GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION POLICY AND RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT FOR SICA COUNTRIES

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This Report was prepared for CECC/SICA as a result of the Regional Dialogues on a Policy for Citizenship Education organized with the support of UNESCO and UNODC in September and November 2020.

SUMMARY VERSION

This summary version is intended as an input to the Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education to be held on May 19, 2021. The CECC Liaisons in the Ministries and the Advisors of the Ministers Bureau may use it to inform the authorities about the sense of the draft Agreement sent for their consideration prior to the meeting.

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The Report was written by Daniel Abreu.

The following UNESCO education specialists contributed with inputs and review:

Ismini Anemogianni
Cecilia Barbieri
Elodie Beth Seo
Martha Ferede
Mary Guinn Delaney
Romina Kasman
Miguel Llivina Lavigne
Ricardo Martínez Brenes
Franklin Tejeda
Lucía Verdugo

UNODC specialists:

Mónica Mendoza Betancourt
Marco Texeira

CECC/SICA specialists:

Guisela Céspedes Lobo
Jorge Rivera Pizarro

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Report on Policies and Recommendations on Global Citizenship Education for the SICA Countries

SUMMARY VERSION

1. Introduction, objectives and structure of the Report

This document is the result of the collaboration between UNESCO, UNODC and CECC-SICA, for exchanging ideas and experiences among SICA Member States on the implementation of a Citizenship Education agenda. This collaborative process is in line with the priority of the topic in SICA regional educational policy guidance instruments and by SDG 4 Goal 4.7, on Quality Education, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Report systematizes, analyzes and deepens the results of two sub-regional dialogues organized by CECC-SICA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2020). The report contextualizes Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in the international Education Agenda as well as a in the SICA region, presents a conceptual framework, highlights relevant initiatives on citizenship education in the countries of this sub-region and concludes with recommendations of policy and strategy on the topic.

2. GCED in the International and Regional Education Agenda

The most important framework for policy development in this field is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), specifically SDG4 Goal 4.7 that commits countries to consider citizenship education as a requirement for sustainable development. The Incheon Declaration and its Framework for Action promoted the incorporation of education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED)" as characteristics of the quality and equity of education.

At the regional level, the Inter-American Democratic Charter (OAS- 2001) and various ministerial meetings and programs since then, support the implementation of citizenship education in the region.

In the SICA region, the Central American Education Policy (2013-2030) incorporates in its Goal 6 the concepts of the 2030 Agenda and makes Target 4.7 of SDG 4 its own.

The Buenos Aires Declaration of the I Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean (2017) organized by UNESCO established the commitment to implement education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED) programs.

The Contingency Plan in Education for the SICA Region and the respective document of Recommendations formulated by the Council of Ministers, and the document A curriculum in emergency for the SICA region: content and methodology, are also references for this Report.

3. Key conceptual framework of Global Citizenship Education in times of COVID-19

The threats of the contemporary world call for a rethinking of development and, therefore, of education, its purposes and methodologies. The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed the exercise of citizenship: social relations have accelerated and the paradigms of solidarity, cooperation, common good, individualism, distrust and isolation are manifested in all spaces. We have learned to coexist with the pain, grief and losses caused by the pandemic and have begun to understand that the sense of belonging to a common humanity will allow us to survive and address the challenges and impacts of the pandemic in a collective and collaborative way.

In this scenario, the concept of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) proposed in the Report takes on special interest, recognizing the tensions between the local, national, regional and global levels, and building bridges to overcome and resolve them in the development of a sense of belonging to a common humanity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led education systems to implement transformative pedagogies that prepare people for an active exercise of citizenship, with critical understanding of complex contexts, living peacefully with others and with the capacity to carry out individual and collective actions that transform their communities, countries, regions and the world, and to the democratic resolution of conflicts, preventing all forms of violence.

Promoting the implementation of GCED in a region seeking to overcome a history of violence and conflict could contribute to the countries' efforts to build a culture of democracy and peace. It could also contribute to strengthening the role of education in the development of countries. GCED can play a fundamental role in promoting a sense of regional identity and belonging, raising awareness and preparing people to strengthen the integration of countries.

The Report presents the essential conceptual elements that define citizenship education, outlines the foundations, objectives, skills and learning outcomes of GCED and its connection to Education for the Rule of Law. It includes an analysis of the challenges of citizenship education and reflects on the relevance of GCED in times of COVID-19.

Citizenship Education

Citizenship education is understood as an area of teaching and learning for children, young people and adults, both academic and non-academic, focused on social, civic and political education, with the aim of achieving the formation and development of attitudes and values that enable people to participate in public affairs, to seek the common good and to practice various forms of social understanding in interpersonal relationships.

The diversity of known approaches form a continuum ranging from those oriented to the reproduction of the existing social order to those that seek to transform the prevailing social dynamics.

The report analyzes the approaches represented by expressions such as "civic education" (teaching the organization and functioning of society) and "citizenship education" (skills and attitudes for active participation). It is key that citizenship education promotes the integration of civic and citizenship education in a complementary synthesis of both perspectives, aiming at education for an adequate relationship with the political system and for life in community.

The Foundations of Global Citizenship Education

The concept of GCED is based on various international documents that expressed the main objective of fostering global citizenship awareness, and stated the need for people to have the knowledge, skills and values to cooperate and jointly solve the interconnected problems of the 21st century.

The adoption of target 4.7 of SDG 4 integrated GCED as an element to ensure quality, inclusive and equitable education that promotes sustainable development. In the vision of the Education 2030 Agenda, a "good education" is more than a means of access to the labor market and the GCED enshrines the humanistic vision of education and development.

The GCED seeks, at the same time as learning about the economic, political, social, cultural, technological, etc. processes that take place at local, national, regional and global levels, to promote the exercise of a sense of belonging and identity to different communities, from which one can act in favor of individual and collective well-being.

The greatest contribution of GCED is to offer a holistic, contextualized, pertinent and relevant vision that integrates the cognitive and behavioral skills promoted by civic and citizenship education and socioemotional skills as the basis and foundation for the construction of knowledge, behaviors and attitudes.

In the Central American context, the rationale for strengthening the actions of countries around citizenship education lies in the need to reinforce historical and current processes for the construction of a culture of peace, and to invigorate social relations and cohesion. The CCE approach can contribute to develop knowledge, values, principles and behaviors that will empower people to make transformations that improve their own and others' well-being, inspired by a sense of belonging to and responsibility for a common humanity..

Learning Objectives and Dimensions of Global Citizenship Education

The objective of GCED is to provide competencies and ethical values that prepare students, youth and adults to empower themselves as active agents, transformers and builders of a common humanity. It involves training and education to build interdependence and interconnectedness among people and to articulate local, national, regional and global levels, because, in their own way, at each level people face similar challenges. "I am because we are, we are because I am" (meaning of the South African expression: "Ubuntu").

The main pedagogical objectives of GCSE refer to these core skills: a) in-depth knowledge of global issues and universal values; b) cognitive skills for critical, systemic and creative thinking; c) socioemotional skills for the development of empathy and solidarity; and d) behavioral skills for acting collaboratively and responsibly.

The exercise of citizenship is a daily individual and collective act that promotes in every environment and space the sense of belonging to a common humanity, through the defense and protection of human rights, the construction of a culture of peace and the prevention of all forms of violence.

GCED is not a new content but a new pedagogical approach that calls for formal and informal approaches and considers lifelong and life-wide learning, with a sense of responsibility for ourselves, for others and for the "whole" in which we live. It embodies many principles of conflict sensitive education (as it is in the Central American region) and can support nation (re)building, social cohesion and positive values in children and young people.

GCED for strengthening democracy and the rule of law

The Report incorporates the relationship between education, democracy and the rule of law and the culture of legality as an integral aspect of the GCED. It contributes to the acquisition of knowledge, values, attitudes and behaviors to strengthen the rule of law. Supports students in learning to act, committing to values and responsibilities and participating in processes of change that promote the rule of law. Seeks to make learning interact with the problems of young people experiencing difficulties related to the rule of law.

Youth perspectives on citizenship education and GCED.

The young people who participated in the dialogues organized by CECC/UNESCO acknowledged that citizenship education is given low priority in curricula and classrooms. They proposed a balance between global, regional, national, and local actions, especially since these levels complement each other. They proposed that GCED should promote active and participatory methods, challenge teaching models and hierarchical learning environments.

4. Citizenship education in the SICA countries

Most SICA countries, although they have already integrated conceptual elements of GCED, do not explicitly incorporate it under that name, but have developed initiatives under the name of citizenship education.

Curricular analysis of GCED in the CECC-SICA countries

The analysis of the central concepts of GCED in the third and sixth grade curricula of primary education in Latin American countries (LLECE / UNESCO) shows that the result IN SICA countries is similar to that of the whole region. Except with the concepts of 'equity', 'dialogue' and 'collaboration', which are much more present in the SICA curricula

and, on the other hand, with those of 'happiness', 'plurality' and 'interculturality', which are found missing.

The main curricular challenge for SICA countries has to do with the inclusion of skills for world citizenship at the programmatic level. Values about how to live together, globalization and diversity, elements of citizenship and gender equality, could be strengthened in the curricula.

Citizen education initiatives in SICA countries

Given the historical context of Central America, convulsed by political conflicts and phenomena of violence, the educational policies of the countries understood since the signing of the Peace Accords at the end of the last century, the importance of prioritizing education in the values of peace, of citizenship, of democracy and social coexistence, in educational policies, curricula and teacher training. The Report synthesizes the main advances of each of the SICA countries regarding the inclusion of citizenship education issues in their educational systems.

Digital platforms and new subjects (Studies on Belize - 2018), with the corresponding training for teachers, were reported by **Belize**.

The educational system of **Costa Rica** gives a systemic approach to the issue of GCED that includes the creation of the Student Life Directorate (2009), the Study Programs by Skills (Ethics, Aesthetics and Citizenship) and the Curricular Policy Educating for a New Citizenship (2015), the implementation of a new evaluation system (2018) and the Education Policy for Sustainable Development (2020).

El Salvador has begun a curricular transformation in which civic culture and citizenship are priority issues with a focus on belonging to a national culture and Central American identity. The project "Exchange of pedagogical experiences between El Salvador and Chile to strengthen citizen training and democratic coexistence" (2017) is underway.

Guatemala created in 2010 the Education for Peace Program, and as of 2015 formed the Technical Board of Education for Peace, Historical Memory and Human Rights, under the guidance of a Ministerial Commission for Citizen Training, which promoted in the year 2017 the National Strategy for Citizen Training. Includes teacher training. He has implemented Citizen Training Self-Learning Guides via WhatsApp. Curricular planning for the Mayan, Garífuna and Xinca peoples has been finalized, with emphasis on a culture of peace.

In **Honduras**, citizenship education is established from the Law for the Establishment of a Country Vision and the Adoption of a National Plan for Honduras (2010), which orders the implementation of policies on values and citizenship. The Education Sector Plan 2018-2022 includes actions to build peace and train citizenship. There are transversal contents of "Education for Coexistence, Peace and Citizenship", in the areas of Social Sciences. The Peace, Coexistence and Citizenship Program aims to facilitate a protective environment free of violence. The Citizenship Training program in times of COVID promotes national dialogues.

The **Nicaraguan** educational system gives priority to skills in the culture of peace and human rights. The approach is to "strengthen the values in the family, school and community to generate a peaceful coexistence, of respect, in unity and harmony." Teacher training and preparation of booklets on "Rights and Responsibilities of Children and Adolescents for Peace and Living Well" are part of their strategies. Citizenship topics are integrated into the Growing in Values course.

Social and Citizen Competence is in the educational curriculum of **Panama**. Within the framework of an Emergency Curriculum, one of the selected competencies was "Citizenship with a human behavior approach". Citizenship education is also worked in a transversal way in study plans and programs from preschool to twelfth grade.

In the "Bases of Curriculum Review and Update" (2016), the **Dominican Republic** has prioritized citizenship education. The "Ethical and Citizen Competence" is the first of the fundamental competencies. It develops an extracurricular initiative entitled Las Catedras Ciudadanas.

5. How to strengthen Citizenship Education in SICA countries

The Report proposes some recommendations for the strengthening of Citizenship Education in six areas: educational policy, curricular, teaching, educational center, community and regional monitoring.

a) In educational policy, it is recommended to promote the multisectorality of citizenship education through the collaboration of various sectors, levels and with various actors and the creation of alliances. It is suggested to promote institutional educational projects at local level in educational centers, which favor a greater integration of schools and colleges in the communities. Intersectoral and inter-institutional groups, networks or working groups can contribute to this.

b) In the curricular area, recommendations are made to: i. strengthen existing programs with the more universal approach of GCED to address contemporary global challenges. Based on the curricular analysis done by LLECE, reinforce several key concepts of world citizenship: the concept of fraternity, happiness, knowledge of the world, plurality and empathy, the rule of law and ii. incorporate the socio-emotional, behavioral and health and well-being dimensions, especially at times when the situation generated by the pandemic has affected the mental health of students. It is key that this vision permeate teacher training, school administration and the different levels of management of the education system. These recommendations are part of the purpose established in the Contingency Plan to develop a regional curricular framework on this subject.

c) In the teaching field: Prioritize initial and ongoing teacher training. The Central American Educational Policy requires that initial and continuing training programs for teachers propose new models of teaching-learning centered on the student, the development of practices in diverse school contexts, and in relation to the communities that surround educational institutions. . It is recommended to promote regional research on how citizenship education is integrated into initial and continuing teacher training. A "Regional Initiative or Alliance for Teacher Training in

Citizenship" - could monitor and update the recommendations for strengthening teacher preparation in this field.

d) In the field of educational centers, it is recommended to create more participatory and democratic educational institutions. It is equivalent to incorporating the principles of democratic citizenship into school management and governance structures and processes. For this, some specific recommendations of initiatives that could be undertaken are formulated.

e) At the community level: youth leadership in the implementation of Citizen Education and ECM. The civic participation of young people has been increasing and has been reflected in movements that have impacted on political debates. The access and use of information at the digital level has influenced this. The young people who participated in the dialogues that have given rise to this Report have demonstrated their commitment and ability to influence at the community level. It is proposed to create a permanent space for meeting, debate and activism for citizenship education that is led by the young people of the region and that provides feedback not only on the work at the level of educational and youth policies, but also the actions of organizations of the civil society.

f) In the area of policies, strategies and regional monitoring, it is proposed to create a working mechanism among specialists from the Ministries of Education in order to prepare a specialized policy and strategy document for citizenship education and to organize periodic meetings that allow monitoring the implementation of its main consensus at the national level, identifying challenges, lessons learned and opportunities for improvement. It would contemplate the implementation of a regional strategy that promotes the development of national initiatives for the evaluation of learning achievements of primary and secondary level students.

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