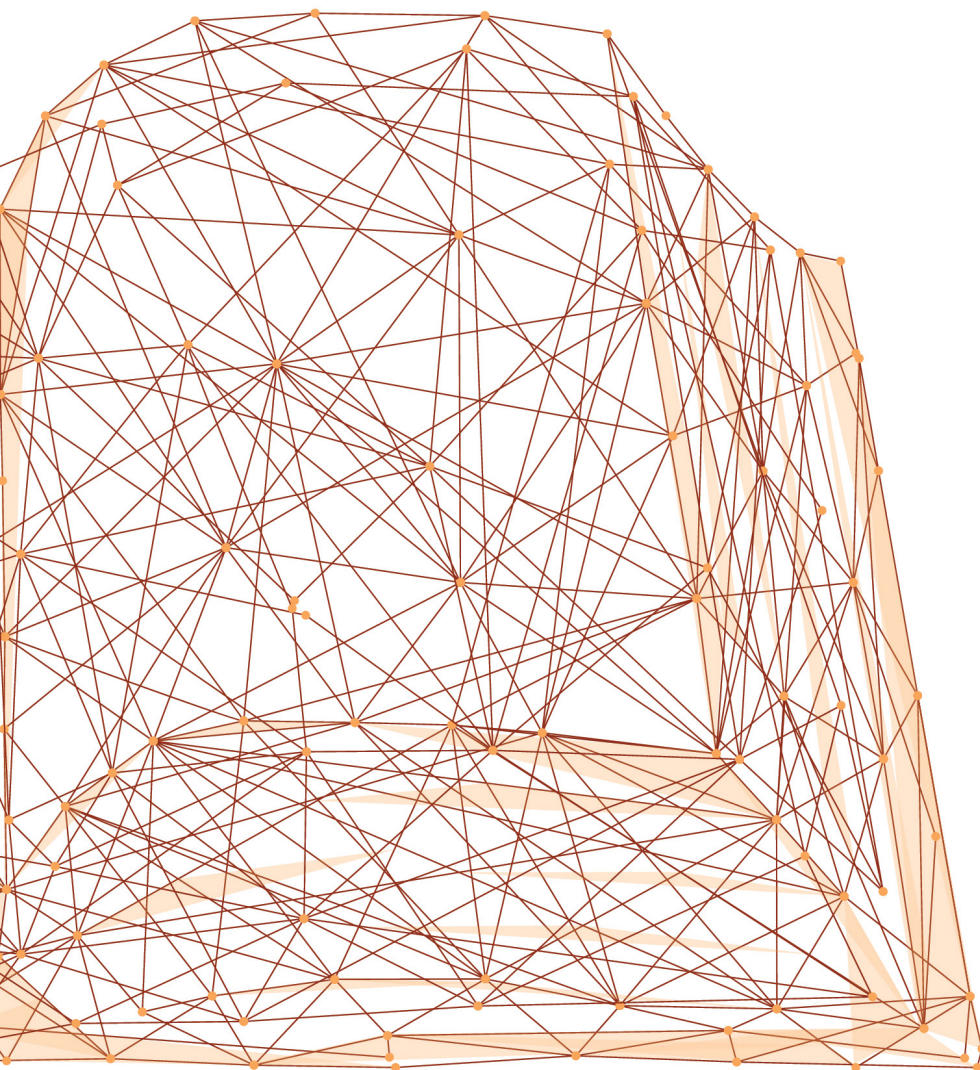




# EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND TOLERANCE

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## About the study

This research aims to address questions around the implementation, measurement, and success of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a response to the global challenges of the twenty-first century. GCE aims to foster peaceful, inclusive, tolerant, sustainable, and socially just societies; yet despite its centrality in international policy discourse and academic research, the impact of GCE on young people's attitudes towards inequalities in society or human rights remains relatively unexplored. The research takes an innovative, interdisciplinary approach through the fields of the sociology of education and economics. It brings together a broad discussion of policy and academic perspectives on GCE with a sophisticated econometric statistical analysis of the impact of civic and citizenship education (CCE) on young people's attitudes towards diversity, tolerance, and political participation.

The research examines education policies, curricula, and scholarly work on global citizenship education internationally to map the discourse worldwide. It attempts to measure the impact of Global Citizenship Education in a range of attitudes among young people –such as political participation, community involvement, identity, living in diversity– and the wider implications these attitudes may have for developing just, peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive societies.

In our analysis, we used data from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). In particular, we used the 2016 dataset from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), a large-scale international comparative study that investigates the ways in which young people, lower-secondary school students (mainly in Grade 8), are prepared to undertake their roles as citizens. ICCS reports on levels of students' civic knowledge, their understanding of concepts and issues related to civics and citizenship, as well as their civic attitudes and engagement. The survey gathers information about the implementation of Civic and Citizenship Education implementation that is closely related to the aims of Global Citizenship Education. Using logit and multinomial logit type models, we analyzed CCE data across 23 countries, which included 2,500 observations for each country.

## Global Citizenship Education: competencies and domains

For the purpose of this study, the criteria for Global Citizenship Education was broadly framed by the eight salient GCED competencies that were identified by the Measuring Global Citizenship Working Group (GCED-WG, 2017); UNESCO's three components model (2015) and the Guiding Principles and related Topics of the 1974 Recommendation (UNESCO, 2018).

Inspired by Nussbaum's (2002) notion of capacity and building on the competencies, domains of learning and principles, detailed above (GCED-WG, 2017; UNESCO, 2015; 2018) the study identified six key capacities related to the purpose and aims of GCED (Table 1).

## Global Citizenship Competencies identified for our study

1.	Capacity for critical and independent thinking
2.	Respect for diversity and intercultural understanding
3.	Respect for the values of equality, tolerance, human rights, peace, inclusion and justice
4.	Awareness of global issues
5.	Recognition of interconnectedness between people and communities
6.	Capacity to get engaged and take action

**Table 1. Global Citizenship Competencies identified for our study**

## Key findings

The research presented in this report offers an innovative interdisciplinary approach to the question of the impact of CCE/GCE on student attitudes towards gender equality, tolerance, diversity, and political participation. The sophisticated econometric statistical analysis of ICCS data, which allowed for the inclusion of a large number of variables, revealed insights about GCE that have been relatively unexamined in academic research. In particular, our study showed that many GCE dimensions can have a positive impact on student attitudes. These results, however, highlighted a level of ambiguity around the impact of certain dimensions of GCE in the curriculum, which, in some countries, had an opposite effect to the one expected. Results from our study stress the importance of local context, the relationship between education and society, and the need for policy makers, curriculum developers and teachers to engage with and reflect upon GCE at multiple levels, from curriculum design to implementation and practice. Key findings are summarized below.

## GCE remains difficult to define and varies across countries

There is no universal model for GCE, nor is there a consistent implementation of GCE programs across countries. Perhaps more surprisingly, citizenship initiatives that appeared similar across countries (e.g. involvement in human rights projects, participation in multicultural or intercultural activities in the local community, emphasis on knowledge, critical thinking or anti-racist strategies) had a very different impact on student attitudes, and in some cases the opposite effect to what would be expected. This highlights the need to take specific contexts into account when considering the development of GCE worldwide.

### **There were mixed-effects of GCE dimensions on student attitudes**

In many cases, GCE dimensions in the curriculum had a significant impact on student attitudes towards equality, tolerance and diversity, as well as engagement with society. However, there were mixed-effects and wide variations across countries and between attitudes measured. The impact of GCE dimensions in the curriculum was not consistent and overall the effect of these initiatives on student attitudes remained inconclusive. In some cases, GCE dimensions were correlated with unexpected opposite effects. This stresses the importance of looking closely at the nature and content of GCE programs, as well as associated pedagogical practices.

### **In some cases, GCE dimensions in the curriculum had surprising, unexpected effects**

In some countries, GCE dimensions in the curriculum (such as involvement in multicultural activities in the local community, or the development of critical thinking) had an opposite effect on student attitudes, making them more likely to disagree with ideas of equal rights or respect of diversity. Some initiatives might have a positive impact on attitudes towards gender equality, but a reverse negative impact on tolerance towards diversity. In particular programs within the local community have highly variable effects, in some cases negative ones. This raises questions about the nature of GCE teaching, the notion of "engagement" as well as the relationship between schools and local community.

### **The influence of mainstreaming GCE was variable across countries, with some positive effects.**

Having GCE dimensions as a separate or extra-curricular subject had variable effects across countries. In some cases, it was correlated positively with students' attitudes towards equality, diversity and tolerance, whilst in other cases it had a negative effect. This holds implications for thinking about the ways in which GCE can be successfully mainstreamed, taking student backgrounds and school contexts into account. It also raises questions about the knowing and the doing of GCE and the relation between knowledge and engagement in citizenship education.

### **The role of teachers remains central to GCE programs**

Results showed that not having a specialized teacher for GCE dimensions in the curriculum tended to have a negative effect on student attitudes towards equality, diversity and tolerance. This supports the idea that teacher education, training and support remain crucial for the successful implementation of GCE programs. The role of teachers also needs to be understood within wider systems and structures that might promote or hinder the successful development of GCE.

## Gender and socio-economic background of students had a significant effect on student attitudes.

Students' gender, socio-economic background and cultural capital had a strong positive impact on student attitudes towards diversity, tolerance, and political participation across all countries. Institutional and local contexts also had a significant effect on student attitudes. This shows the importance of recognising the structural and contextual nature of GCE, in order to develop programs that acknowledge the relationship between education and society. Parental and family influences, social inequalities, access to and engagement with cultural resources, urban and demographic contexts all need to be taken into account.

## Structure of the report

This report is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 gives an overview of the literature on Global Citizenship Education. It examines global policy drivers around GCE, as well as contentions around the definition of the term, its core aims and forms of implementation. It presents main academic debates and literature around GCE and a critical reflection on some of the assumptions it carries. Chapter 2 looks more closely at issues linked to the measurement, monitoring and evaluation of GCE and questions related to the measurement of its impact on students. Chapter 3 presents the methodology for our research, and introduces the empirical data for 12 of the 23 countries analyzed. Chapter 4 offers a cross-country overview of the effect of GCE variables on student attitudes, as well as a summary of the impact of the socio-economic variables. Chapter 5 summarises and concludes this report, offering reflections of policy and practice around GCE.



