



## Further thoughts on hard questions and unique opportunities in Glasgow.

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As we prepare to convene in the vibrant city of Glasgow, it is a good time for us to reflect on what we hope to discuss and achieve during our annual open forum.

From increasing disparities on the socio-economic front to disengagement in political participation and access to information, identifying the **role of citizenship education** in sustaining these trends and the opportunities it offers for addressing them, has become an urgent task.

As we witness the growth of social fractures at both the city and the regional levels with a lack of channels bridging these gaps, **information bubbles are sealing communities into echo chambers**. This trend is reflected through the ballot, whether through the Brexit referendum or through elections across Europe, including the worrying rates of participation and general disengagement of the general public or on the contrary, the growth of social movements taking it to the streets as a last resort.

From public schools, to private schools, from peripheries to centres, from the public sphere to governments: **what type of channels does civic education offer for sustainable forms of engagement providing an outlet for bridging these inequalities?**

**Civic education is a cross-curricular subject which goes beyond the walls of the classroom and beyond school years.** From school to retirement, citizens must have an outlet for engaging in a constructive way and what better motivation to stay constructive than to be heard. What outlet is civic education offering to citizens to be heard? How can formal education cooperate with the non-formal and informal civic education sectors? How can we engage all stakeholders across generations? How do we engage both ends of the inequality spectrum? **How do we reach out to the most marginalized areas and communities to bring them to the centre of the dialogue?**

From theory to practice, the NECE forum offers a platform to tackle this topic engaging a multitude of stakeholders presenting their different perspectives to provide a full picture of the relationship between inequalities and citizenship education. **The civic education sector, though seemingly homogeneous, offers a wide range of expertise, topics and forms of engagement throughout Europe, giving us a chance to challenge our own perceptions and practices.**

We also need to ask ourselves **the hard questions**, and allow our own work to be at the centre of the debate thinking about our own shortcomings whether from a conceptual perspective or a practical one. **Are we truly promoting an open and inclusive dialogue or are we also**





**sustaining an alienating discourse? How can public-private partnerships participate in reducing the economic gap sustaining these inequalities? How do we constructively discuss the notion of privilege?**

Further, the participation of stakeholders from NECE inspired networks beyond the European borders (**NACE, EENCE and CENESA**), will allow for discussions on global challenges like migration, economic development or violent extremism.

We also look forward to new ideas and resources coming from our Scottish and British partners in **Glasgow: IDEAS; WOSDEC, Bridge 47 and the Institute for Future Cities, University of Strathclyde.**

This is a unique opportunity for all of us, civic education actors, to exchange and engage in peer to peer learning around the impact our work has and can have on confronting inequalities.

To put it in a nutshell, this year's topic: "confronting inequalities" invites to a core question: **How can civic education and engagement enable citizens to overcome inequalities and eventually break the social reproductive cycle sustaining them?**

