Contemporary societies face a range of challenges, including: climate change; poverty; wealth, income, and other forms of social inequality; human rights abuses; misinformation and fake news; the growth of populist movements; and citizen disenchantment with democratic politics. Citizenship education, properly conceived, seeks to address issues of general concern through both individual and collective action. A key aim is to enhance citizens’ levels of political knowledge and understanding, and to educate citizens as actors in civil society so as to promote critical and active citizenship, with citizens able to develop their capacities to engage in civic and political activities to bring about social changes they wish to see.

This Special Issue on ‘Citizenship Education and Civil Society’ will explore how current forms of citizenship education in different societies, in both formal and informal educational contexts, are, or are not, contributing positively to citizens’ levels of political knowledge, understanding, and efficacy. It is concerned with questions such as: What role can and should citizenship education play in pluralistic, liberal democratic societies? Can it successfully promote common values and overcome intolerance and discrimination? What are its strengths and limitations in practice? The Special Issue welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions from a range of disciplinary perspectives that address these, and other pertinent, questions, and that draw on evidence and examples from subnational, national, international, or comparative contexts. Contributions are welcome from scholars, practitioners, and activists across a variety of settings.