Panel: How does Citizenship Education Affect Inequalities?

Introduction: **Anja Neundorf**, University of Glasgow, UK

Discussion with
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Anja Neundorf, University of Glasgow, UK
Felisa Tibbitts, Columbia and Utrecht Universities, USA and The Netherlands

Moderation: **Caroline Hornstein Tomic**, Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, NECE Advisory Board, Croatia

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Nelly Corbel (Conference Facilitation): It's time now for our first panel for the opening part of the conference. I would like to introduce you to Caroline. She is a member of Advisory Board and part of NECE. With no further ado, I do pass on the floor to you.

Caroline Hornstein Tomic: I hope that works. I don't need your microphone. There are quite a few soul mates, NECE advisory boards, but it looks to me that we are here a big audience of soul mates and have the huge privilege of exploring three days what we are about, what our ethics are about, what our methods are about. The discussion we had with Darren McGarvey was actually a perfect dive in. We are just continuing and taking it from there with our opening panel which addresses the question, how does citizenship education affect inequalities?

There we are. We are going right into the heart of the issue with all the humility and self-reflexivity that Darren McGarvey has encouraged us to, actually confront us with. We will talk about our practice and our engagement in civic education, our investment into it. We will talk about our entanglements in structures of power, social hierarchies, and inequalities. We will start off now or continue actually to reflect and to explore and hopefully also to come up with some answers, new insights, and ideas about how to go about our business. How can we be more effective, give better and more relevant support to people who need to get into representation, to have a voice, be visible and present in public space and politics?

Do we need to explore new ways to tools and tools and words and language to reach out to those who are hard to reach? How can we enhance our understanding of how inequalities work in society? Last but not least, what public support is needed to substantially tackle inequalities? I'm very excited to be hosting a power panel. A power panel consisting of Anja Neundorf, Rachel Binnie, and Felisa Tibbitts. I'll ask you to the floor in a moment, but now we first get the introduction to our panel by Anja Neundorf. A professor of political sciences, only recently moved to Glasgow University actually this semester as I understand.

Your research amongst others is on how political engagement relates to socialization and the role of civic education and compensation are compensating inequalities in upbringing. You are also researching online civic education, which I think is very intriguing to many of us here. Last but not least, also for friends from the very different environments that we bring in together with autocratic experiences and legacies. How those legacies of autocratic regimes actually impact on democratization and civil society long after those regimes have been overcome. Anja, thank you very much. You have the floor.

Anja Neundorf: Thank you very much for the invitation and welcome to Glasgow. As you're here, I just moved to Glasgow. I'm still adapting to the beautiful Glaswegian weather so my voice is a tiny bit affected here. What I was asked to do was to talk about how citizenship education affects inequalities and please bear with me. I'm going to talk about citizenship education, but I first want to focus a bit more on inequalities. When we think about citizenship education we have to think about democracy and I think Alicia made a really nice point about this.

When we think about democracy, then we have to think about what democracy is based on. It is based on a principle that all citizens equally participate in the process and are heard. However, there are inequalities and political engagement that are based on wealth, education and age that have been well established. When we think about inequality, ultimately there's an inequality of voices here. When we think about inequality, voices are referred to things like voting. We know that some people are more or less likely to participate in elections, which directly affect the composition of governments that make policies.

We also know about inequality in terms of activism, what I mean here is unions, professional association, environmental association and so on, that often are invited to also participate in policymaking and again their voices are heard. To a lesser extent, there's also inequality in terms of other forms of engagement such as demonstration and there's a bit of a debate about how effective that it really is. What we've seen in the UK in the last few months with loads of demonstration hasn't affected too much the outcome. These are the inequalities of voices that I refer to.

Let me just give you a couple of examples of how that looks like. Here you see some data from the European Social Survey. What we have done here is, I just plot what is the average turnout rate in all these different European countries by income? I'm taking actual income because obviously that varies a bit in different countries, but rather this self-infliction of, do you struggle on your income or do you live comfortably? What we see is across the board there's a discrepancy that those that struggle more on their income are less likely to turn out. On average, there's about a 20% gap in Europe.

There's a similar picture if we turn to education. Now those that have only primary education are far less likely to turn out than those that have a university degree and that gap is on average 25%, but see there's some interesting differences here. Look at Germany, huge gap between education groups from going from 40% of those that have only minimal education to nearly 90% of those with a university degree. This is not new, now looking here at some USA data we see that across the last four

decades or so, this gap between those that are more or less educated remained relatively stable, which means that some voices have been heard more than others.

These disparities and political engagement are said to lead to public policies that favor the elite and enhance the social inclusion. This link between inequality of voices and inequality of policy output is related to our political system and how it works. In political science, we usually talk about the incentives that politicians have. Well, they could either be what we call policy-seeking which means they want to make sure that they implement certain policies that they believe in. On the other hand, it could also be office-seeking which just means they want to be elected into office. As you can imagine, most of the time we see that most politicians are office-seeking.

How do they make sure that they get voted for? Well, they have to listen to and deliver to those people that are most active in the political system. Here just to give you some example how this translates. What do we see is that in the US and you have maybe picked up on this picture in the news or social media like about two weeks ago. This is some US data on tax rates. What some economists in the US have done is they have looked at, what are the top 50% tax rate, which is relatively stable at about 25%. Then the 40 richest families in the US, what do they pay? What we see here is that there is a dramatic decline in tax rate among the richest.

Then last year they even paid lesser in terms of overall tax than the bottom 50%. What we see here is that people from socially deprived backgrounds are less likely to be heard in politics. If they're not heard, their interests are not translated into public policies, which could help them. Of course, the issue is, how does this really would connect to the voices? Let me give you another example here looking much closer in Glasgow. One of the most striking statistics I came across was the child poverty in Glasgow that was reported also in the documentation that was prepared for the conference.

Looking at the south of Glasgow, there's only 7% of children that are classified and living in poverty while in the east of Glasgow there's 41%. If we put that next to turnout rate, which I made that argument that if people turn out, their voices are heard more. Then we see again, that picture that in the south, turnout is much higher than in the east of Glasgow. The problem is, what is really happening here? What comes first? Is lower participation of the poor enhancing these inequalities, or are the deprived people less likely to participate in the political process because they become apathetic? Is this the typical chicken and egg problem? What comes first?

The argument here is that maybe these things are cyclical. As inequalities and voice increases, specific communities are heard less, their interests are less represented, which leads to certain inequalities and policy output, which feeds back to apathy. We were already talking about the resentment in politics that we are observing in many countries that is endangering democracy to some extent. What I'm assuming here and what I'm arguing is that the inequality in voice is central to this. If we take the inequality in voices as the central piece that we need to tackle, then we need to think about, "Why do people actually become active in politics? What motivates us? What brings us out to get hurt?"

Looking at the research in this area, there are two main factors I would say. There's knowledge and there's motivation. When we think about knowledge in particular, I like to think about an analogy from sport. When I first moved to the UK, I had no idea about cricket. It just seemed like a really dull game, to be honest, until a friend sat me down and explained to me the rules. I could see that could be a fun game, I can see that some people are really into this. It's in a way exactly the same with politics. If you don't know the rules of the game, you don't appreciate it, you don't get excited about it.

Most importantly, you will also not know how important it is for you to actually become engaged to become heard and that if you don't get heard, policies will not be made for you to be catered for your interest and out of your family because politicians have to trade-off. They have to make decision of what they prioritize. Do they prioritize certain policies of market principles or do they prioritizing putting more money into school? They have limited funds, but what do they prioritize? They will respond to what they hear most about. The question then is how do we learn politics? Now, I'm coming to why we're here.

There's no question that the home is really important. Parents teach us all kinds of things and politics is no exception to this. However, what if you grew up in a family that doesn't care about politics? We heard from Darren about growing up in communities where you're not supposed to write a book, but you're also not supposed to read a book. What if you grow up in a home where you don't talk about politics, and your parents don't give you this motivation and the knowledge? This is exactly where civic education comes in. Civic education is really important for all children, but it is particularly important for those from non-political families.

Otherwise, these social inequalities that we see in terms of inequality of voices, will just be reinforced and repeat itself. Caroline mentioned one particular research that I have done in this area. Let me just briefly give you some of the insights that we have found here. I have studied the compensation effect of civic education for this missing parental socialization. Here, we were looking at adolescence that we kept following during these really important formative years from 14 to 24 and we tracked their political engagement. What we found is there's already four different groups here. You have on the one side, children or adolescents that grew up in quite politicized families.

They would discuss politics with their parents, we also have the socio-economic educational background of the parents, we have books at home as an indicator, these kind of things.

These would be the lines up here. These are dashed lines of families that are quite politicized. Then we have those children that come from not so political families. Then you have two other options here. Children could go to school where they get a really good high-quality education, in terms of civics or they don't have this high-quality civic education in school.

What you see here is, as we expect, those children that come from very political families are much more engaged already at the age of 14, 15 than those that don't come from political families. Yes, family do matter. Look at this group here. This line

is basically the development of political engagement among young adults that have no political home where they learn and get motivated about politics, but they are exposed to really high-quality civic education in school. What we see is they are catching up. That is really important finding here. It also is a bit worrying because what we have seen in our data-- we're using Belgian data here, by the way, we had really good quality data also on the civic education that's happening in school.

What we saw is that there's quite some discrepancy of what children get in school. I know that there's a lot of practitioners here in the room and because that's an important topic for the conference, in general, is there are discrepancies. That leads me to my third inequality. We actually have a trilemma here anyway, there's the access inequality. Not everybody is fortunate enough to get the education in school that helps them to get this motivation and knowledge which they need to become empowered and active citizens. Of course, you're thinking about if there's an inequality of access, that leads to inequality of voices, which also again, leads to an inequality of policy output.

Then you have this feedback here. With inequality of policy output also affects again, an access inequality. This is exactly what we were already talking about. If we want to break this cycle, we need to deal with this link. What we basically need to do is we need to break this cycle that schools reproduce social inequalities, but rather they need to be the vehicle to overcome these inequalities, to empower those that are usually disadvantaged. How can we break this cycle? This is by no means, a comprehensive and there's many more things. I hope that the next two and a half days will be really around these discussions.

School education is without question absolutely important for this. When I think about school education, we need to make sure that civic education is compulsory. We need to make sure that every child is exposed to civic education. We also need to think about the quality of teacher training, this already came up. In a lot of countries, civic education is dumped on a teacher who did something wrong or something known. Civic education needs to be taught by teachers who are highly qualified about this. Then there's all this question about content and delivery. We need to go into this detail as well.

Civic education and breaking the cycle of inequalities is also about lifelong learning and the informal education that I know a lot of you are also working on. I want to make one last point here, which is we need to embrace new technology as an opportunity. What do I mean? Could social media actually be a solution? Could it help us? Of course, when you think about social media, what do you usually think about? Well, social media is a threat to democracy, it cannot be a solution. We think about rigged election and manipulated information and these kind of things. Why don't we just turn this on its head?

If other forces, let's say, use social media for their purposes, why don't we use social media for our purposes and promote democracy? What I have done with some collaborators is to test whether online civic education can be a solution. What we have done here is we run the study in Tunisia, which just as some of you probably know, had its second round of democratic elections this year. We developed some original civic education programs. We used a lot of traditional face-to-face material,

but we just moved it online. We developed some videos, that had different messages, we also asked participant to write a little essay to really engage them. What we then tried to see is experimentally whether this works.

We recruited about 2000 people through Facebook and Instagram and then experimentally put them in different treatment groups, and so on. What we have shown in this study is it works. We can actually show that being exposed to these online little programs, little videos, just engaging people in this way, can actually help to increase citizenship and make people more positive about democracy, increase engagement, and something that I care very much about is, also reduce authoritarian nostalgia. This is also a last point and I don't want to talk too much about this. Obviously, citizenship education is also key for democracy promotion, and I know that Alicia already talked a lot about this. I think we need to talk more about this. Let me now just wrap up. What are my key messages here? I think that first of all, what I would like to get across is we need to break the cycle of inequalities by tearing down these barriers of voice inequality.

Which relate to making sure everybody has the same high-quality access to education and especially civic education. Secondly, we need this high-quality civic education, not just any education but it needs to be high quality. Also, we need to embrace technology and use all possible ways to make civic education available for everybody across all ages because civic education shouldn't stop at 16 or 18. It's a lifelong learning process.

[applause]

Caroline: Well, thank you very much, Anja, this was a fabulous intro into our discussion with the three points, which might be just a manual of how to go about the business or a utopian concept. For some of us, this sounds really like something we might not experience in a lifetime. We are here to actually do something about this and make this happen and turn it into a reality. Civic education compulsory in schools, that would be it to break the cycle for sure. Now let's have two power experts here on the stage, please Rachel Binnie, and Felisa Tibbitts. I'm very happy that you can join us here. We have with Rachel, the opportunity to zoom into the Glasgow situation or the Scottish context, let's say and with Felisa Tibbitts to zoom out again on International and global level.

You will be responding and commenting on Anja's talk and we shall then immediately open up for and engage debate for the time that we are given which is limited to five to seven, I was told, so it's not that much. Let me, Rachel, briefly introduce you. Rachel Binnie is a postgraduate and primary teaching from Strathclyde University, which is our host here and is since working for, now, 25 years in teaching as a headteacher, as a teacher. A year ago, you've been seconded to public administration, which is a great switch and now you will enter that revolving door to work as lead officer for the Glasgow City Council to improve the situation in allocated schools. Also to take care of the implementation of the Learning for Sustainability Program, which I'm very curious to hear about.

That's great stuff. We can learn from your experience. I'd also like to introduce Felisa Tibbitts who just came in from New York. No lesser place than that flying in from the

Big Apple. I found that you state on your webpage, education is for you a powerful tool in personal development and social transformation. That I think is very much a programmatic line also for what we are here for. Self-reflection motivation, this is what we need to be focusing on. You hold the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Higher Education as well as the Chair in Human Rights education at the Human Rights Center of Utrecht University, so the Netherlands.

On the one hand, you are also teacher lecturer at the Teacher College of Columbia University. That's Cross Atlantic and a visiting professor at the Nelson Mandela University in South Africa. This is a fantastic insight that you will contribute here. You take an international and comparative lens on human rights and democratic citizenship education. You are a co-founder of the Human Rights Education Associates. That's the NGO part of the picture which we want to embrace as well. You have yourself, wide teaching experience both of high school kids, of teacher education and of university students. That is also interesting to learn about those different levels.

Now I will take my seat and give the mic to Rachel. You took it already. Fantastic, please.

Rachel Binnie: It's switched on. I'm actually feeling very nervous about doing this. I'm going to admit it's not something I've ever done before and following Darren where I'm manipulated, I'm silenced in a flawed system, I'm not sure that what I'm going to say will be the same as that but in responding to Anja's brought up them, certainly, working and teaching in Glasgow and I can see direct in front of me some colleague that also teaches in Glasgow. We're faced with inequalities every single day. You can't get away from it.

Over 50% of the young people in Glasgow live in the most deprived areas in Scotland. You can't really go into a school without dealing with these inequalities face-to-face.

I have to remember and it was very important that when we're talking about these, we're talking about young people and children. My background is mainly primary, so very young children, and I think that's really important for us. We're talking about actual people and families and communities. I would completely agree with the access inequality from my point of view of being a teacher and a headteacher and working now in education services, that access inequality comes from just poor attendance. If you're in a more deprived area, you are less likely to come into school or come into school on time. Straight away you're missing out on high-quality education, which is what you're hopefully giving to children.

There's also if they are in school if you are in a more deprived area, you're not accessing your education in other ways because you're not prepared to be there. You've probably don't compare to may be in a high anxiety state. There are health inequalities as well which might prevent you even when you're in school accessing the learning that's going on properly. It's also been brought up about parents and their support and their engagement. Well, we've talked about poverty, I actually wrote my notes really around deprivation because there's all those different elements that lead to inequalities to accessing education.

It's been proven if you don't access high-quality education, then your life chances aren't just great. That's just a fact. I'm quite hopeful and optimistic. I'm going to use those words other people have used. There is a realization certainly in Glasgow that you've got to tackle inequality because if you don't, you're going to lose over half of young people. They're not going to do as well as they should. The curriculum that Scotland, and that has been around for over 10 years, it does put, I'm going to say citizenship education which involves civic education within it, at its heart. That's what it should do. It's there and it's built around for capacities to them being responsible citizens and effective contributors.

It's a name that our children are global citizens and they can work in a socially just and sustainable world. That's something that I would say Scotland and Glasgow aspires for its children and that is access for all to education. Hence why Anja has spoken about the government has put in additional funding into schools where it's realized these higher levels of deprivation. It can be seen that young people aren't achieving and I'm going to use the word achieving and detaining as well, because are concerned that I have personally that sometimes and very recently we've had such a focus on high-end improving attainment in certain core areas that sometimes we've forgotten about the broad education that Scotland offers.

We have something called broad general education – I won't go into it unless somebody wants to ask me later – we've narrowed it down a bit and we may be forgetting about the importance of things like citizenship education. However, I think it's coming to the forum particularly in the political climate we're on that it's certainly something that is there in place. It should be taught. It's in our curriculum. It's in the heart of our curriculum. It's done as things that children should achieve. I know people from here from all over the world. Some people when they talk about young people think about maybe secondary, but certainly older than that.

I'm sitting here, when I talk about children and young people, I talk about from birth upwards, but certainly from 3 years old upwards and they are involved in civic education from three years old in Scotland. Not talking about democracy and politics at three years old, but giving children a voice, knowing that they can be listened to and heard and what they have to say is important and building up that confidence and that resilience. It's not always perfect it doesn't always work that well, but it builds up so that you are being taught from approximate the age of 10 you should be taught about politics and about democracy and about how elections work. Then that carries on into the secondary school and into the senior phase. It's there in our curriculum to be taught, I think we've got real potential in Scotland for it to work really well.

There are lots of difficulties, particularly with the inequalities there because those inequalities, despite all the hard work and policies and planning that have been in place are still there, In fact, they were talking about the Glasgow effect and I've just read something recently that said that the life expectancy rate was rising in Scotland. It's stalled and it actually started to fall a bit but probably more importantly, the gap between those have the most and those that have the least is getting wider again. Despite everything we seem to be doing the policies and that the will that's out there, the curriculum that's really centered around the young person and around citizenship and about social justice, we don't seem to be maybe closing those inequalities.

I don't think can be just left to education, which was out there as well. It's bigger than that but it's everything working together so we haven't got it right in Scotland, definitely not in Glasgow. I do think we are having an impact. We've seen it with the recent inspection of Glasgow education system. We are impacting and improving a quality of access to education. It can be seen from improvements in results, exclusions and attendance. I don't know if that's going to impact on the way young people vote or are politically active is that because it's not had enough time to embed.

The curriculum has been around for over 10 years, but we're talking generational change probably here or do we need to do something different to make an impact more quickly? I'm not sure there's a consistency of good quality essential education that's in our curriculum, but is it consistently taught well? I think that that could be questioned as well, but I'm very hopeful and optimistic as a person that-- Maybe don't fall for my accent, I'm actually not originally from Scotland, but I've spent most of my life here and I've only ever taught in Scotland and nearly all the time in Glasgow.

I'm hopeful that we can make a difference because the young people that I meet, and that's from the age of four in my line of work, none of them come into school wanting to have low self-esteem, not achieve, be an addict. They come in absolutely loving school, enthusiastic to learn. We do lose it somewhere along the way, so I think there's work to be done, but they are incredible young people here, but we just need to make sure they all achieve their potential. Thank you.

[applause]

Caroline: Well, thank you. Rachel, that's fascinating because you are pointing exactly at what Alicia was also saying. On the one hand, education is a generational and especially implementing reforms and new approaches takes time, but we are running out of time. There's this pressure of closing gaps which keep widening again, Felicia, [chuckles] you will have the word.

Felisa: Thank you both of you for the points you've raised. Anja shared ahead of time with Rachel and myself what she was planning to present on. I wrote some things down because I did expect to have a little jet lag, so I will maybe be looking down every once in a while, but I thought to actually highlight in my comments something that I think is complementary to what actually both of you have-

Caroline: Can you speak up.

Felisa: -mentioned. Okay. The first is that I wanted for the benefit of the days we have ahead of us to maybe offer to think a little bit more widely about what participation in political participation looks like. I know many of us are already dealing with or have dealt with non-formal education kinds of approaches, so we're already thinking about activation. I thought it'd be worth mentioning that now in the first panel. Thinking about political participation, for example, even the theorist, those of us in academia have distinguished between more a kind of conventional citizenship and another kind of citizenship called either social movement citizenship or justice-oriented forms of citizenship.

I think that those other ones, the social justice forums for example, really connect very evidently with the theme of this conference, which is how schools and civics education, in particular, can influence inequalities. Social movement citizenship understands that the agenda is change and transformation. Then the question becomes how do we in schools as teachers create the kind of movement internally that Darren mentioned earlier all about the movement of the individual in the classroom, what you're doing with your students, presumably giving them a sense of voice and identity and so forth.

How that can link up with changing societies, not only just finding your own way, which Darren argues is sufficient in a way, but I think once you find your way coming from a position, perhaps of disadvantage, there's a reflex to do something broader in society. I think so anyway. Political participation is partly the socialization we do in schools as well we should, involving knowledge and motivation. I think that motivation piece, especially in, where I'm living for most of the time now, which is the United States, is showing up in very different ways.

There is, emotions are playing a role now in engagement – and there's even research that shows what is probably intuitively obvious – that fear, that anger that hopefulness are motivations for getting engaged in some way. That's part of what we do as well in schools, the motivation piece is looking at issues that are already out in society or conditions that we're living in and becoming aware of those and responding to those in some ways. What students do with that, how they look at those issues and what they decide to do about that is I think interesting to think about as well.

It's not just voting, although one would hope for that and that's extremely important for our societies, all of them in democracies, but these other kinds of movements that students are taking as well. If we look at the activism now in the United States amongst youth, which I'm very interested in for, partly because of my human rights background, we see a lot of activism not only with youth but in other parts of society and to reaction obviously against some of the politics that we're seeing. I did a study, actually, it was a cross-national study, but for the sake of being brief, the US results.

I'm consistent with where my focus is in my comments to you. We asked students who had been studying a little bit about human rights, how they thought they could influence human rights and only two or 3% of the students – it was a small study – thought that electing officials would be a way to promote human rights. That rather what they saw was education, public education or education in schools that was about between 40%, 50%. Maybe we can understand that because they were in schools, they're students, they're thinking about learning.

Another 27% though or so roughly, felt that doing something more active would be the way to influence human rights. That could be humanitarian work it could be marches, it could be writing a letter to your-- well, that wasn't so much stated, but advocacy of some kind, taking action. The voting or trying to influence their political leaders was very small. Again, the prompt was, how can you try to promote human rights, but if we transpose that to how can we improve societies. We could take out the human rights language and put it differently, or how can we address inequalities?

It's not clear that the answer for young people that I've seen and also in the other countries that were involved, which were India, Sweden, and South Africa, that the answer was to influence politicians. Now I want to move a bit to activism shortly and schools because that's our focus. I want to remind you in the States that we've seen extraordinary leadership amongst young people, the March For Our Lives response, originally from the Parkland High School survivors, promoting gun control and that March for Our Lives to promote gun control and to try to put pressures on American policymakers at the state level, the national level to do more, has actually been merged with getting students to actually register to vote when they become eligible to do so, which is quite interesting.

Activism has come in and tried to swoop up, getting kids to vote. If we looked at the results of the midterm elections in the United States, if you're following, we had an incredible substantial increase in the number of people voting in the midterm elections, including minority groups and first-time voters amongst youth. That's a response, obviously, to the political conditions we have in the states. What about schools? What can schools do for this? My final thoughts about this are based on observations. The Parkland Students, if you remember those are the ones that came out of the shootings who were very articulate about gun control. I was fascinated by these kids. I don't know about you, I get so inspired by the youth.

I have mixed feelings about it because part of me goes, "My God, that's so great. They're the future, there's a lot of evidence now that the youth in the US are very progressive and want to make changes." Then I think at the same time, it's just not fair that it's on their shoulders. I think that even Greta Thunberg, the climate change activist says, "Why do we have to do this? I have mixed feelings." Anyway, the Parkland youth, there's an article I read and that article said that they had in the previous fall debated gun control in their government's class.

They'd actually had the opportunity to discuss that issue and as a consequence, I think that was partly why they were so articulate on the national stage when the tragic shooting happened in their schools. That made me very curious about what else can be happening in schools that in the conditions that we saw there can galvanize kids into leadership. I think that part of my point here is that when we think about political participation and activism is we're also, in a context, a historical moment. In Europe, in Scotland, we have structural inequalities and we're always fighting poverty.

We also have a historic political moment where activism is happening and that that's part of what we can be doing in schools or that students draw from that. I've started a study now, it's just at the beginning stages just in the United States. It's a backward mapping study, interviewing activist students now at university to ask them if there's anything that happened in high school that influenced their perception of the issues they care about and the ways they decided to address them. We do also ask about family background so it's not so obvious. We're really interested in what's happened in schools and we're finding out.

Rather than doing what I have done in the past, you have a new civics education curriculum, you study it, you see what are the outcomes? Look and see where we have activism, students engaged in some ways and find out, from their own

experience, what's school, how school, if school did influence or a teacher or a course, their choices. My last point has to do with an experience I had actually in New York City. There was a school for human rights that was started about eight years ago and at that time I was working full time in my NGO, which is a human rights NGO, and we were a partner in that school developing.

We were like the community partner, if you will. We embedded in the school one of our staff people. Her job was to work with teachers and the principal to try to infuse this kind of value system of human rights. This was in Crown Heights, Inner City School in New York City. It was the first school that we know there's literally Uzi machine guns had been on the campus a few years earlier. Extraordinary violence historically in that area, about 90% of the student populations were either of African or Caribbean descent. It was a school that had been-- the neighborhood had been in crisis, and they wanted to do something quite different. This makes up with inequalities.

What happened, what we discovered-- which I think may be true for other places, I'm interested to know, we discovered that the students were very disaffected with the idea, not interested in the idea of participation in voting. It just didn't mean anything to them. They were linked with churches, they were involved in their communities and we found that we couldn't really address traditional civics education in a way that was meaningful for them. We turned it around to the issues that they cared about and they ended up defining the issues that they were caring about, like police brutality and profiling and drug raids in their buildings.

On the basis of their having identified those issues, they identified for themselves the ways they wanted to move forward. It was a variety of ways and I think this resonates with a lot of the people have been saying as well that partly it's creating a platform, whether it's in school, out of school for kids to look critically, environment to be thinking about their own perspectives first and then reflecting on the society's and doing those small steps which aren't small ones at all, when they have a chance to organize something in their school or their community to address an issue of real concern to them.

[applause]

Caroline: Thank you very much. I think we have now spanned a very wide spectrum of relevant issues that we can now dive in and I'm inviting you to pick up on-- We addressed the formal sector, we addressed the combination of knowledge and motivation. We've been addressing activism as something that can motivate interest for politics, even if it's first just an immediate interest issue but it can be a trigger for a much wider issue and interest. Of course, the relevance of peer learning through activism and of creating a group dynamics around common interest.

I think that this is a wide, vast field also spanning two continents and more and I invite you now to give your comments and ask questions. We have another 25, 20 minutes to go before we get refreshments I heard.

[END OF RECORDING]