

# Question: what is global citizenship?

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*"What is Global Citizenship?" is the final article of a four-part series on the themes and ideas presented at the Salzburg Seminar's International Study Program, held Jan. 1-8 at the Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria.*

Michael Daxner is a cosmopolitan. This, in his own words, means that he feels at home everywhere: in Germany where he served as president emeritus of the University of Oldenburg, in Austria where he received his Ph.D. from the University of Vienna, and even in Afghanistan where he's worked with the Minister of Higher Education since 2003.

From 2000 to 2002, Daxner was the principle international officer for the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in Belgrade, the capital of the war-torn country Serbia and Montenegro. He has been to nearly every country in Europe. He has family in New Jersey. And, needless to say, he does not believe in a policy of identity.

"In New Jersey," he'll say in his best Deutsch-slaughtered

Yankee accent, "you belong to your family, your institution, your city, your state, your nation." The towering Jewish man swings his arms back and forth to match the wavering tones of his rumbling voice, and the audience laughs. "Citizenship is a concept as well as a political tool. When you move, you either change citizenship or you are forced to change it."

Because labeling means someone "has power over you," Michael Daxner believes in what the Salzburg Seminar has come to call "global citizenship," a concept founded on terms that have been around for years: globalization, universalism, global society, interconnectedness, and multi-levelness.

"Global citizenship depends on universal values," Daxner says. Human rights, tolerance, and respect are all virtues that fall under the universal norms presented in global citizenship. Membership into any community, even if it is global, requires



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a shared set of distinct values or convictions, according to Daxner.

"Yale is beautiful," Daxner says, "but New Haven is a slum."

The audience again tries to control their laughter as they jot down that last remark into their crammed notebooks full of the week's observations. This is because "higher education standards are truly global," according to Daxner, and towns thrive off of these institutions.

Higher education, human rights, respect, and tolerance. These are all beliefs that Daxner says global citizens share, but the overarching question still remains: why do we need to be global citizens? This is the question that the Seminar has been working towards all week, and this was the question that was about to be answered.

"Sometimes universal values are undercut by national interest," he says, a statement that links the previous session's discussion of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In Article V, the declaration reads that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," raising thoughts of Abu Ghraib and re-

lated accusations of torture by the United States.

Issues like world debt, global warming, natural disasters, extensive diseases, pandemics, and illnesses, war, poverty, and human rights violations cannot be dealt with by local organizations alone. According to Daxner, it takes a global society to find a cure for these emerging problems. And a global society requires global citizenship.

With global citizenship, the old phrase, "Think globally, act locally," is thrown out the window. According to Daxner and the rest of the Seminar staff, global citizens can not only think globally, but they can act globally as well. By simply paying attention to world affairs, seeking news sources outside of the United States, discussing global issues with friends and family, and learning new languages, new cultures, and new traditions, anyone can act globally, the Seminar staff says.

So how do you become a global citizen?

According to Michael Daxner, it is quite easy: "You decide to which type of world you want to belong." From there, he says, the possibilities are endless.



Michael Daxner present "Global Citizenship"