

Global citizenship education: The case of Equipo Pueblo's Citizen Diplomacy Program in Mexico

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Abstract

Globalization processes create the need to rethink how citizens participate in complex and interdependent societies. The purpose of this article is to understand how education-related non-governmental organizations in Americas are becoming increasingly transnational in a globalized world through the experience of Mexican non-governmental organization Equipo Pueblo. Following this purpose, I seek to contribute to the study of international education facing non-governmental organizations through activism involved in citizenship education. I argue that non-governmental organizations are potential agents for ordinary citizens to promote non-formal education by participation on global public arenas becoming an important non-formal learning experience beyond schools, which allows those citizens to acquire the necessary skills for effective participation in globalized policy processes. To give empirical evidence to my research, I analyze Equipo Pueblo's Citizen Diplomacy Program and its influence repertoire that enable citizens' participation in public spaces, as example of non-formal citizenship education in the context of global politics.

Keywords

Citizen Diplomacy, global citizenship education, global politics, Mexico, non-governmental organizations, transnational activism

Introduction

Globalization processes are expanding and deepening. Global connectivity infrastructure (Khanna, 2016) and the evolution of the complex global financial system (Sassen, 2015) are two examples of the expansion of globalization dynamics. Despite recent reactions to these global transformations, such as groups defending their national interests and patriotic values (e.g. UK Brexit vote, US election of President Trump, and right-wing action in Europe), these nationalist political reactions will not stop the development of global processes if we observe the growing and consolidation of a global plutocracy and the deepening of a global multidimensional inequality around the globe (Brown, 2015; Fraser, 2017; Milanovic, 2016; Sassen, 2015; Skocpol and Heltel-Fernández,

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2017; Villaroya, 2016). Globalization processes are currently transforming nation-states into global political stage. Of course, these political transformations are not well established, and as Beck (2013: 23) contends, the nation-states will not entirely disappear due to globalization. What is needed is to identify and understand how the politics is transforming from nation-states perspectives and understandings to post-national plural frameworks.

The transformations associated with globalization processes create the need to rethink how citizens participate in our increasingly complex and interdependent societies. Within international educational development, multiple experiences show that civil societies increasingly seek to participate in global politics (e.g. Global Campaign for Education, Global Partnership for Education, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Verger and Novelli, 2012), and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), either by having a voice in global policy-making processes or by promoting the education rights of vulnerable groups. For this article, I use the following definition of citizenship education for the 21st century:

an area of teaching and learning, both formal and non-formal, for children, youth, and adults, which is centred on the social, civic and political education that is considered to be an essential part of the formation of citizenship in any given context. (Tawil, 2013: 3)

Within this context, I analyze citizenship education beyond nation-states and post-national understandings (Tawil, 2013) to provide a foundation from which citizens can participate in global affairs as global citizens.

The purpose of this work is to present how education-related NGOs in the Americas are becoming increasingly post-national in a globalized world. This is accomplished by focusing on the collective action experiences of *Equipo Pueblo*. Through the case of *Equipo Pueblo*, this article offers a way to analyze transnational activism in the Americas. *Equipo Pueblo* is a well-known Mexican NGO and pioneer in advocating for human rights in Mexico. This case study analyzes the transnational practices of this organization, explaining how the local and global scales of action interact and shows how the organization transmits global issues to its local community. In this article, I seek to contribute to the literature on transnational activism involved in citizenship education by posing two questions. The first question focuses on how NGOs promote global citizenship education values in a globalized world. The second question examines the ways in which NGOs provide examples of non-formal citizenship education for global citizenship in Mexico.

To answer the two research questions, I studied how the organization implemented global citizenship education to enable Mexico's citizens to participate in the country's global agenda. More specifically, in this article, I analyze *Equipo Pueblo's* Citizen Diplomacy Program and its influence on citizens' participation in public spaces as an example of non-formal civic education in the context of global politics. To clarify these challenges, I reference UNESCO's (2014) global citizenship education framework to present this case study.

I argue that NGOs are potential agents for promoting non-formal education (beyond schools) that allows citizens to acquire the skills necessary for effective participation in globalized policy processes. Therefore, I establish that examining *Equipo Pueblo's* repertoire of activities provides a foundation for understanding how the organizational structures of NGOs mobilize citizens for the global world (Wong, 2012). To better understand the role of NGOs, I focus on how the global citizenship education values (i.e. peace, tolerance, inclusion, and justice; UNESCO, 2014) are manifest and impact local actors and global politics. To study NGO mobilization in global politics, I observed *Equipo Pueblo's* transnational repertoire operating both simultaneously at supranational and local levels, with a focus on the nation-state because global policies are implemented through local-global interactions and nation states are arenas in which these interactions take place (Colomer, 2015; Sassen, 2007).

In this analysis, I emphasize the idea that the NGO *Equipo Pueblo* does not stop at ‘denouncing’ as main perspective of its advocacy repertoire but instead seeks to provide experiences and strategies to improve the ability of local citizens to influence public policies with human rights and economic components. In this sense, *Equipo Pueblo* exemplifies Mexico with its democratization process, resistances, failures, and authoritarian past. The *Equipo Pueblo* Citizen Diplomacy Program represents a non-formal form of global education with the aim of building a tolerant and inclusive global citizen community.

The article is divided into three sections. The first section includes the methodology used in this study. The second section includes the study’s theoretical approach. Here, I detail how I understand global politics from a multiscale perspective and expose how *Equipo Pueblo* engages in NGO transnational activism. The third part includes three sub-sections. The first sub-section analyzes how *Equipo Pueblo* incorporated a global dimension into its work. In the second sub-section, I focus on the Citizen Diplomacy Program’s influence on global politics. Finally, I analyze the Citizen Diplomacy Program as an experience of non-formal global citizenship education in Mexico.

Methodology

This analysis of the Mexican NGO *Equipo Pueblo* followed a traditional qualitative case study methodology. The study was motivated by the need to identify a civic experience that promotes global citizenship education beyond formal institutions in Mexico. The study followed two research questions. The first question sought to answer how NGOs promote global citizenship education values in a globalized world. The second question explored what ways in which *Equipo Pueblo* exemplified non-formal civic education for global citizenship in Mexico. With these questions in mind, I sought to understand, through the specific case of *Equipo Pueblo*, the teaching and experiences of non-formal civic education aimed at developing global citizenship in Mexico. To answer these interrogations, I used a process tracing approach to clarify *Equipo Pueblo*’s transition from a local to a global strategic orientation. Process tracing here is ‘an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence—often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena’ (Collier, 2011: 824). I reconstructed this process through the lens of *Equipo Pueblo*’s Citizen Diplomacy Program because it represents how the organization’s focus shifted according to the existing global politics.

To write this case study, I used primary and secondary information sources. The former included five semi-structured interviews with individuals who worked closely with *Equipo Pueblo*. Interviewees provided rich information to understand the organization’s Citizen Diplomacy Program. Interviewees included individuals who created the program in 1993 such as the Citizen Diplomacy Program’s current director, former senior researcher at the program, as well as *Equipo Pueblo*’s current and former executive directors. In addition, I reviewed secondary sources of information, including the organization’s documents and annual reports. Through these sources, I identified empirical evidence of *Equipo Pueblo*’s efforts to influence Mexico’s global politics. To know the primary sources of the author’s case study, there is the organization website (see bibliography). The interviews conducted by the author are in his possession. These interviews are available to be consult at any time.

A multiscale perspective to rethink transnational activism in global politics

In this section, I present the theoretical approach used to analyze *Equipo Pueblo*’s Citizen Diplomacy Program. First, I develop the concept of global politics with a multiscale perspective. Second, I explain how do I understand NGO transnational activism for this article. Finally, I

describe the mobilization perspective (Wong, 2012) that focuses on the activities used to influence global politics.

To analyze NGO practices related to global politics, I assumed that globalization was not only an economic process. Globalization is occurring with different rhythms, effects, scales and velocities, simultaneously around the world in political and cultural domains (Sassen, 2007; Steger and James, 2015; Keane, 2003). With a post-supranational understanding of the global world, I use McGrew's definition of global politics: 'the politics of an embryonic global society in which domestic and world politics, even if conceptually distinct, are practically inseparable'. This perspective allows me to rethink the modern institutions that were conceived with national and territorial understandings (McGrew, 2014: 15). With this theoretical approach, global and local interactions in contemporary politics need to be reconceptualized beyond separate dimensions where politics occur (Beck, 2013; Sassen, 2007; Steger and James, 2015).

To reinforce this multiscale perspective, I share the arguments of Tormey and Colomer. For Tormey (2015), it is important to understand that 'the nation state is now but one actor at one level of a multi-scalar world' (p. 74), and Colomer (2015) makes clear how limiting politics to a local approach leaving out global processes is isolated and ineffective. In this sense, according with Falk (2010), the states 'are not properly equipped to face globalization', for example, with climate change agenda (p. 267).

To illustrate this multiscale logic, I show a multiscale governance dynamic where NGOs such as *Equipo Pueblo* operate in Mexico. There is a set of formal spaces for dialogue between civil society actors, governments, and international institutions in Mexico. It is relevant to identify these spaces because I see them as windows of opportunities where it is possible to practice global citizen education values (i.e. peace, tolerance, inclusion, and justice; UNESCO, 2014: 15). Then, I focus on the mechanisms generated from within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mexico's multilateral agendas.

The transnational activism operating in Mexico has an institutional environment that is fragile but proves the existence of formal spaces that can facilitate or inhibit non-governmental actors so that they normalize their political activity beyond the nation-state and find formal channels for their influence on global politics. I conceive the influence of non-governmental actors (in this case, NGOs) following Jones (2011). This author distinguishes two approaches: 'inside track' and 'outside track'. This article focuses on the repertoire defined by the first track, which is closely associated with decision-makers and has a wide variety of activities to influence policy.

To observe the institutional environment from a local–global dynamic perspective, I first mention the global agendas in which Mexico takes part and has gotten civil society involved: Climate Change, Global Partnership for Effective Cooperation, Group of Twenty (G20), International Migration, Post-2015 Development Agenda, and Sustainable Development Objectives 2030. At a bi-regional and regional level, there are, among others, the Ibero-American Summit, the Organization of American States, the relations with the European Union, and its multi-dimensional relationship with North America. At a national level, the organized civil society of Mexico has a Federal Law for the Promotion of Activities Undertaken by Civil Society Organizations. This law aimed to regulate and promote the activities of civil organizations included in a federal register. It is not the only institutional tool for the promotion of Mexico's civil society, but it is mentioned here as an example of the promotion of civil society in Mexico at the federal level. Finally, at a local level, there are several different legal frameworks, public policies, and mechanisms of citizen participation that seek to promote associational life in Mexico. This promotion at the local level is uneven and does not have the same level of understanding and development in all 32 federal entities of Mexico (Alejo Jaime, 2014).

This example of NGO operations shows coordinated governance with local and global policies and decision-making processes. This complexity demands that organizations willing to access transnational public decision-making processes effectively understand the complexity of the institutional environment and adjust their strategies accordingly. NGOs are not passive subjects in global politics, and I see them as available agents to promote global citizenship education through non-formal channels. In this sense, they are dynamic agents with capacities and knowledge to contribute to the transformation of political contexts. I understand NGOs as ‘any group of people who establish regular and formal relations with others in order to perform a collective action. Their activities must be non-commercial, non-violent and can’t be conducted in the name of a government’ (Willets, 2006: 535). To analyze how an NGO operates within global agendas, it is necessary to recognize ‘the competition and contestation among non-state actors’ (Bieri, 2010; Bolton and Nash, 2010; Koenig-Archibugi, 2014; Krause, 2014; Pianta, 2014; Ronalds, 2010; Willets, 2011).

Hence, when I analyze non-governmental actors (NGOs, social movements, unions, and others) and their inclusion and influence in global politics, I recognize the contemporary political relevance of these organizations. In this analysis, in no sense, does the understanding of NGO facing institutional global politics have any relation with the neoliberal perspective of ‘Davos Consensus’ where NGOs are ‘useful adjuncts and cheerleaders’ (Demars and Dijkzel, 2015: 10). I do not consider civil society actors, and hence NGOs, to be virtuous by nature or to have unquestionable democratic ethics. In fact, with a pluralistic approach, I observe civil society actors as agents of specific sociopolitical understandings with concrete values and specific views of the world.

To understand the role of NGOs as agents of global citizen non-formal education in Mexico, I appeal to Appadurai’s (2007) arguments. This author argues that to understand transnational activism and to explain the complexity of transnational mobilization, protest or resistance, theoretical approaches are not enough. In fact, non-governmental actors ‘often (...) try associating with multilateral agencies, with their own states of origin, with global funding providers and with other forces of the local and international civil society’ (Appadurai, 2007: 167). Contrariwise, protest and resistance approaches understand transnational activism through discourses against capitalism, globalization, and ‘the system’. Under this logic, political and economic structures and societies are seen as objects of elimination of something that is external to them.

We can see these approaches in a large number of studies analyzing the defense, protest or resistance against global capitalism in social movements or NGOs. These include collective transnational action (Della Porta, 2011; Rucht, 2003; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Smith, 2008; Tarrow, 2005; Von Bülow, 2010; Khagram. et al., 2002), global justice movements (Della Porta, 2007; Flesher Fominaya, 2014; Romanos, 2016), and the alter-globalization movement (Pleyers, 2010). Those approaches have contributed intensely to the development of critical views on global processes, analyzing and explaining the study of transnational mobilizations and their associational life. However, those perspectives are not useful in identifying how non-governmental actors are contributing to redefine or build new institutional frameworks as part of contemporary global politics as conceptualized in this article.

With the approach that I propose to analyze the experience of the promotion of global citizenship through non-formal education actions, I understand that interactions between transnational activisms and institutional frameworks are necessary to produce a radical transformation in global politics and social change. In this sense, to explain how NGO operates in terms of global politics, it is necessary to observe how NGO interact ‘with, and influence, the government’ in specific contexts. Then to operationalize my theoretical approach, I appeal to Appadurai’s (2007) arguments to analyze the *Equipo Pueblo*’s Citizen Diplomacy Program with repertoires of mobilization (Wong, 2012) to influence global politics. I understand that mobilization repertoires serve as a base to analyze the activities of NGOs and to understand the changes in their references and codes of

organized citizen mobilizations (Wong, 2012). In this sense, I identify the transnational practices of the actors with the organizational and narrative adjustments of NGOs in the face of global politics. In terms of repertoires to influence global politics, I put the focus on programs as examples of organizational structures and activities that seek to influence decision-making in global policies. To analyze *Equipo Pueblo's* Citizen Diplomacy Program as an experience of non-formal civic education related to global politics, I focus on the repertoire of mobilization as dialogue with governments and other actors in order to monitor and research actions, create alternative agendas, or influence strategies facing policy decision-makers. Then, I use organizational and narrative repertoires to identify and analyze the adjustments of the organizational structure, their activities, and their discourses that enable them to act in a public space within the context of globalization.

Citizen Diplomacy Program as advocacy repertoire of non-formal education for global politics in Mexico

In this section, according to the objectives of the article, I use the *Equipo Pueblo's* Citizen Diplomacy Program to identify an experience of a promotion of global citizenship education from non-formal education actions in Mexico. To obtain this goal, I show how this kind of Mexican NGO manifests everyday local–global interconnections, and I evidence how *Equipo Pueblo*, with its Citizen Diplomacy Program, engages local communities through transnational advocacy repertoires as part of global politics. Then, first, I explain *Equipo Pueblo's* origins, mission, and activities. In the second sub-section, I describe the Citizen Diplomacy Program. Finally, I analyze how I understand the Citizen Diplomacy Program as an experience of global citizen non-formal education. The NGO selected is helpful to identify non-formal education practices because it let see how ordinary citizens try to develop strategies to involve in global politics from below.

From local to global perspectives in Equipo Pueblo

Equipo Pueblo, an organization that has been at the forefront of transnational advocacy in contemporary Mexico, was created in 1977 under an authoritarian system led by the Institutional Revolutionary Party. It is one of the various NGOs that were promoted by the Mexican Catholic Church during the 70s. Secular organizations, as Christian Grassroots Communities, created by the Catholic Church, promoted the organization. From its beginnings, *Equipo Pueblo* had allies that helped it to establish and grow consistently. Vital help came from Agencia de Información de América Latina, Centro de Estudios Ecueménicos, Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social, and Centro Nacional para la Ayuda a Misiones Indígenas. Besides, renowned representatives of the Catholic Church, such as Sergio Méndez Arceo, in Mexico were key in promoting this organization. Other significant people among its founders included José Álvarez Icaza, Alex Moreli, and Ángel Torres.

According to *Equipo Pueblo's* documents, its origins were based on Catholic, ecumenical, and leftist traditions that underpin the organization's mission, values, and actions. From its origins, *Equipo Pueblo* with its catholic roots was sympathetic to the ideas of 'Liberation Theology'. As part of its ecumenical tradition, the organization was committed to 'pluralism and open to dialogue' and rejected 'absolute truths' (*Equipo Pueblo*, 1987). The organization's leftist roots shaped the ways in which *Equipo Pueblo* defined its members. As presented in the organization's documents, members identified critically with the idea of 'helplessness of the communist organizations with a middle-class composition and with a clear affirmation of autonomy and independence from the State' (*Equipo Pueblo*, 1987). Building upon this historical framework, *Equipo Pueblo's*

(2016b) current mission seeks to ‘establish a social agenda that contributes to democracy, and the exercise of rights by advocating to improve public policies at local, national, regional and international levels, thus promoting citizenship engagement and networking between social actors’ (p. 6).

The organization promotes citizen participation on public issues such as human rights and commercial trade in global agendas (e.g. G20 or 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), proposes dialogue processes between civil society actors and governments, demands a culture of human rights, and seeks to influence public policies dealing with human rights and democracy issues. To identify *Equipo Pueblo* as a transnational actor in global politics, I expose *Equipo Pueblo*’s current goals as examples that let me show how this organization has included the local–global perspective in its organizational and narrative repertoire to operate in public agendas. The first goal looks to build substantial citizenship for the deliberation and design of proposals on social, political, economic, and sustainable issues at local, national, regional, and international levels. The second goal includes influencing policies through inclusive proposals at local, national, regional, and international levels from a human rights and gender perspective. The third goal includes widening and diversifying partnerships with other social organizations in the country at regional and international levels (*Equipo Pueblo*, 2015: 5).

Repertoire to influence global politics: Equipo Pueblo’s Citizen Diplomacy Program

Starting in the 80s, Mexico went through a process of structural transformation, going from a nationalized economy to a free market economy. This shift brought a significant change to the country regarding its national and international priorities. In the 1990s, the global economy for countries such as Mexico became increasingly important, and *Equipo Pueblo* was one of the first NGOs in Mexico to be interested in commercial trade, especially with North America. Then, in 1993, *Equipo Pueblo* adjusted its priorities and work strategies by becoming increasingly interested in following Mexico’s processes to join the global economy. As part of such organizational adaptation, the founders created the Citizen Diplomacy Program. At the time, the initiative represented a groundbreaking change, since NGO participation in transnational activities in Mexico was very limited. According to the former program director (Carlos Heredia interview with the author, August 2008), the Citizen Diplomacy Program ‘was created on the premise that almost all important economic, political and social issues, have a crucial international dimension’.

Equipo Pueblo (2016b) understands citizen diplomacy as a civic strategy that seeks to influence decision-making processes in Mexico’s foreign affairs agenda (p. 3). Three premises underpin the Citizen Diplomacy Program. The first premise upholds that processes of economic, political, and cultural globalization are deepening and that economic globalization takes place under the hegemony of multinational financial and economic elites. The second premise upholds that NGOs are increasingly trying to propose solutions through strategies that encourage a citizenship-based counterbalance to the hegemony of the states. The third premise proposes a two-way process that combines local and national intervention with actions at the international level (Alejo Jaime, 2017: 198).

The Citizen Diplomacy Program of *Equipo Pueblo* is composed of multiple activities, including dialogue between the foreign affairs minister and NGOs about the Mexican multilateralism agenda, *shadow reports* regarding human rights official reports on the Mexican Government, *monitoring* the Mexican commercial trade agreements with the Europe Union and other activities that seek to influence decision-making processes. The Citizen Diplomacy Program utilizes this set of activities to influence the decision-making processes. *Equipo Pueblo* (2014) considers advocacy to be the following:

A deliberate and systematic process that considers the implementation by organized citizens of a number of political actions, aimed at influencing the people who make decisions on policies, by preparing and submitting proposals, offering solutions to social or community problems, in order to achieve specific changes in the public sphere, which may benefit a wide demographic or more specific groups. (p. 10).

The Citizen Diplomacy Program includes two main intervention areas: development, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, and free trade and investments with a human rights approach. To operate both intervention areas, *Equipo Pueblo* has focused on the promotion and defense of environmental, economic, social, and cultural rights; the relation with North America (North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Trilateral Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (TSPPNA), and Merida Initiative); the influence over public policy processes from a human rights perspective; the promotion of human rights in Mexico City; the influence over foreign affairs and international political agendas in Mexico; and the monitoring of the relationship between Mexico and the European Union. Following this diverse agenda, the Citizen Diplomacy Program's purpose is to promote civil society's participation in monitoring, evaluating, and promoting development policies and projects with a human rights approach, as well as participation in the processes demanding these rights. In this sense, *Equipo Pueblo* (2009) speaks, when necessary, against trade and investment policies, projects, and agreements that may have a negative impact on human rights, by demanding that the state fulfills its obligations regarding this issue (p. 7). To exemplify how these components operate as an educational experience, in the next sub-section, I analyze the Citizen Diplomacy Program as a non-formal experience of global citizen education.

The Citizen Diplomacy Program as non-formal global citizenship education in Mexico

The Citizen Diplomacy Program provides *Equipo Pueblo's* work with certain characteristics that allow it to be viewed as an experience of non-formal global citizenship education with a local–global interaction approach. For the program's coordinator, the organization focuses its efforts on promoting development based on human rights even though at first the program revolved around the processes of commercial agreements and structural adjustment policies. Within the context of the transformation of the Mexican economic model, *Equipo Pueblo* began to monitor policies, chiefly, at the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. At the end of the 90s, the program included a human rights approach along with the monitoring of the policies of multilateral economic bodies. Today, *Equipo Pueblo* has widened the scope of its activities to include other international entities (e.g. United Nations programs or bodies; Areli Sandoval interview with the author, August 2008). For the coordinator of the Citizen Diplomacy Program, organizations such as *Equipo Pueblo* with international areas of focus cannot neglect local work, nor can they neglect the participation of multilateral organizations in reform processes (Areli Sandoval interview with the author, August 2008).

Following UNESCO's (2014) Global Citizen Education goals, my analysis identified that *Equipo Pueblo* promoted non-formal education with its Citizen Diplomacy Program repertoire in that the program promoted informed, critical, and proactive participation of civil society in international, regional, and national spaces and processes of decision-making regarding economic and social issues. The purpose of the Citizen Diplomacy Program was to make sure that Mexico fulfilled its international commitments and obligations concerning economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights with regard to economic globalization (*Equipo Pueblo*, 2009: 7).

Based on an *Equipo Pueblo* (2014) research report, I show how this kind of organization trains grassroots organizations to participate in processes of public influence. In terms of advocacy, *Equipo Pueblo* (2014)

aimed at changing or updating policies on specific issues with specific proposals. For NGOs, solutions to public problems that come from an authority with no link to social organizations are not enough for a democratic order. *Equipo Pueblo* believes that social organizations must be able to propose alternatives to policies that are specific for each issue. (p. 10)

For *Equipo Pueblo*, influencing public policies is a goal that has guided its work. The executive director remarked that in the organization's more than 30 years of work, they have always worked toward exercising or defending rights, even though they did not use to call it that before. *Equipo Pueblo* seeks to promote the agenda and demands of the most underprivileged demographic, the people in exclusion. This is the reason why its advocacy focuses on defending the human rights of excluded people in the global economy. For this NGO, its work has been 'assertive', playing a pioneering role (Laura Becerra interview with the author, October 2008). From the mid-90s, *Equipo Pueblo* started to think that protesting and denouncing policies was not enough and 'began to think that we could wager or try to influence the people making the decisions in our country and to do that we had to be qualified and make proposals to influence the decisions' (Laura Becerra interview with the author, October 2008). This way, *Equipo Pueblo* sees advocacy as an important issue, tool, and strategy for social organizations to use to take action.

For one of its founders, the idea of advocacy is a strategic concept in their everyday work. It has to do with acknowledging the fact that in order to contribute to a changing reality, it is necessary to have the capacity to influence the decision-makers. However, an advocacy perspective has not always been present in *Equipo Pueblo's* work. The inclusion of the concept to guide their actions is an example of the transformation *Equipo Pueblo* has gone through in 'combining protest with making proposals for policy change' (Elio Villaseñor interview with the author, August 2008). *Equipo Pueblo* is an actor that not only makes demands but is also able to be in control, that is, 'to go from a popular consciousness to a citizen consciousness'. From this perspective, 'popular' does not mean 'anti-governmental' (Elio Villaseñor interview with the author, August 2008).

As a form of non-formal global citizenship education for global politics in Mexico, *Equipo Pueblo* trains grassroots organizations on how to learn advocacy's practices and strategies. This way, it seeks to teach them the following:

Promoting public policies does not belong solely to governments. It concerns and involves the society as well, because those are decisions and measures for issues and problems that are common, that due to their dimension and impact become public, and civil organizations exist precisely to deal with them (...). It is essential for us that they see themselves as public interest actors, with a right to criticize, propose and convince, to come up with solutions to the social problems that they deal with, or for the issues and areas chosen by each of them. (*Equipo Pueblo*, 2010a: 5)

The Citizen Diplomacy Program's advocacy strategies as non-formal education allow me to highlight its practices that foster the development of global citizen with a dynamic interaction between local and global levels. *Equipo Pueblo* with its Citizen Diplomacy Program engages local communities through grassroots organizations with global agendas, such as 2030 Agenda. There is the recent experience where *Equipo Pueblo* (2016a) developed a course designed to help grassroots organizations get involved in the process of implementing the 2030 Sustainable Agenda. In this sense, *Equipo Pueblo* uses the Citizen Diplomacy Program to guide its actions in asking the

state to carry out its obligations of respect, protection, and fulfillment of human rights and demand that the state places the rights of its citizens before the rights of private investors.

I see *Equipo Pueblo's* Citizen Diplomacy Program as a tool for promoting global citizenship education with a wide field of action and a local–global perspective. For example, this NGO is a regular actor in the spaces of dialogue between the civil society and the foreign affairs minister on multilateral issues. It is part of the formal spaces of dialogue between institutions and civil societies of Mexico and the European Union; it is an active actor in the agendas of the G20, Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In those spaces, it usually leads global networks of NGOs in Mexico and Central America for the issues on which it works. *Equipo Pueblo* (2016a) is part of a diverse group of NGOs, including Social Watch and Asociación Latinoamericana de Organizaciones de Promoción Desarrollo and was the focal point of the NGO network beyond 2015 in Mexico. Thus, the organization works against the effects of the neoliberal model and the global policies dictated by the multilateral banking system and the World Trade Organization, which most affect society's deprived and excluded populations. For this organization, its Citizen Diplomacy Program is part of an international context marked by an uneven and discriminatory process of economic globalization (unfavorable context) and by a process of globalization of solidarity and social struggle (encouraging context). In this context, organized action by the civil society to monitor and demand human rights is essential, and these actors must therefore be empowered (*Equipo Pueblo*, 2010b).

Understanding local–global interactions, *Equipo Pueblo* developed its alternative education repertoire with local communities in the form of its Citizen Diplomacy Program. *Equipo Pueblo* used to define itself as an 'NGO for the masses and with a federal orientation'. With this meaning behind its actions, the NGO implemented local projects in several places around the country. Among these projects was 'the Banana and Cocoa Cooperative in Tabasco, the Peasant Democratic Movement in Chihuahua, teacher's mobilizations in Oaxaca and Chiapas (Sections 32 and 7), the Veracruz Southwest Interregional and the Workers Coordinating Group in Ecatepec in Mexico' (Villaseñor, 2006: 42). With this, *Equipo Pueblo* promoted and became part of regional networks of organizations in Mexico. For the founders,

a mysticism prevailed among the members of *Equipo Pueblo*, that we all should do grassroots work—be it with the Christian Grassroots Communities, with peasant organizations or with unions—and from there carry out the works of communication and the organization meetings with university intellectuals and leaders. (Villaseñor, 2006: 16).

To close the analysis of *Equipo Pueblo's* Citizen Diplomacy Program as a non-formal global citizenship education experience, I highlight some lessons from *Equipo Pueblo's* repertoire. First, to be effective in meeting their transnational advocacy objectives, they require conducting research in order to have arguments to defend their positions because 'in order to be able to have an influence, you need to actually prove the negative effects of globalization' (Norma Castañeda interview with the author, August 2008). Another element that I highlight from *Equipo Pueblo's* repertoire of transnational advocacy is networking with other actors to achieve common goals. So, one of *Equipo Pueblo's* focus areas is the creation and building of networks to strengthen citizen participation, as they believe that in order to make an impact, they cannot work alone and admit that many of their achievements have come from working with other actors. With its Citizen Advocacy Program, this NGO has established links and alliances with people of other nationalities and countries. After several years of working with multilateral financial institutions, trade agreements and environmental, economic, social, and cultural rights, this organization believes it developed important connections between the issues on which they work and the networks of which they are part. As a result, for other organizations and Mexican government, *Equipo Pueblo* is the go-to Mexican

NGO in relation to the defense and promotion of environmental, economic, social, and cultural rights and its priority status in global politics.

Conclusion

This study looked at the Citizenship Diplomacy Program of *Equipo Pueblo* with the purpose of contributing to transnational activism studies related to non-formal education practices facing global politics by offering new ways to observe transnational activism in the Americas. NGOs and transnational activism in the 21st century have transcended protest and resistance strategies. This study's contributions to this evolving field were based on two interrelated axes: to think about NGOs as promoters of global citizenship education values in a globalized world and to identify examples of NGOs practicing non-formal civic education for global citizenship in Mexico.

First, I highlight the analysis of transnational activism in the associational world both from Mexico and from other countries. This activism includes the incorporation of going from protest to advocacy strategies in contemporary civic actions. With this approach, it is clear how the context changes and defines the field of action for the various actors (Le Baron and Dauvergne, 2014; Davies, 2014; Wong, 2012). However, at the same time, the actors generate their own actions and adjust in order to continue with their own strategies to influence global policies.

Second, through this study, I evidenced how the repertoire of an education-related organization in Mexico became increasingly transnational by combining local and global levels of intervention in the organization's focus. The case showed how *Equipo Pueblo* transmitted global issues to its local community through its Citizenship Diplomacy Program. In addition, the case evidenced that *Equipo Pueblo's* Citizenship Diplomacy Program was part of the organization's influence strategy, by providing participation mechanisms to local NGOs and contributing to a culture of tolerance, inclusion, and peace in Mexico.

Third, the study identified citizen participation mechanisms that *Equipo Pueblo* connected to citizens so that these individuals could participate in global policy issues. Those citizen participation mechanisms are related to Mexico's global and multilateral agendas, such as G20, migration, cooperation and development, European Union, and Mexican relations with North America. I see those citizen participation mechanisms as windows of opportunities to practice global civic education values. Then, I identified NGOs as potential agents to promote these values. In this sense, the civic participation in those global public arenas become an important non-formal learning experience beyond schools that allowed citizens to acquire the necessary skills for effective participation in the 21st century globalized policy processes. In this way, NGOs can play relevant roles in educating citizens beyond the acquisition of cognitive skills, by educating them in the values, participation skills, and positive attitudes needed to promote inclusive and peaceful societies. Thus, this focus on the Citizenship Diplomacy Program offered a new way to understand how NGOs can strengthen democratic institutions and participation mechanisms within a globalized world.

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