

Learning to Live Together: children's rights, identities and citizenship

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Learning to Live Together

The early 21st century has seen increasing migration across the world and a consequent recognition of globalisation as an irreversible phenomenon. This period has also witnessed numerous terrorist attacks often on civilian gatherings and these have been linked in political discourse to lax migration controls (Castles, 2017). Responses to terrorism have included profound changes to urban infrastructures and greatly increased security apparatuses. The concrete barriers erected in cities are reminders of the current and persistent threats to liberal values and democracy from terrorism. However, the physical obstacles are only part of a solution to ensuring that citizens can freely engage in cultural activities. It is now widely recognised that education has a vital role to play in ensuring that human societies flourish at a time when they are rapidly changing in response to globalisation and migration. Flourishing human communities are the context in which individuals can live free from fear and want (European Commission, 2015; Group of Eminent Persons, 2011; UK Government, 2011).

This chapter takes its cue from a widely cited UNESCO Commission report that identified four pillars of education in the twenty-first century. It emphasizes 'learning to live together' as the most important challenge for education (Delors, 1996). I argue that such learning requires both teachers and students to understand citizenship as a key concept. Citizens recognise that human beings are vulnerable and require the support and solidarity of others, feeling part of a society in which they have rights and reciprocally responsibilities. I also argue that children are citizens rather than simply citizens in waiting. Learning to live together involves developing identities as citizens. This entails recognising the diversity of cultures and identities of which even the apparently most homogeneous societies are made up.

Drawing on legal, philosophical and political theory, as well as empirical research, the chapter explores ways in which understandings of children's rights and citizenship inform a pedagogy of living together. It outlines the basic principles of international law and policy that inform the values that, when implemented in schools and classrooms, enable living together in contexts of diversity (Banks et al., 2005). Whilst formal citizenship education tends to encourage national values and identities, the realities of migration and globalisation suggest that educators should also promote cosmopolitan perspectives (Appiah, 2006; Sen, 2006; Osler & Starkey, 2005). I illustrate this approach by reference to a relatively large-scale project in the UK known as the Rights Respecting Schools Award.

The UNESCO-sponsored report of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century presents an analysis of educational aims intended to be of universal application. The

report identified four pillars, namely aims or broad purposes that provide the foundation for education: learning to know; learning to do; learning to be; and learning to live together. Of these, the priority aim is learning to live together which includes:

developing an understanding of others and their history, traditions and spiritual values and, on this basis, creating a new spirit which, guided by recognition of our growing interdependence and a common analysis of the risks and challenges of the future, would induce people to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way (Delors, 1996 p20).

This definition eschews a narrowly nationalist curriculum. It makes no reference to national identities but rather there is an assumed 'us' that is left entirely open as to how this identity is defined. This open and malleable grouping is assumed to have a sense of 'history, traditions and spiritual values' that differs from that of 'others'. The Commission envisages students learning about the cultures of others and coming to a realisation of the interdependence of individuals and groups faced with 'the risks and challenges of the future' that require action in the present. This action should lead to 'common projects', in other words working together, as the best means to manage conflicts and promote peace.

Building on the UNESCO report, recommendations from an international consensus panel convened by the prestigious Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington included an elaboration of learning to live together. The emphasis is on learning about interdependence in the face of global challenges:

Students should learn about the ways in which people in their community, nation, and region are increasingly interdependent with other people around the world and are connected to the economic, political, cultural, environmental, and technological changes taking place across the planet (Banks et al., 2005).

When faced with a specific terrorist attack in France on the journalists of the satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo*, European ministers of education declared their intention to reinforce educational provision:

Ensuring inclusive education for all children and young people which combats racism and discrimination on any ground, promotes citizenship and teaches them to understand and to accept differences of opinion, of conviction, of belief and of lifestyle, while respecting the rule of law, diversity and gender equality (European Union Ministers of Education, 2015).

This declaration focuses on education for promoting citizenship. In this context citizenship is a useful shorthand term encapsulating a commitment to act to combat destructive forces in society such as racism and discrimination. In that sense it is essentially about learning to live together. Citizenship education in this perspective includes accepting differences and respecting the rule of law and equalities whilst recognising and valuing diversity.

Utopia and human rights

The question raised powerfully at the end of the 20th century in the Delors report for UNESCO (1996) and a best-selling work of French sociology was whether we can live together as equals respecting difference (Touraine, [1997] 2000). Learning to live together in multicultural societies requires the acceptance of the legitimacy of multiple points of view. Rather than being premised on ‘them and us’ nationalist narratives, education can take inspiration from a vision of a peaceful and harmonious world. Delors characterises such a vision as a ‘necessary utopia’.

Utopia can be an inspiration and a driving force motivating humans to exercise agency and shape history (Mannheim, [1929, 1936] 1991). However, Nazism, Soviet Communism, and Maoism were based on utopian visions of a better society. These ‘failed utopias’ (Klug, 2000: 189) are based on assertions of the superiority of a race, class, or nationality. These murderous

utopias are based on strict adherence to a party line that outlaws alternative perspectives and minority voices. Authoritarian utopias use propaganda to promote ‘the single story’ (Adichie, 2009). They respond to the challenge of living together by eliminating from the discourse of ‘us’ those individuals and groups that challenge the authority of the single story vision. Those offering alternative narratives become enemies of the regime, denied the protection of the law and vulnerable to arbitrary arrest, detention, exile, and genocide.

The necessary utopia of the Delors report is grounded in ‘the ideals of peace, freedom, and social justice’. These are the values and principles that underlie the international human rights regime. A human rights perspective on living together emphasizes that all must be included in the ‘us’ and it is this vision that drives the political action. Learning to live together in a society based on peace, freedom and social justice requires an understanding that citizenship in such a context is informed by human rights (Mejias and Starkey, 2012). The University of Washington consensus panel argued that the teaching of human rights should underpin citizenship education courses and programs in multicultural nation-states (Banks et al., 2005).

Human rights were formally codified in the 1940s. At the end of the Second World the United Nations (UN) was established as an international organisation committed to justice and peace in the world. The Charter of the UN was signed in 1945 and proclaims that world peace can only prevail when there is respect for human rights. An international Human Rights Commission drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was proclaimed by the General Assembly of the UN on 10 December 1948.

The principles that underpin human rights are set out in the preamble to the UDHR which begins: ‘Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world ... ‘.

The key concepts in this formulation are the inherent dignity of all human beings and the entitlement of all human beings to equal rights. The UDHR introduces a *universal* entitlement to rights applying to all ‘members of the human family’. This is a major conceptual change from previous understandings that nation-states offered rights to their citizens and could also withdraw or withhold them. In other words before the creation of the UN, national sovereignty could be invoked when states enacted discriminatory legislation or allowed their agents freedom to undertake extra-judicial killings or torture. The founding of the United Nations meant that moral pressure to uphold human rights standards could be applied since governments voluntarily commit themselves to the UDHR. Subsequently a legal dimension has developed as human rights form the basis of international law.

The preamble to the UDHR also sets out a vision of a possible future that can be seen as a utopia, asserting that ‘the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people’. This section has its origins in a speech by US President Franklin J Roosevelt in 1941. The UDHR preamble incorporates his idea of four freedoms that come as two pairs. The first pair is freedom of speech and belief. These are sometimes described as negative freedoms since it is argued that they should not be constrained by government. The freedoms of speech and belief are among the civil and political rights essential for any form of democracy and political activity. In fact freedom of speech can be threatened by censorship and by intimidation. Its protection requires policing and courts and the active intervention of governments.

The two other freedoms are freedoms ‘from’. The first is the psychological freedom from fear. This is the right of citizens and others living in the state to security, guaranteed through a

system of policing and laws. Freedom from want is the right of access to basic standards of nutrition, health care, income, and shelter. Without these, human beings are deprived of their capacity to develop their capabilities and thus effectively robbed of their dignity and personal liberty (Sen, 2009).

The preamble to the UDHR is an expression of cosmopolitanism. This Enlightenment concept, associated notably with Immanuel Kant, is based on a conception of human beings as a single community expressed as ‘all members of the human family’. The cosmopolitan perspective has been defined as an ideal that combines: ‘a commitment to humanist principles and norms, an assumption of human equality, with a recognition of difference, and indeed a celebration of diversity’ (Kaldor, 2003: 19).

Human rights are essentially humanist principles and norms, though norms that are also found in all major faith traditions. They are set out in the UDHR in 30 articles. Cassin, one of the drafting committee summarized the content as:

- personal rights (life, freedom, security, justice) in articles 2–11;
- rights regulating relationship between people (freedom of movement, rights to found a family, asylum, nationality, property) in articles 12–17;
- public freedoms and political rights (thought, religion, conscience, opinion, assembly, participation, democracy) in articles 18–21;
- economic, social and cultural rights (social security, work, equal wages, trade unions, rest and leisure, adequate standard of living, education, cultural life) in articles 22–7 (see Osler & Starkey, 2010).

The argument that knowledge and understanding of human rights should underpin citizenship education is based on two premises. First, although national perspectives, traditions and constitutional and legal arrangements are important, they are not the only way of seeing the world. Citizens need to have knowledge and understandings of those universal principles and standards by which they can evaluate the actions and inactions of their governments.

A second consideration is that human rights are the basis of the regime of international law that underpins globalisation. The political and economic superstructural elements of globalisation, particularly trade deals and the World Trade Organisation, require and interact with a philosophical, moral and legal superstructure. Globalisation requires the rule of law and the rule of law requires a philosophical justification based on moral purpose (Bingham, 2011; Spring, 2015).

Human rights, then, provide a way of looking at the world. The definition of human rights is determined by the rights that are set out formally and definitively in international human rights instruments. Human rights education includes knowledge of human rights instruments and developing a capacity to use the discourse of human rights in struggles for justice.

National and cosmopolitan citizenship: developing identities

Citizenship education, as noted above, is one response to the questions of living together and preserving and promoting democratic values. It has gained currency in many parts of the world particularly in response to migration and demographic diversity. National governments, usually controlling publicly funded education, are inclined to develop citizenship education as education for national identity. This is a conception of citizenship education that has its roots in the state formation era of the 19th century (Green, 2013).

Indeed, as the great American educational philosopher John Dewey warned early in the twentieth century, national education systems have been based on promoting nationalist agendas at the expense of cosmopolitan perspectives. He noted that at the end of the 19th century education ‘became a civic function and the civic function was identified with the realization of the ideal of the national state. The ‘state ‘was substituted for humanity; cosmopolitanism gave way to nationalism’. (Dewey [1916] 2002: 108)

Although nationalist education is the education of citizens, it aims to transmit a particular view of national identity and culture, rather than enabling reflection on plural identities. This model is often known as civic education and is based on education for assimilation into a given national culture. It survives in many contexts in the twenty-first century (Hahn 1998, 2005; Torney-Purta et al., 1999; Kymlicka, 2001). However, in a globalizing world of demographic diversity in schools, a nationally focussed citizenship education may be inadequate. A more appropriate formulation incorporating a wider vision based on human rights has been proposed as education for *cosmopolitan* citizenship (Osler & Starkey, 2005).

Education for cosmopolitan citizenship is a response to tensions common across the world and identified in the UNESCO report. First is:

The tension between the global and the local: people need gradually to become world citizens without losing their roots and while continuing to play an active part in the life of their nation and their local community (Delors, 1996: 15).

The tension may be resolved by defining citizenship to include nationality as part of a citizenship identity, but not insisting that nationality determines that identity. Nationality, as Gutmann (2003) points out is a group identity. However, individuals have numerous group identities associated with, amongst others, gender, profession, family, ethnicity all of which may extend beyond national boundaries.

Citizenship is a way of understanding ones associations with and connections to others. It can be characterized as having three dimensions: feeling, status, and practice (Osler & Starkey, 2005). The first element of this definition of citizenship is that it is based on a feeling of belonging or identity: citizens feel that they belong to a community or, more usually, to various communities.

Secondly, citizenship is a status. It can be legal, as a national, and also a moral status as a person entitled to dignity and human rights. Nationality is in the gift of governments that may be tempted on occasions to withhold or rescind it. Yet nationality may be simply an instrumental citizenship. In other words, it may be useful to have access to the passport of a particular country without necessarily feeling much affiliation with it. Moreover, many dual nationals may have affective ties to, and patriotic feelings for, more than one country.

Citizenship is also, thirdly, a practice. The practice of democratic citizenship centres on intervention. Citizens have a sense that they are entitled and empowered to act in the world, in order to defend their own rights or the rights of others. This sense of agency derives from identity as a citizen. It does not have to be associated with nationality.

In a globalizing world, citizenship education that privileges promoting a national identity often defined by a dominant majority, is challenged by sociological realities of many citizens having affective associations with more than one nation. In approving the British census categories for 2011, for instance, the UK government invites those who identify as British Asians to choose an ethnic group identity based on nationality, namely: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese (Richards, 2016). In other words since there is an official expectation that citizens may define themselves as British and Indian, for example, the myth of a single salient national identity collapses. More elaborated descriptions of children's identities embracing three

continents were recorded by researchers exploring students' understandings of identity and citizenship in a multicultural city (Osler & Starkey, 2005). Cosmopolitan citizenship, recognising the diplomatic realities of national borders but not being constrained within a single national identity, is a status that describes the feelings of many young people in schools (Nussbaum & Cohen, 1996; Appiah, 2006).

Citizenship education

Citizenship education provides a conceptual framework that logically embraces human rights, global perspectives, and equalities issues. The Council of Europe, an inter-governmental organisation of 47 member states focusing on human rights and cultural policy, has been at the forefront of developing guidance on Education for Democratic Citizenship / Human Rights Education (EDC / HRE). The aims and purposes of citizenship education, as defined collectively by European states, focus on counteracting political forces that attempt to undermine the democratic basis of citizenship. In the early 21st century European Ministers of Education are concerned by:

the growing levels of political and civic apathy and lack of confidence in democratic institutions, and by the increased cases of corruption, racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, intolerance of minorities, discrimination and social exclusion, all of which are major threats to the security, stability and growth of democratic societies (Council of Europe, 2002).

This formulation is very significant since it appears to recognize that, contrary to narratives widely repeated in the popular press, minorities that are not the problem for European states, but rather the inability of majority populations (the dominant communities) and traditional structures to adapt to diversity. It is not the minorities who are major threats; what is undermining democracy and security is, rather, the attitudes and behaviours of the dominant

communities within these countries, including ‘corruption, racism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, intolerance of minorities‘.

Another European report confirms that there is an issue with the behaviour and attitudes of majority populations as it highlights obstacles to living together:

...discrimination and intolerance are widespread in Europe today, particularly against Roma and immigrants, as well as people of recent migrant background, who are often treated as foreigners even in countries where they are both natives and citizens (Group of Eminent Persons, 2011: 5).

Hostility to immigrants and foreigners stems from a feeling of entitlement reserved for a national community. In other words a nationalist myth based on privileging a national consciousness that excludes people perceived to be less entitled to national status has gained substantial currency. Such understandings and attitudes are learned and so citizenship education based on commitments to human rights is recommended as an antidote. The basis for this form of citizenship education is set out in the Council of Europe *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* (2010).

Education for citizenship encourages the development of citizenship as an identity. The educational process helps learners to see themselves as citizens. While all human beings have the capacity to be citizens, they only become citizens when they are able to recognize themselves as such. In other words, they need to name the feeling of identity with a social and political community of others as citizenship. When this feeling of identity extends beyond a national framework, and when it acknowledges the importance of human rights, learners may be able to feel and understand themselves as cosmopolitan citizens.

The pedagogical process of developing awareness of one’s identity as citizen has been theorised by Hudson (2005) drawing on Bradley (1996) identifying three levels of social

identity. The first is a passive or potential identity. All human beings have the capacity to be citizens, but unless they know the word and understand the concept they will not identify as citizen. It is a latent identity. Once they are able to identify themselves as citizens, a process that can be facilitated by citizenship education, learners can move from a passive or potential identity as a citizen to an active and conscious one. At this level there is a burgeoning sense of agency as they become aware that citizenship is an identity that enables them to challenge injustices and work for change. The third level is characterised as a politicised identity. Building on the sense of agency attached to an identity as active citizen, some people start to view the world through a lens of citizenship. Every relationship, every political decision, every pronouncement is subject to critical appraisal on the basis of the extent of conformity to human rights principles and standards. At this level citizens have a strong sense of agency and develop skills to become effective participants in change (Osler & Starkey, 2005).

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989)

Many educators have recognised the great significance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for their professional activity (Alderson, 1999; Morrow, 1999; Howe & Covell, 2005; Lansdown, 2007). This chapter has introduced general principles relating to human rights, identities and citizenship using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as the central point of reference. Although the UDHR is not, in itself, a convention, in the sense of a binding treaty obligation, its principles underpin subsequent human rights instruments that are recognised formally in international law. The CRC has the status of a convention in international law and it is the most widely ratified of all human rights treaties. It may be considered as setting out universally agreed norms and standards (Freeman, 1996).

When opened for signature in 1989, the CRC reflected changing perspectives on childhood. It introduced a consensus that children (young people under 18 years old) have agency and that their views must be taken into consideration in all decisions that affect them. The rights in the CRC predictably address the specific vulnerability of children and propose standards of provision (e.g. the right to free education) and protection (e.g. a ban on exploitative labour and military service). The great innovation of the convention was its codification of participation rights, such as the right to express views and to have the views taken into consideration. The CRC helped to change the focus from children as needy and helpless to children as citizens with agency. Of course, children exercise agency more or less effectively depending amongst other issues on their maturity. Nonetheless they can no longer be considered merely as citizens in waiting (Verhellen, 2000). Children are citizens if they feel themselves to be citizens, if they have the status of rights holders and if they act as citizens. Since 1989 and the CRC children are citizens and this has implications for relationships in schools and for pedagogy (Osler & Starkey, 2005; 2010; Osler, 2016).

Rights Respecting Schools

The legal justification for promoting children's rights through education is found in articles 28 and 29 of the CRC which address education and schooling directly. However, other CRC rights are also highly relevant to education since the CRC requires governments, and schools as government funded and controlled institutions, to recognise education as a key human right for all children and to provide education for human rights, and respect the rights of children (Lansdown, 2007). This is sometimes expressed as the right to education, rights in education and rights through education (Verhellen, 2000) or education about, for and through human rights

(Lister, 1984). These pedagogical principles are also elaborated in the European and global guidelines on human rights education (Council of Europe, 2010; United Nations General Assembly, 2011).

Education *about* human rights means providing basic information to develop knowledge and understanding of human rights. This may be considered as part of the right *to* education, which includes the right to human rights education. Education *for* human rights entails developing skills for recognising and taking action on human rights issues. This is equivalent to the notion of rights *through* education, that is, education as the means to promote human rights. The formulation ‘rights in education’ is similar to education *through* human rights. It involves experiencing a school climate where the respect of rights is the basis for all activities.

Concrete experiments in developing school structures and education systems that embody the concepts of respect, justice and democracy have a distinguished history. Dewey’s laboratory school at the University of Chicago at the end of the 19th century provided the basis for his theories of education based on democratic dialogue and shared values ([1916] 2002). Democracy, in this sense, is not just a system of government, but rather a way of interacting that respects the rights of all to be involved. As former Secretary- General of the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali observed at the time of the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, democracy is not ‘a model to copy from certain States, but a goal to be achieved by all peoples’ (quoted in Rivière, 2009: 239). Viewed in this way, the focus shifts from the integration of minorities to the development of political systems that ensure the representation and recognition of many voices that have traditionally been marginalized.

Since 2006, the implications of adopting the norms and standards of the CRC to inform whole school policy have been thoroughly explored and evaluated through the UNICEF UK initiative the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA). UNICEF UK is a voluntary association set up to promote the aims of UNICEF and is not a part of the United Nations structure. The scale of the initiative makes it worthy of attention since some 4000 schools educating 1.5 million students had, by 2017, voluntarily committed to participate in the programme. Schools engage in self-assessment and are subject to external evaluation. The criteria are based on the extent to which child rights are embedded in the school's practice and ethos¹.

Schools receive the RRSA award when they can demonstrate that the CRC is known and understood by their leadership and integrated into management, curriculum, and classroom climate. Pupil participation in decision-making is also a criterion for the award. Schools can work towards either a Level One or a Level Two award depending on how well integrated rights are within the school. Level One is awarded when they can demonstrate that they have shown good progress in four dimensions, namely:

- Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management
- The whole school community learns about the CRC
- The school has a rights-respecting ethos
- Children and young people are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Level Two is achieved when schools can demonstrate that they have 'fully embedded' the principles and values of the CRC.

¹ <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/about-the-award/awarded-schools/>

The first three years of RRSA (2006-9), a pilot phase funded by the UK's Labour government in five areas of England, was evaluated with a focus on the impact of the RRSA specifically on the well-being and progress of children in participating schools (Sebba & Robinson, 2009; 2010). Wellbeing of children was of particular concern for the government since a 2007 UNICEF study on child wellbeing in rich countries placed the UK last out of 21 countries overall and 17 out of 21 for educational wellbeing (UNICEF, 2007).

All schools involved in the evaluation study claimed that the RRSA provided a framework that made other policies more coherent. Participation in the scheme also increased pupils', staff and parents' sense of well-being and belonging. There was evidence of improved engagement and behaviour and the scheme encouraged positive relationships and supported children to make a contribution locally, nationally and globally (Sebba & Robinson, 2009).

The final report noted that in all 31 schools surveyed, relationships and behaviour were considered to have improved, attributed to:

an improved understanding by pupils and staff of how to respect rights and greater control exercised by pupils over their own behaviour. In particular, it was noted that there was little or no shouting in school and conflicts between pupils escalated far less frequently than they had done before the schools developed an RRSA approach (Sebba & Robinson, 2010: 18).

These impressive claims may account for some of the increase in take up of the RRSA project. Heads and parents are likely to welcome any scheme that promotes good behaviour.

Other claims perhaps need to be treated with caution (Trivers and Starkey, 2012). For example the claim that pupils became more actively involved in upholding or defending the rights of others might have been better evidenced. The reports reference school projects on global issues, such as school linking with Brazil, Columbia and Ghana and encouragement to purchase Fairtrade products or fundraise for a clean water project. However, it is not clear that such projects address inequalities and imbalances in the power relationship in such school to school links. In fact teachers in three schools suggested that their work supporting pupils to fundraise for projects in partner schools may simply be tokenistic, providing ‘a strong feel-good factor by those involved, but no greater understanding of the effect of their actions’ (Sebba & Robinson, 2009:10). The evaluators also noted a perhaps somewhat patronising sense that pupils ‘felt sorry for people in poorer countries’ (Sebba & Robinson, 2010: 26).

Identities and citizenship

The final evaluation report on the RRSA provides evidence that children in the programme were likely to acquire identities as citizens. Heads and teachers in all the schools confidently asserted that children and young people learnt to make informed decisions and had experience of being active citizens. Once students recognised their dual identities as learners and citizens, staff reported that it changed and improved the relationships between students and between students and their teachers. Teachers attributed this to the fact that an awareness of their rights led them to an awareness of the rights of others and hence a sense of responsibility (Sebba & Robinson, 2010).

Over half the schools in the sample involved students in major decisions such as being represented on the governing body; participating in the interview process when new staff members were hired; providing constructive feedback on teaching and learning processes. In all schools students were involved in collective decisions and these often concerned aspects of the school environment such as playground equipment, lunchtime arrangements and toilets. Such issues can make a great difference to a sense of well-being in school. Students were also reported as becoming confident, as citizens, to discuss issues of rights, global citizenship and sustainability. Consideration of rights gave them a moral perspective and the possibility of a sense of perspective.

One of UNICEF-UK's aims for the RRSA programme was to promote positive attitudes to diversity. The evaluators found strong evidence with respect to including students and staff with disabilities and those with behavioural or emotional challenges. Students from minoritised backgrounds reported feelings of inclusion and belonging in their RRSA schools and the evaluators recorded many examples from interviews of students challenging stereotypes and ascribed identities.

The CRC was particularly appreciated in multi-ethnic schools as providing a coherent set of common principles to inform the proclaimed values of the school. Human rights principles were reflected in the school ethos which consequently focused on inclusion and celebrated religious and cultural diversity. Such an ethos sometimes challenged less accepting attitudes that students may bring from their homes and neighbourhoods.

Conclusion

This chapter argues that there is a widespread consensus, exemplified in guidance and policy documents from global and regional transnational organisations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, that learning to live together is the greatest challenge for education in the context of the tensions and turbulence created by globalisation. There is a further consensus that human rights education has a central role to play in addressing tensions within societies. The chapter highlights the Convention on the Rights of the Child as being a particularly relevant and powerful basis for human rights education at school level. Human rights education logically finds a place within the curriculum as part of civic or citizenship education.

Citizenship education, when promoted too forcefully as education for national citizenship may exacerbate rather than mitigate antagonisms and prejudices in multicultural societies by defining national characteristics in a way that excludes some sections of the population. Where citizenship education is based on commitments to universal human rights it takes on a cosmopolitan as well as a national perspective.

Education for cosmopolitan citizenship recognises that feelings of identity may be associated with numerous co-existing group identities. It puts into perspective the frequently assumed salience of a national identity.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides common, universal, standards and principles to inform the school curriculum in the widest sense of everything that happens in schools. These

principles provide the basis for the assertion that children are citizens. The Rights Respecting Schools Award initiative in the UK provides evidence of the benefits to school communities and wider society of drawing inspiration from the utopian vision expressed in human rights instruments.

Learning to live together requires commitment to common standards. These can be invoked when attempting to address tensions. Communities of citizens of all ages that strive for the common good share these common standards and recognise the need to protect the rights of others within and beyond national boundaries. Education for cosmopolitan citizenship inducts young people into a principled view of communities at all levels from the local to the global. It helps young people identify as citizens with agency and a commitment to justice and peace in the world.

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