

## Global Citizenship Education and a Pedagogy of Hope

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Global Citizenship has become a buzzword in many areas of education in recent years. The term can be seen within the Sustainable Development Goals and in the number of books and academic articles since 2015 with this word in its title. <sup>i</sup>The climate crisis, the impact of the global pandemic and the ever-present impact of global forces on our everyday lives has brought home to millions of people around the world the extent to which people are globally connected not only through the use of the internet but through economies and cultures.

Educationalists around the world have been responding to these agendas by making greater reference to equipping learners with the knowledge, skills and values base to make sense of the globalised world they are living in and how they can contribute as active global citizens<sup>ii</sup>.

This article looks specifically at how global citizenship education can contribute to providing learners with a vision and purpose to address the current global challenges. It suggests that one way of doing this is to look to the ideas of Paulo Freire and his vision of a pedagogy of hope.

The writings of Freire have been influential in the field of global citizenship education particularly through his critique of the banking model of education and his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. What perhaps is less discussed is his *Pedagogy of Hope* (2004), where he states that hope is an ontological necessity: 'We succumb to fatalism, and then it becomes impossible to muster the strength we absolutely need for a fierce struggle that will re-

create the world. I am hopeful, not out of mere stubbornness, but out of an existential concrete imperative' <sup>iii</sup>

At a time when there is a degree of fatalism in the world as a result of the lack of progress on tackling the climate crisis and the continued impact of COVID-19 around the world, educationalists have a responsibility to promote a vision that change is possible. Global citizenship education provides this positivity, that change is possible. This is why Freire is important because he states that one of the tasks of the progressive educator is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be. <sup>iv</sup>

Freire further stated that educationalists in promoting a sense of hope need to do so by grounding their ideas and practices within an understanding of the current social and political situation within societies. Hope also means that it is possible to secure change. If one takes this approach to addressing climate change for example then it means the educator has to first engage with understanding the causes of this crisis, tackle directly the concerns that learners may have about their own futures and to show that through a vision of hope, people can be motivated to engaged into taking action for social and environmental change.

For Freire, hope was also not some form of abstract concept. It had been rooted within educational practice. Giroux develops this approach through the use of what he calls 'educated hope'. Only through education, Giroux suggests can learners see what is possible and feasible<sup>v</sup>.

Global citizenship education provides a distinctive pedagogical approach that is grounded in social reality but also provides a perspective as to the possibilities of social change. Whilst there are many interpretations as to what global citizenship education might contain, it can be summarised as a distinctive educational field that empowers learners to address today's global challenges and become active promoters of a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies. <sup>vi</sup>

Global social justice is a major theme of the aims of global citizenship education combined with a pedagogical approach that is participatory, open to a range of voices and perspectives and challenges dominant assumptions about the world. It is this clear values base around social justice that connects global citizenship to a pedagogy of hope.

Where perhaps global citizenship education could demonstrate its relevance to today's global challenges is through giving more emphasis to a sense of optimism and hope, that change is possible and that this requires an engagement with the complex issues of today. This means recognising the need to go beyond simple quick fix technological and scientific solutions to areas such as climate change. Education has a role in outlining to learners' possible scenarios and ways forward and to engage in them requires skills such as critical thinking, co-operation, self-reflection and dialogue.

In the UK these approaches have been developed by a coalition of civil society organisations under the banner of Our Shared World which aims to promote Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals as the basis for a new approach to formal education in England. Central to this initiative is to see the linkages between themes such as global citizenship, peace, human rights and culture to education for sustainable development.<sup>vii</sup> A challenge this initiative has however faced is the need to move beyond rhetoric and generalised policy statements to providing evidence and research to justify the value of such an approach. The response has been to show that through putting a pedagogy of hope as centre stage and showing the relevance of areas such as global citizenship education to equipping learners with the skills and value base to making sense of today's global challenges, there is then the basis for an argument for a way forward.

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<sup>i</sup> The Global Education Digest published by annually by the ANGEL Network lists all academic articles, reports and books that cover the theme of global citizenship in the English Language from 2018 to 2020, see. <http://angel-network.net/publications/Digest2021>

<sup>ii</sup> See Davies, I, Ho, Li-Ching, Kiwan, Dina, Peck, Carla, Peterson, Andrew, Sant, Edda and Waghid, Yusef (editors) *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Citizenship and Education*. London, Palgrave; Tarozzi, Massimiliano and Torres, Carlos, *Global Citizenship and the Crises of Multiculturalism*. London, Bloomsbury, 2016

<sup>iii</sup> Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Continuum 2004: 8

<sup>iv</sup> Freire 2004:9.

<sup>v</sup> Giroux, Henry *On Critical Pedagogy*. New York: Continuum. 2011:122

<sup>vi</sup> Torres, Carlos, Foreword to Bosio, Emiliano (edited) *Conversations on Global Citizenship Education*. New York: Routledge 2021: xvi.

<sup>vii</sup> See <https://oursharedworld.net>