



## Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

### UNESCO's approach

#### WHAT is Global Citizenship?

There are different interpretations of the notion of 'global citizenship'. A common understanding is that it is a sense of belonging to a broader community, beyond national boundaries, that emphasises our common humanity and draws on the interconnectedness between the local and the global, the national and the international.

The term “Global Citizenship” is not new. It has gained significant momentum with the realm of development since the launch of the UN Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, which has identified “fostering global citizenship” as one of its three priority areas of work, along with access to and quality of education.

For UNESCO, global citizens are individuals who think and act for a more just, peaceful and sustainable world.

#### WHAT is Global Citizenship Education (GCED)?

Global Citizenship Education aims to equip learners of all ages with those values, knowledge and skills that are based on and instill respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be responsible global citizens. GCED gives learners the competencies and opportunity to realize their rights and obligations to promote a better world and future for all

GCED builds on many related fields such as human rights education, peace education, education for international understanding and is aligned with the objectives of education for sustainable development (ESD).<sup>1</sup>

#### Key conceptual dimensions of GCED

For measurement purposes and the development of educational goals, objectives and learning outcomes, the following key conceptual dimensions of GCED, also common to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), have been identified by UNESCO in consultation with experts from around the world:

---

<sup>1</sup> [\*Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the twenty-first century \(UNESCO, 2014\)\*](#)

| Key conceptual dimensions of GCED and ESD |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Cognitive skills</b>                   | Learners acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global issues and the interconnectedness/interdependency of countries and different populations |
| <b>Socio-emotional skills</b>             | Learners have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities and holding rights   |
|   | Learners show empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity   |
| <b>Behavioural skills</b>                 | Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global contexts for a more peaceful and sustainable world   |

*Source: developed by UNESCO based on inputs from experts on GCED and ESD from around the world and the Technical Consultation on GCED, held in Seoul in 2013, and the First UNESCO Forum on GCED that took place in Bangkok in 2013.*

## WHAT is UNESCO's vision of GCED?

UNESCO's commitment to GCED is anchored in its unique vision of peace that is itself grounded in the belief that lasting peace is more than security and freedom from violence. As stated in UNESCO's Constitution, *"since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed."*

This vision of lasting peace requires a commitment to four types of learning - often referred to the "four pillars of education".<sup>2</sup> :

- "Learning to know",
- "Learning to do",
- "Learning to be",
- "Learning to live together".

Learning to live together means *"developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence – carrying out joint projects and learning to manage*

<sup>2</sup> The International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, UNESCO 1996 (Delors Report).

*conflicts – in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding,... peace”* and cultural diversity.<sup>3</sup>

Global citizenship education is about all four types of learning.

The 1974 *Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms* (UNESCO) provides the normative foundation for GCED.

GCED can be applied in various ways, depending on the learners’ needs and contexts. For UNESCO, there are, however, common characteristics to GCED, which fosters in learners:

- an attitude supported by an understanding of multiple levels of identity, and the potential for a collective identity that transcends individual, cultural, religious, ethnic or other differences;
- a deep knowledge of global issues and universal values such as justice, equality, dignity and respect;
- cognitive skills to think critically, systemically and creatively, including adopting a multi-perspective approach that recognizes different dimension, perspectives and angles of issues;
- non-cognitive skills, including social and communicative skills and aptitudes such as empathy and conflict resolution, networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, cultures and perspectives;
- behavioral capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly to find global solutions for global challenges, and to strive for collective good.

### **WHAT is UNESCO doing in this area?**

UNESCO is supporting governments to mainstream GCED in national education systems, including in education policies, contents, teaching practices, learning environments and M&E.

This work includes monitoring peace and human rights education and promoting intercultural and multilingual education, as well as working with various stakeholder groups and constituencies, including young people who are often driving developments in the area of GCED.

---

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*

Activities in support of GCED within the Education Sector are being implemented by the team in Headquarters, several UNESCO Field Offices and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development ([MGEIP](#)).

The HQ-based team is providing technical leadership and overall coordination of UNESCO's GCED related work, focusing on three specific areas:

- 1) Policy dialogue in connection with the post-2015 education agenda
- 2) Providing technical guidance on GCED
- 3) Clearing-house function

Most recent and ongoing undertakings:

- Clarification of the conceptual underpinnings of global citizenship education (GCE): first UNESCO publication on GCED titled *Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the twenty-first century* was launched in May 2014 in HQ (Paris). This publication draws on the foundational work of two key UNESCO GCED events held in 2013 (Seoul and Bangkok).
- In the context of the ongoing consultations on the post-2015 development agenda, UNESCO is providing guidance on the measurability of GCED in view of its inclusion in the post 2015 Framework as a target . UNESCO established the GCED and ESD Measurement Ad-Hoc Team (MAT) to identify GCED priorities for measurement. Collaboration with the EFA Steering Committee Technical Advisory Group (TAG) & the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), for which UNESCO is a co-convener, is underway to ensure complementarity in the effort to include GCED in the post-2015 development agenda. UNESCO's regional post-2015 consultations, scheduled for the second half of 2014 and beyond, are being informed on ongoing developments in GCED;
- Organization of the 2nd international Forum on Global Citizenship Education – “Preparing for post-2015: Building peaceful and sustainable societies”, at its Headquarters, Paris (France), 28-30 January 2015 (read more). On the basis of the outcomes of the First Forum (Bangkok, December 2013) which sought to clarify the conceptual issues around GCED, the Second Forum will focus on future policy directions at the global level, country implementation and expanding partnerships in the context of post-2015 planning.
- Integration of GCED in national education policies, contents and programmes:

- UNESCO-HQ ( ED/TLC/GCE) is producing a Guiding Framework on GCE with age-specific topics and learning objectives. The document will provide guidance to policy makers, curriculum developers and other education personnel at country level.
- Based on demand from Member States a similar guidance framework, specific to the needs of the Arab region, has been developed in Arabic (UNESCO Beirut).
- Teaching Respect for All is a UNESCO project, jointly launched with the United States of America and Brazil in January 2012, to counteract discrimination both in and through education. The project promotes an educational response to counter discrimination and violence, mutual tolerance and respect for all people, regardless of colour, gender, class, sexual orientation, national, ethnic, or religious orientation/identity, are the key concepts it promotes. Work underway in Brazil, Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kenya and South Africa. For more (click)
- Engaging the school community: GCED has also been recently promoted through UNESCO's Associated Schools Network. *ASPnet in Action: Global Citizens connected for Sustainable Development* is an online collaborative platform dedicated to enhancing information and knowledge sharing among the UNESCO Associated Schools Network around the world. It aims to encourage interactive networking and participation of ASPnet teachers, students and experts to connect with their peers by exchanging about school-based initiatives and learning from their respective experiences. For more (click)
- Clearinghouse on GCED: UNESCO is developing a Clearinghouse on GCED in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU). It is expected that the Clearinghouse will go live January 2015.

These are only a few examples of UNESCO's ongoing work in support of GCED which is being implemented in cooperation with various NGOs, IGOs, UNESCO's category 1 and 2 Institutes, Ministries of Education, Permanent Delegations.

For more and updated information on UNESCO's work in support of Global Citizenship Education consult our website [www.unesco.org/new/en/global-citizenship-education](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/global-citizenship-education); or by email: [gce@unesco.org](mailto:gce@unesco.org)