# Importance of Becoming a Global Citizen

**Introduction**

Across various countries in the world, global education has acquired relevance as many people today are taught how to embrace the globalized world and the challenges or benefits that come with it. In line with this, writes that several studies have been developed in a bid to promote the scope of knowledge available on the topic of global citizenship. Borrowing extensively from the study by Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013), certain factors such as valuing diversity, social justice, intergroup empathy, intergroup helping and the level of responsibility to act for the betterment of this world have been identified as some of the drivers of global citizenship.

The purpose of this paper is to expound more on global citizenship by analyzing the different theoretical underpinnings that have been used to define global citizenship. Based on the outcomes, the discussion provides two of the six factors that illustrate the development of global citizenship as well as an analysis of general education courses that may influence me to become a global citizen. Indeed, the essence of educating the society on global citizenship can be reflected in the need to raise self-awareness on how global citizenship promotes the interaction among people based on the precepts of humanity and kindness.

## Definition of global citizenship

Global citizenship identity is a concept that is spurred by globalization, a factor that makes it a subject of focus across multiple disciplines (fod.infobase.com, 2010). However, global citizenship has been overlooked owing to the increased attention directed towards establishing the effects and influences of globalization on the cultural and global contexts. Therefore, Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) argue that it is difficult to clarify the concept of global citizenship “due to the use of seemingly synonymous terms to describe a super ordinate global identity, and the influence of theorists’ disciplinary perspectives in defining the construct.” From the above, it is evident that varying definitions of global citizenship exist, though they are used interchangeably. Theorists who have attempted to define global citizenship are drawn from multi-disciplinary backgrounds, including educational, theological, political and developmental. While other theorists believe that global citizenship is defined by traits, others believe that this concept is not identifiable with any trait.

The confusion above directs me into developing my own perspective’s definition of global citizenship. As such, I define global citizenship as the empowerment of people to act and think globally while taking into consideration the facet of diversity.

## Two of the six outcomes of global citizenship

In a bid to identify the factors that lead to the development of global citizenship, Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) in their article *A model of global citizenship: Antecedents and outcomes* identified six outcomes including intergroup empathy, valuing diversity, social justice, environmental sustainability, intergroup helping, and the level of responsibility to act for the betterment of this world. From these six outcomes, I consider valuing diversity and social justice as the most significant pillars of becoming a global citizen.

Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013) quoted Dower and Golmohamad’s definition of valuing diversity, which is an interest in and appreciation for the diverse cultures that define the world. Diversity is a broad concept that stretches to envisage the difference religions, ethnicities and races that make up the world. In valuing this diverseness, it is imperative to embrace the different features and learn from these features in order to tolerate and understand the identities that define the global citizen.

In addition, Dower and Heater, as cited by Reysen and Katzarska-Miller (2013), defined social justice as the attitude that entails the human rights, fair and equitable consideration of all people. In different parts of the world, people attach varying significance to fundamental human rights. To become a global citizen, one must understand that all humans are equal, and that what is given to one human being should equally be given to another. In justifying my choice of social justice as necessity of global citizenship, I argue that the set of beliefs, morals and values that define the races, religions and ethnicities around the world should not be used to prevent people from being accorded human rights.

## Two personal examples that illustrate the development of global citizenship

Valuing diversity is an essential outcome of global citizenship (Mansouri, Johns and Marotta, 2017). My personal experience of valuing diversity can be condensed in the variety of interactions that I have had with people from different backgrounds around the world. At one time, I joined a team for scenery touring. The team was made up of youths from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds. In the course of the tour, I learnt how to exchange greetings in various tribal linguistic, crowning it by learning how to say “Jambo”, which is the Swahili word for “Hallo.”

Similarly, I have encountered social justice in the remote classroom setting that I share with students from multiple nations. There are classmates who believe that students who are non-English speakers should not be allowed to engage in structured debates and discussions However, education is a fundamental right that should be provided to each student regardless of their national background.

Communication studies and social studies are the two general education courses that influence me to become a global citizen. Through communication studies, I learn how to understand the cultural diversities, while social studies enhance my identification of the traits and characteristics of societies around the world.

## References

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