

Service-Learning as a Tool for Educating for a Global Citizenship

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Globalization is a complex concept that takes different forms, including neoliberal policies that promote economic and financial exchanges in a global market, human rights and multicultural global citizenship, transnational cultural movements, reducing distances between continents, digital cultures that disseminate information rapidly, and the effects of social networks spreading messages with and without credibility (Torres & Bosio, 2020). Al-Rodhan and Stoudmann (2006) define globalization as the “process that encompasses the causes, course, and consequences of transnational and transcultural integration of human and non-human activities.”

Globalization is here to stay. Firstly, because the planet is our only home and only concerted actions will sustain life on the planet, its biodiversity, and its viability for future generations. Also, interconnection is the only way of avoiding a third world war that could destroy the planet; thus, efforts to keep peace globally are essential

This movement favors and encourages interdependence among nations. However, this interconnectivity does not always favor the consciousness and understanding of peoples and communities, and feelings of fraternity among nations; it often leads to fear of the future and forms of selfishness and ultra-nationalism and authoritarian populism (Morin, 2020).

The concept of development based on economic capitalism has led to great problems all over the world: the deterioration of the biosphere, a general crisis of democracy, an increase in inequalities and injustices, the proliferation of armaments, and new demagogic authoritarianisms. Neoliberal economic policies have concealed European ideals such as the balance between economic interests and human rights, democratic political systems, the construction of the consciousness of European citizenship, the development of European international policy, and the response to the situation of migrants (Morin, 2020).

This situation has led to the emergence of populist leaders who justify such authoritarianism, claiming that it is necessary to solve the problems created by neoliberal policies, while proposing measures against immigrants, minorities, and anyone who opposes them; such leaders promote policies and international institutions that support other types of values (Rizvi1, 2019). Meanwhile, the lack of response of progressive leaders to the challenges of globalization does nothing but favor the growth of populism and nationalist sentiments. It seems that those who defend such theories are gaining ground against those who defend human rights and the right to global mobility, despite the fact that global interconnectivity is an unstoppable reality.

For these reasons, it is now necessary to promote the construction of a planetary consciousness under its humanitarian base: to encourage cooperation between countries with the main objective of developing feelings of solidarity and collaboration among nations. And this is where pedagogy has to play an essential role in educating people who create ethical communities to give a collective response in favor of global interconnection. Pedagogical tools that promote values such as social justice, commitment, cooperation, and solidarity, that contribute to the education of reflective citizens and

professionals with critical thinking capable of handling complexity, differences, and uncertainty, and that promote living together democratically in an increasingly diverse world are necessary.

1 EDUCATION FOR A GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Educating for global citizenship means raising awareness; that is, achieving a deep understanding of the world, accepting social and political contradictions, accepting local and global perspectives, transmitting values of solidarity, and understanding that the planet is our home (Torres & Bosio, 2020), in order to act on the environment with the goal of improving it.

Critical awareness is what allows people to become aware of social injustices, their causes, and the elements that maintain them, in order to confront them. When a person is able to think about their own decisions and those of others, and critically analyze global power systems and their position in those power structures, they are ready to change the world.

Education for global citizenship also means learning to have a respectful dialogue with those who think differently from us. And this is more important today than ever. At a time when belligerent attitudes and violent language are frequently seen in the political arena, sometimes supported by ideologized media, education is one of the few spaces in which young people from different backgrounds can meet and practice the art of conversation while respecting one another's cultural differences.

This is not contrary to the idea of national cohesion, which unites people in a collective social project impregnated with feeling; it is the opposite of ethno-nationalism, which implies defining oneself in terms of one culture while marginalizing others (Rizvi1, 2019). Education, rather, has to focus on cosmopolitanism and universality.

According to Morin (2020), for students to learn to meet the great existential challenges, with the complexity and uncertainty of a constantly changing reality, it is necessary to introduce pedagogies that, rather than create closed compartments of inert knowledge, generate an awareness that allows students to face the complexity and uncertainty of a constantly changing reality. We need to educate students to understand the interconnections: for example, how a health crisis can provoke an economic, social, and existential crisis.

But this is not an easy task, as it requires educators to teach their students to think about problems that were previously solved at local or national level, but which now require a transnational response. And it is not easy because these problems are often abstract and difficult to represent (Rizvi1, 2019). Moreover, it requires that students first develop their own identity in order to later analyze otherness. On the other hand, students have to understand that, in addition to looking at the distant global environment, the local environment must be analyzed, since injustices can be present in the classroom itself and in the educational institution. And all this from a double perspective: thinking and acting, because reflection and awareness lead to commitment, and this leads to action.

2 THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EDUCATING FOR A GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Educating for global citizenship is emerging as a priority in higher education, reflecting increasing pressure on universities to demonstrate how they contribute to social justice and the development of

peaceful and democratic societies (OECD, 2007; OECD 2019). And this movement occurs despite universities' other priorities, such as research and teaching, that leave little incentive to focus on it.

Education for global citizenship is related to the so-called “third mission” of the university, which refers to the social responsibility of higher education. However, the writers of this paper question this term, since it is considered that social responsibility must be transversal and present in all aspects of the university, including research, teaching, knowledge transfer, and management.

Universities are called on to play an essential role in the construction of a global citizenship guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015). The United Nations remind us that the challenges that the world is facing—related to poverty, hunger, health and well-being, education, gender equality, water, climate, ecosystems, peace and justice—cannot be achieved by governments alone. Collaboration between governments, institutions, and citizens are necessary to address these issues. Universities have to play a leading role here because of its privileged position as an institution that creates and transmits knowledge. It has to play a crucial role in responding to societal needs, thus enhancing its impact at local, national, and international levels through community engagement (Farnell, 2020) and an integrated vision of the future of all humanity, both locally and globally (GUNI, 2017).

However, developing universities that are committed to educating for global citizenship takes more than mere actions. It requires comprehensive institutional planning, explicitly supported by the highest representatives of the universities and a clear commitment with sustainable development. In this regard, the Renewed Agenda for Higher Education of the European Commission (2017) reminds as that higher education institutions have to engage more actively with the communities around them and promote social inclusion and sustainable development by integrating local and global issues into their curricula.

Other challenges to achieve the objective of educating for global citizenship are related to evaluation and university rankings. Education for global citizenship is resistant to being measured due to the difficulty in creating a small number of simple indicators that would cover the definition of such a broad concept (TEFCE, 2018). University league tables do not include this topic among their evaluation criteria and, therefore, do not support it (TEFCE, 2018).

3 SERVICE-LEARNING AS A TOOL FOR EDUCATING FOR A GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

In this scenario, service-learning emerges as a methodology capable of linking global knowledge with social challenges. Service-learning (sometimes referred to as community based or community engaged learning) is an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates meaningful community service or engagement into the curriculum and offers students academic credit for the learning that derives from active engagement within the community and from work on a real-world problem. Reflection and experiential learning strategies underpin the process, and the service is linked to the academic discipline (Aramburuzabala, MacIlrath & Opazo, 2019).

Service-learning is framed in the context of global citizenship and implies acting globally through commitment to the local community, since it involves specifying and analyzing the implications of theoretical concepts in local and transnational contexts. Service-learning can be a powerful tool to understand and face global problems, but it must be framed in such a way that students become aware that global interconnection impacts the life of the community and that their actions have global

implications. regardless of whether the situation they face occurs in a local, national, or international context (Battistoni, Longo & Jayanandhan, 2009).

Service-learning is a pedagogical and social response to the challenge faced by the University of educating global citizens who think and act democratically at local and global level in partnerships with social entities that can benefit from its support.

By participating in service-learning projects, students:

- Experience the global value of interdependence
- Reflect on possible tensions between local and global cultures
- Contribute to revitalizing local culture while understanding and respecting the global one
- Become aware of the impact of their actions
- Connect to the global movement in favor of social justice and democratic social change, of which many universities are already part
- Become aware of the connection between different subjects and areas of knowledge when facing complex situations and reflecting on their impact at a local and global level
- Develop leadership competencies for a global world characterized by rapid and continuous change.

4 SERVICE-LEARNING IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Service-learning has a short history in European higher education, although it is widespread in other regions of the world. But this situation is changing rapidly. Not only is the number of institutions using it growing, but steps are being taken for its institutionalization. Service-learning is gradually ceasing to be a set of individual initiatives, and is becoming embedded into institutional practices with a more stable structure, supported by the highest representatives of universities. In this way, service-learning contributes to make the social mission of the university a reality, and not just a statement.

With this in mind, the Spanish University Service-Learning Network organized its ninth Spanish and first European Conference on Service-Learning in Higher Education, in collaboration with the Spanish University Service-Learning Association and the European Network of Service-Learning in Higher Education. The main objective of the conference, which took place in Madrid in September 2018, was to promote service-learning as a tool of high pedagogical and social value that not only improves professional training but also contributes to the development of a global citizenship.

This publication contains papers presented at above mentioned conference. They are organized according to the three axes of the conference: 65 are Service-Learning projects, 30 describe studies carried out on the subject, and 11 relate to institutionalization processes.

We wish to express our gratitude to the authors, to the social entities that have collaborated in the actions described here, to the people who have received the service, to the students who have participated in these activities and have learned from them, and to all teachers and professionals that contributed to making them possible and breaking down barriers in higher education institutions so that students feel that they are part of a global community in which all people have equal dignity and rights, making the world a better place for everyone.

The role of Service-Learning in the construction of a global citizenship.

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