

## Editorial Introduction

### Common and Uncommon Citizenship in a Global World

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The articles in this issue began as conference presentations at the 2015 Centre for Global Citizenship Education and Research international conference. The themes of the conference addressed concerns of inequality and uneven citizenship in a world requiring that we come together to address urgent issues that move and exist across all kinds of borders. Since the conference, we have seen the emergence of more extremist political movements that promote division and hatred in many locations. While these get the most time in news and social media, we also witness the growth of many forms of resistance and coalition building in response. What is our responsibility as educators in these times? What contribution can citizenship education and/or global citizenship education make to helping people understand the shifting geopolitical context and globalized corporate capitalist economic system? As I write this introduction, the world's economic elite have just met at their annual meeting, the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland to discuss the global economic system. There is seldom good news coming from this meeting for ordinary citizens anywhere in the world, but this year, we hear of that this system has created an even more inequitable distribution of wealth on the planet. Two global focused reports are released at the time of the Davos meeting. One is by Credit Suisse Research Institute, titled *The Global Wealth Report 2016*<sup>1</sup>. Along with this, Oxfam published their 2017 report using the same statistics but with a view to how the current economic system impacts those people not in the category of the wealthy 1%. This report, titled *An Economy for the 99%* concludes:

New estimates show that just eight men own the same wealth as the poorest half of the world. As growth benefits the richest, the rest of society – especially the poorest – suffers. The very design of our economies and the principles of our economics have taken us to this extreme, unsustainable and unjust point. Our economy must stop excessively rewarding those at the top and start working for all people. Accountable and visionary governments, businesses that work in the interests of workers and producers, a valued environment, women's rights and a strong system of fair taxation, are central to this more human economy.<sup>2</sup>

Within this context, educators work daily with children, families, and communities struggling to live well despite hostile environments that seem to work against many of the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.credit-suisse.com/us/en/about-us/research/research-institute/news-and-videos/articles/news-and-expertise/2016/11/en/the-global-wealth-report-2016.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file\\_attachments/bp-economy-for-99-percent-160117-en.pdf](https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-economy-for-99-percent-160117-en.pdf)

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conditions that might ensure such lives. In these local sites, global issues like climate change, poverty, racism, misogyny, play out in ways that divide and dismantle communities. Ideas and experiences of citizenship reflect these divisions, and therefore, citizenship education becomes an even more important part of education activity.

The articles in this issue dive into the complexity of citizenship education. In the first article, Whitney Haynes (University of Oslo), examines the experiences of migrant workers positioned in the global economy. She links these experiences to global citizenship, too often attached to the mobility of a global elite who is able to travel, unrestricted, to all corners of the world for pleasure and to enjoy the rewards and resources of other people's "locals". A global citizenship analysis provides Haynes with a way to understand global labourers' desire for "the red passport", the passport that would allow them the same freedom as the global elite. The problem of navigating unequal citizenship rules is that labourers are disposable and the rules perpetuate the conditions that oppress people forced to find work far from their homes. They are kept in precarious positions that feed a global economy that cares nothing for them, their families or communities.

The second article in the special issue, Martha Scardua and Afonso Galvão of the Universidade Católica de Brasília, provide a provocative and timely framework to understand transformational education and citizenship using Paulo Freire's ideas and practices of liberating education, and Enrique Dussel's ethics of liberation. They situate the urgency of the situation in the search to find ways that schools can become places where children and youth receive education that is more than the provision of skills for employment but also for citizenship through being able to read their (global) context and engage in this world. By apprehending Donald Winnecott's idea of "The Good Enough Mother", Scardua and Galvão provide a powerful analysis of the potential of schools as places of liberation. The *Good Enough School* will be a place of "solidarity, cooperation, and democracy" because of its resistance to modernity's demand for "more" coupled with neoliberalism's demand for efficiency instead of relationships.

Jamie Elbert presents her research on citizenship education that questions how citizenship education can prepare students for the shifting geopolitical world. She examines the tension in how secondary students understand their national and global citizenship through a framework of identity and cosmopolitanism. Elbert's study provides insight into students' experiences and perspectives of their "civic selves" and citizenship within complex (diverse in terms of racial, ethnic, class and gender) societies by studying the vocabulary they use to "construct their civic subjectivities". This article highlights the significant way that youth are engaged and actively understanding their identity both locally and globally. The problem seems then, that adults in schools, communities, and the political system, are not paying attention to how to hear and include the youth's ideas and voices.

The final article in the issue is contributed by Lyle Hamm, Helen Massfeller, Amanda Scott, and Kevin Cormier and presents the findings of a study of schools in New Brunswick, Canada. Hamm et al. question the educational context and experiences of recent immigrants to Canada. They describe how the wider context of austerity budgeting has already created very difficult conditions in schools and classrooms, and teachers are not being supported in their efforts to support immigrant students. Hamm et al. provide a social justice reading of the context that highlights the obligations the Canadian government, communities, and schools have to support immigrants to adjust to life in Canada. The authors highlight the importance of moving beyond rhetorical statements of inclusion to listening carefully to the experience of students, parents, and teachers if we are to make progress in providing equitable education to immigrant children.

These four articles provide an important contribution to understanding how we might work for education that is more just and also creates a liberation potential. The authors have provided ideas and practices that we might begin this work to provide immediate assistance to students and teachers who struggle to learn about – and for – a more just world.