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GLOBAL EDUCATION FOR ONTARIO LEARNERS: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

A Summary of Research

DR. CAROLINE MANION

DR. NADYA WEBER

support every child
reach every student

Ontario

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Questions or comments about this report should be directed to Caroline Manion, carlymanion@gmail.com.

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Introduction and Overview

This summary report flows from the policy outlined in *Ontario's Strategy for K–12 International Education* (OME, 2015). The report highlights current knowledge about good and/or promising practices in global education[1] in order to suggest practical strategies for improved teaching, learning, and achievement. The intended audience for this piece includes all education stakeholders – community members, parents, learners, system leaders, school leaders, and educators – as active agents of change in support of an education strategy designed to integrate global perspectives, cultures, and experiences in the curriculum and learning environment. The purpose is to enable students to develop the competencies they will need to thrive as citizens in an increasingly globalized world.

The discussion is organized by theme. To underline why global education is critically important for Ontario learners, we begin by outlining the

1. The term "global education" is broadly synonymous with the term "international education", which is used in the Ontario Ministry of Education policy document *Ontario's Strategy for K–12 International Education* (2015). The present study uses the term "global education" rather than "international education" to align with terminology employed in much of the literature that has been consulted for this report.

significant contributions global education can make to the well-being of individuals and society as a whole. We then provide an overview synthesizing different conceptualizations of "global education" and "global citizenship education", as well as a broad range of their overlapping sub-concepts. Next, through a review of the international literature on the subject, we present a series of challenges and opportunities for implementing global education, and list pertinent examples of good practices associated with delivering global education. A further section focuses on good practice in building system capacity and leadership for effective global education. We conclude by identifying key messages and lessons learned.

Why Global Education Is Critically Important for Ontario Learners

Our increasingly globalized world, characterized by growing complexity, interdependence, and interconnectedness, has made educating for a global perspective an important consideration for educational systems worldwide (ACDE, 2014). Moreover, global citizenship education and sustainable development education,[2] as components of global education, are the focus of "target 4.7" of the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals framework, 2015–2030, which applies equally to countries in both the northern and southern hemispheres. The goal of target 4.7 is as follows:

> By 2030, [to] 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

2. "Global education" can refer to any type of education attuned to the "international" or increasingly globalized and interconnected world, and the need to prepare young learners for a changing reality. "Global citizenship education" and "sustainable development education" can be (and are) used interchangeably with "global education"; however, in some contexts they may be used to refer to transnational education with a particular focus on ethics, rights, and responsibilities.

> diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. (UNESCO, 2016, p. 287)

The need for global education has been explicitly recognized and highlighted in *Ontario's Strategy for K–12 International Education* (OME, 2015) and aligns with the goals of addressing inequities and promoting the development of capable and caring citizens outlined in the ministry policy documents *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario* (OME, 2014a) and *Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* (OME, 2014b). The Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) has emphasized internationalizing initial teacher education, asking educational institutions to respond to "increasing levels of complexity, uncertainty, diversity, and inequality in Canada and internationally" (ACDE, 2014, p. 4). The Ontario Ministry of Education has also addressed the issue in its publication *21st Century Competencies: Foundation Document for Discussion* (OME, 2016).

Cultivating global competency and global citizenship values, attitudes, and skills is important for two broad reasons. First, from a technical-economic orientation, global education plays a key role in helping students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for successful participation in the global marketplace (Cozzolino DiCicco, 2016; Mundy & Manion, 2008). Second, from an ethical or moral development orientation, global citizenship education[3] helps cultivate learners' intercultural understanding, communication, collaboration, and critical-thinking skills and gives them "the chance to realize their rights and promote a better world and future for us all. It encourages learners to critically analyze issues, respect differences and diversity and take actions in our lives and communities responsibly" (UNESCO, 2014b, p. 3) (see also Andreotti, 2006; Oxfam, 2006; Cozzolino DiCicco, 2016; Bourn et al., 2016). Global education is also important for promoting community and broader social cohesion and engagement at the local and school levels (Tickle, 2008).

The learning goals for global education found within the literature highlight opportunities to:

- deepen understandings of global themes, structures, and systems (e.g., interdependence, peace and conflict, sustainable development);

3. In this context, "global citizenship education" is used to refer specifically to transnational education with a focus on ethics, rights, and responsibilities. See the preceding footnote for a fuller discussion of terminology.

- explore and reflect upon one's identity and membership through a lens of worldmindedness (e.g., indigenous, local, national);
- examine diverse beliefs, values, and worldviews within and across varied contexts that guide civic thinking and action;
- learn about rights and responsibilities within the context of civil society and varying governance systems from the local to the global (e.g., human rights, rights of the child, indigenous rights, corporate social responsibility);
- deepen understandings of privilege, power, equity and social justice within governing structures (e.g., personal to global inequities, power relations, and power sharing);
- investigate controversial global issues and ways for managing and deliberating conflict (e.g., health, ecology, terrorism/security);
- develop critical civic literacy capacities (e.g., critical inquiry, decision-making, media literacy, futures thinking); and
- learn about and engage in informed and purposeful civic action (e.g., community involvement and service, involvement with non-governmental organizations and organizations supporting civic engagement). (Evans, Ingram, MacDonald, & Weber, 2009, pp. 20–21)

Although there is no agreed-upon definition or description of "global education" (Fricke, Gathercole, & Skinner, 2015; Schattle, 2008; Pashby & Andreotti, 2015), the various frameworks share certain characteristics, including understandings about the world's interconnectedness, respect for different cultures and perspectives, and commitment to social justice.

Conceptualizing Global Education: International Perspectives

Education systems worldwide have been challenged to produce programming to help develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that will prepare young people to make informed and ethical decisions for the future. Concepts related to interdependence, the complexity of knowledge and of knowing, and planetary consciousness are core elements of most global education theories. "Worldmindedness", for example, emphasizes planetary awareness, inner reflection, and the interconnectedness of all (Hanvey, 1976; Merryfield, 1997; Richardson, 1976; Selby & Pike, 2000). Current examples of educating for a global perspective at national, international, and institutional levels from Oxfam, UNICEF, and UNESCO reveal similar sets of interrelated knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes housed within overarching theoretical and conceptual approaches.

Up until 2010, there was strong support in the United Kingdom for *educating for the global dimension* (Bourn et al., 2016) through the following eight key concepts: global citizenship, conflict resolution, social justice, values and perceptions, sustainable development, interdependence, human rights, and diversity. Each of these concepts has an overarching goal and a set of understandings, skills, and values that are linked to the other concepts and that could be related to citizenship curriculum or other

subjects. Since 2013, the U.K.-based Development Education Consortium[4] has delivered the Global Learning Programme, which aims to support teachers through building local, school-led networks of schools and providing the tools to embed global learning across the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3 for students between the ages of eight and fourteen. The program also provides tools for monitoring and evaluating school performance and student learning.

Oxfam U.K. was one of the first non-governmental organizations to produce global education programming for schools (Harrison, 2008). From the 1970s to the late 1990s Oxfam supported regional development education centres, which provided teaching and learning materials to schools. Oxfam's framework for *global citizenship education*, developed in 2006 and revised in 2015, has been widely taken up. This framework's core understanding is of a *global citizen* as someone who is aware of themselves as a world citizen, respects and values diversity, understands how the world works, is committed to social justice, participates at the local to global level, works collaboratively for equity and sustainability, and takes responsibility for their actions (Oxfam, 2015a, 2015b). The knowledge, skills, and attributes connected to Oxfam's framework for global citizenship education include understanding power and governance, critical thinking, valuing multiple perspectives, and self-reflexivity. Oxfam is a member of the Development Education Consortium that delivers the Global Learning Programme mentioned above.

UNICEF's Global Classroom program works in partnership with schools around the world – including in Ontario and other Canadian jurisdictions – to implement a *rights-based approach to education*. The primary framework for this approach, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, requires democratic pedagogy that will allow students not only to learn about their rights through the curriculum but also to enact their rights in classrooms, schools, and communities. A rights-based education aligns with global education, as it requires critical-thinking skills and "provides a framework for learning about and challenging structural barriers that contribute to the violation of human rights in local, regional, national, and international contexts" (UNICEF, 2012, p. 11). Other initiatives such as TakingITGlobal's[5]

4. Comprising Pearson, Geographical Association, University of London's Institute of Education, Oxfam, Royal Geographical Society with IBG, SSAT (The Schools Network), and Think Global.

5. https://www.tigweb.org/tiged/.

Global Education program also provide resources and programming that engage learners in exploring the relationship between human rights, education, and global perspectives.

At the international level, after the U.N. Secretary General (2012) made fostering global citizenship one of the three education priorities of the United Nations, UNESCO has taken the lead in promoting global citizenship education. In 2013, UNESCO invited a pan-global team of educators, academics, and policy makers to participate in two global citizenship education forums, resulting in two documents: a review of the role of global citizenship education in preparing learners for the twenty-first century (UNESCO, 2014a) and a guiding document to assist member states in integrating global citizenship education into their education systems (UNESCO, 2015). UNESCO defines global citizenship as a "sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity" that "emphasizes political, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global" (2015, p. 14). UNESCO's framework for global citizenship education is based on three domains of learning: cognitive (understanding and critical thinking related to local and global issues); socio-emotional (a sense of shared humanity, common values, respect); and behavioural (acting effectively – locally to globally – for peace and sustainability). Each of these domains of learning has related key learning outcomes, key learner attributes, and topics.

Global Education Challenges and Opportunities: Lessons Learned for Ontario and Beyond

This section presents a synthesis of the challenges and opportunities commonly encountered in the implementation of global education, drawing on a review of relevant international scholarly and grey literatures.[6]

There is a robust literature on the challenges associated with global education, and its main findings will likely not come as a surprise to education stakeholders. On the one hand, the following key system challenges have been identified: conceptual and ideological differences related to how global education is constructed and practised (Cozzolino DiCicco, 2016; Rapoport, 2015b; Young, 2010; Guo, 2014; Pashby & Andreotti, 2015); the need for adequate teacher preparation and opportunities for in-service and continuous professional learning (Guo, 2014); lack of support from administration; resistance from parents and community; fears about teaching controversial issues (MacDonald, 2013; Yamashita, 2006); and the relative status and profile of global education

6. Grey literature is "That which is produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic forms, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers" (http://www.greylit.org/about).

in the formal curriculum and teaching and learning materials (Rapoport, 2010; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008). On the other hand, individual educators have identified challenges such as a lack of time, a lack of familiarity with concepts and issues, and a related lack of confidence and lack of a sense of self-efficacy as agents of change in their classrooms (Bullivant, 2014; Mundy & Manion, 2008; Rapoport, 2010). Weak integration across a range of subjects – as evidenced by the concentration of global education topics in social studies teaching and learning and their very limited and patchy uptake in mathematics, science, and physical education subjects – is a further challenge to delivering effective global education (Rapoport, 2015a). Additionally, educational leaders often face challenges in maintaining momentum among teachers and learners (Cozzolino DiCicco, 2016, p. 16).

Despite these challenges, various opportunities and enabling conditions are available to education stakeholders in their efforts to promote inclusive and high-quality global education. First, immigration patterns and increasing numbers of international students are making K–12 classrooms in Ontario more culturally, ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse every year. Ontario is also the most popular destination in Canada for international students (Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2017). This diversity represents one of the richest resources available to educators and learners for developing global competency and global citizenship values and skills (Cummins, 2014). Pursuing partnerships, collaborations, and networking between and among schools, universities, and civil society organizations represents a further opportunity for system and school-based capacity-building (Cozzolino DiCicco, 2016). UNESCO's promotion of global citizenship education at the international level provides a framework and rationale for increased attention to global citizenship education at the national and local levels. And finally, with supportive leadership at all levels of the education system, gains made in strengthening global education at the primary level represent an opportunity for related gains in effectiveness at the secondary level (Cozzolino DiCicco, 2016, p. 10).

Global Education in the School and Classroom: Good and Promising Practices from around the World

This section provides a synthesis of good and promising strategies in global education in K–12 schools to illustrate what effective and integrated practice entails at the district, school, and classroom levels. A rigorous and comprehensive review of the literature on global citizenship education by Evans and colleagues (2009, pp. 21–22) highlighted seven interrelated teaching and learning practices that:

- nurture a respectful, inclusive, and interactive classroom/school ethos (e.g., shared understanding of classroom norms, student voice, seating arrangements, use of wall/visual space, global citizenship imagery);
- infuse learner-centred and culturally responsive, independent, and interactive teaching and learning approaches that align with learning goals (e.g., independent and collaborative learning structures, deliberative dialogue, media literacy);
- embed authentic performance tasks (e.g., creating displays on children's rights, creating peace building programs, creating a student newspaper addressing global issues);
- draw on globally-oriented learning resources that assist students in understanding a "larger picture" of themselves in the world in relation

to their local circumstances (e.g., a variety of sources and media, comparative and diverse perspectives);

- make use of assessment and evaluation strategies that align with the learning goals and forms of instruction used to support learning (e.g., reflection and self-assessment, peer feedback, teacher assessment, journals, portfolios);
- offer opportunities for students to experience learning in varied contexts including the classroom, whole school activities, and in local to global communities (e.g., municipal, international exchanges, virtual communities); and
- foreground the teacher as a role model (e.g., up-to-date on current events, community involvement, practicing environmental and equity standards).

We would also add to the above list the valuable contributions that partnerships between schools (locally and internationally) and between schools and relevant non-governmental organizations can make to global education programming (British Council, 2012; Cabezudo et al., 2010; Edge & Khamsi, 2012). Linking schools locally and internationally can support a whole-school approach (more on this below) to enhancing global education, improve learners' understanding of global issues, equip young people with the skills and knowledge necessary for active global citizenship, and promote young people's commitment to a fairer and more sustainable world (British Council, 2012, p. 2).

After ten years of strong support for global citizenship education from the U.K. government, a take-away lesson was that, for global learning to have a real influence on learners, it was necessary for the global dimension to be embedded in the policies and practices of the school as a whole (Bourn et al., 2016). In the 1950s, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden started the *udeskole* ("forest school") model, to give children more access to and interaction with the natural world (Bentsen et al., 2009). Forest schools, as a whole-school approach, have gained popularity in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and Australia. The British Council's Classroom Connection initiative is based on a whole-school approach and involves linking local classrooms with classrooms in other countries in international school partnerships (ISPs). These ISPs can be a means to challenge global stereotypes, especially by means of a commitment to engage students in activity-based communications (Edge & Khamsi, 2012). A whole-school

approach to assessment is part of England's Global Learning Programme, designed to enable teachers, students, and education administrators to chart their progress as they incorporate more global approaches and activities into their strategies. As well, the Scottish government has introduced Learning for Sustainability to meet its 2011 Manifesto commitment on One Planet Schools, integrating global citizenship education, outdoor learning, and sustainable development for a whole-school experience (Bourn et al., 2016).

Building System Capacity for High-Quality and Effective Global Education

While teachers are central agents of change in strengthening global education, the broader system within which they work must provide the conditions that will enable their efforts to bear fruit (Bullivant, 2014). These should include the following:

- the provision of relevant and high-quality pre-service, in-service, and ongoing professional learning and development (including experiential learning through international travel) (Bamber et al., 2016; Guo, 2014; OECD, 2012; Stringer, 2013);
- supportive leadership at the ministry, district, and school levels (Cozzolino DiCicco, 2016; Jean-Marie, Normore, & Brooks, 2009; Ryan, 2006; Pike, 2008);
- access to relevant and diverse knowledge resources (e.g., multicultural, multi-genre, international, and global news, research, and analysis) (Oxfam, 2015a, 2015b);
- spaces that allow collaboration and learning with and from other educators and practitioners beyond the school (e.g., non-governmental organizations and other non-state actors with relevant interests and

programming) (Ast & Bickmore, 2014; Evans, Montemurro, Gambhir, & Broad, 2014); and

- ongoing assessment and recognition of teaching and learning efforts and achievements made with respect to global education (Schweisfurth, 2006; Skinner, 2015).

As Cozzolino DiCicco (2016) notes, "because the concept of GCE [global citizenship education] is still ideologically and politically contested and not uniformly accepted, teachers need a curricular incentive to teach global citizenship-related ideas" (p. 5, citing Rapoport, 2015b, p. 33).

Key Messages and Concluding Remarks

This report summarizes key research on the importance of global education for Ontario's K–12 schools; explains ways in which global education has been conceptualized and put into practice; provides an overview of common opportunities and challenges in implementing global education; and discusses practical strategies for capacity building both in the classroom and across the K–12 education system. Several lessons can be drawn from the above analysis. First, research clearly shows both that whole-school and system-supported approaches to global education are most effective in terms of achieving desired learning objectives, and also that these approaches provide the necessary foundation for scaling up and sustaining innovative pedagogy and programming. The importance of promoting international/global-education–focused partnerships and networks with other schools, universities, and civil society organizations is a second key message emerging from the study findings. Still other key messages include the importance of supporting high-quality and inclusive education for international students and of respecting these and other students as valuable sources of knowledge and experience that can be productively engaged in international/global education discussions and activities.

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