

Values for Global Citizenship

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Exploring Global Citizenship

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'Islamic Relief was founded in 1984 by a visionary (Dr. Hany El-Banna) who believed strongly in the Koranic verse that states if you save the life of one person it is as if you have saved the whole of humanity.' Lotifa Begum explained that 'This became a fundamental principle of Islamic Relief's humanitarian work.' She added that, 'Islamic Relief has also worked with Jubilee Debt Campaign for the last couple of years to seek debt cancellation for the poorest people and nations.' explaining that this is in tune with the Islamic perspective on debts and loaning money.

Exploring Global Citizenship

We live in a world which is replete with challenges, that of nearly 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty, almost 67 million children out of education and a number of conflicts from which livelihoods are shattered. Despite these challenges, the notion of a global citizen is one we all share because we live in an interconnected world that can no longer be ignored.

As human beings we essentially share universal principles of love, care, morality, peace, happiness and would all say we are seeking peace in our lives.

Therefore the global citizen is a unique individual in my eyes, someone who cares about the future of not only their community but can also identify with the responsibilities and duties they have towards their fellow human beings.



At Islamic Relief we strive to serve the world's most needy and poorest, whilst our work spans to 40 countries across Africa, Asia, Middle East and Europe as an international development NGO we recognise how integral it is to society that we have global citizens who feel obliged to make a positive contribution to the world in a time of fast paced technology yet multiple opportunities to improve our

world.

Defining the global citizen is then something we can do not only from a theoretical perspective but also at a practical level because some of the world's greatest leaders were proactive global citizens who cared about making a significant positive change in society, these include the likes of Martin Luther King, Mahatma Ghandhi, the Arab Spring we saw not so long ago, as well as spiritual and political figures we read about in our history textbooks.

To be a global citizen isn't something that happens overnight, which is why education and continual learning is of vital importance to becoming a responsible individual who can impact on society.

The essence of a global citizen is found in their values, attitudes and skills developed over time: one who is aware of the wider world and has a sense of personal responsibility in their own role as a citizen; someone who respects and values diversity in a multicultural and multifaith world; one who does not tolerate injustice and is driven by the principles of humanity where they seek justice and fairness in their society for every individual no matter what background, colour, creed or faith they belong to; someone who actively participates in their community at a local and global level; one who is willing to act in a way that makes our world more sustainable and equal as well as being responsible for their own actions as individuals who are part of a wider collective.

The global citizen then is an amazing person in my eyes, because he or she can identify with more than one set of lenses through which to perceive the world. The skills and attitudes that are developed are multiple including their own sense of self-esteem and identity, gaining an ability to think critically, be inquisitive about the world, have the confidence to challenge injustice and inequality wherever they see it and argue or debate for a better alternative, as well as showing respect for others and cooperating as well as negotiating in times of conflict whether at a local or global level.

The values and attitudes we find amongst global citizens are amongst some of the most noble, including their commitment and drive to social justice and ability to be concerned for their environment and sustainable solutions for others.



It is therefore the believe that young people through development education can cultivate, nurture and develop these skills, values and attitudes that make exploring global citizenship essential to our work as practitioners in the NGO sector as well as at a wider level in international organisations and with governments.

Perhaps it is in the hope that the next generation will be empowered to lead our world in a force of positivity and drive it through positive change despite the 21st century challenges we face that we can truly hope to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and be individuals in a world that can live in harmony and peace.

I want to end on the note of the wise words of Mahatma Ghandhi who inspired many and is the alumni of the university I was fortunate to become 'globally' aware in and meet the world. He said, "**We need to be the change we wish to see in the world**" and that in essence reflects the true global citizen. Whether through faith or values we choose to act, the most important aspect of global citizenship is that the individual is compelled to act in a positive way. The global citizen is the one who takes action to solve issues in the world through themselves foremost and then their communities.