

**Submission to the House of Lords
Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement**

**By Rebecca Sharkey (Membership and Public Affairs Manager)
on behalf of Think Global, September 2017**



Think Global is an education charity. Our Mission is to enable people to understand and critically think about global issues, motivating and encouraging us to act for a more just and sustainable world. We do this by bringing together resources and expertise in global learning and skills development, developing policy focused activity and strengthening the global learning sector in England.

Think Global was established in 1983 as a national network for local Development Education Centres. During the 1990s we became the Development Education Association, when we included within our coalition major development NGOs including Oxfam, ActionAid, Save the Children, Christian Aid and CAFOD, as well as other organisations such as businesses, trade unions, schools and universities. In the 2000s, when we changed our name to Think Global, we expanded our network further to include individual educators.

1. What does citizenship and civic engagement mean in the 21st century? Why does it matter, and how does it relate to questions of identity?

In recent decades, as increasing globalisation has shifted and softened the boundaries between people living in diverse countries and communities, 'understanding the world around us' has come to involve knowledge not only about our own local neighbourhoods and situations, but also about communities, peoples, ideas, cultures, beliefs and practices far beyond our own national borders. It is in this context that Think Global believes that 'global citizenship education', or 'global learning' as it is more often called in the UK, is relevant to understanding questions of identity.

Britain today exists within a complex and volatile global system. That system is changing and evolving more rapidly than ever before, and the world in which our young people are growing up is being shaped not only by changes within our own cities and communities, but by massive and uncontrolled forces that cross borders and continents with impunity. Preparing our young people to live and work within this global system is a major challenge confronting our society.

Climate change, international competitiveness, terrorism, large-scale migration and rapid technological advances are all having an increasing effect on how young people experience their lives, and help determine the quality of life they will have in the future. In such a turbulent and unstable world, there has never been such opportunity but with it comes real and substantial threats. Our young people need both the skills and knowledge to succeed and to understand their place in this exciting but turbulent global environment.

5. What should be the role of education in teaching and encouraging good citizenship? At what stages, from primary school through to university, should it be (a) available, and (b) compulsory? Should there be any exemptions? Should there be more emphasis on political participation, both

inside and outside classes? How effective is current teaching? Do the curriculum and the qualifications that are currently offered need amending?

Learning about the world around us has always been a key purpose of education. Understanding how we fit into that world, and how our own actions can affect and influence the experiences of others, is a founding preoccupation for teachers and educators across the spectrum, from early childhood learning, through to high school and beyond.

We believe that all people, not just young people in formal education, should have opportunities to understand, critically think about and act on global issues, so that they are motivated to take action for a more just and sustainable world as citizens. The role of education is key to developing good global citizenship and encouraging young people to take informed action; it is our view that a good education prepares young people to play an active role in their communities (local and global), engage meaningfully in a political process, and understand their democratic rights.

There is a growing need to promote the shared values and informed understandings that can help the UK to build a safe, tolerant, cohesive and outward-looking society. Think Global believes that 'global learning' can play a significant role in educating people in the UK towards this goal. As part of their education, people need to be offered the opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills and values to equip them to succeed in and make a positive contribution to our own society and a globalised world. Global learning emphasises the concepts of equity, interdependence and respect for diversity.

Global learning (critical and creative learning about the wider world) enables people to develop knowledge about the challenges we face and skills to make decisions for themselves. Equipped with these global capabilities, people can help to make a more just and sustainable world.

Think Global defines global learning as education that puts learning in a global context, fostering:

- critical and creative thinking;
- self-awareness and open-mindedness towards difference;
- understanding of global issues and power relationships; and
- optimism and action for a better world.

Global learning is a key element to achieving implementation of SDG ([Sustainable Development Goals](#)) 4: Quality Education for All, which includes as one of its subsections Target 4.7: 'Promote education for sustainable development and global citizenship', which is particularly relevant to implementation in the UK. The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) are 17 goals defined by the United Nations to tackle the world's biggest problems by 2030. The UK is one of the 193 signatories, which means it has a responsibility to implement the SDGs and to ensure that the goals relate to what is happening here as well as in other countries. The wording of SDG Target 4.7 states: *"By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development"*.

As shown through the DFID-funded [Global Learning Programme](#) (GLP), it is possible to embed these opportunities in the curriculum and ethos of thousands of primary and secondary schools if a global learning approach is adopted. It is vital that this important contribution is recognised and that the benefits are understood throughout the country and by all ages. The essential role of global learning within education is both timely and necessary.

Beyond the classroom, there are some excellent initiatives encouraging good global citizenship. For example, [Y Care International](#) is the leading champion of global youth work, a discipline that engages young people to make sense of our complex world and take positive action for change. With partners in the YMCA movement and other youth work organisations, Y Care International engages young people in the UK and Ireland living in deprivation or who experience discrimination in global youth work, “enabling marginalised young people to explore the global dimension of issues affecting their lives... All too often these young people are not reached through the formal education sector and denied opportunities to influence decision making”. However, lack of funding too often means that provision is patchy resulting in these opportunities not being available to enough people who could benefit from them.

Some issues with current provision around citizenship education in schools were raised by one of our members: “Education is absolutely critical and cannot start early enough in an appropriate manner. However the narrowing of the curriculum, teacher workload and time pressure has a detrimental effect on active citizenship education. The approach is too piecemeal and superficial in many schools. Citizenship is often taught by non-specialists with poor subject knowledge and inadequate training.”

We believe every school should deliver effective teaching of global learning, where global learning is a regular practice at whole school, curriculum and classroom level. All school staff should have an understanding of what global learning is and what makes a good global learner, and should be able to critically evaluate and assess teaching and learning according to global learning principles. It is our view that global learning should be a key element to everyone’s education, not one that relies on the motivation and determination of individual schools or teachers.

8. What are the values that all of us who live in Britain should share and support? Can you identify any threats to these values, which affect the citizenship of, for instance, women or various minority groups? If so, how can their citizenship be strengthened?

Think Global is an education charity working to help people to understand global issues. We think it’s important for people to understand how we are all interconnected and interdependent on a global scale, and to be empowered to make informed decisions in our personal and professional lives. In an increasingly connected world, national interests cannot be separated from global interests; the values that all of us who live in Britain should share and support are the same for people across the world – “values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs” (Department for Education guidelines on promoting ‘British Values’). We would also add that our common values should be based on social justice, cultural understanding and a sense of social responsibility.

The UK’s decision to leave the European Union presents both challenges and opportunities when considering British values. On the one hand, the rise of racism and xenophobia and retreats to a narrow form of nationalism and patriotism present a threat to such values; on the other, opportunities can be created to help people have a better understanding of Britain’s role in a global society, including our responsibilities to create a more just and sustainable world.

12. Can you give examples of initiatives and role models that have helped promote a positive vision of British Citizenship within a tolerant and cohesive society?

Global Learning Programme: Think Global is a partner in this major DFID-funded programme, which is helping teachers in Primary, Secondary and Special schools deliver effective teaching and learning about development and global issues at Key Stages 2 and 3. Building a national network of like-minded schools committed to equipping their students to make a positive contribution to a globalised world, the GLP gives teachers the tools to help pupils learn how to live in a diverse society and develop an ethos of tolerance, fairness and respect. Global Schools across the UK are also seeing the positive impact that the Global Learning Programme is having on pupils' engagement, knowledge, skills and values. In this article, Clive Belgeonne (a GLP practitioner based in Sheffield) explains [How the Global Learning Programme \(GLP\) supports current school priorities such as 'British values'](#). For example, the Pupil Learning Outcomes (PLOs) of the GLP "include understanding the actions of governments and actions of citizens. It promotes skills such as enquiry, discussion, reflection, taking appropriate action and evaluation. Pupils consider values such as respect for diversity and rights. The GLP provides an opportunity for schools to work alongside others to engage in dialogue around the introduction of 'British values'." Belgeonne goes on to argue that "Sharing and understanding multiple perspectives on global issues makes it less likely that young people will subscribe to one fundamentalist view of the world. The GLP helps schools develop an ethos promoting tolerance, fairness and respect".

Other national programmes promoting global citizenship include the work of British Council with [Connecting Classrooms](#), [E-twinning](#), [International School Award](#), which along with the GLP provide excellent frameworks and resources to promote teacher education and student engagement with difference.

Think Global and 'Start the Change' project: This Erasmus+ project aims to promote understanding and ownership of democratic values and fundamental rights through the core project elements of research, resource production, teacher training and the promotion of a model of active citizenship for young people. In collaboration with European partners, Think Global is working with teachers and school students to understand young people's views on identity and extremism. Working in two hubs in north-east England and London we have conducted research with groups of students and their teachers exploring issues of identity, diversity, extremism and key issues that affect the lives of young people. The project develops an active citizenship model that will enable young people to take informed action to develop safe spaces, have agency at a community level and promote peace. It supports the young people participating in the project to develop into critical thinkers with an awareness of global issues, developing their capacity to make informed decisions and take action to develop and promote a more cohesive society.

Below are some other examples of work by Think Global network partners that we believe have helped promote a positive vision of British Citizenship within a tolerant and cohesive society:

The Linking Network: "supports schools and communities to develop a positive, cohesive ethos by helping children, young people and adults to explore identity, celebrate diversity, champion equality and promote community. We directly deliver a linking programme in Bradford and support local linking programmes in other areas across the country by providing guidance for facilitators, training for teachers and tried and tested classroom resources to enable linking.

We research into best practice in developing school culture and ethos supporting schools to develop the spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning of their pupils that can form a lever for positive

whole school change. We do this by providing courses for leading SMSC, staff meetings on SMSC, bespoke direct support to schools to review their work and by providing extensive curriculum resources available on this website. Our primary and secondary classroom and assembly resources support teachers to promote and celebrate identity, diversity, equality and community.”

Global Link (Lancaster)

“Global Link's commitment to tackling extremism through the PREVENT agenda began in 2008 through our partnership with Lancashire Constabulary. Working together with Superintendent Andy Pratt, our education worker delivered [Philosophy for Children](#) training with teachers across the County, in Andy Pratt's belief that the best method of preventing extremism in schools was to develop the critical thinking and multiple perspectives required to resist radical ideologies.”

Devon Development Education's Cultural Champions [Devon]

“A Cultural Champion (CC) is a Devon resident from another culture or religion. They come into the classroom, workplace or community group to give an authentic, personal view of their culture or faith. We started a training programme in 2006 and have run 4 training courses altogether.

On a notable visit by a Kenyan Muslim to a secondary school, the planned material was set aside so that the pupils could ask questions about being a Muslim and Islam. A very valuable experience for the pupils, and a valuable insight into the myths about Islam and Muslims for the Cultural Champion.

Recognising the quality of our CCs' work, as professional educators from BME backgrounds, CCs have been asked to assist with other work:

- The Youth Offending Team has asked them on 3 occasions to work with individual young people accused of hate crimes.
- On 2 occasions, after racist incidents in school, CCs were invited in to discuss what could be done.
- A large secondary school asked CCs to devise and run anti-racist training for the whole staff.

CCs offer training for teachers in diversity and British Values from a Muslim or Hindu perspective, which is provided through the government's Global Learning Programme.”

Gender Respect Education Project - DECSY (Development Education Centre South Yorkshire)

This project grew out of [One Billion Rising](#) which inspired women and girls, and men who love them, to come out on the streets of more than 50 different cities across the globe on 14th February 2013. Its aim was to help children and young people to understand, question and challenge gender inequality and violence in a local-global context. The 3-year project brought together teachers of pupils aged 4-14 along with creative practitioners and young people to develop engaging, participatory and creative curriculum activities and materials which equipped children and young people to:

- Question gender stereotyping (including engaging boys as well as girls)
- Understand global and historical contexts of gender relations
- Explore issues of power, freedom and human rights in the context of gender
- Feel empowered to take action (especially through the use of social media).