



URGENT: we need new forms of global citizenship education

Chris Durbin reflects and on his Tide~ experiences and makes a plea for new initiative.

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On reaching 60 thoughts of retirement begun to emerge and I started to reflect on what made a difference in my career as an educator. However, the many crises the world is facing in this decade, have rendered me not ready to give up on a lifelong passion. This passion is the pursuit of opportunities to enable people [young and old] to see the world as a precious place to be treasured. To do that we also need to engage the ills of past and the present.

At times of global crises, I can see magnified in the media, the best and the worst of human nature. I wonder how education has influenced the perpetrators of such contrasting attitudes and behaviours. Young people deserve an opportunity to explore this within the curriculum and beyond. This piece is both a reflection on the influence of TIDE and a call for action for educators to make a difference.

A less than conventional career as an educator has taken me from Derbyshire, to London, to Staffordshire and then on to Hong Kong and I am now based in the Netherlands, I regularly travel throughout, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The role I currently play with the Council of International Schools is about connecting ideas, cultures and educators across the world, and it is the stated mission of CIS, that global citizenship is the centre of everything we do. I am however, fully aware for the fact that I mostly witness the education of the privileged in international schools in spite of being across many contrasting countries and cultures. This role is both a privilege and a challenge but I hope to demonstrate that there were so many concepts that derive from TIDE in the 1990s that support the need in schools worldwide now.

Some global trans governmental organisations [OECD 2030] are waking up to the fact that global citizenship and global competencies are now 21st Century Learning and no longer should they be a fringe activity and should be central to the curricula of OECD countries.

Key concept – Student agency can make a difference

I was first involved development education with a project in the early 1990s at Losehill Hall, Peak District National Park – to bring together development and environmental education to explore mutual synergies between the two named forms of education. **It's Our World Too** was the publication that resulted. The plea in the title imagined children having a greater voice for change for better environments and as a result have improved quality of life. 30 years on, we see this in the social media trends in the 2020s – where global movements arise initiated by one charismatic young person.

The challenge that remains is actual impact and the transition from young people's voices to young people's agency. The social media world makes a difference for a while but does it really get people who invest, to make decisions to change behaviours for the common good of the future of humanity and other species? Forces for good in social media are also mirrored by forces for bad.

Key concept – Local is global ... and global is local

This concept was illustrated in **It's Our World Too**, through the influential 'Development Compass Rose'. **Questions of 'Who decides?' throws up questions of subsidiarity.** We witness this in the 2020s in incredibly contrasting views of nationhood, of political discourse, and of attitudes to different forms of decision-making. The publication **'Whose Citizenship?'** [2002] explored ways to build an understanding of decision-making. Decision makers in an isolated nation do not see different ways that government can be effective.

Where are the stories in the media re subsidiarity in the 2020s?

The effectiveness of problem solving improvements to environment and development often need a range of global to local or local to global decision-making. The simplistic pleas that nationhood means more self-determination need to be challenged. This is a worrying time for the world and young people need to understand that both local and supra-national decision making have the potential to really make a difference.

Key concept – Multiple perspectives add value to the world

Whose Citizenship? explored identity too, or more properly multiple identities that can be woven within an individual or a group. It was published at a time of heightened racial tensions in the UK at the turn of the millennium. This gave rise to conversations in the Tide~ network about identities and how people see themselves and why seeing themselves as different led to a need to acknowledge different perspectives. Similarly **'Black Lives Matter'** in 2020, has heightened awareness of injustices, of racism and of inequality. Added to this what seems to be forgotten is that multiple perspectives bring benefits to the world. There are many positive dimensions to multiple perspective approaches – and many design roles use multiple-perspectives to resolve issues and solve problems. In some sectors and in some countries – entrenchment of perspective is the root cause of conflict.

Exceptionalism of one country over another is also problem. The more educators who recognise this and can bring some case studies to students to demonstrate that it doesn't have to be this way, the better off global human family will be in the short, medium and longer term.

Mutual learning was a term that influenced my career significantly. This idea is vital to thinking about educational needs today.

The three concepts chosen here were shaped by conversations with fellow educators in Tide~. I personally remain committed to global citizenship because of those conversations.

Thirty years on, I see a need to renew and refresh perspectives internationally, to ensure that multiple perspectives are brought to bear on local to global issues and that students and educators can make a difference.

