

Global Citizenship Education: Strategies for Implementation

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ABSTRACT

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) has emerged as a transformative educational framework aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to equip learners with the competencies necessary to navigate and contribute to an interconnected world. Despite its growing global significance, the implementation of GCED remains fragmented and often ambiguous, largely due to contextual variations in policy, pedagogy, and curricular design. This paper critically examines strategies for effectively implementing GCED in diverse educational settings. Drawing on theoretical frameworks, case studies, and empirical findings, the paper explores the nuances of curriculum development, transformative pedagogies, teacher training, community engagement, and impact evaluation. By highlighting challenges and presenting evidence-based practices, the paper advocates for a coherent and context-sensitive approach to integrating GCED. The study concludes with recommendations for policy-makers, educators, and institutions to foster inclusive, participatory, and action-oriented global citizenship learning environments.

Keywords: Global Citizenship Education (GCED), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), transformative pedagogy, curriculum development, teacher training, educational policy, community engagement, global awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Educating for Global Citizenship (GCE) has emerged as a critically important educational agenda for societies in the 21st century. Following this, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) was proposed as a policy framework for the GCE agenda in countries, and related goals and targets were incorporated into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The educational objective of GCED is framed as making youth “inquire and analyze – question and challenge – reflect” on the world and their places within it. However, GCED has various manifestations in educational policies and practices, influenced by different contexts. Although the importance of GCED is recognized, policy and pedagogical practices in this regard remain ambiguous. Additionally, there is a question of how GCED would be put into practice, and which curriculum and pedagogy would be required to make the broad goals statements operational. Regarding GCED as a policy agenda, studies were addressing the conditions under which GCED would have implications for educational practices. However, it was not fully considered how the GCED agendas would materialize in curricula and pedagogy. Regarding the latter two issues, only a few studies were found. Most studies were empirical studies examining national and local GCED policy frameworks rather than explaining crucial aspects of curricula and pedagogies, such as content knowledge and the teaching/learning process for GCED. Most importantly, studies were limited on how global education, global citizenship education (GCE), and GCED differ from each other. As GCED has various manifestations based on different histories and contexts, it is important to delineate what is specific to GCED against the background of what is internationally shared [1, 2].

Theoretical Frameworks

The construction of citizenship within education focuses on global citizenship, promoting the notion of a citizen of the world. International organizations advocate for a more integrated world and the preparation

of citizens for productive lives in the global capitalist market. Over time, global citizenship education has attracted attention from various stakeholders, becoming integral to educational reform and policy in many nations. Globalization influences how adulthood, including citizenship, is perceived, leading to the development of global citizenship education as a response to emerging challenges. This new form of education transcends traditional geographical and institutional boundaries. The acceptance and adaptation of global citizenship education in diverse national contexts can be explored through geopolitics, policy borrowing, and border thinking. It represents both a hopeful endeavor and a reflection of the dynamic nature of schooling, embodying aspirations for a better world. Global citizenship education aims to tackle pressing global issues such as terrorism, migration, and climate change, seeking resolutions to conflicts rooted in identities. Education is now tasked with far more than sustainability and citizenship; it must foster a common ethical project without succumbing to relativism. Efforts toward reconciliation and unity are envisioned on a planet where perceptions of inclusion vary significantly. The concept of utopia emerges as history unfolds, revealing a homogenization of values and experiences. Education systems are realigned for a shared global economy, where markets and competition are seen as universal rights [3, 4].

Importance of Global Citizenship Education

As foreign economic ties expand, social life increasingly transcends national boundaries, becoming more multinational. Just as a butterfly can cause far-reaching changes, events in one nation can significantly impact others. For instance, the SARS outbreak reshaped lives globally, and the September 11 attacks led to economic and political decline in the U.S. and strained relationships with other countries. Consequently, crises in one nation can profoundly affect the world. Against this backdrop, there is a pressing need for global citizenship education, emphasizing awareness of terrorism's impact and advocating for anti-terrorism education. Public consciousness of natural disasters and increased transport security measures has led to stricter checks and a more cautious approach towards immigrants and international students. Trust and cultural misunderstandings between nations should be addressed through communication and exchange. However, the interpretation of global citizenship education varies, leading to discrepancies in its implementation. A common understanding of 'global citizenship education' is essential, as clarity in meaning helps cultivate it. There remains no universally accepted definition of global citizenship, but that doesn't hinder education efforts in this realm. Global citizenship is often seen as an affiliation with a global community, sharing values like humanity and universality. Another perspective focuses on education that cultivates global citizens, aiming to foster awareness of their identity and its implications for their practices as citizens [5, 6].

Curriculum Development

Although curriculum promoting global citizenship has been absent from the spotlight at the national level, it has not deterred other nations, states, and local and independent schools from creating their own. To date, elements of global citizenship have been required or encouraged in some US states such as Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, and Indiana. Other countries, such as Canada and Australia, have also developed curricula. Due to cultures, geography, and languages being different, local and regional designs are preferred. Thus, custom designs and models for implementing GCE can be presented to assist school personnel around the globe in choosing and developing programs suitable for their students. One proposed model is to teach the world geography, culture, and history and promote an awareness of people's humanity in the early grades, and graduate to more national, regional, and international themes in upper grades. One possible strategy for GCE implementation is initially to include elements of GCE within the concepts and themes of world geography, history, and cultures. The general curriculum frameworks for such courses should be above the states' minimum performance expectations in learning and assessment. The goal is to set the design far enough above that minimum to avoid the need for major revisions as assessment requirements change. The second part of this framework is a suggested structure—concepts and themes in world geography, history, and cultures with associated content topics—as a guide in designing or revising a curriculum. The content topics are arranged in a reasonable sequence for students in the USA. For other countries, countries can translate each concept into major statements and customize the content [7, 8].

Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies for global citizenship education have an emphasis on transformative pedagogy to foster the knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for effective engagement in the local and global community. GCE occurs across a range of educational settings, be it formal, non-formal, informal, or indeterminate. In educational settings, GCE is expected to be empathic and engaging, adopting student-centered pedagogy well-embedded in context with local communities. It is effective to give up control of

classes, acting as a coach and designing engaging educational experiences to encourage students' wide participation in discussions about social justice issues, where the choice of topic and commentary style is up to them. Project-based learning and problem-based learning following the design process can be effective to identify and analyze global issues, search and analyze information for causes and solutions, identify stakeholders, map out the relationship, options, and outcomes, and design and implement an action plan. Such continuous and repeated responses compel a sustained engagement to maximize the awareness of the impacts of social issues on personal lives, as the engaged critical inquiry leads to organizational actions in response to the experiences of injustices. At the same time, GCE teaching and learning strategy needs to be connected to the teaching and learning of a given curriculum, show the learning outcomes and their quality to others, and be transferable to other situations. Moreover, there is a latitude of education, and GCE learnt in a given setting has a potential to be manifested elsewhere. The GCE implementation in local practice is versatile, despite the contextual embedding and apparent diversity, with teaching strategies practically categorized into clusters based on a meta-ethnography to capture meanings and pedagogical features of these strategies. Therefore, traditional GCE teaching strategies are still evident in local practice, for better or worse. Adverse selection in GCE education is not the norm but can be unexpected [9, 10].

Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teacher training on global issues is critical to implementing successful GCED. A review paper considers the provision of pre-service and in-service training across countries, including case studies of good practice. In-service and pre-service training across several countries, examining methods and resources, and how well they have worked in practice. The report outlines a three-tier approach for wider consideration in other countries looking to develop GCED training. While the majority of training is currently with teachers already interested in global issues, there is a need to reach those who are not already engaged. Creating an 'invitation to engage' and support processes for teachers to develop curricula on global issues in their contexts is essential. The Global Learning Programme (GLP) in England is a government-funded national programme that supports teachers to be more confident and able to teach global issues in schools. A major vehicle for this is peer-led training, where teachers with experience and expertise in global learning set up local networks of schools to train and support other local teachers. Over 11,000 teachers received training on global issues through the GLP. In-service training for teachers takes many forms, including engagement in international teacher networks to sharing resources and processes for designing and delivering external training sessions. The Global Education Conference is a free virtual conference held annually that brings together educators and innovators globally. Presentations cover topics such as collaborative projects between teachers and schools to support global initiatives, professional development in GCED, and preparing students for a global future. The annual conference has about 200-300 sessions, and of these sessions, approximately 10,000 participants log in. 24,000 members from around 180 countries are part of the overall network; approximately one-third of members self-identify as teachers. Overall, supporting processes for teachers to develop curricula on global issues in their contexts will be essential for wider implementation. Peer-led training also helps create solidarity among teachers [11, 12].

Community Engagement

Community engagement is increasingly recognized as essential to global citizenship education (GCE). While often institutionally driven, community engagement strategies inspire individuals and organizations to create or join initiatives. It offers opportunities to debate issues like abundance, connection, and the effect of contemporary crises on community life. Engagement aims to tackle pressing questions on climate change, migration, and inequality while fostering innovative community notions that strengthen social bonds rather than erode them. Ultimately, engagement should promote a deeper understanding rather than merely focusing on outreach and information sharing. Moreover, community engagement should evolve from isolated programs to sustained interactions that involve various partners and perspectives. The goal is to foster ongoing conversations with diverse groups, moving beyond one-time events like semester courses or workshops. Striving for social change and a just, sustainable world is not sufficient, as many youths seek spaces to actualize their ideas. Often, community programming is overly intellectual and resource-intensive, making it challenging for creative youth who may feel cynical and predisposed to failure. Participatory programming offers a transformative alternative, emphasizing youth empowerment as both a goal and a process accessible to all [13, 14].

Challenges in Implementation

Policies on global citizen education may hold significant social, human, cultural, economic, and political value in a rapidly changing world, yet their impact relies heavily on implementation. In recent years,

many national or regional authorities advocating progress have applied these principles to social rights. Global citizenship is envisaged similarly, advocating for rights without coercion. In a landscape marked by persistent inequalities, such aspirations evoke disillusionment rather than hope. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) addresses the unpredictability of educational globalization in a multipolar world, where the development of global awareness is uneven. While technical fields may not struggle with complex English texts, the social sphere's perceived scientific objectivity can be elusive. Policy mechanisms aim to realign education systems with the GCED 2030 Agenda. The question of what constitutes "success" must reference the principles of the UNESCO GEDA, which face implementation challenges akin to those of human rights. It remains uncertain if educational policy development will occur simultaneously across all nations. GCED encourages a broader view, moving educational focus beyond mere cognitive skills toward fostering open-mindedness. Its inherently context-specific nature means there is no universal policy solution. Discussions should prioritize local political and cultural contexts as central to education systems' role in social interaction. While multiple governance alternatives exist for implementing GCED, comprehensive changes to the education system are necessary. The GCED recommendations apply to various educational levels and types, yet without fundamental alterations to existing structures, governmental efforts may not surpass those of early adopters, though opportunities for improvement remain [15, 16].

Case Studies

Students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Gadjah Mada, implemented global citizenship education in Environmental Education, aiming to prepare future Indonesian citizens for environmental preservation. Organized events included workshops, webinars, a video contest, and an e-module competition. The European Association for Education for Democratic Citizenship promotes respect for the rule of law through Citizenship Education. Also, the project "Children and Young People's Environment" focuses on sustainable development in schools while addressing social sustainability. The Faculty of Education at the University of Dar es Salaam employs several strategies to enhance GCE in Tanzania, such as: 1) University capacity for GCE blended learning; 2) Development of teacher education modules; 3) In-service training for teachers and trainers; 4) Participation in national and international GCE initiatives; 5) Research on the impact of GCE; 6) Capacity building for staff and students; 7) Collaboration for GCE training kits with other universities; 8) Partnering with the ministry, political parties, and civil society for education access; 9) Collaborating on Education for Sustainable Development. These strategies have raised GCE awareness among Tanzanian educational stakeholders but require more grassroots effort [17, 18].

Evaluating Impact

Ultimately, evaluating impact hinges on defining what it is you are trying to achieve, and how best to measure these intended outcomes. The good news is that there are frameworks and models available to help distill a mission into tangible and evaluable goals, as well as tools to track progress towards these goals. Assessing impact is most useful when awareness is raised around an organisation's mission and values, and how well it actually delivers on this through policies and actions. This in turn allows for strengths and weaknesses to be revealed and acted on, and it generally leads to better decisions and outcomes. Using an external consultant to assist with evaluating success can sometimes help if there is no experienced team member. It can be a significant investment, but it generally pays dividends. There will be resistance at times, and genuine fears expressed that impacts will be overlooked, or 'bad' news will arise (more on this below). However, impacts and outcomes only ever need to be reported on what organisations want to measure. Everything else is simply irrelevant. Importantly, measuring impacts need not be example-driven or objective. Numbers can also be descriptive or subjective. Implementation workshops or information campaigns can be defined locally, meaning that only the specific activities directly contributing to the goal need to be reported on. Gaps in understanding can be made note of, allowing for improvements to the programme or future research to occur. Undertaking a qualitative analysis of comments and reflections can also lead to novel understandings and insights into the workings and effects of a programme. Ultimately, though, GC education evaluators have to prove that evidence exists of an actual change that is somehow more than a simple acknowledgement of a new concept. This requires the challenges of defining, identifying, and measuring outcomes. It can be done; however, it just takes concentrated effort, important initial trade-offs, and an ongoing maintenance commitment. It is crucial for the future validation and advancement of GC education [19, 20].

Future Directions

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) dispositions, knowledge, skills, values, and actions that can facilitate GCED implementation are introduced. Following that, recommendations are suggested to

ensure a better fit between pre-service teacher education and the goals of GCED. Finally, further empirical research is warranted to understand the contextually relevant GCED knowledge, dispositions, skills, values, and actions it believes necessary for teacher educators and teachers to adopt GCED to inform change in teacher education curriculum and practice. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is now included in many countries' curricula, creating a demand for in-service and pre-service teachers who are literate in a globally-minded curriculum. However, in an education system that is already difficult for teachers to change practice, such as China, understanding how to begin this radical change is more important. In an attempt to aid teachers' understanding of how best to make these changes, GCED as knowledge, dispositions, skills, actions, and values, a greater understanding of the concept in practice is warranted. It takes courage and resilience to move past the backlash many GCED advocates are experiencing. GCED theorists, yet-informed hope that these recommendations aid local teacher educators and teachers in their efforts to democratise academic heritage for more than just the elite, ideological assumptions of globalisation in capitalist terms that further depoliticize GCED and make the world safe for capitalism, not fairness, yet the seeds of a better world for all. Further to suggest avenues of research is a thank you and that efforts filtering down to teacher education are much better suited to the Chinese context than those largely Western privation middle-tier proposals. GCED theorists are excited to see how literacy in the knowledge, values, dispositions, skills, and actions, which globally-minded policies and education argue are necessary, and this process will take time. Globalisation and colonisation have produced unequal land distributions while capital sits stagnant. Global education wide GCED position statement called on international organisations to begin working together to promote global citizenship and peace. There has been a paradigm shift in explaining globalisation since 2001, yet teacher education and schooling remain largely unaddressed [21, 22].

Policy Implications

Important policy implications arise from these findings. In relatively top-down systems, ministries should promote the appropriation of the global citizenship education (GCE) notion, as well as the vision of social justice and the rationale underpinning this education approach. Two levers can be moved in this respect: A cultural one (training sessions, workshops, and tools) and a political one (adopting laws, creating an internal agency, and appointing a 'champion'). In relatively bottom-up systems, ministries should act as facilitators for the school level, helping national and local educational departments ensure that schools have the resources needed. More specifically, ministries should ensure staff, financial, and material resources, promote the sharing of best practices among schools, and foster schools' collaborations with social partners. To this end, several levers can be used. On the one hand, the supply side lever. This refers to initiatives that governments take to offer schools, locally, materials, tools, methodologies, training, and advice, in short, the supply of innovative practices that schools can adopt. This can take various forms, such as nationalized best practice models, a curriculum framework outlining relevant principles and pedagogical techniques, and training for school leaders and teachers. On the other hand, the demand side lever. This consists of governments' initiatives that promote or even pressure schools to adopt the GCE approach, such as accountability checks, every two years, on how schools' curricula and practices address social justice, or publicizing external evaluations of schools' performances on this aspect. It would also be useful to organize roundtables with a few willing schools that successfully and effectively adopted the GCE approach, involving members of their communities, as a way to publicize and share good practices. Crucial points can be drawn in general concerning how such processes can be initiated. Conciliatory approaches should always be preferred; in relative terms, this can mean softly nudging schools in the right direction, but in absolute terms, it can also mean providing schools with new, highly innovative practices they could not sensibly implement themselves if forced to. Moreover, a few early adopters who are then publicly celebrated would be useful. Overall, approaches and practices should be well thought through before entering the public arena, and a long time is necessary for such processes to yield positive outcomes [23, 24, 25].

CONCLUSION

Global Citizenship Education holds immense potential to empower individuals and communities to address the complex challenges of our globalized world. However, realizing this potential requires deliberate and strategic implementation that bridges the gap between policy and practice. As this paper illustrates, effective GCED relies on a multidimensional approach that integrates inclusive curricula, student-centered teaching strategies, robust teacher training, and community-based learning. The diversity of global contexts demands flexibility and responsiveness, underscoring the importance of localized adaptations without compromising universal values of equity, justice, and sustainability. To

move GCED from aspiration to action, stakeholders must invest in long-term capacity building, promote collaborative frameworks, and prioritize outcome-based evaluations that reflect transformative learning. Only then can education truly nurture globally conscious citizens capable of making meaningful contributions to a more just and sustainable future.

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