



Our Priorities

1. Every child in school
2. Quality of learning
3. **Global citizenship**

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Priority #3: Foster Global Citizenship



Young girls at Nwambwa school in Bugiri, Uganda, promote education for girls.

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The world faces global challenges, which require global solutions. These interconnected global challenges call for far-reaching changes in how we think and act for the dignity of fellow human beings. It is not enough for education to produce individuals who can read, write and count. Education must be transformative and bring shared values to life. It must cultivate an active care for the world and for those with whom we share it. Education must also be relevant in answering the big questions of the day. Technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone cannot achieve sustainable development. It requires transforming the way people think and act. Education must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It must give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century.

Barriers to global citizenship

Legacy of the current education system. Schools have traditionally prepared people to pass exams, proceed to the next level and graduate into the workplace. We now face the much greater challenge of raising global citizens. Promoting respect and responsibility across cultures, countries and regions has not been at the centre of education. Global citizenship is just taking root and changing traditional ways of doing things always brings about resistance. This entails changing the way education is organized— making content more relevant to contemporary life and global challenges, introducing innovative and participatory teaching and learning styles. We must rethink the purpose of education and prepare students for life, not exams alone.

Outmoded curricula and learning materials. Reviews from around the world find that today’s curricula and textbooks often reinforce stereotypes, exacerbate social divisions, and foster fear and resentment of other groups or nationalities. Rarely are curricula developed through a participatory process that embraces excluded and marginalized groups. But change is possible when educators adopt a vision of ethical global citizenship. Lessons from India and Ghana, for example, show that explicitly teaching good citizenship as a subject can have powerful results with more empowered and ethical students emerging. Deeply entrenched beliefs take time to change. But young people are open to new perspectives, and schools are ideally positioned to convey them.

Lack of teacher capacity. Broad teacher development reforms are needed to ensure the uptake of new citizenship skills. If we want to transform the way students learn, we must also help teachers expand their

own skills and outlooks. Are they comfortable with a curriculum that dwells explicitly on global citizenship? Can they teach traditional subjects in ways that exemplify non-discrimination and positive support to the disadvantaged? Many teachers lack the training, confidence and classroom resources to meet these challenges without support and instruction. We owe it to them, and our children, to provide it.

Teachers must both be comfortable with the content of what they are teaching but also model it in their teaching practice. This means on-going teacher development and participatory learning techniques are important to ensure teachers feel comfortable teaching about global citizenship explicitly. Teachers can help build ideas and habits of non-discrimination and positive support to the disadvantaged through the way they conduct their teaching of literacy, numeracy and other subjects.

Inadequate focus on values. The values of peace, human rights, respect, cultural diversity and justice are often not embodied in the ethos of schools. Instead of empowering students to learn and thrive, schools often replicate social inequalities and reinforce social pathologies by tolerating bullying and gender-based violence and subjecting children to physical and psychological punishment. Young people learn much from schools, but what they learn is not only in their lessons. Teachers and administrators must learn to model the skills we want students to develop, such as good environmental practices, participatory decision-making, and the control and prevention of violence through reporting policies and clear codes of conduct.

Lack of leadership on Global Citizenship. To create a generation that values the common good, we must understand how young people see the world today—and our schools must find ways to foster a broader vision. Goals and targets should be set around 21st century skills and regularly assessed to measure progress.

Open discussion of tolerance and human rights can be politically sensitive, but it is critical if we want to overcome divisions and expand the prospects for peace and prosperity. Success will require support from a wide range of stakeholders, including the highest levels of government.

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