

Global Citizenship Education as a Cross-Cutting Solution to the UN SDGs:

Teach What, How, and Why in Higher Education?

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Abstract

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) as a priority global education agenda has been practiced since the launch of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. While GCED itself is a target to achieve as the target 4.7 in the SDGs, it is also recognized as one of the most important cross-cutting issues and solutions in concerted efforts of achieving the UN SDGs by 2030.

With such an importance of GCED for the SDGs in mind, the UNESCO has identified the goals and core elements of GCED and they are suggested to be taught to nurture the so-called responsible "global citizens." Problems of GCED in practices since the launch of the UN SDGs in 2015, however, are that less attentions and efforts have been made to GCED in higher education, which is expected to result in larger social impacts and influences through educating future leaders of societies.

Amid the absence of both well designed and practiced academic programs in higher education for GCED that comprehensively incorporate the core components of GCED, this paper suggests how GCED has to be taught in higher education in the era of the SDGs by explaining the core principles in design and practice of an academic program for GCED in higher education.

It argues that academic programs as a deliberation platform for GCED in higher education should be "mutual," "communal," and "inclusive," with provision of "life-wide" "designed experiences" to students to let them indigenize the core values and attitudes from GCED under "human" education.

The success of a holistic GCED as a new paradigm in higher education for the SDGs depends on how realistic, practical, and solid its "human" education is and the mindsets of students are fundamentally transformed in the learning process while the core values and attitudes are indigenized as a norm to students.

Keywords: Global Citizenship, Global Citizenship Education, Sustainable Development Goals, UN Academic Impact, Handong Global University

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Introduction

One of the important debates on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is on how higher education as a cross-cutting solution to achieve the SDGs should be approached and addressed. To enter this debate, we first need to understand the three essential forces catalyzing a fundamental paradigm shift in higher education for the 21st Century, which are summarized as “globalization,” “humanization,” and “futurization” (Kim, 2018).

Firstly, the speed of “globalization” has accelerated, and its scope has expanded since the Internet commercialization in 1994 and the birth of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. Now, physical borders lose its traditional meanings when the problems and challenges the human kind is facing go beyond borders and cannot be solved by efforts of a single nation-state. Faced with unprecedented and ever-increasing global challenges and issues, asked is to think and act with innovation, creativity, and open mind while exploring the unknown. The past paradigm of higher education focusing on transmission of accumulated knowledges and expertise from resources and information already available cannot respond to such challenges and problems from globalization.

Along with globalization, advancement and fusion of science and new technologies has opened up the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in the 21st Century. The so-called “convergence” education on Cyber-Physical System (CPS), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, etc. with transdisciplinary and multiple approaches is expected to bring a new wealth and provide new technical solutions on challenging tasks and problems in our societies. Issues are, however, that new technologies in the Fourth Industrial Revolution do not provide a judgement or a decision on the man-made and man-induced challenges and problems, which are complex in nature and interconnected with each other. In addressing these man-made and man-induced problems, wisdom, conscience, intuition, and insight of human beings are valid as a fundamental basis in judgements and decisions.

In order to train and raise this kind of capacity, asked is education of “humanization,” which means an integrative holistic education or a whole-person education that embraces all aspects of human beings. Since “dehumanized” people are at the fundamental cause of problems, “humanizing” them through education that covers the physical, mental (intellectual and emotional), and spiritual (wisdom, intuition, conscience) realms as a whole is a starting point for solutions.

Likewise, provision of solutions by higher education to the problems and challenges in the 21st Century should be sustainable with impact in the future. “Futurization” as an enabling environment in higher education for the 21st Century means that solutions must be future oriented to train and empower students to look into future and make sustainable solutions, away from decisions to get immediate results in the present. Therefore, preparing students for unpredictable and complicated future challenges and problems in the 21st Century needs to be realized with a new paradigm in higher education that incorporates the forces by “globalization,” “humanization,” and “futurization” (Kim, 2018, pp. 134-142).

Rise of Global Citizenship Education as an Integrative Holistic Education

The necessity and emphasis of an integrative and holistic education or a whole-person education as a new paradigm in higher education emerged in the international community with the start of the 21st Century. In the UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) in 1998, enlightened attention and declaration on “morality” and “spirituality” in higher education was made for the first time. Its Final Report states,

“...Higher education itself is confronted [therefore] with formidable challenges and must proceed to the most radical changed and renewal it has ever been required to undertake, so

that our society, which is currently undergoing a profound crisis of values, can transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and spirituality...” (UNESCO, 1998, p.30).

10 years later after the Global Financial Crisis in 1998, the UNESCO re-invites and emphasizes the importance of “values” and “ethics” as key tenets in higher education:

“...Higher education cannot be separated from values and ethics. They are, together with academic freedom and institutional autonomy, key tenets of higher education. Without being grounded in such values academic staff cannot teach and students cannot acquire clear thinking, cogent communication, and an ability to make good judgement and to be socially responsible...” (UNESCO, 2009, p.102).

The UN’s Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD 2005-2014) also emphasizes “perspectives,” “attitudes,” and “values” as a central part of education for a sustainable future and asks the international community to educate learners to have competency as a “global citizen.” This is also in line with the UN’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, which intends to foster “global citizenship” as one of the three focus areas to realize Education for All (EFA).

Promoting global citizenship through higher education for sustainable development was officially proposed by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon with the UN Academic Impact (UNAI) initiative in 2011.¹ The important role of the UN Academic Impact to achieve the SDGs through fostering global citizenship has been formally declared and endorsed by the series of the UN General Assembly Resolutions since 2011. Upon the Resolutions, the UN General Assembly (therefore its Member States) encourages,

“...the United Nations Academic Impact to take effective steps to facilitate exchanges between the United Nations and institutions of higher education and academic, research and scientific communities in all regions to support the common principles and purposes of the United Nations, contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, foster global citizenship and fill knowledge gaps, while recognizing the role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its constitution;

[N]otes the continued growth of the United Nations Academic Impact, calls upon the Department of Public Information to promote global awareness of the Academic Impact in order to encourage balanced participation among Member States and their continued support for the initiative, within existing resources, and encourages Member States to promote the initiative among their academic institutions, as appropriate, with a view to their joining it, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 70/93 A and B;

[and] [C]ommends the United Nations Academic Impact for its continued engagement with the global community of scholarship in realizing the objectives of the Organization, requests the Secretary-General to continue to promote this initiative by encouraging eligible institutions of higher education in all regions, especially from

¹ UN Academic Impact (UNAI) as a global education initiative was formally launched in 2010 by the eighth UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to align institutions of higher education, scholarship, and research with UN and with each other. Recognizing education as a major driving force for human development, UNAI aims to generate a global movement of minds to promote a new culture of “intellectual social responsibility” to support sustainable development (Ban, 2010). Its Ten Principles are in line with and parallels to the UN’s seventeen SDGs (UNAI, 2015).

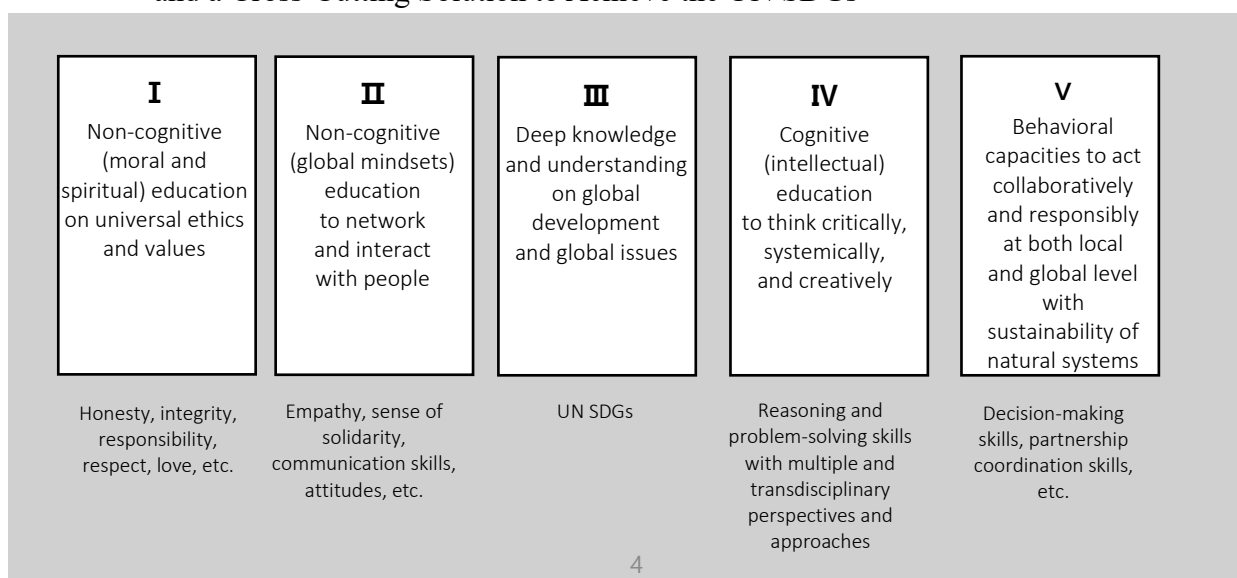
developing countries, to enrol and contribute actively to the goals of the United Nations, and in this regard notes with appreciation the cost-neutral partnerships that the Academic Impact has successfully initiated thus far with a view to multiplying membership” (UN, 2016).

GCED as a New Paradigm in Higher Education for the SDGs: Teach What and Why?

As seen above, the international community led by the UN and the UNESCO has paid a special attention on integrative holistic education with focus on values, attitudes, morality, and spirituality since the start of the 21st century. However, it is only recent that they have identified what to teach in Global Citizenship Education (GCED) as a new educational paradigm for the SDGs. GCED as an integrative holistic education or a whole-person education is a comprehensive educational paradigm, which have the core components. It is a combination of both cognitive and non-cognitive sides of education to transform the mindsets of learners and make them equip with actual problem-solving skills and behavioral capacities to solve interconnected complex global problems and issues that are summarized as the UN SDGs (UNESCO, 2014, p.17).

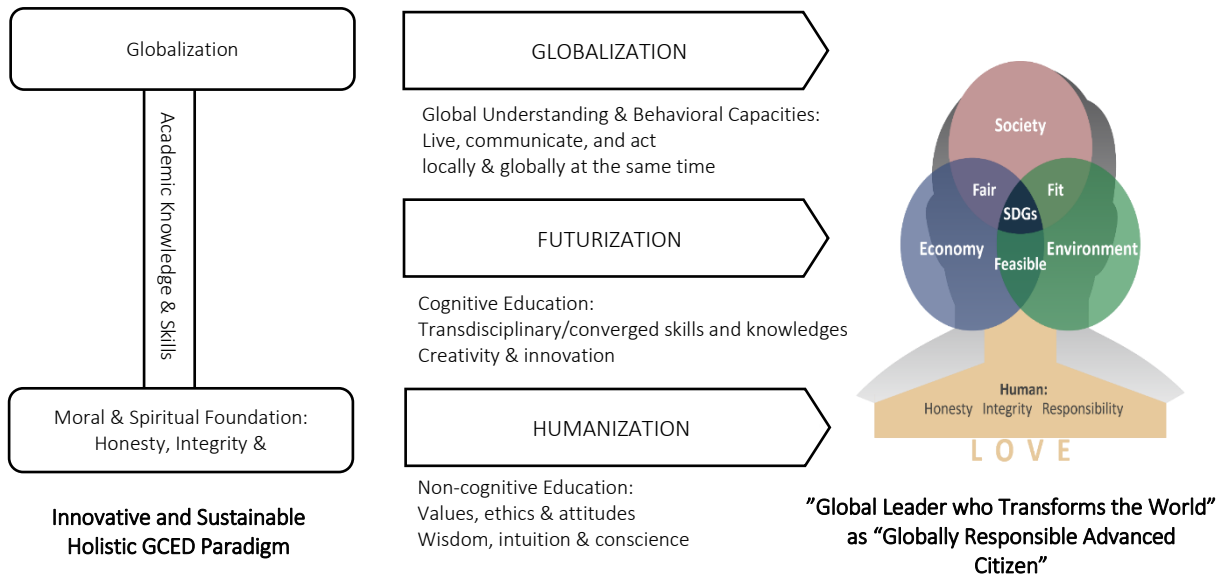
Firstly, as a non-cognitive education, GCED emphasizes teaching of moral, spiritual, and ethical foundations. Such core values as honesty, integrity, responsibility, respect, and love are emphasized. In other words, GCED is a “human” education. Secondly, attitudes and global mindsets to interact with people from different backgrounds need to be taught in GCED. Empathy, sense of solidarity, communication and relational skills are taught as non-cognitive skills in GCED. Thirdly, deep knowledge and understanding on global challenges and issues are also an important part of GCED. The international community has identified and agreed on global challenges and issues to pursue in the 21st Century as the SDGs. Three main subject areas of the SDGs, namely people (society), prosperity (economy), and planet (environment) cover the present and urgent challenges the human kind is facing now. Fourthly, cognitive (intellectual) sides of education is important in GCED, but its approaches need to be employed with innovative, creative, and critical thinking and reasoning, and with practical problem-solving skills to respond to a rapid changing world under advancement of science and new technologies. In that sense, the cognitive education in GCED intends to cultivate the so-called “problem solvers” with entrepreneurship in the end. Finally, behavioral capacities to decide and act collaboratively and responsibly while considering sustainability of natural systems are a core element of GCED to achieve the SDGs in the 21st Century (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: GCED as an Integrative and Holistic New Educational Paradigm for the 21st Century and a Cross-Cutting Solution to Achieve the UN SDGs



The expected outcome of GCED in higher education is “global leaders who transform the world” as a “globally responsible and advanced citizen.” They are not only able to understand and analyze global challenges and issue in the SDGs, but also have both cognitive and non-cognitive skills and attitudes to solve them with behavioral capacities at both local and global levels (See Figure 2).

Figure 2: Expected Outcome of GCED as an Integrative and Holistic New Educational Paradigm



As seen from Figures 2 above, GCED as a new educational paradigm for the SDGs in the 21st Century can be structured as a railroad “I” shape. Stability of this “I” shape structure, like in the cases of other structures as well, largely depends on the strength of base, which corresponds to the moral and spiritual aspects of GCED as the foundation of its education (Kim, 2010). If the purpose of higher education is to nurture the leaders who solve the challenges and problems of societies with larger social impacts, significant attentions should be firstly given to the nature of challenges and problems we have faced.

When the problems and challenges in the 21st Century have become further inter-connected, complex, disordered and chaotic, the trajectory of increasing “entropy” under the second law of thermodynamics is apparent. Since man-made and man-induced motivations are at the fundamental cause of these ever increasing and unprecedented global problems and challenges, addressing them by higher education as a cross-cutting solution for the SDGs in the 21st Century cannot be accomplished without transforming the mindsets of learners as human beings.

While the “entropy” is the universal law governing materials and explains disintegration and decay, “syntropy” is the universal law governing living lives, which leads living systems towards more harmonious forms of organizations (Szent-Gyorgyi, 1977; Vannini, 2005). In order to transform the disordered chaotic entropic world into ordered harmonious syntropic world, required is to transform the mindsets of human beings with education (Kim, 2014). That is why GCED as a new paradigm of higher education with its comprehensive scope importantly emphasizes the non-cognitive elements of education as the core of GCED. That is to say, “human” education is the essence of GCED.

Faced with ever increasing and unprecedented global issues and challenges, learning of academic knowledges and skills with critical thinking and analytical reasoning, and with creativity and multiple approaches cannot be omitted in higher education for provision of practical problem-solving skills. However, learning of such cognitive skills alone cannot lead to competency as a global citizen. Cultivating and transforming the mindsets, values, and attitudes of learners through “human education” lie at the core of GCED that determines the outcomes.

GCED as a New Paradigm in Higher Education for the SDGs: Teach How?

As discussed above, what to teach in GCED as a new educational paradigm for the SDGs in the 21st Century have been identified by the international community while the importance of a comprehensive and holistic GCED in achieving the SDGs is widely recognized and accepted. However, issues are that there has been a significant lack or absence of detailed academic programs in higher education that are carefully designed and practiced to realize a holistic GCED paradigm as a cross-cutting solution to the SDGs.

This may be due to the fact that higher institutions of education usually do not possess comprehensive experiences in practice of such an integrative holistic education in their educational programs in the past. Although they may realize the importance of GCED as an integrative holistic whole-person education, there are issues of designing and realizing an academic program for GCED under limited resources and experiences.

GCED as an integrative holistic education or a whole-person education cannot be taught in theories and texts in classes since non-cognitive sides of its education cannot be effectively delivered to students through conventional approaches centering around class room lectures. Rather, they must be taught through cases, evidences, exemplars, and models under the so-called “designed experiences.” Only a carefully designed deliberation platform with a principle of “life-wide” education enables the “designed experiences” to students in GCED.

GCED as an integrative holistic whole-person education for the SDGs in the 21st Century should have the following principles to be delivered as an academic program in higher education:

Firstly, strong cases and evidences demonstrating the expected outcomes especially from a non-cognitive side of education by GCED needs to be presented by lecturers or mentors who will directly engage with students as an exemplar or model to follow. It is almost an impossible task to let students indigenize the values and attitudes that intend to be taught by GCED with teachers who do not have such an education or experiences. Learning of values and attitudes should be “mutual” while lecturers or mentors should closely engage and interact with students both in and outside of the class rooms, personal and group mentoring, and field trainings/internships to let students naturally indigenize and inherit the essence of non-cognitive elements of GCED with transformation of their mindsets under “human” education, which is the basis and foundation of GCED as an educational paradigm in higher education;

Secondly, academic programs for GCED in higher education need to be extended, complemented, solidified, and supported by learning through active engagements for students with the multiple layers of enabling communities. GCED as an integrative holistic education or a whole-person education has to be “communal.” When students live on campus together with fellow students, personally engage with their assigned team professors out of classes, serve local communities in need while doing volunteering activities together, do the work duties, practice the honor code, and pray together, “human” education can be naturally accomplished. Students learn each other on the core values and attitudes by GCED in this process and the values and attitudes they learn become a norm, which have a strong internal implementing force for self-regulation to students;

Thirdly, field training and engagement opportunities for practice of a GCED paradigm needs to be included as a compulsory course to guarantee the practice of behavioral capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly at both local and global levels. Again, this also needs to be done by mentors who understand and have practiced such an integrative holistic education or a whole-person education. Field training and engagement should not be confined to practicing problem-solving skills and knowledge only. Rather, it is a chance for learning and practicing both cognitive and non-cognitive side of education in GCED with actual problems and issues in the fields.

In summary, academic programs as a deliberation platform for GCED in higher education should be “mutual,” “communal,” and “inclusive” with provision of “life-wide” “designed experiences” to students.

Case of a Holistic GCED Curriculum in Higher Education: GRACE School in Ban Ki-moon Institute for Global Education at Handong Global University

Amid the absence of comprehensive GCED programs in higher education that incorporate the five core elements of GCED as an integrative holistic education with focus on “human” education under the difficulty of designing and realizing the deliberation platform for GCED as explained in the previous section, the UN Academic Impact (UNAI) Korea and Handong Global University (HGU) intend to offer such a holistic GCED program at GRACE (Globally Responsible and Advanced Citizenship Education) School in Ban Ki-moon Institute for Global Education, which will be opened in May, 2019 at HGU with the eighth UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the Honorary President of the Institute. Once offered, it would be the world’s first holistic GCED program in higher education in kinds that incorporate the five core components of GCED paradigm in a comprehensive and balanced manner under a carefully designed deliberation platform for “mutual,” “communal,” “inclusive,” and “life-wide” learning to students.

As a higher institution of education, HGU has successfully practiced an integrative holistic education or a whole-person education for twenty-five years since its foundation in 1995. Many of its comprehensive practices in an integrative holistic education as a new paradigm in higher education for the 21st Century were tried for the first time in Korea and its innovative approaches and methods such as trans-disciplinary double majors, social service, residential colleges, etc. became a norm in many universities in Korea. Since HGU’s integrative holistic education with focus on “human” education corresponds with GCED as seen from Figure 2, GCED as a new educational paradigm in higher education for the SDGs can be best tested and practiced at HGU, which has pioneered and successfully practiced integrative holistic education as a new paradigm in higher education.

Figure 3 below shows how the proposed courses in higher education for holistic GCED correspond with each component of the GCED paradigm. They are offered under an undergraduate major in Global Citizenship with two different tracks. The first one is a conventional curriculum-based program and called a Global Citizenship Track of a major in Global Citizenship. A brief description of each course under this track is summarized in Table 1.

Figure 3: Suggested Curriculum in Higher Education to Realize GCED Paradigm

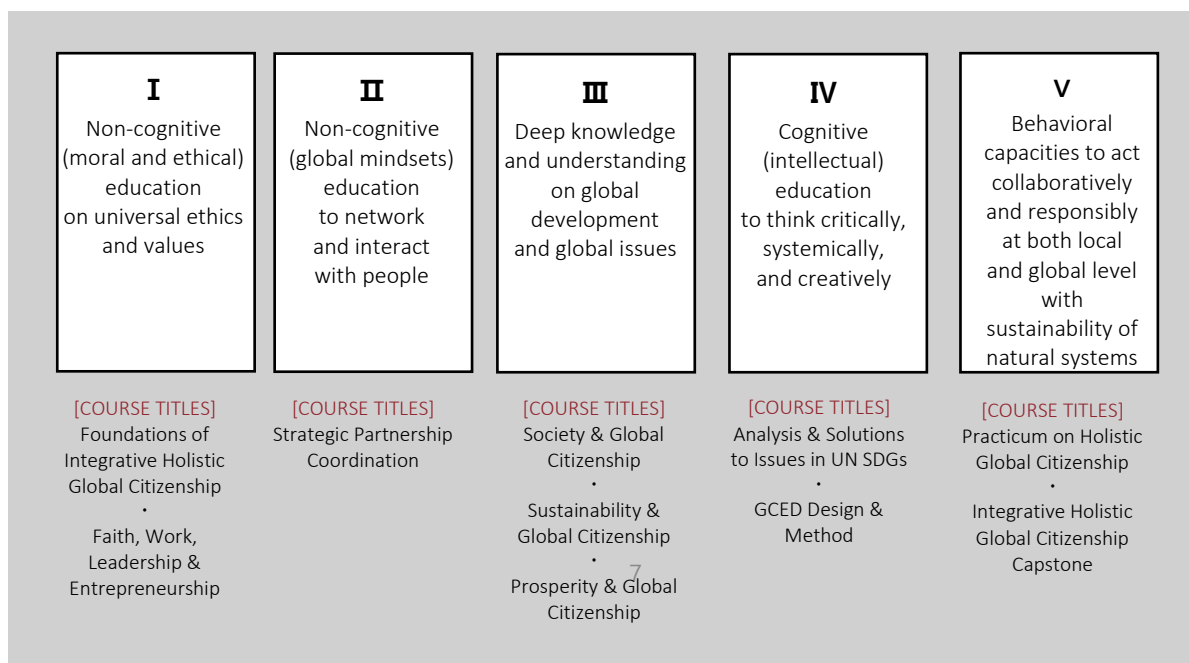


Table 1: Description of Courses for GCED in Higher Education

1. Foundations and Integrative Holistic Global Citizenship	6. Analysis and Solutions to Issues in UN SDGs
(1) Integrative holistic education (2) Essence of global citizenship	(1) Skills on project planning, analysis, monitoring and evaluation (2) Skills on project implementation and management
2. Faith, Work, Leadership & Entrepreneurship	7. Strategic Partnership Coordination
(1) Integration of faith & work (2) Integrative holistic leadership and entrepreneurship	(1) Teamwork and communication with global citizenship (2) Partnerships with different levels of stakeholders in the fields
3. Society and Global Citizenship	8. GCED Design & Method
(1) Global development and UN SDGs (2) Inclusive social development and global citizenship	(1) Designing & developing of GCED curriculum & assessment (2) Learning on GCED pedagogy with new technology and skills
4. Sustainable and Global Citizenship	9. Practicum on Holistic Global Citizenship
(1) Sustainable development with focus on environment (2) Topics on sustainability in SDGs	(1) Domestic and international fieldwork and training in summer/winter vacations
5. Prosperity and Global Citizenship	10. Integrative Holistic Global Citizenship Capstone
(1) Inclusive economic development and global citizenship (2) Technical innovation and entrepreneurship for SDGs	(1) Project based advanced seminar and practice

The second track of a major in Global Citizenship at GRACE School is a problem/project-based learning program and called a GPS (Global Problem Solver) Track. Students who are on this Track have to take the core courses on values and attitudes, however, learning on problem solving skills are accomplished under individually chosen and designed projects with actual problems in the SDGs to be solved in the fields while having individual guidance and teaching from mentors both online and offline.

Whether students are either on a Global Citizenship Track or a Global Problem Solver Track, the five core components of GCED paradigm as described in Figure 1 are comprehensively learned throughout the programs with emphasis on a “mutual,” “communal,” and “inclusive” deliberation to provide “life-wide” “designed experiences” to students under the enabling communities both on and off campus.

Conclusion

The success of a holistic GCED as a new paradigm in higher education for the SDGs in the 21st Century depends on how realistic, practical, and solid its non-cognitive sides of education (“human” education) are. That is why learning by examples and models under “designed experiences” is consistently emphasized as critical for students to indigenize the core values and attitudes by GCED while their mindsets are transformed in the process. To enable “life-wide” “designed experiences” to students, both curriculum-based and project-based academic programs for GCED in higher education must be complemented and solidified with learning from the communities that enable students to have “mutual,” “communal,” and “inclusive” interactions and engagements.

How successfully constructing such an eco-system is at the very core of viable realization of GCED as a new paradigm in higher education for the SDGs in the 21st Century. It may take time, but there is no fast short-cut for gaining an expected result from GCED without understanding it as an integrative holistic education and realizing the non-cognitive sides of its education (“human” education) into practice for indigenization of its core values and attitudes to students, thus fundamentally transforming their mindsets.

Still, it is worthwhile trying since one person with a changed mindset as a “globally responsible and advanced citizen” through GCED will start to make small but real changes in the places they stand, and this would be a starting point of transforming the world in the era of the SDGs.

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