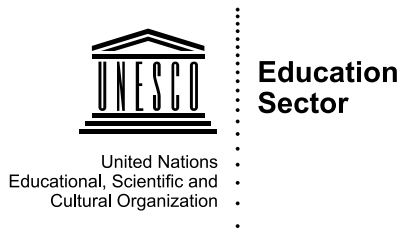

UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



This booklet would not have been possible without inputs from the rich discussions among participants at the Consultation Seminar on “Nationalistic perspectives and their implications for Global Citizenship Education (GCED)”, organized by UNESCO (Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, Education Sector, and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development), the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), held on 28-29 June 2017 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Special thanks to Florian Bieber who made an invaluable contribution to the reflections on this issue and to APCEIU for their support in producing this booklet.



Global Citizenship Education and
the rise of nationalist perspectives:
Reflections and possible ways forward

Published in 2018 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,
7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

© UNESCO 2018



This publication is available in Open Access under the Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 IGO (CC-BY-SA 3.0 IGO) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/igo/>). By using the content of this publication, the users accept to be bound by the terms of use of the UNESCO Open Access Repository (<http://www.unesco.org/open-access/terms-use-ccbysa-en>).

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors; they are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

Graphic design: Aurélia Mayozer
Cover picture: UNESCO
Printed by UNESCO

Printed in France

Table of contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Understanding the rise of nationalism	2
3. Unresolved tensions and misunderstandings within Global Citizenship Education (GCED)	6
4. For a renewed understanding of GCED – Recommendations to take the agenda forward	8

1. Introduction

Why this paper? Over the past few years, many have observed a rise in nationalist perspectives across the world¹. Commentators have spoken of an increased emphasis on economic protectionism in some countries, as well as a rise in exclusionary, xenophobic and sometimes racist discourses and acts of violence in the public arena. These trends raise many questions about the role of education and pose, in particular, grave challenges to one of UNESCO's key areas of work in the field of education, namely Global Citizenship Education (GCED) which seeks to equip learners with the skills, values and attitudes needed to contribute to the development of peaceful and just societies.

What is the paper about? This paper seeks to provide clarification on the evidence of the rise of nationalist perspectives and

its causes, and to lay out how GCED is challenged by this phenomenon. It recommends ways forward for the work of UNESCO and other education stakeholders promoting GCED.

How was the paper developed? This paper is based on the learnings of a consultation seminar convened by UNESCO in June 2017 on the perceived rise in nationalist perspectives and its implications for UNESCO's work on GCED.² The seminar gathered experts from all regions of the world engaged in a variety of fields and disciplines. Their inputs and contributions helped to prepare and direct the discussions of the seminar. Finally, this paper also builds on lessons learned from a series of capacity-building workshops for education policy-makers and educators that were organized by UNESCO, between 2015 and 2017, within the framework of its GCED programme.

2. Understanding the rise of nationalism

2.1. Definitional questions

No single definition. Despite the wealth of academic literature on the subject, there is not one universally accepted definition of nationalism. Moreover, the term is often employed for political means, and it can have very different connotations in different political, cultural, geographical or historical contexts. In some contexts, nationalism is seen as a positive force driving nation-building and the consolidation of national unity. Historically, this form of nationalism was often associated with emancipatory movements, for example during decolonization, and was also sometimes invoked to support democratization processes. In other contexts, nationalism can be an ideology that emphasizes

the exclusion of certain groups considered as 'non-native'³ and it can have strong associations with authoritarianism. Nationalism, as a social phenomenon, can have different functions and can join forces with different political ideologies. Nonetheless, in all types of nationalism, emotions appear to play a key role. For some, nationalism inspires devotion to one's community or love of country, for others it is linked to feelings of fear, anger, revenge and resentment.

Latent vs. virulent exclusionary nationalism. A further useful distinction can be made between latent and virulent (or violent) forms of exclusionary nationalism. This allows for a more precise identification of the forms of nationalism that threaten the status quo versus those, more established, that might display exclusionary features, but lack a potentially violent dimension.

-
- 1 Economist. 2016. League of nationalists. 19 November. Bremmer, Ian. 2017. The Wave to Come. Time, 11 May. Available at <http://time.com/4775441/the-wave-to-come/>
 - 2 The seminar was organized by UNESCO (Division for Peace and Sustainable Development, Education Sector, and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development), the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and the Asia-Pacific Center of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) on 28-29 June 2017 in Seoul, Republic of Korea.
 - 3 Mudde, Cas. 2016. On Extremism and Democracy in Europe. London and New York, Routledge.

Conceptualizing nationalism

	Level of Intensity	
Level of Exclusion	Inclusionary latent nationalism	Inclusionary virulent Nationalism
	Exclusionary latent nationalism	Exclusionary virulent nationalism

2.2. Exclusionary forms of nationalism

This paper is specifically concerned by the most virulent and exclusionary forms of nationalism that risk generating violence, hatred and discrimination. Such forms of nationalism run counter to the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴ and the Charter of the United Nations⁵ and pose serious threats to human dignity and peace.

'Us vs Them': At the core of exclusionary nationalism is a worldview guided by a rigid 'us vs. them' paradigm where members of the 'in group' see themselves as superior to and/or threatened by a perceived 'outsider group' (citizens of other countries, migrants, minorities, the elite). This nationalism is often associated with authoritarianism, conspiracy theories and a hatred of an alleged organized elite. It also runs against a more nuanced and multidimensional understanding of one's identity.

Apolitical illusions of harmony. Exclusionary forms of nationalism, furthermore, create the illusion that they can transcend politics. It assumes that, if the community is sufficiently 'homogeneous', deliberations on public policies in the political arena will not be necessary. Harmonious agreement is perceived to naturally flow from the 'will of the people.'

Trigger events. For exclusionary forms of nationalism to become virulent, trigger events are required. These are events that polarize debates and populations, pitting one group against another. Trigger events might be ideological, economic, institutional or social in nature: for example, a sudden influx of migrants, highly polarized election campaigns, a series of terrorist attacks or a heinous crime.

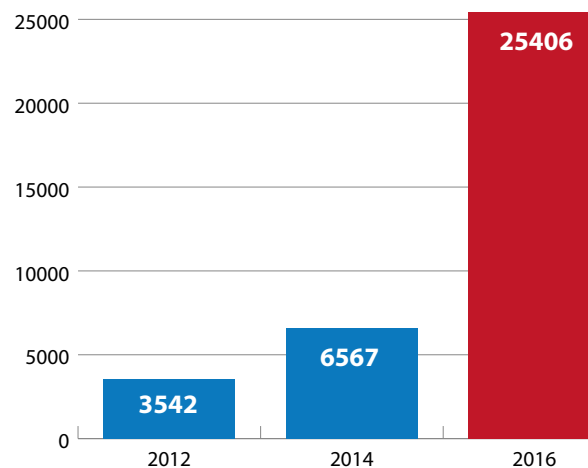
Lingering, unresolved conflicts and disputes can also provide a reservoir of sentiments that fuel exclusionary nationalist parties and lead to outbursts of violent attacks.

2.3. Is exclusionary nationalism on the rise globally – what is the evidence?

Uncertain increase in nationalist attitudes. Nationalism is notoriously difficult to measure, notably for two reasons: a) attitudes and their social and political manifestations can differ, and b) in most countries, nationalism has a negative association. As a result, measuring nationalism requires proxies. In considering the recent rise of nationalism in its various forms, we can only indicate trends and patterns but not give a definitive narrative. Data available up until 2016, which analyze nationalist attitudes around the world, indicate that there is no significant change in individuals' attitudes such as "trust in other nationalities", "pride in the Nation", "isolationism" or "rank of national identity over other identities"^{6,7}. According to Pew Global data on the extent to which individuals believe that "countries should deal with their own problems", there has been no clear trend towards more isolationism between 2010 and 2016⁸.

Graph 1: Growth in the followers of major white nationalist movements and organizations' Twitter accounts located mostly in the US

Source: J. M. Berger (2016)



4 <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

5 <http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>

6 World Values Survey, notably Waves 5 (2005-2009) & 6 (2010-2014). Available at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>

7 Citizens in the sub-Saharan African countries who indicate that they identify only as, or more of, a member of an ethnic group than of a state. "I feel more (ethnic group) than (national identity)" or "I feel only (ethnic group)". Multiple surveys as part of the Afrobarometer, available at <http://afrobarometer.org/surveys-and-methods/survey-topics/identity>

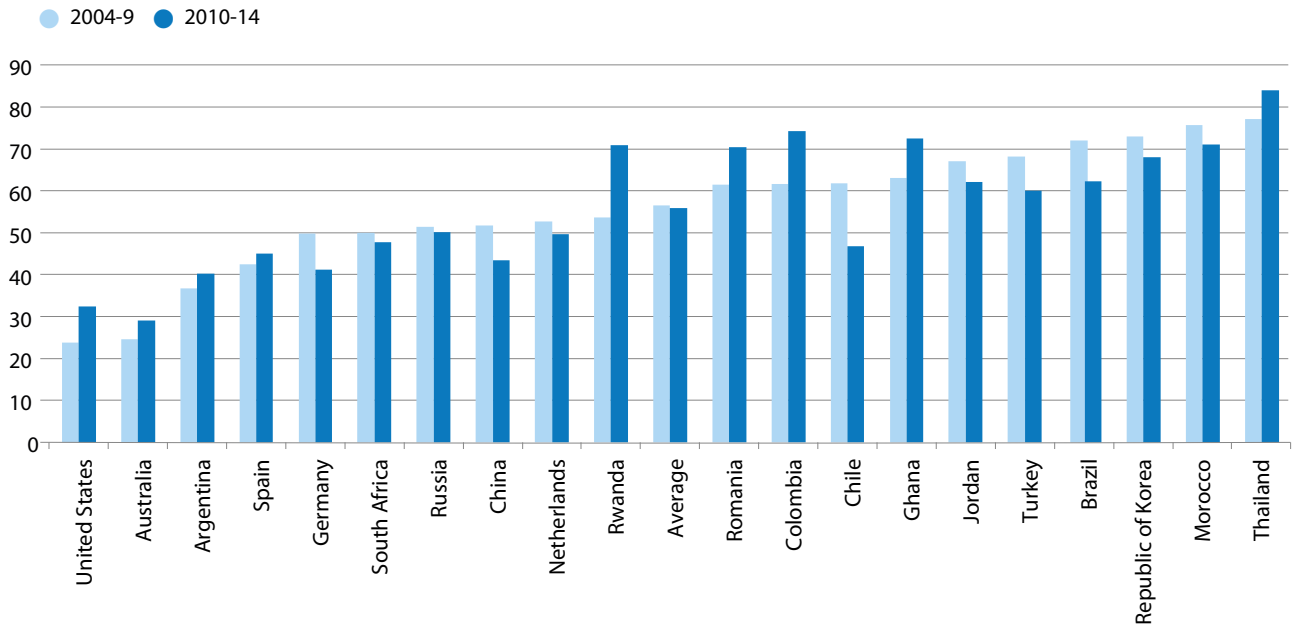
8 Pew Global Data. Available at <http://www.pewglobal.org/>. The question asked was "should a country deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with their own problems?"

Results from these surveys suggest that there is no global shift towards more nationalism in recent years, and that there has been no significant global shift towards exclusionary virulent nationalist attitudes. Though there is a clear

segment of the population that is favourable to nationalist perspectives, it is too early to tell if the world is currently witnessing a rise in nationalist attitudes.

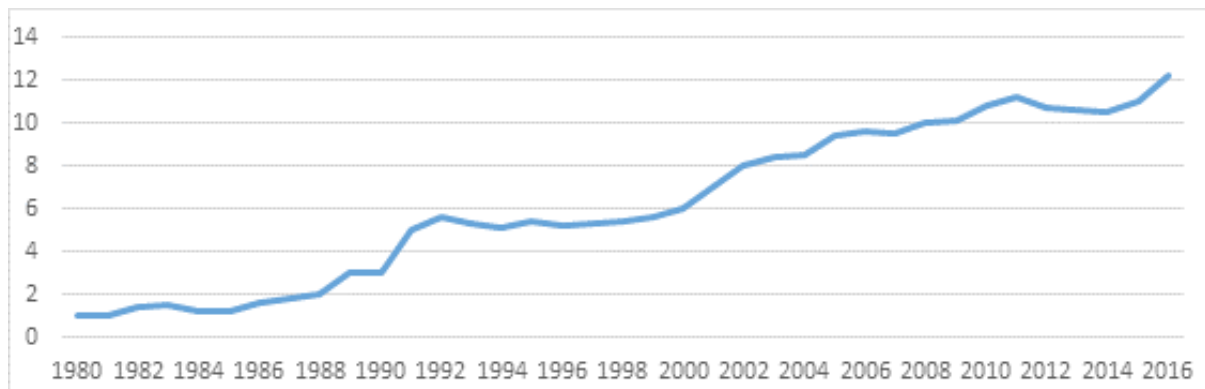
Graph 2: Levels of trust in people of another nationality

Source: World Values Survey Waves 5 and 6



Graph 3: Rise of populist radical right wing parties in Western Europe (1980-2016)

Source: Milačić & Vuković (2017)



Visible rise in nationalist politics. Though there is no clear evidence of the increase in individuals' nationalist attitudes over the last years until 2016, there has been a visible rise in the expression, visibility and acceptance of nationalist politics

in a number of countries. This manifests itself in a number of ways, and most notably in the rise, and electoral success, of old or new nationalist parties and/or the shift in positions of established parties.

Rise of hate crimes. Manifestations of the increased visibility of exclusionary nationalist politics can also be found in the rise of hate crimes over the past year, spurred by trigger events such as polarized election campaigns. Although levels of violence dropped some time after the trigger events, they remained higher than in previous years. This reflects a possible change in social norms, whereby nationalist and xenophobic attitudes have become more acceptable and, thus, radical individuals and groups feel more empowered to act upon them.

Risk of escalation. In this context, it is important to consider that the rise of exclusionary nationalist politics and the increased acceptance of expressing nationalist opinions can reinforce or even generate a trend towards more exclusionary nationalism. In other words, while the rise of nationalist parties may not be the result of an overall trend towards more nationalism, it may well cause such a trend in the future.

There is no global monitoring of hate crimes.

Data on hate crimes can be found at the national level, for example:

* for USA: Hate Crime Statistics, Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, available at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015>;

* for France: Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH) available at www.cncdh.fr

At the regional level, data is provided by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) at <http://hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/racism-and-xenophobia>

2.4. Root causes and facilitating factors

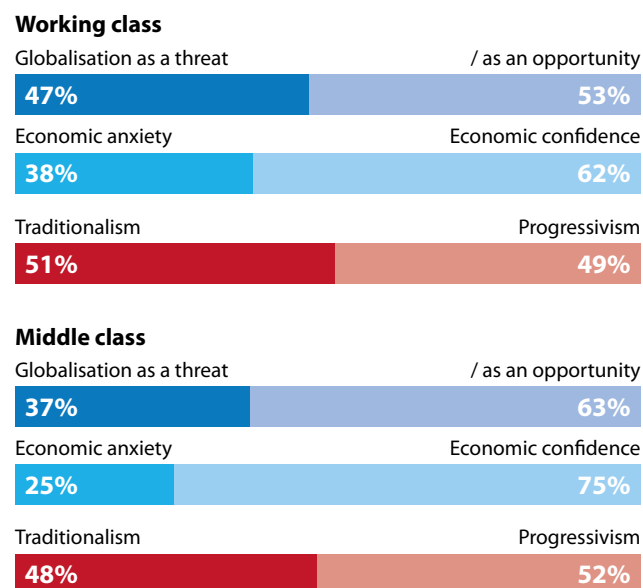
A number of root causes can be identified to explain the rise in nationalist politics and the seeming increase in the acceptance of their expression in the public sphere.

Real and perceived economic inequality and loss in living standards. In particular, since the global economic crisis in 2008, economic inequality is more prominent and more visible today. The benefits of economic growth are very, and sometimes extremely, unevenly distributed. This is true at the global level as well as within countries. Furthermore, there is now a widespread perception, especially in developed countries, that living standards of one's children will not necessarily be higher than one's own, thus undermining the traditional promise of economic ascent. People can feel that they are losing the benefits or privileges to which they believe they are entitled to ('loss of perceived entitled privilege').

Economic globalization and the changing world of work. The blame for the decline in living standards in some countries is often put on economic globalization and a modernizing economy. Economic globalization can mean that jobs move abroad to where labour costs are lower. A modernizing economy can mean that traditional jobs are replaced by automation. Both phenomena can cause fear and anxiety. Certain population groups, for example those living in defunct former factory towns, feel cut off.

Graph 4: The working class fear globalization more than the middle class

Source: eupionions.eu - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2016)



Cultural anxiety. Fears of economic globalization often interact with wider anxieties about what seems to be a rapidly developing world that appears to be increasingly beyond the individual's control. Traditional communities are perceived to be disintegrating and social environments that were perceived to be clearly structured are becoming overwhelmingly complex. These sentiments often go along with a strong sense of victimization that blinds individuals to their own ability to victimize others. Against this background, people who are different or who occupy a minority status (e.g. ethnic minorities, people with different sexual orientations, women, the so called "liberal elite", and those who may benefit from equity measures) are seen as threatening or unjustifiably favoured. Whether justified or not, it is important to recognize that feelings of disorientation can be genuine and cannot easily be overcome if not squarely addressed.

Mistrust in politics and political institutions, and a general sense of powerlessness. Nationalist perspectives can also be linked to the real or perceived crises of the legitimacy of political institutions and processes. This can include the sentiment – justified or not – that the established political process is closed to newcomers or offers few channels for genuine political participation for the marginalized. This is compounded by a feeling that there are no credible political visions being put forward by political leaders that speak to this aspiration and that traditional political institutions are powerless in the face of supranational forces such as economic globalization.

Digital revolution as facilitating factor. The above root causes are magnified by various facilitating factors, such as the internet, and more generally the so-called digital revolution.

With the advent of the internet, information is now freely available and accessible to all. News is no longer determined by established editorial boards, but made by individuals relaying information as they see it and feel it. Social media, in particular, are becoming echo chambers, where people who think similarly interact and exchange. Social media have also changed the boundaries between the realms of the private and the public, resulting in a shift of perspective on what can be legitimately expressed in public. Under such conditions, there is a premium on sensationalism, and conspiracy theories are rampant. The digital revolution has made it easier and faster to circulate marginalized voices, including those that are the most extreme and exclusionary. Social media and the internet provide demagogues with the ideal accessory to gain popularity by exploiting prejudice and ignorance.

3. Unresolved tensions and misunderstandings within Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

What is Global Citizenship Education? GCED aims to empower learners to engage and assume active roles locally, nationally and globally, to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive secure and sustainable world. It builds on peace and human rights education and emphasizes the need to foster the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours that allow individuals to experience a sense of belonging to the global community and to take informed decisions. GCED is a key element of Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education.⁹

Core conceptual dimensions of Global Citizenship Education¹⁰

Cognitive:

To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations

Socio-emotional:

To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity, and respect for differences and diversity

Behavioural:

To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world

⁹ Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG4 on Education) calls on countries to “ensure that all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills 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”.

¹⁰ UNESCO’s Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives, available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf>

Inherent tensions and possible misunderstandings. While GCED is moving into the mainstream of education discourse, there remain unresolved tensions and possible misunderstandings regarding the concept that may explain why its uptake has greatly varied. They need to be addressed squarely in order to ensure GCED delivers on its promise.

These tensions and possible misunderstandings are described in what follows.

Global vs local. GCED promotes an ideal of global solidarity and a sense of belonging to a common humanity, while encouraging learners to take responsible actions at global and local levels. It remains, however, unclear to many stakeholders how local actions connect to global change, and how GCED can be immediately relevant to the well-being of individuals in their local communities. GCED is sometimes seen as a lofty ideal that over-prioritizes the need to address global challenges and interventions over local aspirations, content and interventions. Neither is it apparent how GCED is relevant to national citizenship, which determines, to a large extent, the kind of opportunities that individuals are most likely to have throughout life.

Targeting the individual vs. addressing the political and social context. As GCED focuses on developing individuals' knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, less attention is devoted to questioning the macro-social, structural or political contexts that frame an individual's ability to enjoy and exercise their rights. Some have gone so far as to argue that GCED promotes a sanitized – or depoliticized – vision of

change that can contribute to the disengagement of young people from civic life.

Relevance of GCED in challenging environments. Though the effective implementation of GCED depends on its contextualization, GCED is perceived in certain contexts as an approach that cannot apply to educational settings that are resource-poor, conflicted-affected, remote and underprivileged. Despite existing evidence that peace education¹¹ – which is part of GCED – helps build social cohesion and improves the overall quality of learning, GCED is perceived by some as a luxury, disconnected from learners' basic needs. In countries that are experiencing the challenge of national unity and social cohesion, in particular, the global dimension of citizenship education is particularly difficult to prioritize.

Aspirational goal with implementation challenges. UNESCO's understanding of GCED underlines the importance of developing learners' cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural skills in order to empower them to become responsible and engaged citizens. When faced with practical implementation, this ideal can seem daunting. Teachers are often not comfortable, nor equipped, to teach all three dimensions of learning since they require adopting new pedagogical approaches. It is notably challenging for teachers to develop skills for responsible political engagement and for dealing with emotions. GCED, therefore, runs the risk of being delivered simply as a new subject matter, instead of serving as a driver for more profound educational change across the education sector.

11 Paper commissioned by the UNESCO Education Sector 2017, "Promotion and Implementation of Global Citizenship Education in Crisis Situations" by Tina Robiolle Moul; Available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002527/252771E.pdf>

4. For a renewed understanding of GCED – Recommendations to take the agenda forward

Independent of whether there is a discernible global rise in nationalist perspectives or whether there will be one in the future, all manifestations of exclusionary nationalism run counter to the values of GCED and, therefore, pose an educational challenge.

In this light, the recommendations below seek to address this challenge by proposing a renewed understanding of GCED in order to ensure that it delivers the type of transformations that are needed to build a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

The vision

1. **'Learning to live together' at the core.** GCED can be implemented in a variety of ways, and to different degrees, from a minimalist to a maximalist approach. For example, GCED can translate into the promotion of specific conflict resolution and critical thinking skills for peaceful co-existence. Or, it can also materialize as an overarching educational commitment to promoting a sense of belonging to a common humanity and global solidarity. All these actions are modalities of implementation of GCED, situated along a continuum of valid entry points. At the core of all of these approaches is a commitment to 'learning to live together' in peace and dignity. UNESCO and others who promote GCED should show more clearly how GCED can be effectively implemented along this continuum.
2. **Contextualize and build on the local and country context.** Learning about, and for, global citizenship should incorporate and build on local values, worldviews

and traditions. This implies not only translating GCED into national local languages, but more importantly, using and celebrating the cultural practices and expressions that convey the aspirations of GCED in national traditions¹². Many cultures already have traditions and practices that match and convey the aspirations of GCED. The discourse of GCED should be framed in a way that it builds on those traditions and practices rather than appearing to introduce new terms and concepts. The framing of GCED should be such that people in different cultural contexts can easily relate to it¹³. Contextualizing GCED can, furthermore, imply ensuring that educational contents reflect local realities and localize global issues. Such approaches can be more effective to promote a sense of responsibility towards, and belonging to, the global community, as well as ensure GCED's resonance with national and sub-national traditions and customs.

The skills

3. **Constructive civic and political engagement.** Developing learners' civic and political skills to engage constructively in local and national decision-making processes and mechanisms should be prioritized, at all levels of education, and throughout life. Spreading abstract norms of non-violence and intercultural understanding is not sufficient to ensure young people and adults are able to effectively participate in civic life and contribute to the development of just and peaceful societies.
4. **Self-awareness and emotional intelligence.** Emotions such as fear, anger, resentment and anxiety can create an attraction to exclusionary forms of nationalism. GCED needs to place more emphasis on helping learners identify and deal with their emotions in a constructive manner. This means teaching learners to be aware and in control of their emotions in a way that allows them to empathize and be compassionate with others without neglecting their own needs and emotions.

¹² One example is the notion of Ubuntu, in the Southern Africa region.

¹³ UNESCO is producing an advocacy document entitled: "Global Citizenship Education: taking it local" on 10 local concepts to promote GCED locally. The document will be available in September 2018.

- 5. Critical inquiry.** In our globalized world, marked by a relatively easy access to information from diverse sources, learners are confronted with the need to handle new levels of complexity, which can generate fears and anxiety. GCED must help learners navigate through this complexity and learn-to-learn throughout life in order to keep up with developments. This is possible by inculcating skills of critical inquiry, in order to dissect claims that do not stand up to rigorous scrutiny, logic and rational inquiry.
- 6. Skills for digital citizenship.** GCED should emphasize the importance of 'media and information literacy' (MIL) and digital citizenship competencies in order to help learners scrutinize information and media content (written and video), critically evaluate information sources that feed into conspiracy theories, as well as engage responsibly with media and information systems. MIL is also critical to help learners understand that there can be a multiplicity of viewpoints on issues.

The approaches

- 7. Make a difference for marginalized populations.** GCED has to be delivered in a way that benefits the most vulnerable, disillusioned and disenfranchised segments of the population. GCED should not be viewed as a privilege but a means of improving the overall relevance of education and its ability to promote human flourishing and well-being. GCED provides an opportunity to strengthen a wide range of skills (cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural) that are necessary to develop in a fast changing world, such as inter-personal communication, conflict management, creativity, collaborative work, empathy, emotional intelligence, etc.
- 8. Target those in a position to decide.** Adults, from all sectors of society, that have completed, or never benefited from, schooling are also important target groups and stakeholders of GCED. Individuals who are of age to vote, assume leadership and parental responsibilities should be given access to GCED.
- 9. Redesign teacher development.** Teachers and educators are at the forefront of the learning process and need to be involved in the development of GCED content as well as supported to ensure they can deliver the three different dimensions of GCED, i.e., the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural.
- 10. Expand and diversify partnerships.** To expand the reach of GCED, there is a need to look beyond traditional partners and build alliances with those such as the business community, religious actors, the media and the arts. There is a need build corporate citizenships.

Stay in touch



<https://en.unesco.org/themes/gced>



gced@unesco.org



twitter.com/UNESCO

U N E S C O



G l o b a l
C i t i z e n s h i p
E d u c a t i o n

Over the past few years, many have observed a rise in nationalist perspectives across the world. These trends raise questions about the role of education and, in particular, one of UNESCO's key areas of work in the field of education, namely Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which seeks to equip learners with the skills, values and attitudes needed to contribute to the development of peaceful and just societies. This paper seeks to clarify the evidence of the rise of nationalist perspectives and its causes, and to lay out how GCED is challenged by this phenomenon. It recommends ways forward for education stakeholders in promoting GCED, in order to strengthen 'learning to live together' by embedding GCED meaningfully in local and country contexts.

