History of Global Education in Canada

Since the 1960s, Canadians have actively sought to introduce an ever-widening array of global issues and orientations into our schools and classrooms. In this chapter, we begin by exploring some of the structural features of Canadian society, the Canadian political system and Canadian educational institutions. Together they form the backdrop for what has been a uniquely Canadian experience with global education.

Later in the chapter, we review the history of efforts to introduce international and global issues into Canadian schools and look at the present configuration of actors engaged in global education activities. Current approaches and initiatives at the national level are explored. We highlight some of the contemporary debates that are shaping current approaches to global education. Finally, we place the Canadian experience in comparative perspective.

The Canadian Context and the Post-WWII Rise of Humane Internationalism

Over the past half century, several features of Canadian geography and demography, as well as our political system and the evolution of our political culture, have profoundly shaped the Canadian experience of global education.

Canada is one of the largest countries in area in the world, with a relatively small population of 32.5 million (2006). Over the past 50 years, its population has become increasingly urbanized. The majority of its citizens are now concentrated in four main urban centers, and cluster along the border with the US. Nonetheless, there is still significant settlement in rural and remote areas, including aboriginal communities. Demographically, the country has always been a nation of diversity. The First Nations, French and British populations present at Confederation have been joined by immigrants from around the world. However, the origins of these immigrants and our approach to their assimilation into Canadian society have shifted profoundly over the country's history (Joshee, 2004). In 1996, one-sixth of Canada's total population was born outside of the country; about 70 per cent in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Politically, the British North America Act of 1867 established Canada as among the most decentralized federations in the world. Education, like many other aspects of social policy, is the exclusive jurisdiction of Canada's ten provinces and three territories; thus there is no federal department of education. Each of Canada's 13 jurisdictions has its own ministry or department of education. At the national level, the
constitutional division of powers strictly limits federal engagement in educational issues, except indirectly through the funding of non-governmental ventures and research. Nonetheless, the formation in 1967 of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) has provided an opportunity for pan-Canadian activities, focused especially on standards setting. Funding for both international awareness and multicultural citizenship education has been provided by the federal government since the 1970s (Lyons, 1996; Joshee, 2004).

Historically, the educational systems in each of Canada’s provinces and territories have developed distinctive structures, with different types of funding for denominational schools and different degrees of decentralization (Manzer, 2003). Manzer characterized the systems of Ontario and Canada’s Western provinces using the term “complex interdependence”; in these cases educational finance has traditionally been decentralized, with ministry officials, teachers’ organizations, school trustees and school boards sharing decision-making powers. Quebec and the Atlantic provinces have historically had much more centralized systems, with strong influence from teachers’ unions. In more recent decades, provincial authorities have reasserted financial and administrative leadership, consolidated the number of sub-provincial school districts, and cooperated less with teachers’ unions in their policy-setting activities, so that structurally Canada’s 13 education systems have converged (Manzer, 2003). Today there are approximately 15,500 schools in Canada – 10,100 elementary, 3,400 secondary, and 2000 mixed, employing roughly 310,000 teachers, and serving about 5 million students (CMEC, 2006).

Canada’s political culture is distinct. Scholars of political socialization in Canada have argued that we share a stronger faith in government, are more obedient and law-abiding, and value community over individual autonomy more highly than our American counterparts (Lipset, 1990). These dispositions are often traced to Canada’s origins as a British colony that gained independence without revolution, and to our founding fathers’ focus on “peace, order and good government” (Lipset, 1990).

However, two other unique features of Canadian political culture unfolded in the decades immediately after World War II. First, successive federal governments introduced expansive programs of public health and social security after 1945 – building what political scientist Ronald Manzer (2003) calls the “ethical liberalism” of Canada’s public institutions and its political culture. Ethical liberalism is carried forward provincially in the expansion of public health and educational systems. Across Canada, funding of public education grew substantially after 1945, and attention to equality and equity has been higher than in the US. Canadians continue to share a substantial commitment to the creation of equality of opportunity through public means.

Second, after 1970, Canada developed a strong stream of federal policies supporting a multicultural national identity which, in a marked change from earlier commitments to assimilation and conformity, afforded new levels of recognition for Québécois, aboriginal and immigrant cultures (Kymlicka, 1995). As it enunciated in an official policy of multiculturalism on October 8, 1971, the federal government committed itself to a view of citizenship that went further than respect for diversity. With an emphasis on two official languages but no single official culture, this federal view promoted cultural differences as a source of national strength. Later policies extended the link between multiculturalism and ethical liberalism by emphasizing avenues of redress for discrimination, and the importance of social equality across groups. The 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was a highly visible and integral component of deepening ethical liberalism in Canada with guarantees of individual rights. Recent surveys suggest that Canadians recognize multiculturalism as part of our national identity, and share an increasingly more secular, tolerant and flexible worldview than in the past (Adams, 2003).

Some aspects of Canada’s commitment to ethical liberalism were also carried over into its post-WWII foreign policies. Under then Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, the Canadian government established its commitment to international peacekeeping, and began to play an active role in supporting the
independence and development efforts in former imperial colonies. By the late 1960s, Canada was well on its way to articulating a view of its role in the world as that of an honest broker and “humane internationalist,” often in concert with other middle power nations (Pratt, 1990, 1996). The creation of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in 1968 and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in 1970, as well as the rapid expansion of our foreign aid program around this time, were arguably natural extensions of the public guarantees of social welfare and social security at home (Therien & Noel, 1994). In turn, the expansion of funding for international development activities during the 1970s and 1980s fed the rapid growth of development-oriented non-governmental actors across Canada, reinforcing public support for humane internationalism.

International Development Education 1960-1980

While ethical liberalism, multicultural citizenship and humane internationalism each provided a positive context for the growth of education for international awareness in Canada, the federal government has no jurisdiction in the country’s formal education systems, so the spread of alternative forms of teaching about international affairs occurred gradually, in a bottom-up rather than top-down manner.

Two primary developments led to the genesis of what might best be thought of as a “development education” movement in Canada during the 1960s and 1970s. First, as part of its support to newly independent countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, CIDA began to send large numbers of teachers and technical personnel, as did newly formed and then independent volunteer organizations such as the Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) and the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). Hundreds of teachers and volunteers returned home to North America with the desire to share their experiences with the Canadian public and infuse their teaching with international perspectives (Lyons, 1996).

The second source of momentum came from the rising number of Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in international development. One of the unique dimensions of Canada’s foreign aid program is the relatively high share of the ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) budget available as “responsive” funding for Canadian partner organizations (Smillie, 2004; Brodhead & Pratt, 1996). In the 1960s and 1970s, teachers’ unions, NGOs, and faith-based organizations all began to receive CIDA funding for public education programs. Organizations like UNICEF Canada, which had begun its public engagement and fundraising activities in the 1950s, used this funding to expand their existing development education activities. Similarly, Canadian teachers’ associations, which have been active in international development since at least the 1920s, were able to expand their public engagement work with teachers. For other newly emergent organizations, the combination of federal funding and enthusiastic returning development workers led to the rapid expansion of public engagement efforts, including initiatives that targeted Canadian schools. NGOs developed new curricular resources, hosted speakers’ bureaus and launched twinning programs and competitions.

By the 1970s, universities also began to play a role. International education centres and programmes in comparative education and international development were set up at St. Mary’s University, McGill University, the University of Ottawa, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, the University of Guelph, the University of Calgary, the University of British Columbia, and elsewhere. The Comparative and International Education Society of Canada (CIESC) was established in 1967. Universities also began to receive CIDA funding for international development projects and, during the late 1970s and 1980s, benefited from an enormous expansion of CIDA funding for students from developing countries (Mundy, 1992). Several faculties of education in Canada introduced development education into pre-service training and field development work – though their attention to global issues in pre-service training programs remained limited and was rarely compulsory (Pike, 1996; Lyons, 1996; Case, 1997).
International awareness also appeared as a goal in the educational policies of this era. For example, the 1968 Hall-Dennis report for Ontario’s Department of Education began by calling on Ontario to use education for human betterment at home and around the world. It also mentions the importance of promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations, recognition of the United Nations and of Canada’s role in the world (O’Sullivan, 1999). However, attention to international development and other international issues in the formal curricula remained quite limited — usually concentrated in secondary level History and Social Studies courses, such as Ontario’s popular Grade 13 Geography World Issues course (1978) (cited in Lyons 1996). Throughout the 1970s, Social Studies curricula across Canada continued to emphasize law and formal political structures at the expense of a more active vision of citizenship (Sears, Clarke & Hughes, 1998; Davies & Issitt, 2005). Provincial curricula rarely introduced development education or other global issues in the elementary years.

The Global Education Movement of the 1980s and 1990s

In size and number, efforts at infusing international development education and international awareness in schools across Canada during the 1960s and 1970s were impressive. But these efforts were also characterized by fragmentation and a lack of coordination – few initiatives went to “scale,” in the sense of creating a systemic mechanism that could ensure wide and even levels of attention to international issues across Canada’s educational systems. The global education movement of the 1980s saw important efforts to create a more systemic approach.

The origins of the global education movement in Canada can be found in the work of a core group of academically-based global educators (Tom Lyons, and later Graham Pike and David Selby, among others) who began to frame the pedagogical and curricular components of a unified approach to global education. Drawing on peace, environmental, human rights and development education movements, and in some cases incorporating the notion of multiculturalism (Zachariah, 1989), this group of thinkers played an important role in promoting global education to ministries of education, teachers’ organizations and school boards. Their strategies for engaging administrators and educators in global education generally included the creation of textbooks, classroom resources, experimental projects and training programs. Selby, in particular, is responsible for developing an approach that focused squarely on the learning needs of children, thus introducing a strong emphasis on global education in the elementary years.

Parallel efforts to develop a systemic approach to global education were also fostered in Canada’s NGO community. With CIDA funding, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), a national consortium of development NGOs, was joined by a series of provincial NGO councils for international cooperation. Three of these councils receive provincial funding (Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan). In some provinces global education centres also cropped up; in others the new provincial NGO councils spurred their formation. These centres played an important role in promoting inter-organization cooperation between NGOs, unions, academics and ministries in the delivery of public education on development issues, particularly in areas outside the Toronto-Montreal corridor where most development NGOs are located. They also promoted the direct involvement of youth in designing and implementing global education.

The results of both academic and NGO efforts were impressive. By 1987, for example, Pike notes that ministries in Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Alberta were engaged in pilot efforts to promote global education in the curriculum, often with CIDA funding (Pike, 1996). Many teachers’ organizations, ministries and school boards across Canada adopted formal policies recognizing the importance of teaching about global education. In Ontario, for example, the International Development Education Committee was formed in the 1980s, with the ministry of education, teachers’ organizations, community, academic and NGO representatives. The Ontario Teachers’ Federation passed a resolution supporting education for global perspectives in 1992; and the Common Curriculum (1995) recognized global interdependence as a cross-
curricular learning outcome (O’Sullivan, 1999). A 1992 survey of 1200 Ontario teachers found that 67 per cent thought global education important, while 40 per cent had significantly altered their approach to teaching about global issues (quoted in Pike, 1996).

Nonetheless, global education in Canada continued to be implemented in an uneven and highly fragmented fashion. A 1994 report by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada to UNESCO highlights the central paradox of the global education experience in Canada: while global education seemed uniquely suited to Canada’s efforts to create a citizenry oriented towards multiculturalism with a humane internationalist stance on world affairs, global education still was not a coherent movement (CMEC, 1994). Rather it was an arena characterized by many isolated actors with limited cross-communication and fertilization (CMEC, 1994). Provincially, there was too little funding for teacher in-service training and curricular consolidation. While federal agencies and NGOs supported certain aspects of global education, they had little direct contact with provincial ministries where curricular priorities are set. Global education activities at the school level tended to be sporadic, and many teachers expressed confusion about what implementing global education entailed (Pike, 1996).

Humane Internationalism and Global Education under Siege: The 1990s

The fact that global education lacked central leadership at the national level made it all the more vulnerable to the sweeping fiscal conservatism experienced across Canada during the 1990s. In times of expansive public funding, a wealth of exciting, small-scale initiatives ensured that global education was diffused into Canada’s educational systems. However, in the 1990s funding for education and for international development cooperation dropped dramatically.

During the 1990s, reforms across all of Canada’s provincial and territorial education systems echoed the erosion of ethical liberalism in all aspects of Canadian public policies (Manzer, 2003). Government expenditures on public elementary and secondary education fell as a percentage of total government expenditure. The historical pattern of educational governance through negotiated decision-making among unions, boards, and ministries yielded to a more adversarial dynamic (Manzer, 2003). Ministries of education consolidated school boards into larger managerial units, further centralized control over curricula and educational spending, and introduced reforms that concentrated on the numeracy and literacy performance of Canadian schools. National efforts to standardize curriculum and set tougher educational targets emerged – primarily through CMEC, but also through the engagement of the Federal Department of Human Resources and Skills Development and Statistics Canada. In this context, global education was squeezed in two ways. First, it became increasingly marginal to the goals and targets of provincial ministries and to the new federal bodies interested in improving Canadian education. Second, its main proponents in the educational system (teachers and their unions) saw their room for manoeuvre shrink, both in the classroom and in provincial policy making.

Several commentators have also noted that increasing attention to international economic competitiveness during the 1990s inserted a new inflection into the study of world issues. Pike cites an example of several teachers in an Ontario school known for its leadership in global education, who “argued that facilitating Canada’s potential entrepreneurship within the global economy, through introducing students to the fundamentals [sic] of international business, is a legitimate function of global education; meanwhile colleagues helped students empathize with victims of poverty and injustice worldwide and encouraged involvement in social and political change” (Pike, 1996, p. 7). He asks whether these two seemingly divergent perspectives can ever be reconciled. As we shall see in later chapters, these two divergent perspectives continue to operate in provincial curricula.
At the federal level, Canadian commitment to humane internationalism also eroded. Historically high levels of funding for development cooperation (0.4 per cent-0.5 per cent of GDP) dipped to well below 0.3 per cent by the late 1990s (Pratt, 1996). CIDA funding for NGOs, regional NGO development councils and public engagement programs all suffered. While politicians continued to promote Canada's role in alleviating international poverty and promoting world peace, Canada's foreign policies, including its aid program, concentrated increasingly upon expanding international trade and maintaining the country's comparative advantage in a global economy (Pratt, 1996). In 1995, substantial federal funding was withdrawn from provincial councils for international cooperation and regional development/global education centres, causing a serious contraction of their global education activities. The effects were particularly stark outside the Ottawa-Montreal corridor, and among smaller community-based NGOs.

Despite these setbacks, a committed cadre of global educators continued to work across Canada during the 1990s. In 2001, documenting this wealth of activities, the Council of Ministers of Education concluded that:

> Despite many pressures for a ‘back-to-basics’ style of education in Canada’s formal education systems, policy-makers, researchers and teachers continue to develop citizenship education curricula and to integrate peace, human rights and global education into school programs...During the period under study, the most noticeable trend has been a much higher level of integration of the themes of peace, democracy, human rights, international understanding and tolerance in both formal and non-formal education programs. (p.i)

The inheritance of the 1990s, then, was not the dismantling of global and international education in Canada. Nonetheless, its expansion was stalled, as were efforts to build the more integrated and coherent approach that global educators had begun to envisage in the late 1970s and 1980s.

**Into a New Millennium: Global Citizenship Education Emerges in Canada**

Where does global education stand in Canada today? Many commentators have noted that recent years have seen a renewal of momentum and interest in teaching about global and international issues in Canadian schools. This interest has been matched by the adoption of “global citizenship” as a guiding framework for the educational activities of Canadian NGOs and several federal departments. Global education has also benefited from an expansion of public funding at both federal and provincial levels as a result of Canada’s recent economic boom. At the same time, the challenges of implementing global education and global citizenship education remain daunting.

**Global education in provincial and territorial curricula**

One of the most impressive arenas of recent change has been within provincial and territorial curriculum, where the “back to basics” philosophy of the 1990s has fuelled major efforts to rethink what is taught not only in Math and Language, but also in Social Studies, History and Civics, in relation to the perceived challenges of globalization (Evans, 2006). In some provinces, attention to international understanding or global issues is now named as an overarching goal to be integrated across the curriculum (Quebec, 2005). An effort at producing a Western Canadian regional curriculum also included strong emphasis on global education - so strong that it remained in provincial curricula even when the western protocol failed.

In a change from past practices, many provinces now include global education or global citizenship in their curricular guidelines for the elementary level, as shown in Table 3.1. Formal curricula across Canada seem
to support the idea that children can and must be exposed to the challenges of complex interdependence in an increasingly integrated world.

**TABLE 3.1: STATUS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION IN PROVINCIAL ELEMENTARY LEVEL CURRICULA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province or Territory</th>
<th>Year of Most Recent Curriculum</th>
<th>Status of Global Education</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Global education is found largely in the Social Studies curriculum, with specific attention paid to global citizenship and human rights issues and an emphasis on developing students’ critical thinking skills. Sub-categories in each grade deal with the environment and the economy. Global social justice and global economic competitiveness orientations to global education appear in tension within the curriculum. (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>The curriculum in the Yukon is based on British Columbia’s “Programs of Studies” curricular framework. However, the Department of Education in the Yukon has made modifications to the B.C. curriculum to include more emphasis on First Nations’ language and culture. (Yukon Department of Education, 2005b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Global education is found largely in the Social Studies curriculum, with specific attention paid to issues of active citizenship and identity. The child-centred pedagogies that are promoted in the new curriculum emphasize skill (e.g., critical thinking) development rather than content knowledge. (Alberta Education 1990, 2003, 2005c, 2006d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Global education is found largely in the Social Studies curriculum, where “global interdependence” and “citizenship” are core concepts and a “systems” worldview is emphasized. (Manitoba Department of Education, 1995, 2003, 2004a, 2006a, 2006b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>2004 (Revised Social Studies, History and Geography Curriculum)</td>
<td>Global education is found largely in the Social Studies curriculum in the public schools, as well as in the Religious Education units that are added to the Ontario curriculum used in Catholic schools. The six “core concepts” that frame the curriculum are linked directly and indirectly to global education, with an emphasis on skill and attitude development. There is strong emphasis on “global economic competitiveness.” (Ontario Ministry of Education 2004b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
These curricular developments are so recent that it is difficult to assess their implementation at the classroom level. Nor has any province planned to evaluate or assess the success of its social studies, citizenship, or global education curriculum. While these developments represent substantial shifts in the curriculum, we know little about their impact on what students learn in Canadian elementary schools.

In this study we begin to assess how far these new curricula go towards addressing tensions in content (i.e., between national self-interest and international justice; pluralism and universalism; loyalty to the nation-state and a wider loyalty to an interconnected world; charity versus solidarity). We also look to see if the two overarching goals of educating for active citizenship and whole-school/cross curricular integration, promoted by contemporary global citizenship educators, are present in the formal curriculum or in a small sample of Canadian schools (Evans & Reynolds, 2004; Davies, 2006).

Already in 1998, Sears argued that provincial curricula were increasingly promoting a view of citizenship that was less elitist and passive, more aware of world cultures and comfortable with the existence of different cultural communities and allegiances domestically than at any time in the past (Sears et al., 1998). However, more recently Richardson has shown that education about global issues continues to be “a matter of national self-interest and almost exclusively tied to the civic structures of nation-state” (2004). Thus students in Canada are urged to take up responsibilities and obligations to address global issues such as international conflict, environmental degradation, or the protection of human rights as citizens of Canada rather than as citizens of the world.9

**Federal support for global education and global citizenship**

In 2005, Canada’s Liberal government issued an International Policy Statement in which it affirmed a general shift in Canadian foreign policy towards renewed funding for foreign aid, an expanded commitment to international peacekeeping, and a vision of active international citizenship for Canadians. Although
never adopted as foreign policy, the document provides insight into the government’s efforts to balance its 1990s focus on global competitiveness with renewed attention to humane internationalism. In practical terms, this policy shift has meant considerable growth in CIDA funding and greater attention to public dialogue and engagement since the late 1990s.

In 1999, CIDA launched its new strategy for public engagement and began to increase funding for media, NGO and other international development education activities (CIDA, 2004). It has since increased funding to regional NGO councils for public engagement, including recent indications that it may again provide them with multi-year funding. In 2000, CIDA also launched the “Global Classroom Initiative” to support curriculum development by academic and non-governmental organizations for use in Canadian classrooms. However, CIDA’s public engagement strategy has continued to shy away from using “global citizenship” as an overarching frame, and has been criticized for focusing too narrowly on building support for Canada’s international development program, as well as for avoiding contentious issues like debt, trade, and globalization (CCIC, 2004a and b). Thus the Canadian Council for International Cooperation argues, “the current approach to public engagement in CIDA is narrowly focused, small scale, short term and project oriented (CCIC, 2004a, p. 2). As in the past, the constitutional division of powers has been taken very seriously by CIDA; CIDA does not work directly with any provincial or territorial government, effectively limiting its reach into ministries of education.

However, federal interest in citizenship education, which is a federal responsibility, has expanded considerably. This interest grew substantially during the 1990s, first in relation to the 1995 Quebec independence crisis, and more recently in relation to the importance of global economic competitiveness, and national social cohesion (Jenson, 1998; Jenson & Saint-Martin, 2003; Joshee, 2004). One source of dynamism for global education in Canada has always been the country’s espousal of multicultural citizenship policies – through both Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Heritage Canada (Zachariah, 1989). Some have criticized Canada’s recent approaches for their focus on conformity to a unified vision of what it means to be Canadian, often at the expense of previous commitments to diversity and social citizenship entitlements (Jenson, 1998; Joshee, 2004; Mitchell, 2003). Nonetheless, it is interesting to see how profoundly the language of global citizenship education has been taken up by bodies such as Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which notes in a recent activity guide for elementary schools:

Global citizenship is more than just understanding that we are all citizens of the world—it is a way of thinking, feeling and living. It is about understanding the complex web of interconnections that ties each of us to one another, and to the earth itself. It means we also see our connections to future generations and recognize our responsibilities to the rest of the world’s inhabitants and to those who come after us. Global citizenship is the conviction that we have an inherent responsibility to tackle injustice and inequality, and it requires both the desire to do so and the belief that we can make a difference. (2005, p. 3)

Another aspect of federal policy that has implications for global education and global citizenship education is the evolution of children’s rights in Canada, following Canada’s 1989 endorsement of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). At that time, resource material was produced and geared to the reading and comprehension levels of even quite young children in Canadian classrooms. It focused not just on the rights of children in other countries, but it also was meant to educate Canadian children about their rights. However, while Canada has gone some way towards introducing the concept of children’s rights, Daiva Stasiulis notes that the CRC was typically adopted by the federal government and the judiciary to highlight the plight of domestic child poverty, an approach that reinforces an image of a helpless child victim – quite contrary to the Convention’s view of children as active participants in governance (Stasiulis, 2002). Recent polling suggests that most Canadians are not aware of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (War Child Canada, 2006).
Two other federal agencies have developed an expanded interest in education over the last decade: the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, and Statistics Canada. Both track changes in the effectiveness and coverage of Canada’s educational systems and engage in international assessment research. Neither, however, appears to include assessment of the way Canadians learn about international issues.

Finally, we should mention the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), the independent organization that officially represents the federated views of provincial and territorial governments. It is responsible for reporting on behalf of these governments to UNESCO and the OECD on such things as the inclusion of international understanding, the development of a culture of peace, and sustainable development in Canadian schools. CMEC also leads Canada’s delegations to major international conferences on education (CMEC 2001, 2006). However, its efforts at standardizing, evaluating, and strengthening the performance of Canadian education have focused primarily on areas associated with global competitiveness: literacy, numeracy and science (CMEC, 2000). A recent report on the challenges of globalization to the Commonwealth Ministers of Education makes no mention of international awareness among its list of “millennium challenges” (CMEC, 2000). CMEC’s sporadic attention to global education appears to be entirely driven by intermittent UNESCO reporting requirements. Thus far, CMEC has made little effort to build a sustained dialogue on the issues of either global education or citizenship education.

**Canadian civil society - non-governmental actors**

Canadian NGOs, universities and teachers’ unions remain among the most active advocates for global education in Canada. Beginning in 1996, the CCIC (the national consortium for development NGOs), began a dialogue with its members on how to best mobilize Canadian public support for development (CCIC, 1996). In the report of its 1996 task force and in two more recent policy notes, the CCIC has advocated for a national framework for global citizenship that can inform Canadian foreign policy, CIDA’s public engagement activities, and the development education efforts of Canadian NGOs (CCIC 1996, 2004a, 2004b, 2005). According to the CCIC:

> The concept of global citizenship embodies a set of principles, values and behaviours through which sustainable and democratic development can be realized the world over. It implies the participation of individuals in public life, deliberating and acting for the common good, with regard for both local and global consequences. The concept of global citizenship is in many ways a natural evolution of what it means to be Canadian in a complex and rapidly changing global environment. (2005, p. 2)

The CCIC believes that goal of a national framework for active global citizenship should enable Canadians to:

- Recognize connections between the global and the local
- See themselves as involved and able
- Access and reflect critically on a diverse range of views and information
- Participate in public dialogue and decision making
- Take action to address key challenges of our day, if they wish

(CCIC, 2005)

Many other Canadian organizations have also called for a more active approach to global citizenship education. Among the most original and well-recognized has been the work on child-to-child advocacy pioneered by Craig Kielberger and “Free the Children,” the organization he founded (Kielburger &
Kielburger, 2002). Efforts to use new technologies – notably the Internet – to spread the word about global citizenship education are also a hopeful sign. UNICEF Canada – the most widely recognized Canadian NGO according to a recent survey of Canadian youth (War Child Canada, 2006) – also espouses an active global citizenship approach:

[UNICEF development education....] promotes global solidarity, peace, tolerance, and environmental awareness. At its foundation are five concepts that provide a lens through which the world can be viewed: Interdependence, Images and Perceptions, Social Justice, Conflict and Conflict Resolution, Change and the Future. Simply stated, Education for Development seeks to answer certain basic questions:

- How can we address today’s global issues in a way that empowers young people to bring about change?
- How can we best develop in our young people the lasting values of global solidarity, peace, and tolerance?
- What practical skills can we teach our children so they can shape their own futures?
- How can we best prepare our children to take constructive action in a rapidly changing world?
- How can we show that global events impact activities at home, while at the same time highlight the impact local events and actions have globally?

Yet despite signs of engagement in global education, Canadian NGOs still seem to be working at cross-purposes. Most have continued to link their public engagement activities to their marketing and fundraising efforts. It remains common to find public engagement campaigns organized around the idea that Canadians must provide charity for impoverished people in the least developed world, rather than the notions of interdependence and solidarity espoused by global educators. And because public education activities are tightly linked to marketing and fundraising, there is a built-in reluctance to engage in collective and coordinated effort.

Collaborative work among NGOs, ministries, school districts, teachers’ organizations and faculties of education does occur, but it is usually not sustained. CIDA funding for global engagement promotes this organization-by-organization, project-by-project approach. The net result is that a multitude of NGO-led educational initiatives – including those that espouse global citizenship principles – have failed to build much in the way of an integrated platform for public education on development issues in Canada.

A 2001 survey of Canadian NGOs by CIDA also suggests further limitations that relate specifically to their effectiveness in working with elementary schools across Canada. First, most of the 227 organizations that responded to the CIDA survey concentrate on one region in the world and many are issue-specific. By definition, their work is not holistic in the sense advocated by global educators, placing the onus on teachers to add what they have to offer into an integrated vision of global education. Activities designed for the elementary grades also appear to be lacking: neither “elementary schools” nor “children” ranked among the top five target populations for public engagement identified by the NGOs surveyed (CIDA 2001).

Recent research on public awareness in Canada

Several recent surveys of public opinion and one smaller comparative study of student perceptions have highlighted the challenge of implementing global education and global citizenship education in Canadian schools.

Most recent public opinion polls have shown that Canadians are increasingly global in their outlook. We
believe we have a moral obligation to other countries, and support our international development program. Most Canadians are proud of our multiculturalism, bilingualism, our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and our global competitiveness (Adams, 2003). Nonetheless, we rank global development issues quite low in our list of public policy priorities, and our knowledge of global issues is weak and uneven (CCIC, 2004a, 2004b).

A recent national survey of Canadian youth (15-24) substantiates these findings (War Child Canada, 2006). It found that a majority of respondents had not heard of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child or developing countries’ debt. More than half of the youth surveyed could not name a country in which human rights abuses occur, nor name an NGO active in global issues. Fewer than half felt that youth can make a difference in the world. On the other hand, the same survey found that youth were proud of Canada’s peacekeeping activities, and two-thirds of the respondents devoted time or money to charity.

The War Child Canada survey also asked youth what they were learning in school. It reports that:

Most Canadian youth are learning about world issues in school, but for the most part this appears to be largely traditional topics such as wars and lack of peace, that are taught in the context of any history class. Less attention is apparently being devoted to more contemporary world issues such as global inequities, human rights, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, terrorism and environmental sustainability. (2006, p.10)

It would seem that while Canadians hold world-views that are broadly compatible with global citizenship, their knowledge of global issues and their sense of efficacy about issues of global justice remain quite limited. These are stark gaps that need to be addressed in the elementary school years.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has described the history of global education efforts in Canada. We have identified a strong foundation of support for global education in Canada’s federal and provincial governments, among NGOs and other non-governmental actors, and in the broader history of Canadian political culture and public policies. Ethical liberalism, multiculturalism, and a commitment to humane internationalism have laid a strong and unique foundation for global education in Canadian schools.

Attention to global education at the elementary school-level in Canada is a relatively new phenomenon. Most provincial curricula have been recently revised, and all pay considerable attention to global education themes. However, there has been little research on the implementation of global education, and provinces have no plans to evaluate the outcomes of this new curricular focus.

We have also documented the absence of systemic leadership and coordination of global education activities in Canada. A large number of federal departments and non-governmental actors engage in global education activities, but they at best loosely coordinate their work with provincial ministries, where educational policy and curriculum development are undertaken. Also, they are only loosely linked to one another. A decade of cuts to federal funding has eroded many earlier initiatives to build a stronger and more systematic community of practice around global education themes.

In conclusion, it is constructive to compare the Canadian global education experience with that of the UK, where a framework for active global citizenship has been adopted by the Department for International Development (DFID) and the National Department for Education and Skill (DfES). The NGO community in the UK has formed a single Development Education Association (DEA, f. 1993) that develops a common platform for public engagement and works closely with government departments (Davies et al., 2005b; Davies 2006). This association, along with the five largest development NGOs, uses the concept of “global
citizenship education” as a common framework for action. In the UK, an active research community has begun to evaluate the impact of the country’s new global education curriculum within its schools. Funding from DfID and DFES supports research and field projects that link issues of citizenship to global awareness. Initial research from the UK suggests that these coordinated efforts are paying off. UK children are learning more about global issues today than ever before, and this learning is happening more consistently across the educational system (UNICEF UK, 2004; Davies, 2006).

Canada is still a long way from having such a coordinated effort among governmental departments, NGOs, educators, and researchers at either the federal or the provincial levels. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, teaching about global issues remains a remarkably fragmented and uneven enterprise. This is surprising, given Canada’s longstanding commitment to humane internationalism and the delivery of equitable educational opportunities.

ENDNOTES:

1 Statistics Canada (2006)

2 Canada’s 1867 founding document, the British North America Act, provides that “in and for each Province, the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education” (Cited in CMEC, 2001, p. 1).

3 As a result, while student performance in Canadian schools does vary by socio-economic background, international achievement studies suggest that Canadian schools are better at closing the gap between the achievement of students from different socio-economic backgrounds, and are particularly successful at ensuring this for the children of new immigrants (HRDC, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2004).

4 Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson brought international affairs to the attention of the Canadian public when, during the 1956 Suez crisis, he proposed the idea of international peacekeeping forces under United Nations aegis. He was later awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

5 Pike notes, “regrettably...programmes were more often part of the electives and thus many pre-service teachers have not been exposed to the curriculum and pedagogy associated with Issues Education [as in World Issues courses at the high school level]” (1996).

6 One example of this adaptation is the Victoria International Development Education Association, now 28 years old, which runs a website, <http://www.videa.ca>, to help teachers find resources in global education.

7 As an example, neither CMEC’s 1993 Victoria Declaration (in which it asserted its right to act as Canada’s national voice in educational matters and committed itself to an action plan centred on national testing and standard setting, and harmonization of the curriculum), nor its 2000 report Education in a Global Era (prepared for the 14th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers) mentions anything about global interdependence, global education or international understanding.

8 Schweisfurth (2006) documents how committed teachers in Ontario, for example, continued to introduce global education in this period.

9 As quoted in Evans (2006). Bickmore (2005) offers a somewhat different view. She argues that most of the knowledge, skills and pedagogy called for by international peace and conflict educators is in the curricula of Canadian provinces, but that the curricula focus on abstract ideals, at the expense of deep engagement with conflicting values and situations.

10 Only the Global Classroom Initiative gives its ultimate goal as building global citizenship. It describes its purpose as helping Canadian youth “get to know their global neighbours, appreciate different world views, and understand the global impact of their choices and actions” (Cited on CIDA’s Global Classroom website, http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/gci ).

11 K. Mitchell (2003) speaks of a shift towards policies that encourage “strategic cosmopolitanism”.


13 UNICEF’s mission is to advocate for the protection of children’s rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF is guided in doing this by the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. http://www.unicef.ca

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