

Global identity, local identity

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translated by Amelia Burke

In a globalised world, hundreds of millions of people live in countries which they were not born in, or which their parents were not born in. Although many adapt to life in a new place, whilst managing to keep the bonds to their place of origin alive, others find it more difficult. Perhaps they find their heart divided between two countries and two cultures, or maybe they just do not feel they belong anywhere, except as a global citizen of planet Earth. Not to mention the problems of discrimination they encounter for being *different*.



Sergio Tamayo



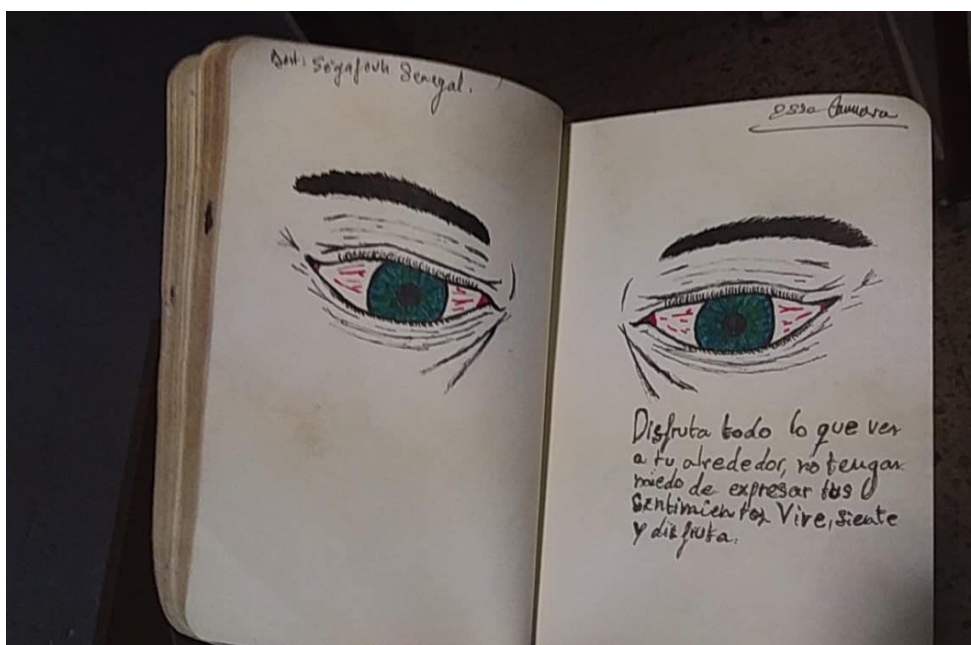
Mohammad Sabir

In this presentation we want to explore what it means to be a global citizen and to do this we offer a resource created by **Fabricants de Futur**. Fabricants de Futur is a collective which has spent 10 years

generating open educational material (Creative Commons) in collaboration with people from diverse countries. Many of those collaborators have lived through the experience of abandoning their country of origin, usually because of armed conflicts. The collaborators talk about their experience through art (texts, poetry, drawing, painting, photography...). This activity is directed at students aged 16-18 years, however Fabricants de Futur creates many activities on different topics and for a wide age range. We suggest that you explore their material on the internet, for example here ([aquí](#)) and especially their book A New Social Contract. No Flag No Frontier ([Un nuevo contrato social. Sin bandera. Sin frontera](#)) which includes many texts suitable for discussing other related topics.



Bo Chapman



Essa Camara

The development of our identity as a global citizen requires, for most people, time to reflect on what it means, and what it implies to feel and act in this plane within the society we live in. In order to act as a global citizen we need awareness about the obstacles in our path and the forceful arguments and propaganda in our environment which aim to repress its development and growth - racism, fear, mistrust, economic separation, cultural separation and separation of sectors of humanity by the system. These elements, among others, are manipulated by political, economic and cultural interests who want groups or populations of people to remain inside a narrow identity. Through the poem "Children of the River" by Rafael Carvajal, we can question and reflect on the attitude of the global citizen when faced with the real world we live in.



Dave Martin

<https://youtu.be/fXojbnLLSZU> link to 'Children of the Rivers' video

Children of the Rivers

I

What is right,
Said Adam
Is to be born out of the mud,
In love with your native land;
To dive contentedly into its pools.

What is healthy,
Is to delight in the damp sands
Of ancient traditions
Chewing them over like an old piece of gum,
Which lost its sweetness
A long time past.

What is complete,
Is to sing with feeling
Every heroic strain of your country's anthem,
Let yourself get carried away
Cheering on the national team through victory and defeat,
To enthusiastically wave the flag.

What is human,
Is to be a citizen:
This fleshy dream borne out of the mud.

But some of us
Are not from any place.
We were born as pebbles
To be dragged along by wild rivers.

II

I am calling to you,
Man of stone,
And to you,
Woman of jasper -
Carved by the chiselling of the winds,
Polished by the river currents
Which deposited you on the bank.
I need your hard quartz hearts.

They shot you with silver bullets,
They baptized you in acid,
They took your support away
They denied you headrest and pillow
They broke your alabaster bones.

The time is now.
The storm is rising:

Thunder will roll;
Lightning flashes will light up the ones who are hiding in the clay.
The deluge is coming: rain and hail.
To raze mountain, valley and hillside.

Brothers - sisters.
Shall we climb to the tip of the frozen mountain
and build the marble palace?
Or shall we go down to the delta of the sacred river
And form a jetty with our blood of gesso?

I am calling you,
Stony brother,
The one they called a coward.
I am calling you,
Jade sister,
Rejected and called a traitor.

III

There are bones which do not rest in their graves.
There are niches open in the cemetery.
The sweat on the traveller's brow:
Tropical pebble
Dragged along by the river of poverty
Economic migrant
Carrying his country on his back,
Its altars and its virgins
Its foods and curious ways
Living tortured by the noble horizon
By dreams of a homeland far away.
Come to him! angel of hopeless cases,
Steal away the songs which rocked his cradle
Give him a sky with no frontiers in exchange;
Give him some shade on the pavement;
Give him the view from the rooftops;
Give him peace and take culture away.
May the soul become a passport
And let eyes restore wellbeing with the sincerity of their look.
The dead have already found their country;
Let no-one hide the living
In a casket of customs and traditions.

IV

I am alone.
This land of my parents is not my land.
I am an intruder.
My face looks like other people's faces.
My name identifies me as kin.
My blood is the inheritor of this dust.
But my blood boils against the enemies of beauty.
There is only one truth and we all know what it is,
Only one living homeland,
Only one origin.
And still, the lie keeps us away from Paradise.

I walk looking at the ground,
Even so, I see the beggar and the business man in his suit
And the prostitutes on the corner
And the woman who is no longer quite beautiful.
And the youngster going through his pains
And the old man blind to love
I don't see a homeland until I see the police;
Asking the black people for their papers.

Senegal, Algiers, China, Peru.
You are a map, a vision, a dream.
I know your prodigal sons.
I too was a prodigal son in America.
For twenty years I savoured the ice of injustice.
Let all the border controls be opened.
Let the skies know freedom.
The future makes us grow small.

I am small:
Just a pebble
Dragged along by the river.
My homeland is the current which carries me onwards;
My skin is my flag.

Rafael Carvajal

translated from Spanish by Amelia Burke and Rafael Carvajal

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