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DISRUPTIONS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE IN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

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Abstract

Communities of practice (CoPs) enhance the work around global citizenship education (GCE), enriching ways of thinking and acting for social transformation. Through their shared expertise and collective actions, CoPs provide a platform for individuals to amplify their voices and raise collective awareness about social and environmental justice. Addressing this context, this article reports on a study that aimed to understand how a CoP on GCE can be a disruptive place with a potential for individual, collective, and communitarian transformation. Data included individual multimodal narratives, meeting minutes and recordings, questionnaires, and mind maps, which were collected over two years. Results show that through disrupting routines, taken-for-granted beliefs, and a self-centred praxis, the CoP allowed its members to better align their personal and professional selves, as well as to develop confidence and a collective sense of direction and hope. Findings confirm the relevance of CoPs in providing alternative spaces for positive change.

Keywords: *Global Citizenship Education; Communities of Practice; Disruptions; Social Transformation; Case Study.*

Introduction

Communities of practice (CoPs) have been shown to promote individual and collective change, as well as to enhance the work around global citizenship education (GCE), enriching ways of thinking and acting for real social transformation (Coelho et al., 2020; Costa et al., 2021; Cotter et al., 2022; Lourenço, 2018). Because CoPs are rooted in a culture of collaboration, they empower their members with the confidence, support, and inspiration to experiment and take risks, which can lead to effective change (Hargreaves, 2018).

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Through their shared expertise and collective actions, CoPs serve as a platform for individuals to amplify their voices, raise collective awareness, advocate for social and environmental justice, and ultimately influence policies. In this regard, CoPs can play a vital role in fulfilling the pedagogical and political dimensions of GCE highlighted in various documents on the subject (see, for instance, Despacho n.º 25931/2009; Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD, 2018).

In line with this context, this article reports on a case study that aimed to understand how a CoP on GCE can be a disruptive place with a potential for individual, collective, and communitarian transformation. To achieve this objective, a diverse range of data was collected over a two-year period within the CoP. Data included individual multimodal narratives, meeting minutes, audio recordings, questionnaires, and mind maps. Qualitative content analysis was employed to identify instances that demonstrated the CoP's role in fostering personal and collective change.

The article starts with an overview of the literature related to GCE and CoPs. This is followed by a presentation of the CoP that is at the heart of this study, focusing on its history, mission, aims, members, and activities. Subsequently, the case study is presented, outlining the data collection and analysis methods and tools employed. Finally, the results are discussed, with a focus on emphasizing the role of CoPs in providing alternative spaces for reflection, experimentation, collaboration, overcoming setbacks, and ultimately succeeding in identifying concrete opportunities for action and positive change at the individual and collective levels.

The Role of Communities of Practice for Global Citizenship Education

Global citizenship education (GCE) is a transformative pedagogy that "empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future" (GENE, 2022, p. 6). In essence, GCE refers to an educational framework that aims to prepare individuals who actively engage as responsible, empathetic global citizens in our interconnected and interdependent world. It seeks to impart a comprehensive set of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, enabling individuals to effectively address both local and global challenges, while fostering a profound sense of belonging to a global community - our shared planet. Therefore, GCE "pulls us to think in a multiscalar way, from the personal and local to what we think of as global, transnational or planetary" (Sant et al., 2021, p. 13).

The landscape of GCE has witnessed significant transformations in the 21st century, particularly marked by key developments since the introduction of Andreotti's seminal work, "Soft versus Critical Global Citizenship Education", in 2006. Before this landmark publication, GCE in the global North tended to overlook the colonial legacies that underpin and perpetuate the very global issues it aimed to address (Sant et al., 2021). Andreotti's work served as a turning point, emphasizing the importance of a "critical" approach to GCE, one that fosters change without imposing specific beliefs on individuals. Instead, she proposed creating what could be deemed "safe spaces" that encourage people to analyze and experiment with different perspectives, facilitating a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of global citizenship.

GCE emerges as a crucial endeavor, seeking to instigate a transformative paradigm shift imperative for challenging and disrupting the prevailing status quo. Within this framework, a critical approach to GCE serves as a vital mechanism for providing a reflective space to question and explore our own and others' epistemological and ontological assumptions. This involves a deep examination of how we come to think, be, feel, and act, along with the implications of our belief systems in local and global contexts, particularly concerning power dynamics, social relationships, and the distribution of labor and resources (Andreotti, 2006). The transformative potential of critical GCE extends beyond surface-level awareness, aiming to inspire action-oriented global citizens. By incorporating critical pedagogy, GCE encourages learners to scrutinize their biases, challenge dominant narratives, and actively contribute to social change (Andreotti, 2011; Stein et al., 2022). Furthermore, a critical GCE is indispensable to avoid inadvertently reproducing belief systems and practices that perpetuate the very problems it seeks to solve and harm those it aims to support (Andreotti, 2011).

From the perspective of Andreotti et al. (2018), a critical approach within GCE challenges traditional educational methods, providing "alternatives to reactive dogmatism, romanticisation of alternatives, and/or absolute relativism that are presently creating intercultural inertia and other barriers to collaborative approaches to imagining and enacting global justice and social change" (p. 36). This implies that individuals engaging in GCE should constructively and critically confront the often uncomfortable questions that arise during the learning process, paving the way for profound change. Effectively disrupting the status quo requires GCE to cultivate a deep understanding of global interdependencies, socio-political structures, and environmental challenges. By drawing on critical theories and perspectives, such as postcolonialism and decolonial theory, GCE can actively promote a more inclusive and equitable worldview while challenging existing power structures (Andreotti, 2011, 2018; Pashby, 2011). These theoretical frameworks provide analytical tools to deconstruct and reimagine the narratives and structures that underpin global citizenship, fostering a more nuanced and socially just approach to education.

Precisely, Jones and Smith (2014) argue that global citizenship is about "going beyond our comfort zone" (p. 12), emphasizing the willingness to "seek common understanding when language is a barrier". Sharing a similar opinion, Lilley (2014) considers citizenship a "multi-level construct" (p. 3), urging individuals to leave their comfort zones, think differently, and extend involvement beyond the circles of colleagues, friends, and family. This includes having broad expectations in life and work. The need for a critical approach in GCE is paramount for achieving its transformative goals and disrupting the status quo (Curren, 2010; Jooste & Heleta, 2017; Suša et al., 2021). As articulated by Bryan (2011), "the emotional inertia that more critical approaches to global citizenship education are likely to yield is ultimately more likely to open up spaces for creative and meaningful ethically and politically informed responses" (p. 281). By encouraging critical thinking, reflection, and action, GCE becomes a catalyst for developing informed and empowered global citizens capable of addressing the complex challenges of the contemporary world.

The claim put forth in this article, and substantiated by research in the field, is that Communities of Practice (CoPs) can play a pivotal role in enacting the transformative goals of critical GCE. CoPs are defined as groups of people who share a concern or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger et al., 2002). Capra (2002) compares CoPs to self-generating living networks characterized by a shared context of meanings, the exchange of knowledge, the

establishment of rules of conduct, and the forging of a collective identity. This comparison highlights the dynamic and interactive nature of CoPs, emphasizing their role not only as knowledge-sharing entities but also as communities that shape a common identity and foster a collaborative framework for meaningful engagement in critical GCE.

In the context of GCE, CoPs can bring together educators, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners, who have the opportunity to share insights, resources, and experiences, addressing both the practical aspects of GCE implementation and the theoretical underpinnings guiding its development. These CoPs serve as dynamic hubs for the exchange of ideas, best practices, and research findings, fostering a vibrant network of individuals committed to the evolution of GCE. CoPs can also provide a platform for continuous professional development and the dissemination of innovative approaches in GCE, ensuring the field remains responsive to the evolving needs and challenges of our interconnected world. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, "critical" perspectives of GCE require safe spaces for individuals to become global citizens, and CoPs can serve as one of these safe spaces where members can interact (Andreotti, 2006).

In order to maximize the objectives of CoPs, partnerships are crucial mechanisms (Castanheira et al., 2016), particularly by optimizing resources and adapting to the changing roles and responsibilities of CoP members. Furthermore, they can contribute to change both at the individual and collective levels. As Jara (2009) suggests, partnerships demand the best from us, but they can also foster "our own growth as people. In this way, we can be capable of transforming ourselves and others, to the extent that we are committed to processes that transform the social, economic, political and cultural relations of the context to which we are fortunate enough to belong" (p. 61).

The collaborative nature of CoPs encourages collective problem-solving and the co-creation of educational and awareness-raising strategies that transcend traditional boundaries (Cotter et al., 2022; Martins et al., 2018). Through the promotion of interaction and knowledge exchange among its members, CoPs contribute to enriching GCE practices and disseminating research that informs the continuous evolution of this field.

Existing literature supports these claims by reporting the outcomes of studies that involve partnerships between various GCE actors. One illustrative example is a pilot initiative focused on collaborative knowledge building, as described by Coelho (2018). This initiative engaged higher education institutions (HEIs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) within a CoP called Sinergias ED. The study emphasizes the importance of bringing together diverse perspectives, embracing a wide range of thoughts and opinions from different GCE actors, fostering dialogue, and establishing mutual trust. These elements contribute to strengthening collaborative learning processes and promoting excellence in research, ultimately leading to tangible impact and transformation at personal, institutional, and policy levels. Another example, involving HEIs responsible for teacher education and CSOs, further underscores the valuable role of CoPs in enhancing reflection, exploration, and the integration of educational policies related to GCE into pedagogical practices (Coelho et al., 2020). Within the collaborative framework of the Sinergias ED project, Costa et al. (2021) argue that promoting democratic and horizontal power relations within CoPs, guided by an ethics of care and emphasizing an ecology of knowledge, forms the basis for establishing collaborative relationships that can disrupt the status quo.

Similar international studies also underscore the role of CoPs in promoting reflection on emerging problems and their possible solutions. For instance, an ethnographic case study conducted by Pesce et al. (2018) explored the interactions among higher education students in an online CoP in Brazil. The findings revealed that these interactions contributed to the creation of dialogical and interactive networks, ultimately strengthening participants' planetary citizenship. Another notable example is the Bridge 47 – Building Global Citizenship project. This initiative is dedicated to advancing Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals through advocacy, innovation, and partnership work. Bridge 47 serves as a collaborative space bringing together CSOs, practitioners, policymakers, activists, and others. Within this CoP, participants engage in meaningful interactions, exchange information and resources, and develop innovative approaches for GCE. The project focuses particularly on joint advocacy efforts and building new partnerships to catalyse transformative change in society, with a specific emphasis on global justice and the eradication of poverty (cf. Vela-Eiden, 2020).

In light of the above, it is compelling to argue that the intersection of CoPs and GCE constitutes a dynamic and critical space, fostering the ongoing growth and enhancement of critical GCE. The primary goal of GCE is to empower individuals to take action and positively impact their communities. Collaborative processes, particularly those involving active public participation, are acknowledged for their potential to address complex issues that transcend specialized knowledge alone. These collaborative processes can lead to empowerment, enhancing individuals' capacity to improve their lives and contribute to social change (Raposo & Mesquita, 2018). Within the context of GCE, individuals are not only encouraged to challenge injustice but also to contribute actively to a more sustainable and equitable global society. CoPs, as dynamic hubs of collaborative learning and knowledge exchange, are well-suited for this purpose. They serve as both a starting point for action and a foundation for the exercise of deliberative citizenship (Fernandes et al., 2017). In the supportive environment of CoPs, individuals feel safe, encouraged, and surrounded by like-minded peers, providing a fertile ground for nurturing the values and principles of GCE.

While numerous studies explore CoPs for various purposes in the existing literature, it is crucial to underscore that studies specifically delving into the intersection of CoPs and GCE are notably scarce. This scarcity becomes particularly pronounced when considering the disruptive potential of CoPs in fostering both individual and communitarian transformation for social change. This study is a deliberate attempt to address this notable gap in the literature. By focusing on the potential transformative impact of CoPs within the realm of GCE, our research seeks to contribute to the understanding of how collaborative learning communities can drive significant outcomes in terms of individual empowerment and broader societal change. Exploring this intersection is not only a response to the current scarcity of studies but also an important step toward unlocking the full potential of CoPs in advancing the goals and principles of GCE.

FOCO CG: a community of practice in the making

The expression "It takes a village to educate a child", which is attributed to one or several African proverbs, emphasizes the involvement and responsibility of the entire society and the role of different learning spaces in children's education. When educating for global citizenship, coordinated work and dialogue between schools, families, and communities are fundamental. As evidenced in the previous section, collaborative work is one of the essential dimensions of GCE. It simultaneously promotes awareness and encourages questioning of what

we know and do, allowing for the construction of more appropriate solutions to the problems that arise in collective life.

It was with this spirit that FOCO CG was established. FOCO CG, an acronym that stands for "Formar e Colaborar para a Cidadania Global" (in English, "Educating and Collaborating for Global Citizenship"), is a CoP composed of individuals with diverse backgrounds who share a common interest in the field of GCE. Symbolically, FOCO CG was founded on May 18, 2021, World Citizenship Day, as a result of the personal and professional commitment of a group of individuals connected to the University of Aveiro.

In alignment with the University's institutional objectives and guided by a desire to promote research and education with a social impact aimed at nurturing informed and critical citizens, FOCO CG has a mission to collaboratively develop thoughtful responses to issues pertinent to global citizenship within local contexts, with the aim of promoting social transformation (https://comunidadefococg.wordpress.com/). Specifically, this CoP aims to identify areas within local contexts that are significant for the exercise of global citizenship, co-create knowledge concerning effective action strategies, and design educational and training strategies and resources related to global citizenship issues, applicable in education and other contexts. These objectives are accomplished through collaborative projects and actions in partnership with NGOs, associations, schools, and training centers that share common goals. These actions may include awareness campaigns, the production of pedagogical and informative resources, as well as the organisation of gatherings, seminars, and workshops targeting specific groups. The target audience for these activities is diverse, encompassing schools and educational communities, higher education institutions, local communities, and families.

At present, the CoP consists of 30 members, although only half of them actively participate in meetings and activities. The majority of the members are linked to academia, comprising 10 higher education lecturers and researchers, four of them performing teacher education duties; and 10 PhD students in Education, developing their projects on GCE, education for linguistic and cultural diversity, education for sustainability or critical thinking. The CoP also includes six individuals from civil society organizations or NGOs, and four schoolteachers (two language teachers, one Philosophy teacher, and one History teacher). It is worth highlighting that all PhD students also have a background in teaching in early years, primary, or secondary education. In terms of gender, 24 individuals identify as female and six as male. Members are located throughout Portugal, as well as in Angola, Brazil, Germany, and Spain.

FOCO CG members convene regularly through in-person or online meetings, which serve as opportunities to build knowledge, exchange experiences, and collaborate on projects. Between May 2021 and May 2023, the CoP held a total of 13 meetings. Initially, the meetings were more frequent, but as members became more involved in collaborative projects, they became sparser. The structure of these meetings broadly followed Serrat's (2010) 5D Model for Designing and Managing Sustainable Communities of Practice, involving five key steps:

1. Discover – exploring relationships to the CoP through individual narratives and mind maps.
2. Dream – synthesising individual narratives into a common story centred on joint purpose and mutual engagement.

3. Design – developing operational processes for the community, namely collaborative projects on GCE. This step included the creation of four working groups: conceptual development of GCE, pedagogical practices on GCE, communication and dissemination, and evaluation.
4. Document – engaging in learning and documenting knowledge.
5. Disseminate – disseminating knowledge and reconnecting the CoP.

The study reported in this paper falls within the last two steps of Serrat's model and constitutes an effort to assess the CoP's activities and its transformative impact on its members' personal and professional development, as well as on the CoP as a collective entity and the surrounding communities.

Methodology

Given this context, and considering the themes and axes of the III International Meeting Synergies for Social Transformation[4], where the study was initially presented, the following research question was defined: "How can a Community of Practice (CoP) focused on global citizenship education serve as a disruptive space with the potential for individual, collective, and community-level transformation?" To address this question, a qualitative case study methodology was employed, following Yin's (2009) framework. According to Yin (2009), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not evident. Therefore, the choice of a case study methodology was driven by our intention to thoroughly examine the CoP (our "case") within its "real-life" context to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon at hand and to develop a deeper insight into our research question.

In line with the tenets of qualitative case study research, which prioritize in-depth data collection employing extensive and detailed data collection methods to capture the subjective experiences and viewpoints of those involved in the case (Yin, 2009), a range of materials was collected over the course of two years (from May 2021 to May 2023). These included:

- Meeting minutes (MM): written records of the CoP meetings, detailing who was in attendance, summarizing the most important points discussed during each meeting, and including the assessment of the meeting by the participants. These provided a source of information for the participants and for members who were unable to attend. Overall, eight MM were collected, comprising the summaries of seven CoP meetings and the synthesis of the Capacity Building and Reflection Meeting held in July 2022.

- Mind maps (MA): three visual representations where CoP members shared their background, experiences and motivations, as well as their individual and collective expectations for the CoP. These were titled "If I were a tree", "My baggage" and "Imagine (in) the CoP", and created between May and July 2021.

- Audio recording (AR) transcript: a transcript of the 7th CoP Meeting, titled "Reflect", which was held in January 2022 and aimed to discuss the path and the future of the CoP.

- Questionnaires (QU): an anonymous questionnaire titled "Significant moments", which comprised a multiple-choice question for the CoP members to select the number of meetings they had attended, and two open-ended questions that invited CoP members to share the most significant moments they had lived in the CoP and to state their motivation to continue to be a member of the CoP. This was made available to CoP members in June 2022.

- Individual multimodal narratives (MN): six multimodal texts, including a video and a poem, made by the CoP members sharing their thoughts on the following sentences: *I'm a member of FOCO CG because…, To participate in FOCO CG I had to break with…, For me the most significant moment was when…, FOCO CG has contributed to…* These texts were shared in May 2023.

Valuing the discourse of each member of the CoP, qualitative content analysis was used as a data analysis technique to systematically and objectively describe the meaning of the collected material (Schreier, 2013). In particular, the researchers employed content-driven deductive coding, defining a priori categories of analysis aligned with the research question.

The data analysis process commenced with a thorough reading of the data, undertaken repeatedly to gain familiarity with the content and obtain a sense of the whole. Subsequently, a categorization matrix was developed to facilitate the coding process. At this stage, four categories of analysis were established and defined, drawing both on the literature on GCE and CoP and on the data encapsulating the participants' voices: C1. The CoP as a disruptive place, C2. The CoP as a place for individual transformation, C3. The CoP as a place for collective transformation, and C4. The CoP as a platform for social and communitarian change (see Table 1). The coding process was carried out by the authors/researchers and then rigorously checked for validity and consistency through regular peer debriefing sessions among the researchers to discuss data analysis and findings.

Categories	Definition
C1. The CoP as a disruptive place	Instances that show that the CoP has functioned as an environment or context that is conducive to and open to disruptive innovation or change. Disruption, in this context, refers to a significant shift or breakthrough that challenges existing norms, practices, often leading to the creation of new paradigms or opportunities.
C2. The CoP as a place for individual transformation	Instances that show that the CoP has contributed to its members setting personal goals, acquiring new knowledge or skills, overcoming personal limitations or obstacles, or developing a stronger sense of self.
C3. The CoP as a place for collective transformation	Instances that show that the CoP has contributed to bring about positive changes in the collective identity, purpose, and actions of the group, leading to a shared vision and common goals.
C4. The CoP as a platform for social communitarian change	Instances that show that the CoP has contributed to valuing the well-being of the community as a whole over individual rights or interests, promoting a sense of shared responsibility, mutual support, social cohesion (solidarity, empathy, and cooperation among individuals) and collective decision-making.

Table 1 - *Categories of analysis.*

Results and Discussion

Research findings are presented below according to each category of analysis. Statements are illustrated by quotations, which were translated from Portuguese into English to reach a broader readership. Participants' names were anonymised to maintain the confidentiality of the data.

C1. The CoP as a Disruptive Space

Disruptions are events, situations, or changes that interrupt or alter the normal course of something. They can be either positive or negative, depending on their impact and the perspective of those experiencing them. In the context of this study, disruptions represent a significant shift or breakthrough that challenges norms and practices within the CoP, often leading to the creation of new paradigms or opportunities.

When analysing the data, it was possible to identify instances showing that the CoP had functioned as an environment conducive to and open to disruptive innovation or change, leading its members to break with old habits of thinking and acting. A paradigmatic example, mentioned by all members, was the need to alter routines to find suitable times to meet and work together. Negotiating conflicting agendas was one of the major challenges to participation, as mentioned by the CoP members on multiple occasions:

> [It's a pity…] that we can't devote more time to this CoP. It's something precious, but there are always so many other demands competing for our time… (MM_BL)

> We face several challenges here. One of them is the challenge of consistent participation. Personally, I've found it somewhat difficult to attend meetings despite them being scheduled well in advance because occasionally there are conflicting commitments. (AR_AP)

Aligned with this disruption, CoP members also highlighted the necessity of moving away from individualistic and self-centered working practices to embrace a collective praxis centered on group dynamics and on collaboration. This is considered the fundamental ingredient in building a *de facto* CoP, as this member emphasizes:

> Time seems to be an unavoidable factor. It is present not only in the setting of individual agendas, but also — and above all — in the necessary maturation of the group's dynamics (and the roles and interpersonal relationships that develop within it) so that we can become a de facto CoP. (MN_LM)

Disruptions were also evident in the way members understood GCE. Being part of a CoP on GCE required them to transcend their individual and often taken-for-granted comprehension of the concept and establish a common language that was not limited to their own areas of expertise but could be comprehended and related to by all CoP members.

> The content covered thus far illustrates the careful construction of shared perspectives, not only on the topic that unites us, which is Global Citizenship, but also on establishing a truly transparent language among all members. It extends to what it means to be part of a community — involving the

dynamics of interknowledge and the creation of a common vision regarding the group's mission and objectives. (MN_LM)

Finally, in order to effectively engage in the CoP, participants mentioned that they needed to shift from a self-centered and conformist attitude to a more critical and active stance as responsible citizens. The following quote illustrates these sentiments:

In order to embrace this project, I had to break with the passivity that leads us towards monotony. I feel that if I hadn't made this change, I would be a different professional and person today – less reflective, less critical, and less attentive to the world around me. (MN_SS)

C2. The CoP as a Place for Individual Transformation

Individual transformation focuses on personal growth and change within an individual. It entails a process of self-reflection, self-awareness, and self-improvement. The individual takes steps to enhance their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, leading to personal and professional growth and development.

Results suggest that participation in FOCO CG has contributed to the personal and professional development of its members. In particular, individual transformation within the CoP has involved acquiring new knowledge and skills, being attentive to others and their perspectives, setting new personal goals, and developing a stronger sense of self.

A primary outcome of the CoP was the development of knowledge and understanding regarding the concept and significance of GCE, as highlighted by this participant:

Up to this point, I've had the opportunity to enhance my understanding of Global Citizenship Education and its various areas of action, particularly through the activities proposed during our sessions and through interactions with established initiatives like the Sinergias ED project. (MN_LM)

For other participants, the activities conducted in the initial sessions, which concentrated on defining and sharing personal goals, aided in the development of a stronger sense of self. This process promoted self-reflection and a deeper understanding of their identities and roles as global citizens.

I adopted a more active attitude, not necessarily more activist, but almost approaching that level. It's about a mindset of reflection and increased critical awareness of my surroundings. (MN_BB)

In this regard, the CoP proved to be a catalyst for its members, propelling them to move from theory to action in their respective territories and areas of intervention, as evidenced in these quotes:

FOCO CG enables me to expand my perceptions, be more attentive to diverse perspectives, and, as a result, not only incorporate alternative ideas into my Ph.D. work but also endeavor to engage with children and teachers in novel ways. (MN_BB)

FOCO CG is a relevant network both for my volunteer work and for my postdoc in science education. (MN_MA)

All in all, the CoP functioned as "a welcoming space for the concerns that [the members] already had" (Q_anon), helping them discover a sense of purpose in their work and lives.

C3. The CoP as a Place for Collective Transformation

Collective transformation involves change or development that occurs at a larger scale within a group, organization, or society. It focuses on the collective mindset, culture, values, and behaviors of a group of individuals. Collective transformation seeks to bring about positive changes in the collective identity, purpose, and actions of the group, leading to a shared vision and common goals. This often requires collaboration, shared effort, and collective action.

The analysis of data collected over the course of two years reveals that members view the CoP as a "safe space" where they can learn, share, reflect and grow together in a "pleasant atmosphere" (Q_anon) and an "environment of well-being" (MN_LM). As one of the members notes: "How great it is to learn, listen, read and see something that makes sense to us and helps us reflect together!". (MM_SS).

These sentiments, together with other specific moments in the CoP's journey, such as the definition of shared goals (what is our mission, what do we want to do and achieve), the development of common concepts and interests (not exclusive to GCE), as well as the creation of working groups that produce tangible results aligned with the CoP's goals, are considered to be key in developing a collective identity and a shared direction. The following quotes illustrate these points:

> *Once again, we had a different session, enriching in terms of personal development, opportunities for sharing, and the effective construction (through brainstorming) of the path we intend to follow here...* (MM_anon)

> *We engaged in 'light' activities that encouraged us to construct collective concepts and visions.* (MN_LM)

> *We discovered additional aspects that connect us to each other, extending beyond our shared interest in GCE.* (MN_FP)

> *I would like to emphasize our interaction with "Cartas com Ciência", as it enabled us to initiate work on specific products that give purpose to our efforts within FOCO CG.* (Q_anon)

This sense of belonging is coupled with a sense of hope in the group's ability to effect positive change. As some members highlight, individual action for global citizenship can be challenging. However, being part of a CoP on GCE provides participants with a sense of security and empowerment to make a difference in their roles as global citizenship educators or advocates for social justice. This is evident in the following quote:

> *Since we are working collaboratively and have established connections with others, what I am currently struggling with will likely improve. I now have contacts who can assist me in my work.* (AR_ML)

Overall, all members feel motivated to continue the journey, and to advance as a community:

> *Yes, I feel more and more motivated to continue. We are building a community with a shared direction and developing strategies to implement what we believe in. (Q_anon)*

> *We have move forward and have evolved as a CoP. We are a CoP! We remain interested and with future plans and objectives. (MM_FP)*

C4. The CoP as a Place for Social Communitarian change

Social communitarian change refers to a type of societal transformation that emphasizes the importance of community and social cohesion. It places a strong emphasis on the well-being and interests of the community as a whole, encouraging a sense of shared responsibility.

According to the members' voices, the CoP can play a relevant contribution in promoting social communitarian change, as this is aligned with FOCO CG's mission and goals. As they emphasise:

> *We can contribute to the construction of more just and plural societies, extending beyond our immediate context to broader or different domains (social, economic, non-academic, etc.). (Q_Anon)*

> *We are developing pedagogical resources to educate for global citizenship, which holds significant value. (MN_MA)*

However, it is important to note that there is still a lack of concrete evidence in the data to support effective positive change in the community at large. This can be attributed to the fact that the CoP is still in its early stages.

Concluding Remarks

This study aimed to explore how a CoP on GCE can be a disruptive place with a potential for individual, collective and community-level transformation. Analysis of data collected from the inception of the CoP shows that, through disrupting routines, taken-for-granted beliefs or convictions, and a self-centered praxis, the CoP has effectively contributed to promoting individual and collective change. Indeed, as evidenced in the members' testimonies, the CoP facilitated alignment between their personal and professional identities, instilled confidence, and cultivated a collective sense of purpose and hope regarding the transformative potential of GCE.

The study's findings support previous research underscoring the potential of CoPs in fostering personal and professional development while contributing to effective transformation through dialogue, reflection, and shared goals (Coelho, 2018; Coelho et al., 2020; Cotter et al., 2022; Lourenço, 2018). Importantly, these results align with current debates on GCE (cf. Andreotti et al., 2018; Stein et al., 2022; Suša et al., 2021), emphasising the need to adopt a critical perspective – one that recognizes disruption as a key ingredient for promoting the transformative change we aspire to see in the world. Embracing disruption becomes essential for instilling individuals with the courage to leave their comfort zones, think differently, and actively engage with others in advocating and acting to overcome injustice and inequality. In this way, the study not only contributes to the

empirical understanding of CoPs in GCE but also resonates with the broader discourse on the critical and transformative nature of GCE.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that may impact the interpretation of the findings. Notably, the study is susceptible to research bias, given that it was conducted by researchers who were also active members of the CoP. This dual role introduces the potential for subjectivity and positionality to influence the data analysis. Furthermore, participant bias is a possibility, as CoP members might have emphasised the positive aspects of their experiences during the study. While the research demonstrated the CoP's significant impact on individual and collective transformation, the study's scope does not extend to exploring the long-term effects of this impact. To ensure effective and lasting transformation, it becomes fundamental to navigate potential obstacles that may arise. One such challenge involves maintaining the sustained engagement of CoP members over time. Ensuring consistent investment and participation will be crucial for overcoming potential declines in momentum. To conclude, limited evidence was found regarding the CoP's effects on the broader community. Addressing this gap necessitates further investment in the development of concrete products and actions, such as resource books for teachers, a glossary of GCE terms for a wider audience, and workshops for teachers, families, and students. Longitudinal studies represent a promising avenue for providing a more comprehensive understanding of how the CoP influences the communities where its members operate.

The key takeaway from this study is that disruptions should not be viewed negatively but rather as essential and potent catalysts for GCE. The data highlights that disruptions can transform CoPs into communities of purpose, preventing individuals from becoming complacent with what is comfortable and familiar. Without disruptions, there is a risk of developing actions that lack a clear emancipatory or transformative intent, potentially leading to a loss of hope. As Cotter et al. (2022) highlight,

> *Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is a pedagogy of disruption, but it is also a pedagogy of hope. Hope that comes from the courage of communities and individuals who act in the name of justice; hope that comes from the aspirations and concern for the future (…); and hope that comes from the enduring power of GCDE as a consciously political, transformative and relevant approach to education* (p. 24).

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