
NEWSLETTER FOR PROMOTING A VISION TO CONFRONT THE GLOBAL CHALLENGES CALLING FOR GLOBAL SOLUTIONS
WITH JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015 ARTICLES

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Global Citizenship Education Seen as Key to Development and Peace



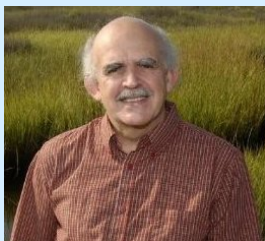
With inequality as well as extremism a growing concern around the world, education has a crucial role to play in contributing to peace and sustainable development, experts say. “Education is a common good, and it’s the moral responsibility of governments to provide it. But the challenge we now face is how to use education to have peaceful and sustainable societies,” said Peter deSouza, professor at the India-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. >> Pages 5-6

Driving Home The Concept Of Global Citizenship



Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development (EGCSD) is far from having become a buzzword. In fact, beyond the domain of experts, the concept has yet to gain currency. Though, while explaining it, even those well versed in the theme do not find it easy to drive home the message. “As technology advances and governance is increasingly conducted beyond the parameters of the nation-state, the concept of global citizenship remains mysteriously absent. What does the term mean in historical terms and what practices might help its evolution into a coherent and democratic political practice?” asked Ron Israel, co-founder of The Global Citizens' Initiative (TGCI), in a recent article. >> Pages 7-8

Global Citizenship, A Result of Emerging Global Consciousness



Globalisation is an integral feature of modernity. It already has significantly advanced to transform local experiences into global ones, to unify the disparate villages of the world into a global community, and to integrate national economies into an international economy. At the same time, however, the process of globalisation brings about the loss of cultural identity. Many young people today grow up and live in a consolidating global world and define themselves as people not belonging to any particular culture. In 2013, 232 million people, or 3.2 per cent of the world’s population, were legal international migrants, compared with 175 million in 2000 and 154 million in 1990. >> Pages 9-10

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UN Scheme to Teach ‘Respect for All’ Aims at Fighting Discrimination

By A.D. McKenzie



Dr. Helen Bond, one of the authors of ‘Teaching Respect for All’ | Credit: UNESCO / K. Holt

PARIS - “What the world needs now is love, sweet love” goes a syrupy Burt Bacharach-penned song from 1965. But love is difficult, if not impossible, to teach, so education experts have come up with another solution: teaching respect for all.

“And by all, we mean *all*,” says Christophe Cornu, senior project officer in the Section of Health and Global Citizenship Education at UNESCO, the United Nations agency responsible for science, culture and education.

The organization, in association with the governments of the United States and Brazil, has produced specific tools and resources to fight discrimination and violence through education as well as within education, even as

the level of hatred and intolerance rises in many regions.

The tools include a 300-page manual, a range of relevant UN documents, online interactive forums, and proposals for student activities such as writing articles and staging plays, all of which were highlighted at the Second UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (GCED) that took place January 28 to 30 in Paris.

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“Teaching respect for all is a means of promoting an educational response to combat discrimination and violence by strengthening the basics of mutual tolerance and cultivating respect for all people,” Cornu told IDN.

In its manual, UNESCO says that the project is founded on the “universal values and core principles of human rights,” and is targeted at learners aged 8 to 16, with the aim of equipping them with skills to “cultivate respect and stop discrimination on all levels”.

Educational institutions need to adopt a “holistic” approach where “all aspects of the school environment work to ensure non-discrimination,” the agency says.

It adds that “curricula must dedicate time to sensitive issues, such as discussing stereotypes and recognizing injustices”.

Teacher-training is also a key part of this approach as educators - who can be victims of discrimination as well – need to be skilled in teaching conflict resolution and dealing “sensitively with issues of discrimination”.

The Paris-based organization’s mission has acquired increased urgency with the growth of extremism and intolerance, which has seen certain groups and individuals targeted, officials say.

According to UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, the agency is strengthening efforts to address the “worldwide rise” of discrimination and is especially promoting Global Citizenship Education.

“The opportunities for exchange of knowledge and information have never been so numerous, but intolerance is on the rise, notably in the form of a violent and destructive extremism,” Bokova said at the conference.

“Young people are often the ones calling for change, but they are also the first victims,” she added. “What education do we need then, to build a more peaceful and sustainable future for all?”

According to UNESCO, the aim of Global Citizenship Education is to “equip learners of all ages with those values, knowledge and skills that are based on and instill respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be responsible global citizens.”

“Teaching Respect for All”, meanwhile, seeks to involve all of society’s “stakeholders”, from parents to pupils to policy makers; and the media also has a role to play.

The role of media

“Media is a duty-bearer to increase public awareness,” states the UNESCO implementation guide. “Media professionals have a particular responsibility in combating negative stereotypes, fostering respect for diversity and promoting tolerance among the general public.”

This was drafted before the January 7 assault on the staff of French satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo, in which 12 people including journalists were murdered. Critics accused the magazine of Islamophobia and racism, while the cartoonists and supporters defended the right to freedom of expression and the liberty to satirize subjects that included religion and politics.

The current divide in France and many other countries is indicative of a lack of understanding of both religion and secular values, some commentators have argued, while the attacks have meanwhile focused attention on the lives of Europe’s marginalized youth and the failings of education.

“When you teach respect for all, you acknowledge that everyone has prejudices, and there should be a space to discuss these prejudices, to demystify stigma,” Cornu told IDN in an interview.

This dialogue can take place in both formal and informal educational settings, with curricula “shaped around such values as a culture of peace, human rights, tolerance and respect,” say experts involved in the project.

While these values should be recognized as “universal”, they should also be adapted and draw from local systems and culture, UNESCO advises.

Dr. Helen Bond, an associate professor at Washington DC-based Howard University and one of the authors of “Teaching Respect for All”, said that “manifestations of discrimination” can take many forms.

These can include bullying, name-calling, stereotyping, stigma, anti-semitism, Islamophobia and gender and poverty-based prejudices, she said during the GCED conference. >>

Discrimination can also be seen “in targeted laws, which prevent certain groups from obtaining access to certain government programmes”, participants noted. They said that discrimination and intolerance usually start with “micro aggressions”, and that the violence can become even greater if policy makers don’t take necessary action.

‘Respect for all’

In France, after the Charlie Hebdo assault and related attacks at a kosher supermarket, students in some schools refused to observe the national minute of silence that the government had requested, highlighting their feelings of exclusion from the mainstream and the contention that the newspaper had added to stereotype and stigma.

Further, in a case that shocked many people, school officials reported an 8-year-old pupil to the police in the southern French city of Nice when the boy expressed “solidarity” with the “terrorists” even though he seemed not to know the meaning of “terrorism”.

The latter incident, which occurred as the GCED conference was taking place in Paris, underscored the importance of discussing “respect for all” in school settings and having teachers who are trained in this area.

“The tragedy has been an eye-opener about something missing in the curriculum,” Cornu told IDN. “We need

to teach all students how to live together, and focusing on just one religion is not the right approach.”

The UNESCO scheme has examined how “Teaching Respect for All” can be “integrated” into the school curriculum and “incorporated in all subjects and across school culture”.

Pilot projects have taken place in Brazil, Ivory Coast, Guatemala, Indonesia and Kenya, looking at different aspects of the issues.

The Kenyan government has focused on developing peace education, while the Ivory Coast has examined how to prevent discrimination against people with disabilities.

Some of the questions raised by “Teaching Respect for All” include: how can “difficult discussions and situations in the classroom be managed”, and how can students be empowered and motivated to “confront discrimination, prejudice and bullying”?

In a section of the UNESCO manual aimed at children and youth, the advice is to “be brave and say ‘NO’,” even if this is “not an easy thing” to do.

“Everyone has the right to be treated with respect,” the advisers state, adding that “no matter what, being discriminated against is NEVER OK.”

[IDN-InDepthNews – February23, 2015]

According to UNESCO, the aim of Global Citizenship Education is to “equip learners of all ages with those values, knowledge and skills that are based on and in-still respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be responsible global citizens.”

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Global Citizenship Education Seen as Key to Development and Peace

By A. D. McKenzie

PARIS - With inequality as well as extremism a growing concern around the world, education has a crucial role to play in contributing to peace and sustainable development, experts say.

“Education is a common good, and it’s the moral responsibility of governments to provide it. But the challenge we now face is how to use education to have peaceful and sustainable societies,” said Peter deSouza, professor at the India-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.



A keynote speaker at the Second UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education that took place January 28 to 30 in Paris, deSouza told IDN that the world ran the risk of “losing the battle” regarding the true aims of education to produce better citizens.

“We need to move into campaign mode and have a powerful movement for education now because we’ve seen with the women’s movement and with the environmental movement how minds and values can change,” he said in an interview on the sidelines of the conference.

He argued that the international education discourse was unfortunately being driven by corporate sway, or what he called the “Davos way”, referring to the annual World Economic Forum in Switzerland that brings together “global elites” from the business, political and entertainment sectors. This produces a “hegemonic and detrimental discourse”, deSouza said.

“Education is becoming more and more corporate driven, with business opportunity being the aim, but in the meantime public schools are falling off the radar and inequality is increasing,” he added.

At the conference, the two main themes were global citizenship education in the post-2015 development agenda and its role for building “peaceful and sustainable societies”.

The discussions were expected to result in “concrete inputs” to the emerging Framework for Action on Education post-2015 that will be adopted at the

World Education Forum in May, being held in the Republic of Korea, officials said.

“New skills for new times”

Opening the discussions, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova told the 250 participants from around the globe that the world needed “new skills for new times”.

She said that education was not just about transmitting information and knowledge, but also about providing the values, capabilities and attitudes that can contribute to a more “peaceful, just, inclusive and sustainable” world.

“We must sharpen our vision and place global citizenship education in the context of all our work – to eradicate poverty, to enhance social inclusion, to respond sustainably to the needs of all societies, to build a culture of peace,” Bokova said.

She emphasized that education could help foster greater respect and understanding between cultures, give learners “tools to make the most of diversity” and also “harness the energy of young women and men for the benefit of all”. >>

Photo: Peter deSouza | Credit: UNESCO K. Holt

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The conference began exactly three weeks after the January 7 attacks in Paris in which 17 people were killed by three young militants. The victims included nine journalists who worked for Charlie Hebdo, a satirical weekly newspaper that had published controversial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

In the shadow of such violence, discussions on the role of education in the fight against extremism, and in promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue were of particular significance. Participants called for the full engagement of youth, alongside educators, in developing long-term policies for global citizenship education.

Secular values

Amira Yahyaoui, president and founder of the Tunisian NGO Al Bawsala, stressed that young people needed to be educated about how to live together in a diverse world, and especially about “laïcité” (or secular values) in relationship to religious beliefs.

She also called for more attention to the plight of children in conflict-torn regions who “no longer have the right to childhood”, saying that these youngsters must be taught the “right to survive”. She said that educating parents and grandparents was fundamental as well.

“When it’s a mother who explains to a girl that she is not equal to her brother, how can you educate against this inequality?” she asked.

According to UNESCO, the aim of global citizen education (GCED) is to “equip learners of all ages with those values, knowledge and skills that are based on and instill respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be responsible global citizens.”

GCED also gives learners “the competencies and opportunity to realise their rights and obligations to promote a better world and future for all”, and it is aimed at all ages: children, youth and adults.

Although global citizenship education can be delivered in a variety of ways, the main method in most states will be through the formal education system, officials said. As such, governments can integrate the concept

either as part of existing programmes or as a separate subject.

The values of “global citizenship” have been in consideration for some time, but UNESCO explained that it has “gained momentum since the launch of the UN Secretary General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, which has identified ‘fostering global citizenship’ as one of its three priority areas of work, along with access to and quality of education”.

Among the UNESCO measures in this area is the “Teaching Respect for All” project, launched jointly with Brazil and the United States in 2012 to “counteract discrimination both in and through education”. Work on this is being carried out in Brazil, Kenya, Ivory Coast and other countries.

The organization has also created a clearinghouse on GCED, in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding.

While the numerous areas of discussion (which included sexuality and health education) were at times overwhelming and repetitive during the conference, the significance of the issues seemed inescapably real. This was underscored by the presence of many young people among the academics, policy makers, NGOs and UN agencies participating.

Chernor Bah, the Sierra Leone-born chairperson of the Youth Advocacy Group of GEFI, said the meeting was important because it raised concrete proposals for the post-2015 education agenda, such as how to measure the outcomes of GCED and build international partnerships.

“We have a responsibility to one another, and our humanity is more important than our nationality, ethnicity or religious beliefs,” Bah told IDN. “As the African saying goes - I am because you are. And that’s what being a global citizen is really about.”

[IDN-InDepthNews – January 30, 2015]

“We must sharpen our vision and place global citizenship education in the context of all our work – to eradicate poverty, to enhance social inclusion, to respond sustainably to the needs of all societies, to build a culture of peace.” - UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova

Driving Home The Concept Of Global Citizenship

By Jaya Ramachandran

NEW YORK - Education for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development (EGCSD) is far from having become a buzzword. In fact, beyond the domain of experts, the concept has yet to gain currency. Though, while explaining it, even those well versed in the theme do not find it easy to drive home the message.

“As technology advances and governance is increasingly conducted beyond the parameters of the nation-state, the concept of global citizenship remains mysteriously absent. What does the term mean in historical terms and what practices might help its evolution into a coherent and democratic political practice?” asked Ron Israel, co-founder of The Global Citizens' Initiative (TGCI), in a recent article.

A global citizen, he says, is someone who identifies with being part of an emerging world community and whose actions contribute to building this community's values and practices. Sounds a simple definition. But the devil is in the detail.

Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, a Bangladesh diplomat most noted for his work on development in the poorest nations, global peace and championing the rights of women and children, is of the view that the concept of global citizenship is “an idea, a way of behavior” for individuals.

In fact, the basic change Ban Ki-moon wants in his Global Education First Initiative launched in September 2012, is to change the mindset, notes Chowdhury: “To prepare the younger generation, in this case, to feel that we are part of a bigger world, to feel that we cannot just think very parochially, we cannot achieve our broader



objectives, objectives that are in the best interest of humanity, without feeling as a part of one whole world, that we are part of this bigger planet and we should feel the same way.”

Arsenio Rodriguez, Chairman and CEO of DEVNET International, who has worked with the World Bank and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), finds the essence of global citizenship in the fact that “when we are born we inherit a common home, a sun for energy,

an Earth for all commodities, shelter and nourishment, a sustaining milieu for body, mind and spirit, and our fellow beings to share the extraordinary experience of life”.

Life is thus in its ultimate essence, a relationship between peoples and between people with the planet and its sustaining wealth. “To make this relationship a productive and fruitful one for all is our challenge. Whereas new concepts and models are beginning to sprout they have not yet taken hold to steer us fully into sustainability and global citizenship,” he adds.

Going into historical detail, Palitha Kohona, Sri Lanka's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations says, the concept of global citizenship has challenged the minds of humans for a very long time not only in the 19th and 20th centuries. >>

Universal acceptance evaded

Despite all the philosophical and religious exhortations, the concept of global citizenship has continued to evade universal acceptance. Historically, the world has witnessed the growth of many empires, which encouraged subjects to become accustomed to the common factors of being part of such empires.

“Perhaps, not as equals but as individuals who were subject to the same ruler. The result was not what most would imagine to be global citizenship,” argues Kohona (right photo).

Nevertheless, a much wider perception of the world became established in the minds of many as a consequence. Around 330 B.C., Alexander the Great expanded little Macedonia’s sway almost to the shores of the Indus River and left, as his legacy, a concept of oneness with the culture of Greece in the minds of his subjects.

Later a bigger empire centred in Rome brought under its umbrella vast areas of Asia Minor, North Africa and Europe. A type of political unity that did not exist in the Western world before now prevailed. The political and socio-cultural footprint left behind by Imperial Rome is a factor even today in the psyche of many.

Kohona recalls that a much bigger empire resulted from the expansion of the Caliphates of Baghdad and Damascus. The oneness of belonging to one regime, which encompassed economic relations, and religion and culture, was evident from Spain to Northern India during this period. The underpinning framework of religion was a tangible factor in this case.

In more recent times, says Kohona, the world witnessed the Portuguese and Spanish empires, which straddled the globe creating a sense of oneness among citizens and subjects. Religion, culture and trade relations were essential factors of these empires.



The Ottomans, the Dutch, the English, and the French created more recent empires. They said that that the sun never set on the British Empire and its legacy is far reaching. The Chinese empire which expanded, at one time to Poland and Syria under Genghis Khan and his sons, was so unified, that a laissez passer issued by an official in Khanbalik was honoured all the way to the Middle East.

“However, the oneness created by these empires, for various reasons, including geographical reality and the limits of physical power, did not encompass the whole world,” says Kohona.

Besides, one empire was often challenged by another and fell in due course. Nor did they create a feeling of global citizenship in a true sense. In fact, empires competed with each other and in certain empires the concept of oneness did not exist at all as there were different categories of subjects.

“One result, however, of these global empires was that they had the effect of bringing together different peoples, cultures, philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific ideas, political concepts and economic systems, helping to generate, at least in certain respects, feelings that there were common strands among us humans or the desire to bring them under one common umbrella,” says Kohona.

While the 20th century witnessed the emergence of sub-regional, regional and international organizations based on human rights and democratic norms – a process that has continued into the 21st century, experts believe that it is through education that the concept of global citizenship can be anchored in the minds and lives of people at several levels. [IDN-InDepthNews – January 11, 2015]

Global Citizenship, A Result of Emerging Global Consciousness

By Arsenio Rodriguez*

MYRTLE BEACH, South Carolina - Globalisation is an integral feature of modernity. It already has significantly advanced to transform local experiences into global ones, to unify the disparate villages of the world into a global community, and to integrate national economies into an international economy.

At the same time, however, the process of globalisation brings about the loss of cultural identity.

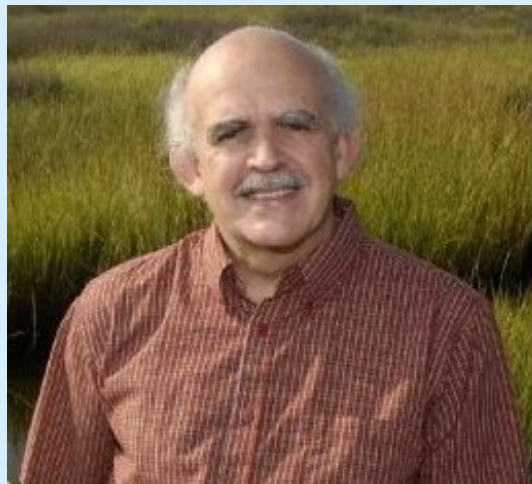
Many young people today grow up and live in a consolidating global world and define themselves as people not belonging to any particular culture. In 2013, 232 million people, or 3.2 per cent of the world's population, were legal international migrants, compared with 175 million in 2000 and 154 million in 1990.

To these figures one must add at least an estimated 30 million undocumented migrants.

As a result, more people in the world are intermarrying across cultural, ethnic and religious groupings. In Europe, for example, in the period 2008-10, on average one in 12 married persons was in a mixed marriage. Their children are exposed to hybrid cultural settings plus sometimes the host country setting if both parents are immigrants.

In 2013, more than one billion traveled internationally as tourists, thus increasing their firsthand knowledge of the world beyond their own borders. On the other hand, there are nearly three billion Internet users in the world today. More than a billion are connected in social networks across the planet.

The interconnectedness of people today is beyond anything that has happened before in history. And to this one must add the ecological, cosmological and modern physics concepts that emphasise interconnectedness in the world at large and our appreciation of being on the same planet, the global village.



For many now, home is not bound to a specific location, but rather to a conscious experience of culture. People living between cultures feel more “natural” in a globalised world because it reflects the combination of different cultures, views and social belongings.

There is, however, as part of the global synthesis and interconnectedness process, a socio-cultural energy of resistance, acting as a counterforce. And although

many people define and identify themselves as global citizens, the cultures and societies in which they live do not easily accept their status, and constantly try to place and categorise them.

Wherever they feel at home, they are simultaneously perceived as outsiders, tourists, and as members of a foreign culture. Simultaneously, as the world integration persists, cultural entrenchments, ethnic, religious and parochial groups resist, fearing the dissolving forces of globalisation, manifesting the resistance in fundamentalism, violence and tribal and ethnic wars.

Culture and globalisation have come to be understood as mutually exclusive and antithetical; the former is typically associated with one specific culture while the latter signifies the homogenisation of all cultures into one.

For the global citizen, self-understanding and cultural identity are defined by the lack of belonging to a specific culture. Global citizens lose their sense of belonging and become strangers to society, but in return they gain the freedom of self-expression and self-definition since they are unfettered by the normative constraints of culture and society. >>

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The world is in the midst of a great transition. Prevailing business as usual models are not going to work for a nine billion, highly consumptive society. Scientific, business and government authorities throughout the world agree that we need to align our production and consumption cycles, our markets, with the natural cycles of our life support systems.

And our fragmented approaches are not efficient or effective enough to accomplish this. We need a global consciousness and a global citizenship.

Not a global government but a federated international system based on collaboration and cooperation, rather than competition and hegemony, linking citizenry in their respective communities and countries on issues of common interest and with respect for the cultural diversity.

And it cannot be not just be governments participating in this concerted effort of international cooperation. Private business stands today as the most powerful sector in the planet. However, it has yet to assume a corresponding responsibility in shaping the future of the societal context in which it is embedded and on which it ultimately depends.

A new world-culture is emerging through an integral vision, which is independent of existing traditions and conserved values. It is initiating a new way of thinking in terms of an indivisible totality, and it discards the relative values of comparison in favour of the recognition of the intrinsic worth of everything and everyone.

Increasing numbers of people, communities, even corporate enterprises are increasingly understanding this interconnectedness and the advantage of cooperation and collaboration as a business model.

The movement to global citizenship should be to connect people committed to create a just, peaceful, and sustainable world, to accelerate a cohesive global movement of personal and social transformation, reflecting the unity of humanity.

True global citizens aim to connect caring communities, groups, and individuals at a global level, to promo-

te understanding of humanity's underlying unity and advance its expression through peace, social justice and ecological balance.

Anyone who transforms his/her perception of the world from one of me against "the other", of "us" versus "them", into a unified perception that recognises the interconnectedness of life starts to belong to the global citizenship movement.

This emergence is already happening everywhere as people are becoming conscious at many levels of political organisation, that the functioning of the life support systems that underwrite the well-being and prosperity of humanity is at risk.

There is broad consensus amongst the world's scientific, business, intergovernmental and non-governmental communities that:

(a) we need to align our production and consumption cycles and our markets with the natural regenerative cycles of nature; (b) prevailing business-as-usual models based on intense and wasteful consumption are not going to work for the expected nine billion inhabitants; (c) there is an urgency to change our ways; and (d) piecemeal approaches are not effective or scalable enough.

Sustainable solutions are there, people are already making a difference, making things happen. All we need to do is a wide-range scaling up and a fast acceleration of this process.

We have a systems problem, so we need a systemic solution. There is only one force on earth that is powerful enough to fix this – all of us. We need to collaborate consciously in the largest enterprise, ever to be set in motion; one that contains all others – a truly global citizenry and for this we need a massive cultural change in our consciousness. [IPS | January 10, 2014]

**Arsenio Rodriguez is Chairman and CEO of Devnet International, an association that works to create, promote and support partnerships and exchanges among civil society organisations, local authorities and entrepreneurs throughout the world.*

Education for Global Citizenship



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A View of SGI-IPS Forum on Global Citizenship – November 18, 2014 – New York

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<http://www.educationforglobalcitizenship.net/documents/globalcitizenshipforum.pdf>



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