

1
2

3 School Students' Guidelines on Global Citizenship Education

4 **Adopted by the OBESSU General Assembly, 22-23 July 2019 in Madrid, Spain**

5

6 Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is a key element in empowering youth to assume active roles in society
7 and be able to reflect and critically examine current global challenges and become proactive contributors
8 to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and safe world. Despite its importance, it is not always seen as a
9 top pedagogical priority. In the countries where it is already incorporated in school curricula through
10 different practices, it is primarily taught at the end of secondary education, instead of being recognised
11 as important factor already in primary education.

12 There are many different ways to introduce GCE in school curricula: in a cross-curriculum way, by
13 integrating it in another subject (e.g. history), or as a separate subject, but it is important to highlight that
14 it is interconnected with other areas of work. Therefore, we aim to incorporate GCE both in formal and
15 non-formal education.

16 Implementation of GCE would provide students with skills on how to think more globally and critically,
17 help them develop attitudes and values of active participation and teach them how they can contribute as
18 world citizens, while developing their own personal identity.

19 **Content of Global Citizenship Education**

20 **Active Democracy**

21 School provides the ideal environment for fostering an active democracy. It must therefore be recognized
22 as a fundamental goal of global citizenship education to empower students to take an active role as young
23 citizens who understand the close interdependence of local and global actions. In order to promote the
24 development of democracy at all levels, students need to be guided towards upholding fundamental
25 democratic values, acquire skills for democratic participation and the necessary knowledge about our
26 democracies and their local, national, European and global dimensions.

27 **Key values and attitudes** of education for global citizenship include respect for democracy, participation
28 and open-mindedness. These values need to guide the development of educational material and be
29 present in all educational activities for global citizenship.

30 Curricula need to be designed as to support students' development of fundamental **skills** for democratic
31 participation. Every student has to learn how to cooperate with others, communicate clearly and
32 assertively without aggression and engage in constructive dialogue. Students need to be encouraged to
33 explore multiple perspectives and realities, respecting and understanding differences and similarities
34 between fellow citizens of their local as well as global community. Learning how to effectively organize
35 democratically and voice one's opinion, as well as communicating that creatively and effectively with
36 wider civil society and advocating towards policymakers are further key skills that need to be taught
37 through global citizenship education. Critical thinking is another key democratic skill that has to be

38 strongly promoted in order to allow students to engage critically with different arguments and information
39 provided by different sources such as other citizens or the media. They need to learn how to research and
40 check reliable information and knowledge using different sources, as well as how to act in the case of
41 uncovering false facts.

42 Essential **knowledge** that has to form part of curricula for global citizenship education include citizens'
43 rights, political systems and forms of active participation. Students need to be made fully aware of their
44 rights as school students as well as national, European and global citizens and understand how to access
45 them. National political systems and policymaking need to be studied thoroughly with a specific focus on
46 how to participate actively. European and global political institutions such as the EU, Council of Europe
47 and the UN and their treaties form another crucial part of global citizenship knowledge. Furthermore, past
48 and present developments of democracy and different democratic systems need to be discussed in order
49 to enable students to engage critically and actively in democratic processes. The crucial role of civil
50 society in actively safeguarding democratic values has to be stressed and opportunities for democratic
51 participation at local, regional, national and global level need to be highlighted.

52 **Human Rights and Solidarity**

53 Promoting respect for human rights and solidarity and an active upholding of those values are another
54 key aspect of global citizenship education. It is crucial for students to understand interconnectedness as
55 humans in today's' worlds with its social, political and economic dimension and gain the required skills
56 and knowledge to stand up for democracy and justice at local and global level.

57 Global citizenship education needs to instil fundamental **values and attitudes** of respect for human rights,
58 concern for justice and peace. Global solidarity as well as ethical responsibility for one's' behaviour in our
59 world, including environmental awareness, should be fostered.

60 Schools must help students to develop the necessary **skills** for becoming active promoters of human
61 rights, including how to identify human rights abuse and learning how to advocate for their protection.

62 Students need to be enabled to engage in respectful intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Furthermore,
63 the development of visions and policy suggestions for social progress towards a fairer world needs to be
64 encouraged through creative global citizenship education.

65 Students need to acquire the required **knowledge** about the history and philosophy of universal concepts
66 of humanity such as human rights and global justice and the current dynamics in our local communities
67 and global world. Existing socio-economic inequalities and structural discrimination regarding gender,
68 race, sexuality, ability and other social categories need to be studied and critically discussed at school.
69 The ways in which globalization, and its resulting economic, social and political interdependence affects
70 citizens all over the world furthermore have to be examined. Students furthermore have to learn to
71 understand our modern economic systems and its global dynamics. Our global environment and the
72 dangers resulting from climate change, including student's role in counteracting it, have to be explored in
73 global citizenship education. The history and current dynamics of international migration have to be
74 another fundamental component of curricula. Finally, students have to understand the organization of
75 international civil society and international strategies such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the
76 role they can play in advancing it.

77 Therefore, OBESSU believes that:

- 78 - Curricula for citizenship education to recognize the fundamental interconnectedness of its
79 national and global dimension, hence practicing Global Citizenship Education;
80 - The active teaching and practice of the above listed required **values and attitudes, skills** and
81 **knowledge** for active democracy, as well as for human rights and global solidarity in schools.

82 **Means of Global Citizenship Education**

83 **School Types**

84 Both types of schools, VET and general education, deliver different competences to its students on
85 different levels of education and in different dimensions. In comparison to general education, VET often
86 does not emphasise democratic practice, intercultural and interreligious competences and does not
87 provide a basis for critical thinking for its students. It also does not provide the knowledge on political
88 institutions and organisations in national and global context.

89 The mentioned competences are all crucial and equally important for all students, no matter their type of
90 school and/or level of education.

91 We should aim to provide equal access to GCE in all school types and at all ages, and also recognise the
92 importance of early teaching of principles of GCE in primary schools, to instil democracy at a young age
93 and prepare children to become democratic citizens. After primary school, it is crucial to support and
94 develop these competences until the end of education and work towards teaching school students to be
95 open and critically minded citizens that are able to critically examine the society they live in.

96 In order to implement GCE successfully, we believe that national curricula has to work towards equipping
97 students with above mentioned competences.

98 Therefore, OBESSU believes that there is a need:

- 99 - to provide equal access to GCE in general secondary and VET;
100 - to provide GCE in primary schools;
101 - to give the whole set of global citizenship competences equal emphasis across school types;
102 - to teach all school students to be open and critically minded and to be able to critically examine
103 the society they live in;
104 - for National Curricula to guarantee and provide students with the above-mentioned competences.

105 **Pedagogical Approaches: Informal and Non-Formal Education**

106 Informal and non-formal education have an important role in today's society; these two forms of education
107 help students to develop skills and abilities not obtained through formal education. Innovative pedagogies
108 play an important role in encouraging interaction between the students and other actors in school.
109 Sometimes a mixed approach is possible; problem-based learning, project-based learning, and co-working
110 with peers are some non-formal methods which can be used in a formal context by educators in order to
111 learn content faster and to create connections between students. Non-formal methods should be used in
112 all school types: primary school, secondary education, VET and high-school and should be recognized as
113 valuable guidelines in teaching.

114 The NGO sector also represents an important sector in providing GCE all over Europe. Teaching students
115 how they can participate in different NGOs as positive actors in society is another form of informal
116 learning, and visits to NGOs should be encouraged,

117 Finally, all informal and non-formal activities should be recognized in the educational system around
118 Europe. This should be ensured by educational authorities.

119 Therefore, OBESSU believes in the need for:

- 120 - More options for learning through non-formal and informal education, recognising the role of non-
121 formal education in formal education;
- 122 - Validation of non-formal education in formal education;
- 123 - Understanding and promoting the role of NGOs in developing GCE;
- 124 - Promoting school activities and international projects for students, such as;
 - 125 a. International exchanges,
 - 126 b. Erasmus+ projects
 - 127 c. eTwinning

128 **Curriculum Organisation**

129 Where and how GCE is taught in the curriculum are not questions that can be answered universally.
130 OBESSU members recognise the different needs between countries for GCE, however a national
131 curriculum common for all students in that state should be established.

132 OBESSU further believes that:

- 133 - This national curriculum should start from an early age, at least at primary level;
- 134 - A Global Citizenship Education approach or "lens" should be implemented across all subjects in
135 the curriculum;
- 136 - Global Citizenship Education may also be taught alongside other subjects or as a core subject in
137 itself.

138 **Democratic Practice**

139 In the education system students are often not prepared to be able to take their own decisions.
140 Democratic processes are not in place for students to have their say, and the culture of doing so may not
141 exist. The reality in primary schools and VET institutions is often worse. GCE in classrooms can aid in
142 creating a democratic practice among learners.

143 Students of all levels need to be active participants in matters affecting them. This creates a sense of
144 ownership and belonging to the school community. A positive experience of participation and effecting
145 change can lead to students becoming more active citizens in their later lives and in society too.

146 Active and inclusive participation of students in decision-making processes in all school activities
147 requires adequate resources to be provided by the school. Student councils and student unions are
148 effective ways for students to have their say and should be recognised by school management as the
149 voice of students. Nationally, school student organisations should participate in all education reform
150 processes as equal stakeholders.

151 Therefore, OBESSU demands:

- 152 - From the national government to institutionalize participation by including students right to
153 participation in legislation.
- 154 - That schools, in coordination with education ministries, create spaces for participation of
155 students, teachers and parents in the education system.

156 **Teacher training**

157 Teachers must be trained in teaching Global Citizenship Education and having a cross-curricular
158 approach. Teachers must be objective in their teaching, following a national curriculum but with space to
159 link teachings to current affairs and relatable topics.

160 OBESSU further believes that:

- 161 - Teachers should have a cross-curricular awareness of GCE
- 162 - Teachers should be trained in the course and teach in an open-minded, objective way
- 163 - Teachers should be aware of inclusive teaching methods that support students to think for
164 themselves.
- 165 - Continuous training course should be provided for teachers to upskill / re-train themselves.
- 166 - Teachers should be evaluated in their teaching

167 **Assessment**

168 The current focus on traditional forms of assessment of citizenship knowledge does not capture
169 competences and values. Students are not encouraged to self-evaluate themselves or their peers.
170 Regarding the subject of GCE itself, evaluation of its usefulness in creating engaged societies is also
171 lacking.

172 Therefore, OBESSU demands:

- 173 - That curriculum makers focus on alternative assessment models for GCE, including peer and self-
174 evaluation and project-based assessments;
- 175 - That evaluation of GCE be based on competencies and skills, rather than knowledge;
- 176 - That governments evaluate the value of GCE in creating, engaged, active citizens and share best
177 practices.