



**Melton Foundation**

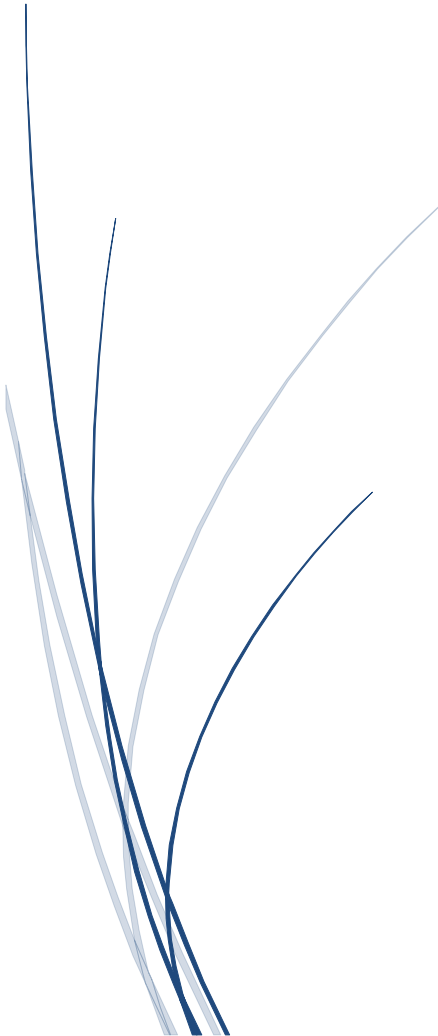
Deep collaborations. Powerful actions.

# Global Citizenship

Whitepaper about an emerging concept

Melton Foundation, March 2021

Produced in collaboration with **egomonk**



## About

A leading proponent of global citizenship practice worldwide, the Melton Foundation looks back at over 30 years of shaping young minds through experiential learning, skill development, and intercultural exposure.

Through our fellowship and collaborative programs, we promote and enable global citizenship as a way for individuals and organizations to work together across boundaries of place and identity to solve challenges in an interconnected world.

The Melton Foundation is also an active part of a larger community aiming to develop and promote the understanding of global citizenship as an overarching framework for thought and action. In this context, the Melton Foundation has developed this Whitepaper.

The content and deliberations have their main basis in a focused discussion on the concept of global citizenship at a practitioner roundtable initiated by the Melton Foundation and the global intelligence platform egomonk. The roundtable took place in Bangalore, India, in the aftermath of the Melton Foundation's Global Citizenship Conference. The conversation was recorded, transcribed, and developed into this Whitepaper. No quotes are attributed to a specific person. The discussion's essence has been integrated into a more comprehensive narrative about the concept of global citizenship and its applicability subsequently.

In consonance with the Melton Foundation's spirit to create meaningful collaborations and impact of powerful actions, the Whitepaper aims to contribute to the global and local discussion. We do not claim to touch on every aspect of global citizenship with the profound depth it might deserve but highlight aspects that the practitioners found intriguing and worth debating. The deliberations advance the discussion on global citizenship as an overarching concept that cherishes diversity and includes a strong sense of responsibility for just, fair and sustainable societies that collaborate for mutual benefit. A visual summary of the discussion can be found at the end of the document.

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## Intro

Global citizenship is a concept which intertwines our identity with the interconnected, interdependent world of today. It seeks to transcend geographical limitations and expand the definition of our personalities. As expounded by the United Nations, global citizenship is a new and vital force, which operates beyond the traditional spheres of power. In some instances, it has also been described as "a way of life", a set of guiding principles for a sustainable lifestyle.

The rise of globalization has implied that the ripples of an act committed in one corner of the world will be felt at another corner of the world. This has implored the human community to accept that we cannot live in artificial silos anymore. Instead, there is a need to connect with our larger identity and tap into a collective human experience if we want the future to be one with peace, prosperity and stability for all. In the end, we are one human family.

The characteristic of global citizenship as a universal concept renders it a degree of intangibility. The context of an individual's environment and their trait of self-awareness impedes the realization of oneness with the global community. It has resulted in personalized definitions becoming the norm, wherein the individual links their personality with moral and ethical values.

Moreover, the task of seeing oneself as a global citizen is complicated in an increasingly nationalistic, separated, protectionist and xenophobic world. While global citizenship is an important trigger to overcome these restrictions, it remains confined to intellectual discussions amongst a relatively small number of people, giving it a halo of elitism. Hence, even though the task of popularizing global citizenship has been touted as institutional or international, it is, in fact, of personal origins.

The fundamental challenge is to transmit the sense of responsibility of global citizenship across locations, age groups, cultures, and generations. There exists a resistance to accept this responsibility as a consequence of widespread fear and misunderstanding. Stagnating socio-economic mobility and mistrust has conflated global citizenship with globalization's underlying issues, creating a hostile environment. However, there is also great potential in promoting the idea of global citizenship, as it opens the way for collaboration across boundaries of place and identity to solve global challenges.

Given the difficulties to position the idea of global citizenship as a prime identity, we want to pose a series of question to advance the conversation:

1. Is global citizenship a homogeneous concept? Does it have space for multiple identities to exist?
2. How can global citizenship be grounded so that it applies to everyone? How can it shed its image of an elitist phenomenon?
3. How can global citizenship be a universal guiding principle for collaboration and sustainable behavior?

The following deliberations set out to give some answers to these questions. After reviewing fundamental documents that shape the idea of global citizenship, we discuss the universality of the concept. We then touch on the Indian context as our conversation took part in South Indian metropolis Bangalore. We move on to look at ways in which we can promote global citizenship principles and while considering the challenges in our way forward, we draw final conclusions.

## Fundamentals

The massive drive of globalization the world has witnessed in the past century has been accompanied by a paradigm shift in the way we look at our identities. Human beings have been challenged to ascertain the various layers of their identity, which may overlap or even contradict each other. The global interchange of goods and people has brought different cultures closer to each other, collaborating on many issues such as climate change or the fight against poverty and questioning our own beliefs and nation-encapsulated identities.

Globalization has often been portrayed as a positive development in terms of understanding that we as humans form one race, sharing one planet. However, the adverse effects of wealth disparities, unfair trade regulations, and the fear that other customs and beliefs are questioning their own way of life have also given rise to strong anti-global movements and nationalism. The nationalistic school of thought paints an oversimplified, and even harmful, portrait of an otherwise complex and multi-dimensional conflict. When looking at terms like globalization, globalism, and global citizenship, it must be acknowledged that these are intertwined concepts differing in scope and meaning. While globalization and globalism are more often associated with economic integration, global citizenship refers to a feeling of belonging, responsibility, and unity in diversity. Rather than deglobalizing and putting up barriers, the values propagated by global citizenship form the cornerstone on which we base our future actions. In this understanding, globalism does not become an evil, but it is a phenomenon that can be used to ensure the prosperity of humanity.

The cornerstone for such action can be seen in two fundamental documents. First, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted in 1948 in the aftermath of the second world war. Although having been drafted in a world quite different than today, its relevance has not decreased. As stated in the preamble, "the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world", stressing the idea that humans should be treated equally regardless of their origin. The 30 articles of the UDHR set forward the universal rights that any citizens of the world should have and are signed by all 192 member states of the United Nations. Therefore, we can see it as a document that promotes universal standards for all people in the world, and equality being a fundamental principle of the idea of global citizenship. This, however, also means shared responsibility to put these ideals into practice. Each of us has the duty to defend our inalienable rights within our communities and beyond.

The second fundamental document calls for action. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 by all UN member nations provide a framework of global challenges that we collectively need to address. The goals are a product of awareness that most of our problems can only be solved collectively. The formulation of the SDGs themselves is a testimony of global collaboration and multilateral policy work. The 17 overarching goals specified in 169 targets show a clear path towards achieving sustainable growth in a more fair and equitable manner. The goals include, among others, targets such as reducing poverty, preserving life underwater, maintaining fair labor agreements, and building strong institutions. The SDGs recognize the structural interconnectedness of these challenges and call for global collaboration. The efforts to attain the goals start locally in our communities though. As responsible citizens, it is in our hands to achieve the goals by taking tangible action within our spheres of influence. The SDGs, along with the UDHR, are beacons in the journey towards realizing a connected, collaborative world, progressing through the efforts of its citizens. Since trust and understanding are key factors for any constructive discussion, a conducive environment coupled with the right mindset can set the wheel of progress in motion.

Both documents build a solid overarching framework for the concept of global citizenship as a set of rights, responsibilities, and tangible actions. However, we need to realize that contextualization is a significant impediment in establishing a shared sense of global citizenship. The needs of a rural farmer in a remote world region differs substantially from the requirements of a lawyer working in a metropolitan city. When we try to solve problems like access to education, healthcare, or fair trials, combating poverty or climate change, the formulation of uniform solutions and ignoring local contexts would impede progress. The rich diversity of our world cultures needs to be acknowledged. We must be conscious about the plurality of belief systems, often deeply rooted in religions, cultures and traditions. It is this diversity that makes humanity so exceptional. The essence of global citizenship lies in recognizing rather than suppressing our origins and multiple identities and reconciling them by harnessing the locally available resources to resolve global challenges. The question then is if there is a universal context for global citizenship beyond human rights and the shared challenges we face.

## Universal Context

One of the first questions that arise is: Is there a set of universal values that all inhabitants of the world can subscribe to? Even though the UDHR establishes a solid foundation of shared principles, it is far from promoting a rigid set of universal values. While examining global citizenship from a universal standpoint, it is crucial to recognize the fluid nature of the concept. Fluidity refers to the multiple layers that overlap to form an individual's personality, such as family, religion, ethnicity, and culture. The existing realities in different parts of the world differ vastly from each other. Global citizenship incorporates several dynamic elements, each synergizing to meet the current needs and aspirations of youth and society the world over. Therefore, global citizenship in no way means or endorses a homogeneity of opinion or consensus. In fact, it is the opposite. It indicates that there is a spectrum within which a range of opinions and values can co-exist even if they conflict with each other. This requires us to practice not only tolerance but compassion as well. At an individual level, this allows us to hold honest, sometimes heated exchanges that are entirely free of hate or malice. If we meet our differences with empathy and respect, there is a way for reconciliation and to find middle grounds that are acceptable with the prevailing community and its culture. One way of articulating global citizenship as a universal concept can be its manifestation as an ethic of care for the world and each other. This understanding focuses on awareness, moral resilience, judgment, and action. It provides a sound moral background for any action taken and places a premium on responsibility and accountability. Even if this ethic of care calls for action, it does not necessarily relate to activism. The concepts co-inhabit some ideological spaces. However, if activism is about bringing attention to injustices, then global citizenship is about leading people to shared mutually beneficial conclusions on their own terms. This unbounded empowerment allows people to eventually reach a more developed and nuanced shared understanding of the world and cherishes the wellbeing of all people and the natural environments they inhabit.

A discussion about the universality of global citizenship has to acknowledge that the standard framework in which today's world is organized are nation-states. Countries are basic entities in which rules are made, and their citizens should theoretically have all the same rights and responsibilities as they are all governed by the same laws. In that sense, citizenship and its attached benefits and duties are, under normal circumstances, universal concepts within a nation. The most common traits for granting citizenship are blood, soil, culture, and law. Blood indicates direct ancestry; soil points to the physical place of birth;

culture alludes to their cultural integration within society, and the law is concerned with codified rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Rights shared by all citizens typically inspire broad agreement amongst community members, while responsibilities differ wildly based on possibility, opportunity, status, wealth, and several other factors. The opportunities structure within countries is often very unequally distributed. We cannot deny socio-economic differences and multiple forms of discrimination within and across nations. On a global level, we see even greater differences in economic development, political systems, and individual freedom. The nation-states remain the strongest denominator of identity. If we look at surveys such as the World Values Survey, people around the world first identify as a citizen of a country instead of thinking of themselves as a citizen of the world. However, global citizenship as an overarching and fluid concept is not in contrast to the narrower ideas of national citizenship. It is not related to passports or a critique of patriotism. Instead, it suggests another layer of citizenship that transcends nationalism and points toward the shared destiny we face as humans in this world.

The challenge to conceptually differentiate global citizenship from national citizenships is that global citizenship now seems beyond the reach of large sections of society because the concept appears mentally incompatible with our national identity. If your national identity is at odds with your ideas of citizenship and its associated rights, then global citizenship will remain a mirage. Global citizenship, though, is not aiming to compete with national, regional, or ethnic identities. Within global citizenship, there is even ample room for patriotism, however, not as one nation before others, but as a sense of responsibility towards the world departing from one's own feeling of belonging. Global citizenship acknowledges origins and belongings but argues for an overarching idea of shared responsibility towards each other, transcending national borders.

However, global citizenship does conflict with strong nationalism. The growing nationalism of stagnating industrial economies was built on the back of pro-globalization and pro-immigration policies. These upsides have already been socially and economically absorbed over two or three generations. Still, the current task of equitable sharing of resources and opportunities has become a polarizing social and political choice in all advanced nations. This is because it would require these societies to recalibrate, and there is a fear of losing their worth and sacrificing their quality of life by being accommodative for the sake of others. The strong nation-first rhetoric we hear is in contrast with multilateralism and global collaboration. Understandably, governments need to fulfill their citizens' needs first, but



when nationalism leads to isolationism and hostility, it conflicts with global partnerships for addressing shared problems.

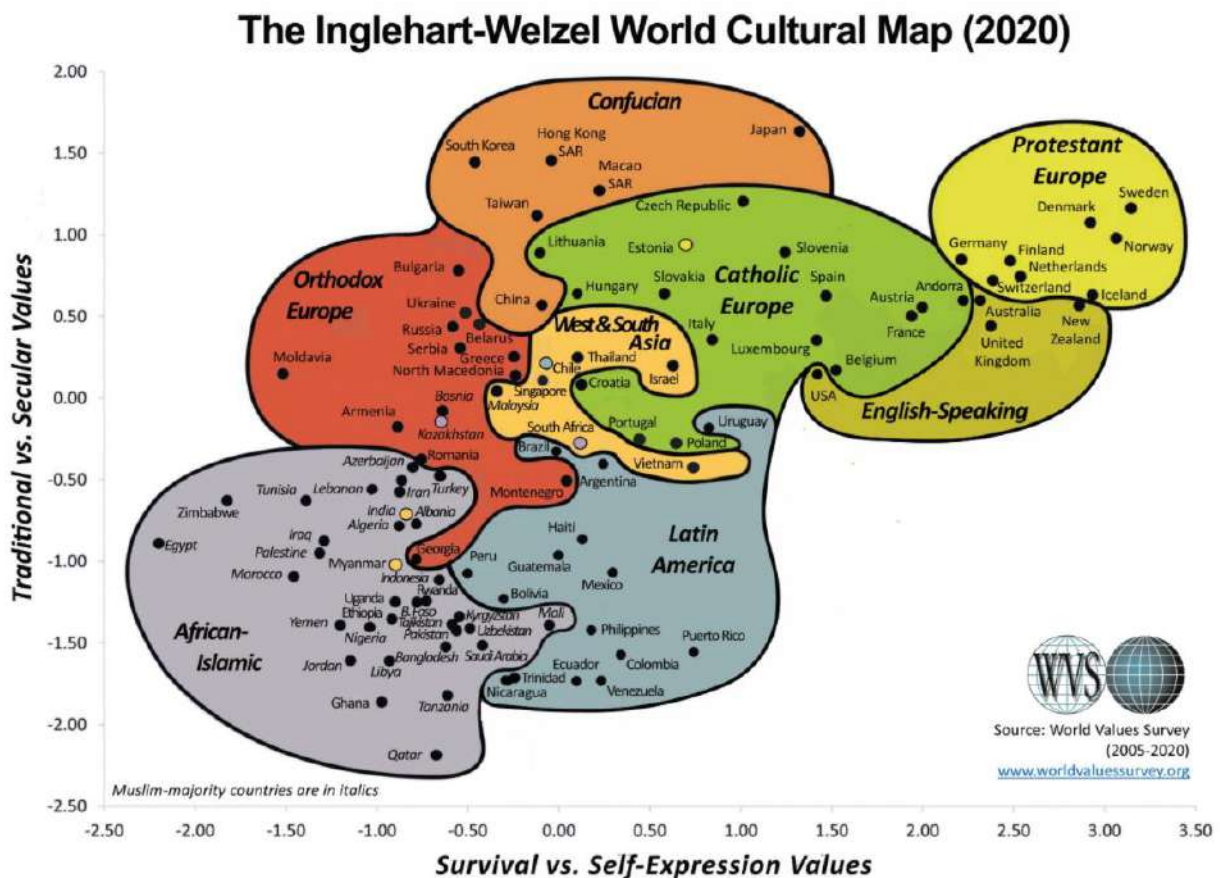
To counter such sentiments, it seems advisable to value and promote traits such as empathy, respect for diversity and collaboration across boundaries. However, these aspects of global citizenship are not yet institutionalized as universal values across the world. It is not part of the lexicon of politicians, parents, teachers, and caregivers. There is a whole generation of young people who are not taught what it means to accept diversity of thought. Remedial influences for such an audience remain unproven because they display monolithic thinking, which is extremely difficult to change without strong stimuli. For global citizenship to become a universal concept, we would need to agree with such fundamental values to be taught to younger generations to internalize the spirit of open debate and accept differing world views.

Often those who travel extensively or have access to multiple cultures are considered to be global citizens. This is because it is somehow implied that people who have visited different regions of the world are more open-minded than others. However, this cosmopolitan view lacks nuance and depth. It is an elitist concept which does not withstand a closer test. If global citizenship is interpreted only as a cosmopolitan attitude, it will rule out most of the world's population. It implies that those belonging to lower socio-economic backgrounds who lack travel opportunities can never become global citizens. Experiences in other cultures may help form one's own identity in relation to others. Still, traits mentioned such as empathy, care for the world and valuing diversity are not dependent on socio-economic status. If global citizenship is to be a universal overarching concept, then it cannot be tied to monetary resources but needs to be based on the common ground of all people being citizens of one planet that we need to protect and care for, foremost through local tangible actions that positively influence global developments.

Besides, global citizenship must acknowledge the diversity of people regarding their upbringing, their cultural, ethnic, religious, regional, and national influences when forming their identities. A starting point to understand cross-cultural variations of values across the globe is the World Values Survey (WVS). This global research project aims to identify and group people in different countries on several cultural parameters and analyze societies based on the data. It specifically asks for opinions and influence of markers such as the impact of globalization, the role of religion, culture, family, and the attitudes toward ethnic minorities, foreigners, and environmental conservation. The survey results can add to the framework of global citizenship by showcasing on a more macro level the major differences in prominent attitudes throughout the world. The data is presented on a national level,

though, and therefore can only serve as the first point of orientation as national societies themselves can be highly heterogeneous.

One interesting outcome of the survey is the Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map (see graph no. 1). It plots societies based on their position relative to secular-rational vs. traditional values on the vertical axis, and survival instincts vs. self-expression instincts on the horizontal axis. Traditional values here associate with a nationalistic outlook in which traditional institutions are sought to be preserved. Secular-rational values associate with an opposite trend, accepting new institutions into its fold and destigmatizing taboo topics. The survivalist societies tend to exhibit lower thresholds of trust and tolerance and yearn for economic security. Towards the right of the spectrum lie the societies emphasizing self-expression, marked by greater democratization and tolerance.



Graph 1: The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map 2020. Source: The Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map - World Values Survey 7 (2020) [Provisional version].

It is an insightful exercise to place yourself on the Inglehart-Welzel map because your ascribed values-based identity may significantly diverge from your national identity. Culture is essentially institutionalized knowledge living inside of people. We gain fluency and nuance in this knowledge by interacting with everyone around us. True global citizenship should allow us to hold multiple cultures and realities within us with some confidence in our ability to switch and navigate between them instead of assigning to one-dimensional identities.

With the world map divided into cartographic regions of modern nation-states, the puzzle to be solved by the advocates of global citizenship is the accommodation of diversity under an overarching framework of inclusion within a broader society, characterized by a feeling of belonging to the global community. Placing oneself on the world map gives one a sense of control and enables one to assess situations from a bird's eye view of prevailing conditions. Hence, a person's global identity in the world, while uncontested, forms an integral part of global citizenship and allows one to view things from varying distances in a changing milieu.

In conclusion, global citizenship is not the opposite of national citizenship. Quite the contrary: as a universal concept, it embraces the diversity in nation-influenced convictions as much as religious, secular, traditional or modern values. Its universality lies in mutual respect and the willingness and ability to collaborate across boundaries to solve the global problems we humans face. It has a firm grounding in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a framework of action in the SDGs. However, the concept goes beyond that. Its universality lies in a familiar feeling and ethic of care for the world and each other. It is not uniform in terms of culture, religions, thoughts, and actions but on a responsible way of life where we take care of others and the environment within our spheres of influence.

## Indian Context

Before examining the concept of global citizenship, we will shortly look at how far ideas of global citizenship can be recognized in India. As our initial conversation took place in Bangalore, participants made frequent reference to the culture that surrounded us. We briefly explored how deeply global citizenship can be rooted in India's culture and politics without going into exhaustive analysis. The following therefore is to be regarded as a starting point for a much deeper discussion.

India's cultural fabric is akin to a colorful mosaic of religions, languages, cultures, literary pieces, philosophies, and relics. The sheer diversity found in the country, interspersed with varying strands of thoughts, beliefs, and ways of life, is of gargantuan dimensions. Globalization, and therefore global citizenship, is a phenomenon that underlines the evolution of Indian society and has worked its way into the mindset of the people for thousands of years, resulting in the interwoven societal setup existing today.

Indian history is characterized by its richness. One can trace its roots back to the Indus Valley Civilization in 2,500 BC. Not only was India the site of one of the largest ancient civilizations, but it was also the birthplace of several religions, schools of thoughts and art forms. Furthermore, it was located strategically on the world map, giving rise to a vibrant trade culture. Since ancient times, the nation was a destination for travelers, pilgrims, traders and even rulers from distant lands. This, in turn, resulted in an influx of myriad cultural elements. The Indian society that we see today has evolved through such interactions with foreign elements. It is distinguished by the visible imprint of influence other cultures have left on it while retaining a distinct flavor.

The historical antecedents of global citizenship in India are perhaps best illustrated by the following verse, found in the Maha Upanishad, a text whose origins can be traced back to 500 CE.

"The world is a family.  
One is a relative, the other stranger,  
say the small-minded.  
The entire world is a family,  
live the magnanimous."

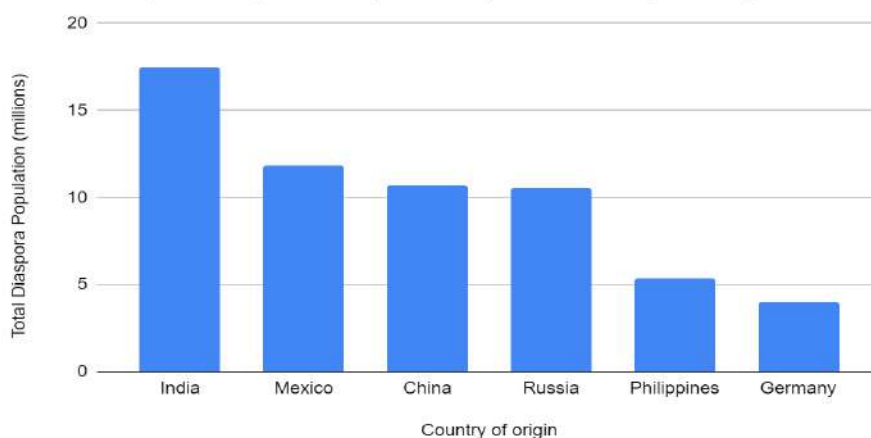
This verse in Chapter 6 of the text, better known in its abbreviated form as "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", is one of the most profound and oldest expressions of the intention to mold a global community.

The idea of humanism and humanity, central to global citizenship, is beautifully captured by Ramcharitmanas, a 16th-century epic based on the Ramayana, penned by the poet Tulsidas. Apart from "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", evidence of humanism, like "Atithi Devo Bhava" or "the guest is God", exists galore in numerous other textual references. These writings point towards a culture where strangers and others are seen as enrichments and treated as family members, thus emphasizing the shared humanity of all people.

When looking at the World Value Survey (WVS) Culture Map, India is located in the lower left quadrant but close to the center of the map. This is an adequate representation of the nation considering the mashup of cultures, religions, and ethnic diversity it harbors from millennia of integration. However, conservative, and traditional oriented values prevail.

The ability of Indians to blend in with foreign ecosystems without losing their local touch is reflected in the Indian diaspora communities residing in countless nations of the world. As of 2020, India has the largest diaspora globally (see graph no 2), with approximately 18 million citizens living as emigrants on foreign soil. Even though a large majority of the diaspora cherishes their origin and cultures, signs of a "westernization" also become apparent with a growing number of younger generations questioning traditional barriers such as a caste system or choosing western clothing over traditional attire.

Total Diaspora Population (millions) vs. Country of origin



Graph 2: Total Diaspora Population vs. Country of origin, 2019; Source: United Nations, Department of Economic Population Division

On the political level India has a track record of participating in global fora and ratifying international treaties and agreements. Along with endorsing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), India is signatory to the Paris Agreement, an accord framed within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Clean energy obtained from renewable, emission-free sources is increasing in energy policies (see table 1). Solar, wind, hydropower and biomass are some of the clean energies in the spotlight. By tapping into its resources and the natural bounty it is endowed with, India's nationally determined contribution (NDCs) is compliant with the 2-degree goal under the Paris Agreement. Still, it remains a challenge for India to further reduce coal as its main energy source.

<b>Yearly gross energy generation (GWh)</b>	<b>Hydro</b>	<b>Solar</b>	<b>Wind</b>	<b>Coal</b>
2018-19	135,040	39,268	62,036	1,021,997
2019-20	155,970	50,103	64,639	995,840

Table 1: Change in India's energy generation to cleaner and more renewable sources  
Source: Government of India, Ministry of Power, Central Electricity Authority

It is reasonable to conclude that global citizenship exists and has existed side by side with India's rich heritage. Despite this, thought leadership on global citizenship is often found missing, or at best lacking, in modern India. The varying local contexts, spanning countless and diverse stories of life and livelihood across the country's length and breadth, pose a considerable challenge to realizing an underlying oneness and identification with a larger community beyond the immediate regional boundary.

Despite widespread urbanization, 68.8% of the national population resides in rural areas. Given their larger share in the populace, this section invariably becomes the target of efforts directed towards their integration with the rest of the world. However, there is a paucity of skills and technical knowledge amongst the rural workforces, especially due to missing educational infrastructures. With the local economies preoccupied with playing catch up, the rural populace seems less supported in accessing global opportunities.

Further, WTO regulations and the global pressure exerted to open its market to foreign producers have had diverse effects on the development of local industries and resulted in a negative trade balance with several countries. This negative trade balance has led to a negative perception of globalizing as reason for losing local economic autonomy. These coercive and negative experiences portray globalization in poor light and induce people to remain averse to cherishing the idea of global citizenship without reservations.

As far as the recent tide of events is concerned, the widening urban/rural divide and inequitable access to natural resources have given way to the rise of nationalism, patriotism, and a stronger assertion of national identity as a defining trait of the self. As long as exploitation and the denial of the voice of the vulnerable exists the concept of citizenship itself remains a difficult one to grasp. Also, lingering issues as the propagation of religious supremacy, discrimination based on cast, skin-color, gender, or sexual orientation are visible challenges to the core ideas of global citizenship. Legal recognition and equitable treatment of people are at the heart of global citizenship, and these are fundamental prerequisites to anything more nuanced.

India is a land where the mention of global citizenship is met with familiarity, enthusiasm but also in some cases with fear or rejection. In this nation, home to 1.36 billion human beings, the key to shaping tomorrow's global citizens lies in encouraging empathy and solidarity between people that are different to oneself and to connect heart, mind and hands in tackling today's problems. Given the rich repository of values and cultures at India's disposal, it is well poised to set an example of peaceful co-existence of people with very different backgrounds. There are many challenges that remain on the pathway to build a more equitably, just and fair society, however, India has a strong potential to become a vivid advocate for global citizenship.

## Promoting global citizenship principles

Global citizenship subscribes to collaboration across boundaries of place and identity wherein everybody is responsible for the wellbeing of our world at large. However, as we have seen so far, specific issues like accounting for the local environment, resisting the fallback to easier, populist messaging and the lack of a coherent message to disseminate amongst the masses persist. Also, to be a framework for action that applies not only to the elite with resources but also to everyone, global citizenship needs to be grounded in the living reality of each person. This makes the task to find universal values in the vast human cultures even more challenging. Looking at the Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map, one can imagine how the extremes of the traditional vs. secular-rational values can clash. We are far away from having a global consensus on topics such as marriage, abortion, gender diversity, or wealth distribution, to name just a view. The political systems, philosophical traditions, and religious teachings heavily influence the dominating value systems in all world regions.

Conditions vary vastly in different geographical places and times. What may work in a specific environment may fail to yield results in another. To adapt to these variations, there is a need to break down the elements of global citizenship to levels where it starts becoming relevant for local communities and merit inclusion in their typical discourse. To enable participation at the local level, it is crucial to ensure the representation of people's will and its implementation on the ground. A point of departure are schools, where the seed for collaboration in diversity can be planted at an early age.

Acquiring global citizenship requires a certain level of practice to develop a set of competencies. According to the OECD these are the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development. If we are serious about nurturing and scaling these competencies, we need to focus on teaching these in the classrooms. Instead, the spotlight is currently on building parallel delivery systems or remedial programs. To solve this imbalance, using educational tools and aligning our teaching paradigm with the values of global citizenship are novel ways of propagating a generational shift steeped in universal ethics.

Global citizenship, though, is not a subject that can be taught like physics or biology. The dispositions of individuals to be global citizens is not an exact science. However, there are several growing attempts to integrate global citizenship practices and principles throughout



curricula in schools and universities. For example, UNESCO is spearheading an initiative to promote global citizenship education. In their approach, global citizenship education can be a critical factor in achieving more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies. A reference to the value of promoting global citizenship can also be found in the SDGs. Specifically, goal 4.7 states that "by 2030, [the aim is] to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

Considering the large world population, this is a very ambitious goal. It becomes clear that the responsibility lies not only with schools and teachers, parents or politicians but also on each of us. Fortunately, we can see many more actors promoting global citizenship principles, the SDGs or careers that aim to create positive social impact.

Additionally, we can see the efforts to gather more data about student's global citizenship competencies. The OECD's PISA study now includes questions that aim to capture global competencies in terms of knowledge and cognitive skills. Achieving a deep integration of global citizenship education throughout schools' curricula is a vital step. However, it requires ongoing efforts and lobbying by its proponents. To sustain and support these positive developments, we will need the proper capacitation for educators to be prepared and trained to bring global competencies into the classrooms. When teachers allow students to raise topics on ethical, moral, social and civic issues for constructive discussions, it will enable today's youth to express their take and refine their thought on varied subjects. Such a free environment creates an ideal ground for students to carry out their experiments and explore new avenues. This can inspire them to imbibe the values of empathy, collaboration, and reasoning, all of which play a pivotal role in a global citizen's life, just like the appreciation of diversity and the potential of any human.

Therefore, an important goal of global citizenship education is to incentivize individuals to adopt a broad mindset. One of the indicators of becoming a global citizen is recognizing and removing one's "tunnel vision". Diverse thoughts aid in cultivating multiplicity and accommodation in our mindsets. They are said to possess a 'revolutionary power', an idea whose proof is manifested in global experiences and personal stories. Schools are formative spaces where social identity is constructed. Teachers play an influential role in developing the worldview of the next generation. Tangible activities around SDGs may increase a feeling

of responsibility in learners. Even little projects with a positive and visible impact, such as installing recycling opportunities, workshops about gender equality or community cleanup activities, may seed in students the feeling of empowerment. When pairing reflective educational practices with tangible actions, global citizenship as an overarching concept will be in a favorable position to make inroads into the local realm.

However, the task is to make global citizenship accessible for vast sections of the population, regardless of age, income, and access to education. It is essential to reach as many different actors and sectors as possible. Schools are just a tiny piece of the puzzle. The complex challenges we face require proximate collaborations across academia, nonprofits, corporations, media, private organizations, and government. Complementary approaches such as involving critical journalism, digital storytelling, ensuring adequate representation of minorities in institutions and incorporating their agendas are significant in the broader scheme of things. Ultimately, the benefits of global citizenship are meant to trickle down to the level of every individual.

Encouraging individuals to take action can, in turn, galvanize a community. Although populist nationalistic culture exists at the top of several national governments, there is also a deep network of civil servants and social actors who hold global citizenship as a core value. These are the other, less visible set of actors who help take global citizenship into local heartlands. They are an in-built bulwark protecting the system from its shocks and macro tendencies. Responsible citizens contributing to interest-based causes help us discern their inclination to a certain extent. Structured interventions with such candidates can upskill them with new mental frameworks, tools and intercultural fluency. This then allows them to contribute to society with the awareness that the problems they face may not be local but present globally as well.

A serious challenge we face is that a war of influence has marked the previous decade. In the current politically and socially charged environment, misinformation campaigns and heavily biased news play an active role in tapping into social anxiety and our pent-up emotions in the hope of eliciting an aggressive response. Country-first ideologies have found considerable support in many nations in the world. Social proof and herd effects are strong forces and disproportionately affect the marginalized and vulnerable. We must recognize that personal or institutional biases of the media cannons contribute significantly to building our flawed understanding of the world. In such an environment, it is the easy voices that will gain support, not those who offer complexity.

As enterprises, corporations, and organizations spring up in different parts of the world, globalization's central role in their day-to-day operations becomes increasingly conspicuous. The economic, social, cultural, and political benefits of globalization are inimitable. To utilize these benefits efficiently and sustainably, all organizations should focus on becoming interdisciplinary and inclusive. A heightened awareness on these fronts shall then serve as precursors for the organizations to become globalized. In carrying out this project, nonprofit organizations should not be treated or consider themselves as eternal saviors. Instead, they must be seen as the means to an end. It should be the aspiration of the majority of such organizations to eventually become defunct because then it would mean that their beneficiaries would have been empowered enough to be their own first line of defense.

Yet another set of actors are the ones who themselves wield leverage. People who have a tremendous amount of privilege, wealth and power must take it on themselves to democratize opportunities for the sake of others. If the spheres of influence gradually extend into a forum for the discussion of matters pertaining to individuals and organizations alike, it can greatly help create a drastic alternative for people convinced of the vanity of globalization. Since most global citizen icons are larger than life characters who are difficult to emulate by the audience we are trying to reach, the focus should be on making the concept more familiar and approachable. Everybody can act as a global citizen. By introducing relatable role models, we unearth a linkage and establish a communicable bridge between the role models and the local inhabitants, thereby serving as a vehicle for dispersing global values.

The ability to simultaneously contain and process conflicting worldviews is at the heart of global citizenship. Global exposure and intercultural immersion expand a person's ability to acknowledge and understand multiple points of view, some of which may fundamentally differ from their own. The mental frame required to think from multiple dimensions, taking into account diverse viewpoints and striving to accommodate them into coexistence, is the hallmark of a global citizen. While global citizenship is anchored on the belief of working towards a shared destiny for humanity, an emphasis on personal commitment to achieving social justice and equality is vital to realizing the same. The existing normative gap between local and global societies is a void that can be filled through proactive global citizenry. Orienting oneself towards openness, reflecting diversity in actions and caring for others without taking a paternalistic approach can combine to create a formidable framework for resolving global issues in the 21st century. As enunciated by Antoine Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, "In a world in which all problems are global, there is no way countries can handle issues by themselves; we need global response".

## Way Forward: Challenges and Limitations

Global citizenship is still an inchoate idea for many and faces hindrances on multiple fronts. It has often been misconstrued as a bridge to be burned rather than a bridge to be crossed. Inherent in any solution we propose are certain challenges that constrain the adoption and practice of it. Even though global citizenship on paper may seem like a colossal project with lofty ideals, practical and sustainable steps implemented every day to advance its values go a long way in producing tangible results.

The main challenges in positioning global citizenship as an applicable and robust concept are the difficulty of defining universal values, the halo of elitism, the rising tide of nationalism, the perception of threat by cultures different to ours as well as the stark difference in socio-economic conditions, leading to a firm rejection of globalization throughout growing segments of societies. Additionally, the environment for global collaboration has been put to the test in recent years by "nation-first" ideologies taking root in some countries. In many countries, the socio-political environment encourages or pressures organizations to stay as local as possible via policies, visa regulations, etc. Nonprofits with external financing are labeled "foreign agents". These developments show just some of the limits for global citizenship becoming a strong concept for sustainable and peaceful development, especially when seen as superseding or competing with notions of national citizenship.

The most significant edge or limit of global citizenship is exposed when we are faced with binary choices such as global vs. national, choice vs. social expectations or the elite vs. poor. Binary options breed ever-increasing polarization because they create misunderstandings and a mental shift towards zero-sum thinking. To succeed, global citizenship must break up this dichotomy and show its strength as a more plural and open concept, acknowledging the multiple layers of identity each person carries.

Opposition is the instinctual response to any bias or worldview being threatened. The people pushed to the invisible periphery of development fall prey to narrow nativism and get beguiled by large actors promoting nationalism. Non-strategic conversations with fringe groups pushes them further away from the center. This is because the populist narratives are those of ease, protectionism and maintaining the status quo. When people grapple with issues such as disease, refugees, gender equality, etc. they feel powerless and guilty about choosing global citizenship. In many spaces, the world is missing the right of expression because there is already a fear of being punished for speaking one's truth. The lack of safe spaces for discourse and differing opinions is worrisome. Democratic engagement and

growing belief in ill-conceived or broken democracies can become a severe handicap for the future of global citizenship. It is difficult to communicate and educate others when the goal is to help people come to terms with disturbing or challenging knowledge. A parallel communication channel must be opened to provide people with a practical, sustainable alternative in response to extreme anti-globalization sentiments. This can, over time, replace the arguments of nativism and nationalism.

Taking the message of global citizenship to the ordinary citizens and elucidating it in simple and clear words will infuse a new verve into the planet-wide community. The core values embossed in global citizenship condemn inequality and barriers to intercultural exchange. They serve as an antidote to the economic and social imbalance prevalent today. The key is to find the right message, disseminate it through the right set of actors and unshackle global citizenship from its elitist relations.

## Conclusion

The world today is not the same as it was a couple of decades ago. It has undergone a sea change, transforming aspects of our lives, livelihoods, ecosystem and society. This white paper had set out to familiarize and explain to the reader the meaning of global citizenship, its relevance today, our present position from a global viewpoint and solutions for the widespread adoption of global citizenship. The content of the paper is owed to a group of global citizenship practitioners that work to promote its principles in different contexts around the world.

As a result of our discussions, we can conclude that global citizenship is not a homogeneous concept but serves as a powerful framework for an ethic of care for the world and each other. It allows for a plurality of values and identities. Instead of being an elitist concept, the practice of global citizenship applies to anyone regardless of origin, color, gender, wealth or any other marker meant to differentiate people. As a guiding principle, global citizenship points toward the appreciation of diversity and finding unity in this diversity by finding common grounds to tackle today's global challenges.

Together we have identified various issues plaguing the state of global citizenship today. As part of the remedy, we propose a strong focus on integrating the principles of global citizenship as ethics of care into the curricula of educational institutions. However, we also stressed that the promotion of such ethics could not be reduced to being the sole responsibility of these institutions. The need of the moment is to compose an easy and practical message of sustaining global citizenship practices. To convey the message and ensure it penetrates local inlands, identifying and empowering the right set of mediators is peremptory. By systematically dismantling fallacies and delusions, we aid in softening the aggressive posture of skeptical communities towards global citizenship and smoothen their integration into the global fraternity. Educating people and shattering the glass wall of elitism will usher in innovation, humanism and diversity.

The essence of global citizenship lies in the spirit of teamwork and camaraderie. The Melton Foundation and egomonk, as co-conveners of the roundtable, recognize the need to forge solutions through collaborative action. Through our initiatives and projects, we aim to be a strong promoter of the principles of global citizenship throughout the world. The Melton Foundation follows its framework of Awareness, Responsibility and Action to incentivize positive change in this world. The concept of global citizenship has excellent potential to become a unifying element in tackling the challenges we share as a human family. We

strongly believe that collaboration across boundaries is the key to achieving tangible progress.

The planet stands at a critical juncture today during a pandemic that has forced people everywhere to introspect on our journey as a human force hitherto. With economies ravaged and livelihoods destroyed, the dark underbelly of the epoch of relentless development has been exposed. The COVID-19 induced anthropause has called upon the whole of humanity to unite and contemplate the dynamics of the post-pandemic world. This opportunity beckons us to rise above our conditioned mindset and narrow paradigms and discover our role as global citizens. By shedding individualistic approaches, we appeal to the collective human conscience to join hands for a reliable, sustainable, and peaceful future. The die is yet to be cast, and the onus is on us to chronicle the annals of history as responsible world citizens inhabiting an inclusive and tolerant macrocosm.

## Appendix

### Name of roundtable participants

Shehzia Lilani - Country Director - India, Amani Institute

Brinda Adige - Director, Global Concerns India

Prof. Hadagali Ashoka - Assistant Professor, BMS College of Engineering

Rishabh Lalani - Independent Fundraiser

Prateek Khare - Head of Startup Partnerships, Swissnex

Alen Maletić - Global Network Coordinator, Bridge 47

Dr. Steffen Bethmann - Executive Director, Melton Foundation

Sartaj Anand - Founder, egomonk and Moderator of Roundtable

### Guiding Questions of the roundtable discussion

- Defining the landscape:
  - What definition of global citizenship do you personally employ or within your organizations?
  - Is there a set of universal values that define or inform it?
- Making it real: How can we make global citizenship tangible and practice it in our everyday lives?
- Scaling capacities:
  - How are you incorporating this sense of global citizenship and interconnectedness across your organizations?
  - Cross-functional and international collaboration are realities of the modern world. How are you cultivating this ability in others?
- Defining the edge:
  - Where are the limits of global citizenship?
  - When does our own culture come first?
- Mapping threats: What are the biggest threats to the concept of global citizenship?

The Melton Foundation thanks all panelists and people that helped in the production of the Whitepaper.

For questions and comments please write to [sbethmann@meltonfoundation.org](mailto:sbethmann@meltonfoundation.org)





*Global citizenship is a concept which intertwines our identity with the interconnected, interdependent world of today.*

It seeks to transcend geographical limitations and expand the definition of our personalities.

Operates beyond the traditional spheres of power. Also been described as "a way of life"; A set of guiding principles for a sustainable lifestyle.

The task of seeing oneself as a global citizen is complicated in an increasingly nationalistic, separated, protectionist and xenophobic world.

It is an elite concept.

... *Questions to advance the conversation* ... ?

Is global citizenship a homogeneous concept? Does it have space for multiple identities to exist?

How can global citizenship be grounded so that it applies to everyone? How can it shed its image of an elitist phenomenon?

How can global citizenship be a universal guiding principle for collaboration and sustainable behaviour?

*Fundamentals*

While globalization and globalism are more often associated with economic integration, global citizenship refers to a feeling of belonging, responsibility, and unity in diversity.



Two fundamental documents that build the base for Global Citizenship.



United Nations Declarations of Human Rights – “the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework of global challenges that we collectively need to address and calls for action

# Universal Context

Global citizenship is fluid in nature.

Global citizenship in no way or means endorses a homogeneity of opinion or consensus.

Global Citizenship suggests another layer of citizenship that transcends nationalism and points toward the shared destiny we face as humans.

Everybody is a global citizen.

Global citizenship is not aiming to compete with national, regional, or ethnic identities.

Its universality lies in mutual respect and the willingness to collaborate across boundaries to solve global problems.

Its universality lies in a familiar feeling and ethic of care for the environment within our spheres of influence.



## Indian Context

India's cultural fabric is a colourful mosaic of religions, languages, cultures, literary pieces, philosophies, and relics.

Today's Indian society has evolved through interactions with foreign elements while retaining a distinct flavour.

Maha Upanishad (500 CE)  
"The world is a family.  
One is a relative, the other stranger, say the small-minded.  
The entire world is a family, live the magnanimous."

18M

There is a rich Indian diaspora of 18 million citizens.

Along with endorsing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), India is an active signatory to the Paris Agreement.



Despite this, thought leadership on global citizenship is often found missing, or at best lacking, in modern India due to:

- widening urban/rural divide
- inequitable access to natural resources
- rise of nationalism, patriotism, and a more emphatic assertion of national identity

As long as exploitation and denial of the voice of the vulnerable exist in the popular perceptions of people, the concept of citizenship itself remains elusive.

In this home to 1.36 billion human beings, the key to shaping tomorrow's global citizens lies in encouraging and stimulating the youth to start linking their local maladies with international conflicts.

# Promoting Global Citizenship principles



Global citizenship needs to be grounded in the living reality of each person.

We will need the proper capacity building for educators to be prepared and trained to bring global competencies into the classrooms.



SDG 4.7 states that "by 2030, (the aim is) to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

2030



The responsibility lies, not only with schools and teachers, parents or politicians but also on each of us.



Projects such as installing recycling opportunities, workshops about gender equality, empathy or community cleanup activities, instil the feeling of empowerment in students.



Global citizenship needs to become more accessible.



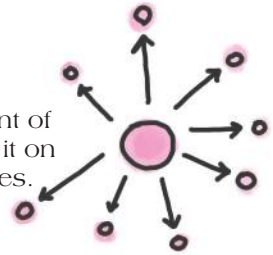
Government, corporations and nonprofit organizations should focus on pushing forward an ethic of care for the world and each other.



Everybody can act as a global citizen.



People who have a tremendous amount of privilege, wealth and power must take it on themselves to democratize opportunities.



Antoine Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, "In a world in which all problems are global, there is no way countries can handle issues by themselves; we need global response".

An additional emphasis on a personal commitment to achieving social justice and equality is vital to realizing the same.



## Way Forward: Challenges & Limitations

Global citizenship on paper may seem like a colossal project with lofty ideals, practical and sustainable steps implemented every day go a long way in producing tangible results.

The main challenges in positioning global citizenship as an applicable and robust concept are:



The difficulty of defining universal values



The halo of elitism



The rising tide of nationalism



The perception of threat by cultures different to ours



The stark difference in socio-economic conditions



"Nation-first" ideologies

# Way Forward to Succeed



Global citizenship must show its strength as a more plural and open concept



Acknowledge the multiple layers of identity each person carries



Parallel communication channels must be opened to in response to extreme anti-globalization sentiments



Communicating the message of global citizenship to ordinary citizens through simple and practical language



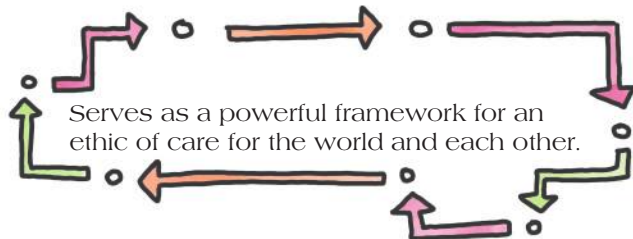
The key is to find the right message, disseminate it through the right set of actors and unshackle global citizenship from its elitist relations



## In Conclusion



Global citizenship is not a homogeneous concept.



Serves as a powerful framework for an ethic of care for the world and each other.



Allows for a plurality of values and identities.



The practice of global citizenship applies to anyone regardless of origin, colour, gender, wealth.



As a guiding principle, global citizenship points toward the appreciation of diversity and finding unity in this diversity by finding common grounds to tackle today's global challenges.