers they have, on one hand, to be filtered from any type of messages and references that discriminate or that encourage stereotypes, while on the other, they have to go through a rethinking and a renewal of content and form, receiving the values and principles of Global Citizenship Education.

It is relevant to carry out an evaluation of the coherence between the values and proposals, between the declared principles and values and the reality in schools, between the objectives and the strategies, between theory and practice, between content and form.

*We call upon **the national and local political authorities**, together with the **teachers** and **civil society** to commit themselves to put into practice these recommendations.*

### **Roles and relationships**

Global Citizenship Education within the formal educational system requires a democratic, participative and open environment within the school. Within this environment, all the actors - students, teachers, administrators, educational officers, families - are to be recognised as citizens that can play a leading role within the educational process and are to be encouraged to share their experiences, their thoughts and their proposals for improvement and to promote joint initiatives.

This educational system has a role to play in the building of a global citizenship and in the transformation of society. It needs to do this in collaboration with civil society and with social movements in a manner that gives value to the diverse abilities and that respects the specific role of each part, making use of the fruits of creative and motivating interactions.

In those contexts where media are powerful educational agents which have unprecedented accessibility and distribution of information and opinions, it is essential to learn to utilise and to interpret them in a critical manner and to contribute to the creation and strengthening of alternative media that are able to encourage attentive, active and socially involved lifestyles.

*We call upon the **national and local political authorities** and the **media organisations** together with the **teachers** and **civil society** to commit themselves to put into practice these recommendations.*

## Note

This position paper was born within the "Conectando Mundos" project which is co-financed by the European Commission. It is the result of the sharing of ideas and experiences of the four European NGOs making up the consortium of the project: CIDAC (Portugal), Inizjamed (Malta), Intermón Oxfam (Spain) and Ucodep (Italy). These four organisations are proposing it to act as a thought provoking document and a commitment for all those actors that work, cooperate and influence the educational sector at the national and international levels so that Global Citizenship Education receives the recognition it deserves.

This first paper has the aim of acting as an initial process of thought on the basis of which the four NGOs propose to continue working on together with other members of the teaching sector in the particular countries in order to produce an international manifesto during 2008.

## Corporate Information

This document has been written by the members of the International Scientific Committee of Conectando Mundos. In Malta, Mr. Vince Caruana, member of the Maltese Scientific Committee (SC), has been the main contributor of this document. The other members of the Maltese SC are (in alphabetical order) Josephine Vassallo, Paul Pace, Philip Caruana, Philip Said and Rita DeBattista.

In its work, the Scientific Committee has been assisted by the Conectando Mundos Project Management, formed by the Consortium partners Cidac (Portugal), Inizjamed (Malta, Intermón Oxfam (Spain) and Ucodep (Italy). In Malta, the international and national SCs have been assisted by Dominik Kalweit, William Grech and Bernardette Mizzi (Inizjamed - Conectando Mundos Project Management).

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