

## Ep. 6: Girls as Global Citizens

[00:00:00] **voice note:** With technology advancements countries are becoming more interconnected and we are becoming increasingly exposed in this global world. Personally, I feel that only being involved in mundane activities, for example, simply buying products from another country. There's not establish us as an global citizen.

[00:00:18] It is when you become aware of the global challenges and is prepared to act in interest of human race, then would you identify as a global citizen?

[00:00:25] **Trudy Hall:** Hello there. You're listening to on educating girls, creating a world of possibilities, a podcast produced by the coalition of girls schools and I'm Trudy hall, your host for these important conversations about girls and their education in our conversation today, I'm interested in exploring a term that has emerged in recent years in almost every conversation about education that.

[00:00:47] Global before our listeners jumped to the conclusion that they know what that word means, particularly when educators use it. Let me explain why a deep dive is needed. Educators, speak of having a global [00:01:00] mindset or global competencies being a global citizen or the importance of having a global perspective or global worldview.

[00:01:07] I think we all assume we know what is meant when that word appears on the website of a school or in the remarks of a school administrator to describe program or approach the. But I think that assumption is risky. I would argue that the word global has become so ubiquitous that we no longer stop to think about how, why, and for what purpose it's being used.

[00:01:28] We need clarity on what being global really refers to when it is applied to a school's curriculum or a school's pedagogical. So that we can assess if those programs really are fostering opportunities for students to develop skills, to ensure their readiness for a world where traditional borders and systems are integrated into a complex.

[00:01:50] As important the adults and girls' lives need to know how to add value in conversations with girls who are striving to become globally aware, how can we do that? Well, we might not be using the [00:02:00] same language as we begin this conversation. Let's hear what questions girls are thinking about.

[00:02:06] **voice note:** I would like to know how could schools promote global awareness in a way that's interesting for students.

[00:02:12] In a context where people tend to think very locally, what can be done to raise awareness of the importance of thinking more globally. I'm very interested in narrowing inequality gaps, and one of the main causes of it is education. So I would like to ask an expert on global education, how they think young people can contribute to narrowing this education and inequality that virus between countries.

[00:02:35] A question I would like to ask an expo on global education is how feasible is global education for everyone in a grand scale in the next 5, 10, 15 years

[00:02:46] **Trudy Hall:** today, let's highlight some of the ways we use the term global in education to get parents and educators on the same page to ensure that parents really understand how the word global is being integrated.

[00:02:57] Educational. It is far too [00:03:00] easy to use the word globalist an adjective these days. Next time you read or listen to the news. You'll see what I mean. Since this word has taken on immense importance in the realm of schools and in the lives of our girls, it's time. We had a very intentional conversation about its implications for the education of girls.

[00:03:16] My guest today is Claire. Sisisky the executive director of the global education benchmark. A nonprofit organization that researches and establishes model practices in the field of global education. Clara was a founding board member of this organization coming to that role through extensive educational and administrative experiences, designing and implementing programs of a translational nature, perhaps as relevant for our listeners.

[00:03:42] She's also the parent of a daughter who attends a girl's school. Claire. It's such a delight to demystify a topic that is dear to me. Preparing girls for a life in a world in which systems, structures and cultures are interconnected around the globe, where it matters, what they [00:04:00] know about the world and how its various systems impact their lives.

[00:04:03] It's so good to have. So I want to start our conversation. Um, letting our listeners learn a little bit more about you, Claire, and how you got into this work before we dive into important definitions that are going to add clarity to our conversation, and then we'll move on to strategies for parents. How did you come to be interested in focusing on global education?

[00:04:22] What launched. On your path in this realm, it's

[00:04:25] **Clare Sisisky:** such a part of who I am, who my family is, uh, who I'm raising my children to be that it's difficult to know when it really started. Um, but I would say in my own elementary school, growing up in the UK, I did have, um, a good number

of friends whose family. Came from different countries and immigrated to, uh, to England at that, uh, at various times.

[00:04:51] Um, and I do think that, you know, really kind of laid a foundation for me, having friends whose families came from [00:05:00] Nigeria, from Orishas, from Bangladesh, from India. And that, you know, helped me to understand that the world is in some ways, a small place, as vast as it seems when you're young. Um, and then you through my professional life, um, have really, you know, kind of drawn on my own family story of moving to the United States when I was in high school.

[00:05:26] And that has been a big part of my professional life and my work with students in my desire to work with students. Um, and academically, you know, I always had this sort of academic and intellectual interest in the world. I studied, um, south Asia. In undergraduate and graduate school. Um, but I was always involved in schools and summer camps in working in schools, in tutoring, in schools.

[00:05:55] And so I really had this sort of dual interest in [00:06:00] understanding and connecting with the world, but also in working with young people. And, and I, I went into education and I loved every minute of the numerous jobs I had. But there were certainly times when I lived and worked abroad that, um, gave kind of gave me pause and reflection.

[00:06:20] And one of those times I think was especially instrumental in my focus in global education since that time. And I worked in Beijing. I worked for the national committee on us, China relations, their education department. And I worked with teachers. Students in Beijing, China, and I really saw how many of those students had a strong, thirst and curiosity for the way that the world worked for questioning, um, in a way that I really didn't expect or sort of.

[00:06:56] You know, basic understanding of China [00:07:00] and Chinese society prior to living there was informed by assumptions or stereotypes that were kind of embedded in my subconscious probably. Um, and so, you know, I saw how they were. Um, not only multi-lingual, but also curious also, um, you know, I was hungry to kind of develop the skills, um, to thrive in a world that they understood to be truly interconnect.

[00:07:29] **Trudy Hall:** I think your answer, um, helps our listeners understand why you were selected as our, uh, guest for this program, because you really have personally interwoven, um, professional, global interests into your life and into your way of being and into your family's life. So, um, so thank you for that. Um, I, I am curious because we often use the term global citizen and you know, when educators say they have aspirations for students to be.

[00:07:57] Global citizens. What does that mean? [00:08:00] What, what are we talking about?

[00:08:02] **Clare Sisisky:** Yeah, it's a term that I hear a lot. I also hear it interchange with other terms. Um, and so I think, you know, this is a really helpful place to start. You know, the part that I would like to focus on in the global citizen term is the citizen part.

[00:08:18] It's citizenship is about engagement. It's about action. It's about taking action on issues that you care about. And so, you know, and we're really talking about global citizenship or global citizenship education. We're talking about empowering students. To contribute to a more sustainable, more peaceful, more just world, including in their own community or even on their own school campus.

[00:08:47] **Trudy Hall:** It's interesting because I've, I've heard the same that oftentimes global work starts locally. Uh, and in fact, that's the best place for it to start. I think you might agree.

[00:08:57] **Clare Sisisky:** Yeah, absolutely. When we talk about global [00:09:00] education, we talk about global as local national and international, and, you know, uh, um, many of the parents listening to this podcast will be lucky enough to live in communities and attend schools where.

[00:09:14] The cultural diversity is abundant. And so, you know, that the intercultural piece even is not even just international or national, it is really local and even school and community based as well.

[00:09:28] **Trudy Hall:** I like that. She focused on the word citizen in global citizen, but now I want to shift to another vocabulary term global competencies.

[00:09:37] What, what are included in global competencies?

[00:09:39] **Clare Sisisky:** Yeah. So global competencies, you know, it's a relatively new term. And, um, it's really what educators have. Kind of termed or created this term in order to capture the knowledge, the skills and the dispositions that they believe [00:10:00] students need to learn and need to develop in order to be able to thrive, uh, and contribute to a sustainable society.

[00:10:10] Globally. Um, and so, you know, it differs than some of the more traditional educational outcomes or markers that we might look at in mathematics or in. Uh, reading comprehension. Um, it's really looking at, you know, what is it about the world, um, today and an increasingly in the future that, um, is helping that we need

our students to be ready for, and we need to empower them to be part of that in a way that is, uh, responsible and in a way that contributes.

[00:10:46] Um, and so. You know, many, many schools will be looking at or thinking about how to embed and how to teach global competencies as part of their curriculum, as part of their teaching [00:11:00] and learning in order to grow and develop their students as global citizens.

[00:11:07] **Trudy Hall:** Can you think of, um, a resource that you might direct our parents to, where they could find a specific list and description of what educators call global competencies is?

[00:11:18] Is there such a.

[00:11:21] **Clare Sisisky:** There is, um, some of the most, I think accessible work and clear work is done by an organization called the Asia society. They have a really great framework, um, you know, and some of the things that they outline or things like recognize perspective. Or, um, you know, communicate across difference, right?

[00:11:44] Communicating, um, adapting your communication style in different contexts in different audiences, right. Is an example of a global competence where. Um, you know, you might be asked to do that in a classroom or you might not.

[00:12:00] Uh, but we certainly can all agree that in as adults in our professional world, that being able to communicate and adapt or communication and understand with empathy, the audience that we're working to communicate with are essential skills even today.

[00:12:15] And that we know. Those will continue to be essential for students going forward. And so global competencies, you know, they really look at, uh, knowledge and skills and dispositions and kind of how they interact. You know, for example, like something like international trade on, no learning about that in a classroom, truly understanding what that means in terms of, uh, not just historical, um, you know, policy agreements that are related to international trade or economic systems or theories that underline it.

[00:12:52] But, you know, Why if my family ordered a new stove, is it not here yet? Even though it's four months after they said it was going [00:13:00] to be right. So how do these things, how does their understanding impact how they understand the world around them? How do they see that interconnection? And then what are the skills that they need in order to be able to partake in that world?

[00:13:13] Um,

[00:13:13] **Trudy Hall:** you've done a superb job, uh, breaking down global citizenship, breaking down the competencies as we. Is there any other term that you use quite frequently or educators use that we really ought to have in front of us before we go

[00:13:26] **Clare Sisisky:** further, when we talk about global education, you know, we really talk about global perspective.

[00:13:33] Global issues and global competencies in, in this, in every student's learning every year. So, you know, what we're really trying to say is that these things, things like global competencies or really understanding a complex global issue. You know, like international trade or economic systems or, you know, systemic racial injustice.

[00:13:59] [00:14:00] That is an issue in so many places around the world or climate change that these global issues. You don't just learn about it one time in one class, right? Justice in the same way that you wouldn't be, you know, just, um, learning algebra one time for eight weeks in one year, right? That these skills are connected and they build on each other, right?

[00:14:24] This knowledge, these dispositions, they grow over time and they build on each other year over year. So when we talk about global education, sometimes people think of it as a program. Or a travel program or trip or a, um, initiative or it's for some students and not for others. And what we're really looking about is, you know, in order for our students to be, you know, ready to thrive in their world in any career path that they might choose.

[00:14:53] Um, and in order for them to be global citizens, we really need these global perspectives, global issues and global competencies, [00:15:00] um, in their growth and development every year for every year.

[00:15:04] **Trudy Hall:** A young woman, doesn't wake up in the morning and say, I'm a global citizen. I mean, it's a process of becoming and are there, are there signs or signals along the path that let us know or let educators know, parents know that she really is developing a more informed view?

[00:15:20] What should we be listening for? Looking for the way she moves in the

[00:15:24] **Clare Sisisky:** world? No, I have a 10 year old daughter and, um, you know, the, the person she was two years ago is not. And anything close to the person that she is today, you know, so I think it is, you know, they're changing so much, they're taking in so much.

[00:15:41] Um, and I certainly see her reflecting back to me, things that I said, husband says that our extended family say, or even that we don't say, but that our actions reflect right. Whether we, whether we like it or not, we see it coming back at us. And, um, you know, that's one of the [00:16:00] joys of parenting, the mirror that is held up to us.

[00:16:03] Um, but I do think, you know, parents and communities play a really important role in that. Um, and, and I will say that, you know, people sometimes ask me, well, when should we start this kind of teaching and learning? And I think it really is, uh, something that can be, can begin, um, as early as school starts or even before there's.

[00:16:24] So there's such an important. Role that, uh, families and communities and, and teachers play in this work and that it does really build over time. I think one of the things that is exciting. Uh, you know, is, is that curiosity that really develops that understanding of the world beyond your own self and your own immediate family and your own immediate class that starts to develop, you know, and that berries, you know, um, second grade, third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth [00:17:00] grade, you know, these are really key grade levels that, um, you know, you know, so ages.

[00:17:07] You know, eight to 12, right. For those listeners outside of the United States system, um, they really are able to kind of get curious about the world beyond themselves. Um, and then, you know, later on we might see a shift more to. The sort of social dynamics or back closer to home or closer to school community in, in terms of the interpersonal interaction and focus of that energy.

[00:17:33] And so anything that we can do during that time to really help them understand that, that curiosity isn't just about something that's far, far away, but that we are connected and we are interdependent. Um, on each other as human beings on this,

[00:17:52] **Trudy Hall:** I want to shift specifically to talking just a little bit more about, uh, girls, and I know that your organization, the global education [00:18:00] benchmark group, um, is also a strategic partner on the global forum coming up on, on girls education, which she's convened by NCGS.

[00:18:08] So that tells me that you care deeply about girls becoming global citizens. Why in your opinion. As a mother of a D of a girl, is it critical for girls to become global citizens for parents to sort of put this on their list and dive into?

[00:18:24] **Clare Sisisky:** I think one of the reasons is that we, we know that for many girls, they have.

[00:18:32] Higher level of interest, or they are disproportionately represented in schools, global education programs indicating to us that they are interested in, in how the world works. They're interested in, um, global issues or challenges. They want to be part of solutions, both locally, as well as global. Um, and so, you know, I think that's one of the reasons is trying to help [00:19:00] schools and parents to do that.

[00:19:02] Well. Um, the other thing is, you know, that a lot of research shows that girls are more interested, more committed, more willing to explore college and career options in fields like stem and fields like mathematics, where they are traditionally, maybe underrepresented, if they can see the relevance. That field in making an impact on the world in an issue that they care about.

[00:19:28] So like we, as adults know that we can't really do anything about the changes that are happening in our climate and the impact that it's going to have the disproportionate impact. It will have, you know, on communities that are under resources and underrepresented and global conversations. We can't do anything without scientists, without mathematicians, without engineers.

[00:19:51] And so how do we get. Uh, girls to see that those, if they care about this issue, those are fields that can be empowering to them. [00:20:00] You know, those are fields that where they can, like, they can be awesome at those things and they can do it for good. And so, you know, how do we, uh, I think that's one of the areas of synergy between the global education benchmark group and NCGS.

[00:20:15] Um, it's really that shared mission. Um, the other thing that I'll say is, you know, that we have a lot of girls schools within our network. We share some common members. Um, and so, you know, supporting all of those schools to make sure that girls voices and, and, um, girls education is a part of their global education programs at best score or are really important and what we have found.

[00:20:41] And, and of course, you know, we can't. Those same outcomes. We want boys to develop global competencies. Um, and I, I do think though that there is, uh, maybe some different approaches or some research backed strategies that can kind of help us to think about even for our [00:21:00] co-ed educators, schools and educators that we work with that, you know, there's this.

[00:21:05] Um, understanding in that community of what, you know, what strategies might be really helpful for girls. So one of the things that we always take away from our work and, and our conversations in NCGS communities from educators that specialize in working with girls are things that we really feel like are also relevant to the educators that work with girls in schools that are, um, you know, inclusive of all genders.



[00:21:32] You know, in my own research, I have been speaking with young alumni of, uh, of independent schools, um, a significant portion of them attending girls schools. And one of the things that they tell me that they is a consistent pattern that they're saying that they learned through their, through their global education programming.

[00:21:53] Is this getting comfortable with being uncomfortable? And that even though they, [00:22:00] um, you know, they're five to eight years out of high school. When I'm talking to them, they keep referring back to that skill, that skill of sort of entering into a new conversation or a new environment, or a collaboration with another partner score, not really knowing what's going to happen and just being, learning how to be comfortable with being uncomfortable, learning how to navigate that ambiguity or two.

[00:22:27] Sort of give up control, but also still take action and move forward. Um, and that they've been drawing on that over the past two years in their professional lives, that they, they are, they referenced those high school experiences as they are sort of navigating like film sets or, um, You know, there was a language barriers and supply chain or like graphic does not mean they're working all kinds of fields, right.

[00:22:53] Some directly global in nature and some not, but they're drawing on that skill set still. And so I think [00:23:00] that's an area too, where we have, um, you know, really had some resonance with work, making sure that our, all of our scores are supporting girls in developing that essential.

[00:23:12] **Trudy Hall:** Well, it's, it's interesting that you mentioned that because that's precisely what we've heard come up as a theme in this podcast.

[00:23:17] A number of times, which is this notion of ensuring that girls feel comfortable being uncomfortable. Um, in particularly in professional ways, particularly in intellectual ways, one of the goals of this podcast is to leave parents with some tools or language they can put to use almost immediately. In fairness, you've already done quite a bit of that in a excellent way throughout the answering and responses that you've given us.

[00:23:40] But are there three key takeaways that you think our parents could implement almost immediately?

[00:23:47] **Clare Sisisky:** Whether you have, I have a five-year-old or you have a 15 year old or a 25 year old. There are lots of ways that you can implicitly and explicitly show your children that you understand that your way of being in the [00:24:00] world is only one of many valuable, valid ways of being a human in the world.

[00:24:06] And that is for many of them. You know, I live in Virginia, that's very local for me. Right. You know, we, I, I, there is so much cultural, um, uh, you know, political, racial, ethnic, linguistic diversity, all around me all the time. Um, and so how do I help my child understand that there are multiple ways of, of, um, living.

[00:24:33] A valuable life, a valid and dignified life, as well as, you know, helping them kind of figure out who they are. Right. So there's two parts to that, right? You have to sort of, um, help them understand that their way of being or family's way of being or a community way as being, or, you know, whether it's religious, cultural, linguistic, you know, is one only one way, but it's also a valuable, valid way and they [00:25:00] should embrace that and understand it and be proud of who they are.

[00:25:04] Um, and so, you know, that's, I think those two things kind of go to. And the easiest way to sort of describe that is if you I've, I've worked with many teenagers who think that their way of seeing the world is, is normal, is the way to see the world. And that then when they encounter people, which they inevitably will, um, who don't see the world the same way, then those people are wrong or those people don't understand, or there's something wrong with them.

[00:25:35] And so. You know, or it leads to sort of an internal kind of identity crisis. Like if they do see, um, you know, value and, uh, you know, and strength in those other opinions, it, it leads them to feel well. Like everything that I was ever taught implicitly or explicitly is now up for questioning. And then I think related to [00:26:00] that, the second takeaway is that difference.

[00:26:02] Isn't. And so, you know, one of the things I like to talk with kindergartners and kindergarten teachers about is this concept of the same and different, right? And so there are so many messages in our society, especially when girls enter adolescence that different is bad. Right. And that being the same is something that is desired.

[00:26:22] And so even if they wouldn't IX, they wouldn't tell you that. There are so many messages coming at them that, that support that mindset. And so from a young age, how can we counter that? How can we see different as different and different is not good or bad, right. Sometimes difference. You might disagree with some differences.

[00:26:41] You might like some differences, but different is just different. And so that sounds like such a simple thing, but I think parents and families can play a lot of, um, a big role in normalizing. And it is also related to the many valuable ways of being in the world. So for example, because my husband and I [00:27:00] lived and worked in China, when our son used to like slurp his noodles, we would always say, well, you can't do that here because here in our country and our culture in our family, that's.

[00:27:13] But in China, it's not rude. So, you know, if you ever find yourself in China, you should go ahead and slurp your noodles because there is a sign that you really enjoying your meal, and it's a compliment to the chef, et cetera. So, you know, there are little things like that. And if that's not been your family experience, there are many people in your community, in your school that can support that, that you can engage with and kind of, um, can help you with that.

[00:27:38] But there are also lots of books. That are really good at those kinds of things. For third one is to understand that the world has changed. And I think, you know, we've always known that, like we know it intellectually that the world is changing, but I think we are also, and I'm guilty of this. Like we, especially over the past two [00:28:00] years, like as parents, we hunger for like something in like a nostalgic version of our own childhood or something that like never really truly existed.

[00:28:10] Or if it did, there were so many other things at play that we didn't see happening because we. Um, you know, so I think helping them to live in the world that they live in. So part of that is about technology. Part of that is about, um, you know, engaging across difference in the local community. Um, part of it is about food.

[00:28:34] You know, what, what, what are they eating when you take them? When you get takeout from your local community, there are so many ways that we can help them see that and embrace and be excited for them about the world that they live in, because those differences are only gonna continue. Um, and I think. You know, and, and being, showing yourself to be adaptable, right.

[00:28:58] Practicing that [00:29:00] adaptability is only going to encourage them to be adaptable. And, you know, if we didn't know it before we know it now adaptability is an essential life skill. And it's not always something to be totally honest that at schools are always great at right. And so, you know, I think that is something that can, can come, um, from.

[00:29:21] **Trudy Hall:** Well, not only our school sometimes, uh, not great at it, but sometimes those of us who are set in our ways are not great at it either. So, so thank you for reminding me that I need to lift this conversation, trying a few more things and being a little more flexible. Uh, so thank you very much, Claire. This has been great.

[00:29:38] And I think that, um, what I'm going to do is make sure that, uh, we're able to capture all of this intelligence and put it out in the universe for. Take care now.

[00:29:47] **Clare Sisisky:** Yeah. Thank you, Trudy. It was a pleasure.

[00:29:49] **Trudy Hall:** I think it makes the most sense to conclude this episode with some voices from girls, from St.

[00:29:55] Catherine's school in Bramley England and Lavelle school in Barcelona, Spain, as they [00:30:00] speak about what being global means to them. Remember the world we are creating is for them. To organize and run. Let's have them have the final words.

[00:30:10] **voice note:** Um, the phrase global citizen means to me being aware of and learning about other countries or cultures, um, having lived in Spain, Singapore, and England, I have learned a lot about the world around me and others experiences through this.

[00:30:24] I think that having a global perspective will benefit me in the field. As it will help me to relate more to people on a deeper level, like the world, um, in the future, I'd like to work in journalism, um, study abroad, um, having this perspective, well, definitely helped me a lot with this. I think that increasingly globalized work in which technology and social networks advance very quickly and they help us to connect to anyone anywhere it's in our hands, in other young people to try and take advantage of these advances in order to create a better world, a better.

[00:30:57] As someone once said, think global [00:31:00] act local. We have to be aware that all our actions have an impact, not only on others, but on the whole world is not about doing big things. It is about respecting and doing small day-to-day things. Railway to me, a global citizen is someone who is aware of the political, social and economic situations around the.

[00:31:18] More importantly, it is someone who is willing to engage in global issues through multiple perspectives and is prepared to think critically and ask questions. I think having a global perspective will benefit me in the future and that I am able to recognize stories beyond myself, to understand situations from all perspectives and empathize across communities.

[00:31:38] This is something that will allow me to socialize and connect with people of different backgrounds more easily. I want to pursue a career in politics. So I think global perspective is one of the most important things I need to have to be successful and do my job in the best way possible. So I think having a global perspective gives you an amazing opportunity to understand other people who might not really [00:32:00] relate to because of their different culture or values and encourages you to think outside the box.

[00:32:05] And my opinion. I think that being globally aware is the key to solving numerous difficulties in the future. For instance, to learn taught, to be globally aware

at a young age, learn to appreciate the differences existing among people, and also learn that those differences are. By differences. I mean, of course, race, sexual orientation, religion, and so on.

[00:32:26] These will do nothing less than prepare upcoming generations to unite and fight against other global issues such as climate change. Nowadays, people tend to focus on their own needs and they will do anything to accomplish their own objectives. Even if that means degrading others is dignity. The perfect example for this are businesses which practice child labor on under development.

[00:32:48] Breezing global awareness with lessen this kind of issues in the future because people would become less. Self-centered.

[00:32:58] **Trudy Hall:** This has been the sixth episode of [00:33:00] uneducated girls, as always. We would love to hear from you with thoughts and suggestions. They send comments or questions to [podcast@girlschools.org](mailto:podcast@girlschools.org) and join us next time. As we provide insights, information and resources you can put to use. Thanks for listening. It's important to the girls in your lives that you do.