Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference
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REINVENTING EDUCATION

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VOLUME 1

Citizenship, Work and The Global Age

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REINVENTING EDUCATION
VOLUME I
Citizenship, Work and The Global Age
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VOLUME I Citizenship, Work and The Global Age

This volume contains papers presented in the 2nd International Conference of the Journal “Scuola Democratica” which took place online on 2-5 June 2021. The Conference was devoted to the needs and prospects of Reinventing Education.

The challenges posed by the contemporary world have long required a rethinking of educational concepts, policies and practices. The question about education ‘for what’ as well as ‘how’ and ‘for whom’ has become unavoidable and yet it largely remained elusive due to a tenacious attachment to the ideas and routines of the past which are now far off the radical transformations required of educational systems. Scenarios, reflections and practices fostering the possibility of change towards the reinvention of the educational field as a driver of more general and global changes have been centerstage topics at the Conference. Multidisciplinary approach from experts from different disciplinary communities, including sociology, pedagogy, psychology, economics, architecture, political science has brought together researchers, decision makers and educators from all around the world to investigate constraints and opportunities for reinventing education.

The Conference has been an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education and thus promoting a trans- and inter-disciplinary discussion on urgent topics; to foster debates among experts and professionals; to diffuse research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners’ mainstems; to launch further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale; to provide a new space for debate and evidences to educational policies. In this framework, more than 800 participants, including academics, educators, university students, had the opportunity to engage in a productive and fruitful dialogue based on research, analyses and critics, most of which have been published in this volume in their full version.

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Citizenship, Work and The Global Age

A Premise

What is education for? This philosophical question cannot be answered ignoring contributions from social and educational sciences. The growing focus on learning outcomes should have prompted discussion on the values and aims in defining policy objectives and developing accountability systems and evidence-based approaches. Whereas for years public discourse on education has most frequently been confined to a merely sector-based perspective, without addressing the relationship (i.e., interdependency and/or autonomy) with globalised societies or to face the new challenges of contemporary’s world. The relationship between education and society and the issue of aims can be observed in a new context which has seen the weakening of the society-nation equation and the strengthening of global dimensions.

The crisis born of the pandemic is more and more global and multidimensional. It inevitably obliges to ask what the post-pandemic socio-economic scenarios could be and what challenges might emerge from the transformations of education and training systems and policies. Many researchers and observers think that the most relevant of these challenges is that of inequalities between and within countries. The medium-long term nature of many of these challenges poses a complex question: does the pandemic tend to widen or narrow the time-space horizons of people perceptions, rationalities, and decisions?

For decades, the field of education and training has witnessed continuous growth in globalization and internationalization: just think of the role of the large-scale assessment surveys and the increasing influence of international organisations. Phenomena and concepts such as policy mobility (lending and borrowing) or – within another field of research – policy learning, as well as global scaling up, global-local hybridization and policy assemblage might find a useful opportunity of debate and in-depth analysis in this stream. This might also be true of the related issue regarding how comparative research must be carried out and of the relationship between some government ‘technologies’ adopted in the latest cycle of policies – for example, quasi-market, evaluation, and autonomy of schools and universities – and the ever more criticized neo-liberal paradigm. In this framework, without any revival of the political or methodological nationalism, a critical rethinking of the national dimension, perhaps too hurriedly assumed to be ‘obsolete’, can be useful also for a comparative reflection. As to our continent we are in the presence not only of
globalization of educational policies, but also of their Europeanisation, due to the extent of the European Commission’s strategy and its Open Method of Coordination. Beyond the official distinction between formal, non-formal, and unformal learning, it seems European initiatives and programmes shape a new policy world preparing the future of education, particularly through different expert networks, new ways of conceptualizing knowledge, and disseminating standards. On these issues there is no lack of reflections and research, some of which very critical indeed, whose results deserve to be broadly shared and discussed, too.

The equipping of the new generations with the tools – knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values – to live in a plural and interconnected world is delicate matter indeed in Europe. It is the issue at stake for the encounters – and at times clashes – between old and new visions and forms of pluralism and secularism. Around this theme are developed educational policies and strongly heterogeneous curricula. Such topic is linked also to the variability in young people’s competences and attitudes towards ‘cultural otherness’.

Life-long learning is another question of notable importance at international level as it implies both a diverse temporal horizon for education and its link to the dimensions of work. And a different approach to the relationship between school and extra-scholastic (life-wide) learning is also implied. From this stems the necessity of greater investment for example in both the early years (ECEC) and the adult education. We might ask, however, how much has been done to achieve this goal, and whether it risks remaining a fascinating but largely unfinished project for a long time.

Within a general rethinking of the aims and the means at the disposal of education systems, many papers ask whether until now enough has been done to educate towards citizenship and democracy and whether various national educational systems have adopted this issue as their core mission.

A second group of questions derives from some crucial challenges – such as the dramatic deterioration of the biosphere, the climate, and the health – which impose both the necessity of rethinking this mission in a planetary context and redefining the ‘citizenship’ as a concept not merely national, but multi-level, that is ranging from global to local; and in our continent European, too. How deeply are our nations presently involved in the task of educating their citizens in terms of knowledge of global and trans-national issues? And are they striving to build a collective common consciousness in Europe? What help is being given in this sense by proposals elaborated and experiences promoted by international organizations or the EU?
Finally, starting from infant and primary schools, what weight does citizenship education have in schools, what approaches are adopted and what have shown to be the most effective? What didactics are applied and what seem to be the most promising experiences? To what extent are teachers prepared and motivated and students interested in it? Universities and adult education should also play a role in citizenship education. What proposals and significant experiences can be described and examined?

The Volume also includes contributions on the relationship between education and economic systems which is a classic subject of social science. During the twentieth century, the functionalist perspective established a close link between ‘school for the masses’ and the construction of individuals personalities conforming to values and social objectives. Professions have then become more and more specialized and therefore requiring ever more targeted skills. Hence, the insistence on the need to train future workers in technical and technological skills, as well as more recently in the ‘soft skills’ climate, increasingly necessary in certain sectors of the economy (Industry 4.0). The alliance between the functionalist perspective and the neoliberal visions finds its conceptual and practical pivot in the employability conceptual frame. On the other hand, since the 1970s, critical research has highlighted that formal education system contributes to the reproduction of inequalities, confirming and strengthening hierarchies and power relations between different actors of the economic system. These lines of investigation have underlined the weight of cultural and social capital in determining school performance, but also the inflation of educational credentials as a combined effect of mass schooling and changes in the economic system. In more recent times, the fragmentation of the educational and training systems, because of the multiplication of public and private agencies in charge of training citizens, in addition to the explosion of the non-formal and informal as learning places (e.g., on the Internet), challenges the school to maintain its primacy as a place responsible for training workers. Moreover, it questions its ability to continue to represent a social elevator and / or a place of social justice.

The issue of the reproduction of inequalities and differential returns of educational qualifications fuels lively and stimulating interdisciplinary debates: economic stagnation, mass unemployment and job instability affect the inclusion of young generations in the labour market. Recently, in the context of lifelong learning policies, the relationship between training and work has become increasingly central, but the definition of the goals of these policies is not neutral: in the neoliberal mantra it is a question of guaranteeing the adaptability, employability and autonomy of each individual, so that one can occupy a place in society according to the dominant values. There is no shortage of critical voices about this individualistic and functionalist interpretation.
of the Lifelong Learning vision. On the other hand, even the supporters of neoliberal-inspired policies want an inclusive training offer (from a meritocratic perspective), as it is essential for recruiting resources and supporting flexible production systems focused on knowledge.

The attention of scholars focuses on the effects of the ‘knowledge society’ in the educational system of European countries. In this perspective, several studies have focused attention on the orientation processes that contribute to the reproduction of inequalities as the students from the lower classes tend to orient themselves, and are oriented by their teachers, towards the vocational paths, stigmatized within the educational systems.
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Inclusive Citizenship Education in Times of Crisis
The Challenges of Global Citizenship Education before the COVID-19 and Beyond

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ABSTRACT: Global Citizenship Education (GCE) represents UNESCO’s strategy to address ‘global issues’ such as human rights violations, inequality, and poverty. It plays an important role in driving cultural, social and political change for building a more just and sustainable world. In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, confronting these ongoing challenges requires, among other things, redefining social and educational needs, reformulating and reconceptualizing emerging problems, but also renewing institutional commitment and a sense of community, and defending democratic education. This contribution aims to introduce a design for exploratory research assessing projects and interventions activated in formal and informal contexts in the Municipality of Bologna. It also will be significant to observe how and to what extent teachers and institutions consider the aforementioned global challenges when addressing the educational needs that have emerged as a result of the pandemic.

KEYWORDS: Global Citizenship Education, COVID-19, Pedagogical Approaches, Formal and Informal Contexts

Introduction

Issues such as human rights and intercultural dialogue, equality, migration and social inclusion are becoming increasingly urgent at all school levels. A long-established scientific debate has valued GCE – Global Citizenship Education – as one of the most comprehensive pedagogical models, for it incorporates all the positive goals and practices related to both globalization and citizenship issues.

Such pedagogical models include citizenship education, global education, human rights education, multicultural education, environmental education, peace education, etc. (among others, Davies, 2006; Davies et al., 2005; Hahn, 2005; Mannion et al., 2011). In this vein, several authors define GCE as a pedagogical movement that aims to drive cultural, social and political changes for building a more just and sustainable world. In particular, as Estelles and Fischman (2020) states:
In the last few decades, GCE, although steered by very diverse ideologies and understandings, has been usually presented by both international organizations and scholars as means to respond to the challenges derived from globalization (Estelles, Fischman, 2020; Stromquist, Monkman, 2014; Suárez-Orozco, 2007). Particularly, GCE has often been identified as part of the solution to world problems such as respect of human rights, knowledge of global interconnectedness, knowledge of other cultures, development of global responsibility, environmental awareness, economic growth, and/or social justice (2020, 3).

Some scholars, however, remark some approaches adopt a narrow concept of GCE and neglect the heterogeneity of purposes and pedagogical frameworks available on a global scale, as well as criticism of each national contexts and the structural barriers young people face in their effort to participate in democratic processes.

Aiming explores some of GCE’s perspectives, the first part of this contribution presents some theoretical definitions of GCE. We will highlight the meanings of GCE in the light of the new challenges and needs – educational, social, cultural – that have emerged in times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, we will explore some more recent insights emerging from the literature on potential educational principles for a post-COVID-19 GCE.

The second part of this chapter presents the design of an exploratory research project that is still in its start-up phase. We suggest observing some actions and projects implemented in formal and informal contexts (i.e., Seipiù, Amitie, Amitie Code; S-Confinati, MigratED) in the Municipality of Bologna, which aimed at promoting GCE among young people. In particular, we aim to detect which methods and strategies motivate young people to take an active role in facing global challenges in pandemic and post-pandemic times.

1. GCE: diverse purposes and pedagogical criticism before COVID-19

The definitions and criticisms of the GCE are very broad and the authors adopt different approaches and argumentation taking part in a rapidly evolving debate. UNESCO (2014, 9) has defined the GCE as «a framing paradigm which encapsulates how education can develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable». This is the conception of GCE whereby the most recent international guidelines would invite education to «lead the change» of society and culture in order to implement initiatives aimed at promoting a more inclusive and sustainable society (Goren, Yemini, 2017).

Tarozzi (2016) understand GCE as a pedagogy for global social justice, grounded in a global outlook, a recognition of power and
inequality in the world, a belief in social justice and equity, and a commitment to reflection, dialogue and transformation. Some other scholars offered a broad GCE conception, differentiating between soft and critical GCE. While soft GCE could be equated with global citizenship education (Marshall, 2011) by providing students with an understanding of the world and cultural tolerance, critical global citizenship requires a deeper engagement. According to Andreotti (2006), critical GCE provides students with the skills to reflect on and engage with global issues involving conflict, power and opposing viewpoints; to understand the nature of colonial, liberal and Western assumptions; and to seek change. This critical approach implies a deep understanding of global cultural citizenship and of cultural symbols and structures that divide or unite members of different societies and considers the globalization of different cultural forms (Andreotti, 2006).

In a similar way, Dill (2013) suggested that there are two domain approaches to GCE from which different objectives can be ascribed: the global competence approach, which aims to provide students with the skills needed to compete in a global society; and the global consciousness approach, which aims to provide students with a global orientation, empathy and cultural sensitivity, derived from humanistic values and assumptions (Dill, 2013). The same author has shown that different teachers apply the two approaches differ in accordance with their own perceptions of students’ futures and that GCE is not always incorporated into schools as a tool for empowering and creating opportunities for students. The meaning of GCE is often reduced to the knowledge of the English language that would allow students to exercise the opportunities and mobility offered by globalization, sometimes in contradiction with the curricula and in-service learning, as well the objectives at all school levels (often at higher education). This discourse opens up a whole debate that requires exploring the geographical location of GCE (where GCE is promoted), its different degrees of integration into school curricula, the organization of which changes in each country in the South and the North. Moreover, several scholars explain it is usually neglected that GCE, although relatively popular among international organizations and educational scholars, remains peripheral in national school curricula (Myers, 2016) and is not clear the reason because GCE it usually been presented as a proposal to include in extracurricular programs or, at best, in social studies courses. These criticisms have led to the development of several GCE models, which allow scholars and policy developers to identify, articulate and evaluate the goals of the GCE from a critical perspective. In this vein, Goren and Yemini (2017) recognize a multidimensional model of citizenship included in the national curricula that of ten present global issues from a non-critical perspective, leaving students with only a limited understanding of how global citizenship fits into daily life and experience. In a similar way, Arnold (2014) and Hartung (2017) note that the idealism of GCE discourses tend to exalt idealistic potentialities,
instead of paying attention to the educational and socio-political difficulties that students and teachers face when implementing the CGE principles in daily lives and scholastic experiences. In this regard, if the literature already states that «the notion of GCE as a solution to pressing global problems does not necessarily contribute to the promotion of politically engaged pedagogical models», the pandemic has confirmed that reform of existing international organizations and the regeneration of a GCE debate is urgently needed.

2. The challenges emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic

The current pandemic provides strong evidence that a more legitimate and democratic global governance is urgently needed. The COVID-19 pandemic has had deeply disrupting effects in many spheres of life, both at the individual and collective levels. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all the educational institutions have been facing many challenges, affecting both the different actors and the social and cultural system as a whole coupled with previously global civic problems like the deepening of inequalities, authoritarianism and the problematic of digital surveillance among other complex dynamics.

Moreover, the pandemic has created financial burdens on individuals and nations that will likely accelerate and extend an economic recession. That recession, in turn, and the financial toll resulting from the public health costs of the pandemic, will constrain the ability of governments to fund other needed social services, such as education; and intermingling with pre-existing levels of economic inequality, it will further limit the opportunities to advance human well-being. In this regard, several scholars (Myers, 2016) agree that many effects that emerged from the pandemic have only made (more) visible some social and educational needs and problems that were already established before the time of the pandemic.

For this reason, the discourse on GCE is now focusing more on highlighting problems and inconsistencies with the idea that it is necessary to resume the school’s dialogue with institutions, reformulate the prototype of the global citizen, rethink the function of the national school in the challenge of global citizenship. Following this perspective, the report of Unit State (2020) affirms the urgency to tackle the phenomenon of hate speech and discrimination in our society as well as the early school leaving. In line with this consideration and with existing literature, we have identified the exacerbation of hate speech as one of the most significant effects as result of the new Coronavirus. In this regard, the start-up Light, born in 2018 to filter toxic content online, reports how since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a 900% increase in hate speech addressed to the Chinese population and the nation of China and has registered a 70% increase in hate speech among young and children during online chats.
Furthermore, the study reports, the spread of tweets such as #chinaliedpeopledied, #kungflu, #communistvirus, #Whuanvirus, fomented by political leaders and influential figures, has had even greater consequences on the fears and uncertainties that dominate today (Human Rights Centre of the University of Padua, 2020). In addition to this, one estimate suggests that global learning losses from four months of school closures could amount to $10 trillion in terms of lost learnings (UNESCO, 2020), while 108 countries reported missing an average of 47 days of in-person instruction due to school closures by the time of the survey (UNESCO, 2020), equivalent to approximately one quarter of a regular school year. For Estelles and Fischman (2020, 2), this global imaginary «makes evident a collective failure of civic education systems to promote empathy and to encourage creative and democratic forms of engagement and collaboration among citizens and governments from other regions of the world».

With a positive outlook, this crisis can be also viewed as a sort of opportunity for the application of a more reflective approach to GCE. In this regard, the same authors state:

The development of global solidarity at the individual level is rather uncertain, but there is no doubt that if we want to confront global phenomena, it is necessary and urgent. What makes us reluctant to cooperate with humans from other regions of the world? What motivates us to do it? Proponents of GCE have usually taken for granted that altruistic beliefs and seemingly purely Cartesian rational thoughts are the main drivers of global citizens’ behaviours However, emotions and non-altruistic behaviours are also an intrinsic part of our human nature (Estelles, Fischman, 2020, 7).

3. Reimagining a post COVID-19 GCE in formal and informal educational context

According to recent literature, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the difficulty to put into practice the GCE principles by civic institutions both at the national and international level (Estelles, Fischman, 2020). The COVID-19 has also brought to light how some national policies and public speeches have reinforced thoughts and feelings of intolerance and distrust in the population. Moreover, in recent years this has found in the migratory phenomenon and in the figure of the migrant the new scapegoat on which to pour hatred and xenophobic attitudes.

Fighting the pandemic requires facing its darker sides. Decisive actions are urgently needed by states and all of us to safeguard the human rights of the most vulnerable and marginalized, including minorities, and migrants (Estelles, Fischman, 2020).

In this sense, today more than ever, there is a need to strengthen global responsibility and governance in order to make the democratization process more realistic and potentially feasible. Recently
Stein (2021) stressed the need to consider GCE within a VUCA\(^1\) future (Bennett, Lemoine, 2014; Waller et al., 2019), encouraging a reflexive approach to the 'description-prescription formula' of GCE shared up to now. As reported by Stein:

Description–prescription approaches to GCE tend to seek not only consensus, certainty, universality, and continuity but also coherence, all of which seek either the restoration or revision of a single forward for all humanity. However, in the context of liquid modernity, these desires have become increasingly untenable; and in light of decolonial critiques, they are deeply suspect. How might we reimagine GCE in ways that are strategically responsive to our current context of systemic crises, and ethically responsive to the ongoing colonial conditions that are at the root of these crises?

[...] I suggest the imperative to balance multiple, often competing or contradictory responsibilities, emphasising a ‘both/and more’ approach, rather than ‘either/or’, in relation to: concrete policy and open-ended pedagogy; critical and affective literacy; and intellectual and relational rigour (2021, 7).

Many recommendations have been proposed in the last year at national and global level, in continuity with the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech (United Nations, 2020). These suggestions highlight the need to develop educational principles and strategies to identify, address and respond to hate speech and discrimination and make them strategically and ethically responsive in national contexts that are constantly in crisis.

There is a requirement to understand how GCE can develop actions that react to the feelings of fear that are fueled by authoritarian political systems.

Moreover, GCE could be an opportunity for teacher and student to critically reflect on the emotional pathway through which authoritarian populism (Zembylas, 2019) and hate speech are articulated. To date, the research areas most investigated by GCE have focused on two main objectives: Student-centered studies focused on students' perceptions and understanding of global citizenship and the GCE (among others et al., 2014; Niens, Reilly, 2012); and Teacher studies, in which many teachers and educators recognize the importance of GCE. However, they often feel trapped between the curricular objectives that encourage its integration in the classroom and the cultural norms of nationalism or lack of practical resources that hinder their ability to actually teach it (Goren, Yemini, 2017).

There is also a lack of empirical studies regarding parents’ perspectives of global citizenship as a component of their children’s education (Goren, Yemini, 2017). This could be an interesting field of

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\(^1\) Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.
investigation to explore new paths of actions and reflections of the principles that guide the GCE.

4. An exploratory research design. Research questions, scope and methods

In this research we will focus on issues related to the phenomena of hate speech and discrimination by investigating them in formal and informal educational contexts.

In order to understand these aspects, our research questions are focused on three main issues: i) How the Global Citizenship Education approach in a VUCA contemporary society is pursued during the pandemic?; ii) How can the challenges faced during the pandemic be transformed into opportunities for more inclusive educational contexts?; iii) How can effective actions and strategies be promoted to fight the growing phenomenon of hate speech and discrimination among young people?

The research therefore aims to understand the needs and criticalities emerged during COVID-19 by observing which actions are implemented in projects and interventions following the GCE principles activated, or in the process of being activated, in informal and formal contexts in the Bologna area (Italy). We also aim to identify which pedagogical approaches, methods and strategies can support the young generation to take an active role in the society in VUCA times.

The study aims to investigate the projects implemented in the Municipality of Bologna that followed the GCE principles (i.e., Amitie; Amitie-Code; Sconfinati; MigratED). The sample will be made up of young people, exploring good educational practices that raise awareness on issues such as: human rights, migration, intercultural dialogue, sustainability. In particular, the MigratED project (Migrations and human rights enhanced through Technology in Education) was carried out in the period before and during the pandemic. This project aimed to disseminate educational practices on intercultural dialogue, migration and human rights in the educational community, to raise awareness of a sustainable, innovative and inclusive education system. Through the use of new multimedia technologies and an advocacy campaign, the project promoted the development of civic skills, media literacy and digital critical thinking skills involving students, teachers and educators from different European cities. These purposes proved to be even more urgent during the lockdown due to the pandemic, as the project continued at remote, experimenting with innovative tools represented by participatory approaches such as IT, digital and audio-visual devices (WeWorld, 2021).

The project, as reported in the Brief Analysis Report drawn up in April 2021, highlights the need to open the field of reflection and action of the GCE with an intersectional look at the global challenges that today even
more require to be treated in their connection and complexity (Pashby et al., 2020). In addition, three key findings are identified as transferable elements in the future and in line with the EC 2020 Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025, which aims at an educational strategy «based on sustainability, with green and digital transitions as transformation drivers». These concern the promotion of global competences and digital skills for life; participatory and multidisciplinary methods for inclusive education and pedagogical innovation; young people and educational communities as key actors to support political reforms in education (WeWorld, 2021).

We believe that the activities implemented in this project along with the recommendations provided can be a starting point to investigate how the principles of GCE need to be re-meaning and revised in practice. This, considering the changes and challenges that occurred during and after the COVID-19 pandemic towards the desired goals of transformative education with a common approach to education for global citizenship, green and digital skills.

Through semi-structured interviews and focus groups with young people and participant observations in formal and informal contexts that follow GCE values, we will seek to identify which strategies could adequately support young people to face today’s challenges (e.g., hate speech and discrimination). In this first phase of the study, we proceeded a review of the literature and established contact with representatives of the Municipality of Bologna who coordinate projects in formal and informal contexts. Finally, we have researched existing projects on this topic and contacted interested parties. To date, we have experienced delays with the next steps due to slow responses from stakeholders. Some projects are already completed (i.e., Amitie; Amitie-Code; MigratED), while others projects will start with the new school year.

**Conclusion**

In this contribution we have reported the first part of our study, still in its early stage. We have built a theoretical framework that examines the studies and the different orientations of GCE that have developed over time, trying to reimagine new possible interpretations and fields of action in light of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Noting this need, we have launched an exploratory study that wants to try to trace these new instances in formal and informal educational contexts.

As argued in the discussion, the pandemic has highlighted even more the inequalities already present in our society and has accentuated feelings of fear and intolerance as well as the fragility and liquidity (Bauman, 2011) that characterize our time.
We asked ourselves about the aspects that more than others need to be investigated in times when hate speech and discrimination are increasingly gaining ground, especially among young people and in different contexts, online and offline. The necessity to analyze these contexts, such as the needs and expectations of young people, allows us to understand the first effects of the changes induced by the pandemic. Furthermore, on which paths research can contribute to offer new meanings and help identify new action strategies towards a transformative approach that looks at Global Citizenship Education, sustainability and digital skills in its complexity.

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