



Animating the Global Dimensions of our Jesuit Schools: Our Unique Opportunity to Prepare Citizens of the World

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Has there ever been a better time in the history of the Society of Jesus for our Jesuit schools around the world to consider how we might powerfully animate the global dimensions of our schools? Recent history is on our side: General Congregation 35 reminded us that “serving Christ’s mission today means paying special attention to it’s global context,” and that we are called “to act as a universal body with a universal mission.” (GC35, D.2,#20). The International Colloquium on Jesuit Secondary Education brought our network together and illuminated the incredible potential and strength we have as a global network and manifestation of the Catholic Church. SIPEI challenged us to explore the intersection between Ignatian Spirituality and Ignatian Pedagogy, and in doing so, ignited a global conversation on the future of Jesuit education. Educate Magis has provided a platform for our schools to connect, collaborate and transform together in our quest for meaningful global relationships and initiatives; and we are more challenged than ever by acts of hate, intolerance, and social injustices that at times challenge our moral, our beliefs and our hope.

St. Ignatius of Loyola and his companions were inspired to travel to the frontiers; to spread the good word of the Gospel in the context of the cultures they encountered; to find God in all things. Now, almost 500 years later, our schools must also be inspired and hear the call of St. Ignatius; not as a new beginning, but as a continuation of the Society’s mission in a new, vibrant and challenging global context.

Context

The Secretariat for Education aims to help Jesuit schools be part of our living tradition of human excellence at the service of our mission today: a faith that does justice, cares for the environment and engage in dialogue with others. Within that

context, this particular document aims to capture the growing sense of global community that is permeating our worldwide network as a way for us all to consider how we are animating the global dimension of our schools, and preparing citizens of the world. Certainly, we come from incredibly diverse local and global contexts and cultures. Our curriculums vary, our cultural norms and expectations are different, we have at times an imbalance of resources at our fingertips, and our languages spoken span the globe. This richness in diversity; however, should be celebrated and relished as an opportunity to serve our universal mission as a universal body.

We know that to truly educate our students within the 21st century, we must equip them with skills to succeed and contribute in a world that is constantly changing; a world that calls for intensified needs for global collaboration, communication and understanding. We must prepare them to truly see God in all things, to be driven by compassion, and to utilize the power of religion and spirituality for freedom and peace, not conflict and war. We must instill in our students a commitment to take on global challenges with a new level of responsibility that goes beyond our traditional concepts of nation or country: our environment, solidarity with the poor, inequitable access to food and water, and care for refugees to name a few. We must prepare them to actively contribute to a more just and sustainable world; we must prepare them to be global citizens.



Our international network of schools is uniquely suited to educate global citizens who will be able to participate in a globalization of solidarity, cooperation, and reconciliation that fully respects human life and dignity, and all of God's creation. Our commitment to networking as a universal body, and our call to the frontiers, comes from our awareness of the world and our desire to effectively help students face global challenges. – From the ICJSE Vision Statement

This document is intended to start, or in many cases continue, an important dialogue in our worldwide network of Jesuit schools on global citizenship. It is intentionally designed not as a final product, but as a beginning. The document is expected to evolve over time, and be revised, as our network contributes to this critical conversation - both in our local contexts and communities, and in our global community through Educate Magis. These four questions, and the explanations that follow, are not constructed to provide definitive answers, but to help shape our collective conversation...

1. What is Global Citizenship?
2. What do we hope for in our students and school communities?
3. How can we animate the global dimensions of our schools through global citizenship?
4. What unique opportunity do we have in our global network of Jesuit schools?

What is and why do we emphasize global citizenship in our schools?

Creating a universal definition of Global Citizenship, in our context as educators that neatly fits every culture, country and circumstance just the right way would undoubtedly prove to be a tall task. However, we need to offer a concept of global citizenship that can guide and direct our global conversation from a common framework.

At a basic level, a global citizen is someone who recognizes the interdependence, responsibility and solidarity with all humanity and with the world.

In our roles as educators in Jesuit schools, perhaps we think of our approach toward global citizenship as a focused pedagogy and programs aimed at preparing students to understand and embrace their global responsibility. As such, our students will identify with different cultures; communicate effectively at a global level; respect and value diversity, as well as their own culture and identity; understand and take action against social injustices; integrate into an increasingly interconnected world; and experience first hand countries, customs and cultures that are different from their own.



What do we hope for in our students, and overall school communities?

When thinking of global citizenship in our Jesuit schools, we might start by asking what the anticipated and desired outcomes are for students. How do we ensure “global citizenship” is not a simple cliché used to loosely exemplify what we hope for in our students, and is instead perceived as a concept we hope to imbed into the cored of our educational practices, our mission, and our way of proceeding as educators? How do we determine, and then assess whether or not we have achieved our desired outcome for students? In the context of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP), what is the “action” we hope for in our students as they become “global citizens?”

Perhaps we start with a universal set of expectations from our students and school communities that should span the breath of our global network. Can we agree that we want our students, from a globally rooted perspective, to:

- Demonstrate an openness to the world that is fueled by an understanding of a greater common good
- Understand that global citizenship often begins, or circles back, to local communities
- Develop a curiosity for cultures, customs, beliefs and traditions different from their own, that leads to a global knowledge base and sparks a desire to learn, grow and contribute to the common good

- Develop a sense of common responsibility for global concerns, problems and challenges
- Engage in a commitment to promote justice at the global level
- Live a religious experience that is mindful and embracing of the diversity and complexity of the world
- See in themselves a true transformation of the mind, body and spirit as a result of deep commitment to understand and empathize with different cultures from around the world
- Understand, value and develop their own cultural and social identity so that they in turn become open to other cultural and social identities.



What active steps can Jesuit schools consider to animate the global dimension of our schools through global citizenship?

How can these expectations turn to actions? Without a doubt, our Jesuit schools around the world represent and exemplify the rich, vast diversity that spans the global communities we represent. While maintaining our individual identities and charism, we simultaneously adhere to a universal mission. As GC 35 reminds us, “it is as a worldwide community – and, simultaneously, as a network of local communities – that we seek to serve others across the world.” (GC 35, D.2, No .20)

The diversity of our situations, cultures and contexts, coupled with our belonging to a collective sum of all parts, will naturally guide, inspire, and illuminate the steps each individual institution will take to embrace our responsibility of preparing citizens of the world. The following actions and concepts, surely already manifested in many of our schools, might provide a foundation from which we can ensure our important mission of forming young men and women for others is fueled by our opportunity to prepare our next generation of teachers, politicians, business men and women, policy and peace makers, caring parents, clergy-religious men and woman...and ultimately saints.

Develop a Global and Cultural Curiosity

Global citizenship, at its core, must encompass a genuine, sincere curiosity to simply learn more about our global community. That curiosity then drives, motivates and nurtures the actions we take in our pursuit of global citizenship. We must instill in our students this global curiosity and emphasize the need for students to understand, respect and value other cultures in order to:

- Gain useful and relevant world knowledge
- Become more understanding and empathic to world cultures, challenges and injustices
- Begin to develop their own ethical responses to such challenges and injustices

- Begin to analyze cultural stereotypes and use ones own knowledge and experiences to more consciously formulate global perspectives
- Cooperate and collaborate with people from other cultures and countries



Make it our Mission

An overwhelming strength of Jesuit education is our commitment and dedication to our mission of forming men and woman for others, and for prioritizing that commitment above all else. It is what makes us who we are as Jesuit educators, and keeps us rooted in the teachings of St. Ignatius. As such, if we aspire to ensure global citizenship becomes part of the core of Jesuit education, we must act by:

- Examining our mission statements to ensure they are reflective of our commitment to global citizenship
- Ensuring our boards, school owners, and senior leadership teams recognize global citizenship as a fundamental component of Jesuit education, and lead in ways that exemplify that recognition
- Prioritizing global experiences and a commitment to global initiatives when hiring
- Acknowledging that we are part of a living tradition, that continuously evolves, and therefor needs our constant, passionate commitment to ensure the education we are providing reflects our currents times

Embrace Technology as a Tool for Global Citizenship

Advances in technology, and the ability we now have to communicate around the world with relative ease – even in regions of the world that traditionally lack resources the use of cell phones has become prominent - has opened new avenues of collaboration that will enhance the global nature of the education Jesuit schools are offering. Dialogue, human interaction, and global companionship that used to be “half-a-world away,” are now the equivalent of being “right around the corner.” This is simply too rich of an opportunity to ignore, or to preclude as a tool used for developing our students. We must embrace the use of technology for the following:

- Increased exposure to world cultures, customs and peoples
- Increased conversational language skills in multiple languages
- Dynamic partnerships between classrooms, teachers and students
- Collaborative programs, initiatives and methodologies designed to examine global problems and ethical responses
- Building deep, meaningful, long lasting relationships around the world



“Globalization, technology, and environmental concerns have challenged our traditional boundaries and have enhanced our awareness that we bear a common responsibility for the welfare of the entire world and its development in a sustainable and living-giving way.”
(GC35, D.2, #20)

Certainly, we must also recognize the “dark side” of technology: a culture of superficiality, new forms of discrimination and domination, and an inadequate replacement for human interaction. We must ensure, that as we embrace technology as a tool, we are also mindful of the ways technology can work against our mission.

Experience the World

It is perhaps easy, and in some ways almost natural, to assume global citizenship is only attainable through first hand experiences and exposures to other countries. This is certainly not the case, and we must ensure we do not simply reduce global citizenship in our schools to that concept. With that said, when resources and opportunities allow, we must provide opportunities for students to experience world cultures, religions and languages through exposure to the global network of Jesuit schools and associated apostolic missions. These experiences should include:

- Collaborative, cross-cultural, project based learning opportunities
- Cultural immersion experiences
- International service immersion opportunities
- Opportunities to regularly communicate cross-culturally to enhance global leadership and communication skills
- Academic based exchange programs
- The integration of all students with diverse backgrounds into the global learning climate of our schools
- Spiritual retreats that cross cultures



*“Nevertheless, in a context like the present in which social networks are multiplying across geographical borders, if we long to offer a better service within the international community, it is necessary to create **global citizenship**. With it we want our students to feel capable of intervening in the international arena and to assume the new reality of a world that is built beyond narrow frontiers, where we are all citizens and stewards...”*
Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, WUJA Conference, 2013

Examine our Curriculum

Global citizenship, perhaps all too commonly considered an “add-on” to our core academic programs, must instead become a fundamental part of a Jesuit education. We have opportunities to integrate in creative and unique ways global content into the core curriculum by:

- Using global and cultural examples to emphasize certain lessons

- Focusing on communication skills that are globally mindful, inclusive and effective
- Creating new and innovative world courses that provide opportunities for students to be informed of significant trends, happenings and challenges of current global societies
- Teach with an awareness of globalization and its impact on 21st century learning.
- Consider existing curricular opportunities, such as *Healing Earth*, that have been designed specifically to meet the mission of Jesuit education

Our Unique Opportunity

Our Jesuit network, while built upon years of tradition, commitment and passion, is poised to embrace the opportunity to form our next generation of leaders; leaders of compassion, conscience, commitment and competence. It is what makes us unique, it is what makes us whole, and it is what brings us together as a global community.

Concretely, the network should allow us to establish connections, partnerships and relationships around the world. It should provide a built in security blanket of trust, confidence, safety, local knowledge and established presence that breaks down or even eliminates our traditional notion of borders and boundaries. General Congregation 35 has called us to this work and we have already established both regional and global priorities within the Society, according to our current Superior General. These are unique attributes and opportunities that we must grasp; that we must act on.

Ultimately, as we collectively and individually pursue varying paths of global citizenship for our students, faculties, and school communities, we must continue to change how we view our institutions at the core; no longer as individual schools, but rather as companions in a network that provides not only access to the world, but relationships with the world. The signs at the entrances of our buildings should no longer welcome students and families to our schools; they should instead welcome them to the global community of Jesuit education...they should welcome them to the world.