



The Continued Relevance of Global Citizenship Education: Addressing Global Challenges Through Learning

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ABSTRACT

In an era marked by rising nationalism and shifting attitudes toward globalization, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) remains a critical framework for fostering inclusive, responsible, and globally engaged individuals. While enthusiasm for globalization was once widespread, current trends indicate a retreat toward nationalistic policies, raising concerns about global cooperation, equity, and shared responsibility. This paper argues for the continued importance and relevance of GCED in addressing pressing global challenges such as climate change, migration, technological transformation, and socio-economic inequalities. Despite its significance, implementing GCED faces multiple obstacles. This study examines these challenges through the case of Uganda, where issues such as inadequate resources, weak infrastructure, and misalignment with national policies hinder the effective adoption of GCED. The Ugandan example illustrates broader systemic barriers that many countries face when integrating GCED into their educational frameworks. To enhance the implementation of GCED, this paper proposes targeted strategies, including curriculum reforms, teacher training programs, stronger public-private partnerships, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. By adopting these approaches, countries like Uganda can more effectively integrate GCED into their national education systems, ensuring that learners acquire the skills and values needed to navigate an interconnected world. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on education's role in global engagement and provides practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to sustain the relevance of GCED amid shifting geopolitical landscapes.

Keywords: Global Citizenship Education, Sustainable Development Goals, Interconnectedness, National Implementation, Uganda

INTRODUCTION

The world today is facing a convergence of pressing challenges, including rapid rural-to-urban migration, armed conflicts, growing inequalities, climate change, environmental degradation, demographic shifts, rising globalization, persistent poverty, human rights violations, and rapid technological advancements. These complex and interrelated issues threaten peace and sustainability at all levels, making it imperative for individuals and societies to move beyond theoretical solutions and take decisive action. Education plays a critical role in fostering an awareness of these global challenges, equipping learners with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to contribute to more peaceful, just, inclusive, and sustainable societies. In recognition of this, UNESCO introduced the Global Citizenship Education (GCED) movement to empower

learners with a global perspective, encouraging them to become active agents of positive change. GCED seeks to cultivate responsible and engaged citizens who uphold fundamental human rights and work toward building more equitable and sustainable communities.

In an era of shifting political dynamics, the role of GCED becomes even more significant. The rise of nationalism, polarization, and misinformation threatens global cooperation, making it essential to reaffirm education's role in fostering global understanding, solidarity, and shared responsibility. Climate change, migration, technological transformations, and widening socio-economic inequalities further underscore the urgency of GCED. Climate change exacerbates resource scarcity and displacement, increasing tensions between and within nations. Migration—both voluntary and forced—challenges societies to foster inclusivity and social cohesion. Meanwhile, the rapid advancement of technology transforms labor markets and social interactions, creating new opportunities but also deepening digital divides. Socio-economic inequalities, both within and between countries, continue to limit access to quality education and opportunities for many, reinforcing cycles of poverty and marginalization. GCED serves as a crucial tool in addressing these challenges, helping learners develop critical thinking, empathy, and the ability to engage constructively in a rapidly evolving world.

This paper uses the case of Uganda to examine the challenges of implementing GCED in a developing country context. While Uganda faces significant obstacles—such as limited resources, infrastructural constraints, and policy gaps—there are also opportunities to strengthen the integration of GCED into national education frameworks. This paper explores these challenges and proposes strategies to overcome them, emphasizing the continued relevance of GCED in fostering peace, sustainable development, and global solidarity. Ultimately, the aim of this paper is to make a strong case for the ongoing importance of GCED in an increasingly interconnected and uncertain world.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

- To examine the significance of GCED in addressing contemporary global challenges.
- To analyze the integration of GCED into Uganda's education systems and its impact on learners.
- To identify key challenges hindering the effective implementation of GCED in Uganda.
- To propose strategies for enhancing the adoption and sustainability of GCED within formal and informal education settings.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a desk research approach, utilizing a comprehensive literature review to analyze and synthesize existing research, reports, and scholarly articles related to Global Citizenship Education, with a specific focus on Uganda as a country example. Given the study's objective to explore how GCED is implemented and its impact within the Ugandan context, secondary data sources form the foundation of this research.

The literature review examines key academic texts, policy documents, and reports from international organizations, NGOs, and governmental bodies that have contributed to the development of GCED in Uganda. By exploring global frameworks, such as those outlined by

UNESCO and the United Nations, and reviewing Uganda-specific educational policies and strategies, the study seeks to understand how GCED is integrated into the national education system. This includes looking at the broader goals of GCED, such as fostering global awareness, social justice, and active citizenship.

The review is structured around several thematic areas: the definitions and goals of GCED, pedagogical strategies used in Uganda, and the challenges and successes of implementing GCED programs. Particular attention is given to the role of education policies in Uganda that promote or hinder GCED, with a focus on formal education settings (such as primary, secondary, and tertiary education) as well as non-formal educational initiatives.

This methodology provides a thorough understanding of GCED in Uganda, drawing on existing knowledge to critically assess how it has been conceptualized, implemented, and evaluated. The theoretical frameworks of postcolonial theory, critical pedagogy, and cosmopolitan theory are used to contextualize the findings, ensuring that the study not only reviews the literature but also engages critically with the ways in which GCED is framed and applied within Uganda.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by a combination of postcolonial theory, critical pedagogy, and cosmopolitan theory, which together provide a comprehensive lens through which to examine GCED.

Postcolonial Theory

Rooted in the works of Said (1978), Bhabha (1994), and Spivak (1988), postcolonial theory critiques the enduring legacies of colonialism and the power structures that continue to shape global educational systems. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) highlights how Western representations of the "Orient" (and by extension, other marginalized regions) have historically been constructed in ways that justified colonial domination. In the context of GCED, postcolonial theory challenges the dominance of Eurocentric curricula, advocating for a more inclusive educational framework that respects diverse cultures, histories, and worldviews. Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity, in particular, emphasizes the complex and fluid identities formed at the intersection of different cultures, suggesting that GCED should acknowledge and celebrate this cultural blending rather than promoting a singular global identity. Spivak (1988), in her work "Can the Subaltern Speak?", highlights the need to amplify marginalized voices within education, aligning with GCED's goal of empowering students from historically oppressed groups and encouraging them to critically engage with global injustices.

Critical Pedagogy

Rooted in the work of Paulo Freire (1970), critical pedagogy is a transformative educational approach that focuses on empowering students to critically analyze their socio-political realities and take action for social change. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) argues that education should not merely transmit knowledge but rather facilitate a dialogue between teachers and students, fostering critical thinking and a collective consciousness. This approach aligns with GCED's goal of encouraging learners to engage in social justice issues, challenge oppressive structures, and recognize their agency in shaping a more equitable world. By focusing on the "banking model" of education, Freire critiques traditional, top-down forms of teaching that reproduce power imbalances, advocating instead for an education that is

participatory, dialogical, and empowering. This aligns with GCED's emphasis on participatory learning, where students are not just passive recipients but active agents of change.

Cosmopolitan Theory

Drawing from the works of Appiah (2006) and Beck (2006), cosmopolitan theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals in a globalized world and advocates for a shared moral responsibility toward others. Appiah's "Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers" (2006) argues that while local identities are important, individuals should also recognize their moral obligations to people beyond their immediate communities, transcending national, ethnic, and cultural boundaries. This aligns with GCED's emphasis on global solidarity, ethical responsibility, and respect for diversity. Beck (2006), in "The Cosmopolitan Vision", further explores the idea that the traditional boundaries of nation-states are increasingly irrelevant in addressing global challenges such as climate change, migration, and inequality. He proposes that cosmopolitanism offers a framework for understanding and addressing these issues through global cooperation. GCED, drawing on cosmopolitan theory, advocates for an educational framework that encourages students to think globally, act locally, and develop the competencies necessary for responsible global citizenship.

Together, these theoretical perspectives enable a nuanced understanding of how GCED can challenge existing power structures, foster critical engagement, and promote a sense of global responsibility among learners. By integrating insights from postcolonial theory, critical pedagogy, and cosmopolitanism, this study assesses how educational programs can cultivate students' global competencies and prepare them for active, engaged citizenship in an interconnected world.

Understanding the Foundations of Global Citizenship Education

To fully appreciate the role of Global Citizenship Education (GCED), it is important to first explore the concept of citizenship itself. Citizenship has long been associated with national identity, rights, and responsibilities within a defined political and legal framework. However, in an increasingly interconnected world, the idea of citizenship has expanded beyond national borders to include a global dimension. This shift has influenced the development of GCED, which seeks to cultivate a sense of belonging to a broader human community while fostering active participation in addressing global challenges. By examining the evolution of citizenship and its expanding definitions, we can better understand the foundations of GCED and how it responds to the complexities of the modern world.

Citizenship is a status of belonging to and taking part in a political domain of a state, civil and socio-economic arena where people connect with each other and their community at large. Citizens are posed to execute duties such as engaging in political processes, playing economic, social and cultural roles and responsibilities in line with the country's guiding principles and laws. The common goal of today's education scheme is raising values, attitudes, knowledge and skills of the learners to enable them become responsible citizens.

Global citizenship is connected to the rights and duties of considering oneself as belonging to a global community rather than a narrow territorial part of it. Basically, it is a common understanding of belonging to a broader community and identifying with all mankind which is beyond the national boundaries with major emphasis on humanity and interconnection

between the local and global communities. Global citizens are individuals who think and act in a more honorable; fairer, just, peaceful and sustainable community worldwide.

The term “Global Citizenship” is not a new concept, it gained significant momentum during the phenomena of globalization and the United Nations Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) launched by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon in September 2012 which identified furthering global citizenship to particularly the three priority areas of global peace, global commons, and common good along with access to quality education to develop shared values, social, economic and political transformation. Growing interest in global citizenship has resulted in increased attention to the global dimension in citizenship education as well, and the implications for policy, curricula, teaching and learning. But the approach towards Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is different worldwide and the approach taken in Europe and North America is far from a standard that is accepted worldwide (UNESCO, 2014).

GCED was embedded within the Sustainable Development Goals because of various endeavors in the past. These include; the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) launched in 2012 by the United Nations Secretary General’s Ban Ki-Moon which advocated for education to further global citizenship in order to promote shared values, social and political transformation. Education should be geared towards care for the world and the people in it by being more just, honorable, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It should give people the understanding, knowledge, skills and values that they need to collaborate in resolution of the 21st century interconnected problems (Global Education First Initiative, 2015).

Globally United Nations member communities in September 2015 adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically the SDG 4 Target 4.7 which put much emphasis on the need for global citizenship for all (United Nations, 2015). These countries committed to ensuring that all the learners are provided with skills and knowledge needed to promote sustainable development like education for sustainable development and sustainable life styles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and cultural diversity creating sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies and enabling the learners to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions on global issues like climate change and the current COVID 19 pandemics.

GCED emerges from an informative concept that currently people live in the learning process at an international circumstance. This model encourages a meaning of belonging to a global society with emphasis on a shared democratic humanity among the population while ensuring the biosphere and environment is well protected by ensuring that learners think of citizenship as being associated with the ecological world.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Meaning and Objectives of GCED

The primary aim of GCED is nurturing respect for all, building a sense of belonging to a common humanity and helping learners become responsible and active global citizens. It is to empower learners to assume roles to face and resolve global challenges and become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant and inclusive, secure world. This will help the learners develop the core competencies which allow them to actively engage with the world, and help to

make it a more just and sustainable place. It is a form of civic learning which makes learners active in addressing social, political, economic and environmental global issues.

GCED has been embedded within the Education 2030 Framework as a key driver for sustainable development and sustainable life style. It advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all as agreed in the Incheon Declaration of 2015. GCED's major purpose is to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles locally and globally with the ultimate goal of encouraging peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies.

UNESCO describes GCED as a framing paradigm which condenses how education systems can promote knowledge, skills, values and attitude. Learners need to ensure the world is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable. It therefore values the importance of education in understanding and resolving global issues in their social, political, cultural, economic and environmental concepts. It should be noted that, education promotes the development of knowledge, cognitive skills, soft skills and attitudes among the learners leading to international cooperation and social transformation.

The Need of GCED

Globally the world has gained increasing interest in global citizenship; consequently global dimension in citizenship education has been integrated in education systems, policies, curricula, teaching and learning in various parts of the world. The effects of globalization have widened the idea of citizenship from national to the global arena. It is a global education movement adopted by many education systems for the purpose of transforming the learners to take part in a global society due to the following factors:

Peace and Sustainable Development:

The new global education agenda emphasizes education's role in promoting peace and sustainable development through initiatives like Global Citizenship Education (GCED), SDG 4, and Target 4.7 under Education 2030. This agenda has spurred global efforts to integrate GCED into formal, non-formal, and informal education systems. Many countries have incorporated GCED-related components into their national curricula, developed educational resources, and prepared teachers to deliver global citizenship content (SangSaeng, 2018).

GCED is central to the Education Framework for Action 2030 and the Incheon Declaration of 2015, which aim to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. By 2030, learners are expected to acquire knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, including human rights, gender equality, peace, and cultural diversity. Target 4.7 assigns education a global dimension, focusing on fostering a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable world. GCED plays a crucial role in this mission by equipping individuals with the knowledge, values, and skills to build just and inclusive societies grounded in fundamental human rights (Opertti Kang, Magni, & Severin, 2018).

Human Rights Abuse:

GCED is promoted to equip learners of all ages with the morals, values, knowledge and skills grounded on the principality of encouraging human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and environmental sustainability and that empower learners to be responsible global

citizens. Generally, education plays a critical role in supporting peace, human rights, equity, acceptance of diversity and sustainable development requiring a paradigm shift to education systems that recognize and promote respect of human rights. GCED contributes to the promotion of the competencies and opportunities for the learners to enable them to understand their responsibilities to ensure the promotion of human rights through human rights education, peace education, and education for international objectives of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to promote a better world and future for all GCED. Education is a human right and a driving force for sustainable development. Every agenda in 2030 requires education to empower people with knowledge, skills and values to live dignity, build their lives and contribute to their societies.

Increasing Global Challenges:

The growing interconnection between countries highlights shared problems and solutions that transcend traditional nation-state boundaries. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) was adopted to align individual, corporate, and national interests with global interconnectedness, recognizing the continuous flow of people, transactions, and capital driven by globalization.

Global challenges, such as pandemics, demand a population capable of responding quickly to emerging risks. GCED equips learners with the skills to understand complexity, evaluate scenarios, negotiate, act, and find collective solutions. It also fosters socio-emotional resilience, essential for crisis preparedness and response, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Education plays a key role in promoting peace, human rights, equality, sustainable development, and cultural diversity. GCED fosters a sense of global belonging and equips learners to address contemporary global issues such as conflict, poverty, inequality, and environmental crises.

Increased refugee movements due to conflicts pose challenges for learners in foreign education systems. GCED promotes reconciliation, social justice, respect, and empathy, improving relationships between students and teachers while fostering social cohesion in diverse settings.

Addressing global challenges like climate change, migration, and conflict requires transformative education that instills shared values and empowers citizens to take effective action. GCED nurtures the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for individuals and communities to respond to global crises and contribute to a sustainable world.

Rapid Population Growth Rates:

The world population is almost reaching 7 billion people which are putting a lot of pressure on the available natural resources so we need to act now and learn to live together in a sustainable and inclusive manner. Hence, GCED helps to avail quality education for sustainable development by empowering the learners to change their thinking to a sustainable future. This is done by including issues of environmental preservation, biodiversity, climate change into the teaching and learning approach which encourages learners to be responsible players who are problem solvers, respect cultural diversity and ensure a more inclusive and sustainable societies worldwide.

The global challenge of Climate Change and its associated effects like rising temperatures, storms, prolonged drought resulting to poor crop and livestock production, inadequate water supply exposing millions of people worldwide to water stress, food insecurity triggering mass migration nationally, regionally and internationally in search for better opportunities. This will challenge education systems because of differences in languages, culture, values, norms, customs and demographics among the intersecting inhabitants which may lead to conflicts and increase in human right violations. This can be resolved by adopting educational programs that goes beyond the expansion of the citizenship's idea from local to the international level with clear moral and political value. It supports the framework of ensuring education contributes to various knowledge, skills, abilities, capabilities and values empirically and ensuring that learners are exhaustively prepared to provide solutions to global challenges like climate change problem faced by humanity today.

Technological Development and Globalization:

Technological advancements and increased global connectivity present both challenges and opportunities. While mechanization reduces low-skilled jobs, it also creates new opportunities for highly skilled work. The rapid movement of people, goods, and ideas across borders can lead to cultural and ideological conflicts. GCED helps learners navigate these complexities by fostering an understanding of global social relations and promoting collective action.

GCED, linked to democratic citizenship education, prepares students to engage in global society. Although globalization can challenge traditional values, it also encourages civic participation and social movements that uphold human rights and social justice (Bosio, 2017). This education approach develops global competencies that empower learners to respond to economic transformations and prepares them to compete in the global workforce.

Globalization also drives migration and interconnectivity, raising new security and environmental concerns. GCED addresses these by fostering a sense of ecological citizenship—encouraging responsibility for the environment and future generations beyond national interests (Farahani, 2014). It challenges traditional assumptions and empowers learners to think critically, engage with diverse perspectives, and take informed action on global issues. As communities become increasingly interconnected, GCED equips individuals to foster cooperation and collective solutions to the complex challenges of our globalized world.

Rising Diversity:

Rising global unemployment rates necessitate preparing students to compete in the global economy. GCED addresses this by fostering engaged learners who value human dignity and are equipped to create positive change in their communities and beyond. By promoting employable skills and adaptability, GCED enhances learners' prospects in the 21st-century workplace and helps reduce unemployment rates.

As global opportunities increase, understanding cultural differences becomes essential. GCED encourages learners to recognize and respect diverse perspectives, fostering the ability to collaborate with people from various cultural backgrounds. Integrating GCED into national education systems prepares students to navigate and thrive in a multicultural world.

Given the rapid evolution of technology and globalization, some current skills will become obsolete. GCED equips learners with critical 21st-century competencies, including collaboration, communication, creativity, innovation, problem-solving, and critical thinking. This prepares them to adapt to the changing workforce and address emerging global challenges.

Education plays a crucial role in promoting peace, human rights, equity, diversity, and sustainable development. GCED emphasizes values-based learning and communication skills, fostering a sense of global citizenship that transcends national boundaries. Global citizens, as shaped by GCED, prioritize the rights and well-being of all people and the broader global community, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for a more just and sustainable world.

The Relevance of GCED as an International Agenda and Its Relevance to Society

GCED is one of the fast-growing education reform movement, it has gained support from different stakeholders like teacher's union, governments, foundation bodies, institutions, corporations and its major focus are on curricular and extra-curricular activities with the aim of preparing the learners for global opportunities and challenges. It is anticipated to make the education sector relevant in the twenty-first century and make learners global citizens equipped with the required competencies, skills and knowledge necessary to achieve prosperity in highly competitive and fundamentally new and different global opportunities. GCED is intended to work at the intersection of programs, education and globalization for the preparation of the young people. Most countries have adopted GCED and are integrating its components to their national curriculum, education materials and teacher's training resources due to the following reasons:

Promotion of a More Just, Peaceful, Tolerant and Inclusive Societies:

According to the United Nation's Global Education First Initiative, it is not enough to produce individuals who are able to read, write and count. Education must assume its central role in helping people to forge a more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive society. GCED therefore provides understanding, skills and values students need in resolving global challenges of the 21st century such as climate change, poverty, inequalities, conflict and helping the students to be able to work in the diverging work environment of the 21st century.

GCED is very relevant in today's education sphere to ensure that young people acquire social, civic and global-intercultural attitudes by promoting democratic values and fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discrimination as well as active citizenship across all disciplines.

It encourages greater intercultural understanding and peace by instilling skills and perception of learners in the global village era so that they recognize and understand the surrounding global issues while nurturing the emotional sensitivity and empathy to manage the global challenges. This influences global peace, promotes engagement paying attention to economic, social and cultural inequalities aimed at reducing global poverty. It also stipulates a concrete model and guidelines to support national morals which will lead to more democratic social groups.

GCED equips learners with a deep knowledge of global issues and universal values like justice, equality, dignity and respect, cognitive skills to think critically, systematically and creatively,

adopting a multi-perspective approach that recognizes different dimensions, perspectives and angles of issues, non-cognitive skills including social skills like empathy and conflict resolution, communication skills and attitudes for networking and interacting with people of different backgrounds, origins, culture and perspectives and behavioral capacities to act collaboratively and responsibly and to strive for collective goals.

Preparations of Learners for the Challenges of the 21st Century:

With the ever-growing globalized world, it almost feels like a necessity to identify ourselves as global citizens by being part of the emerging global community and with the actions of contributing to building this community's values and practices. Historically in Africa, people are organized into groups and communities that share similar values, ideas, culture, and an overall identity. This helps in shaping our needs economically, politically, religiously and socially. But in the 21st century, as the world becomes flatter with less physical and communication barriers, there is need for global engagements, thus resulting in global citizens who crave a sense of belonging to a world community rather than a small, local one. And this is only possible by adopting education systems which produce learners who advocate for several issues such as human rights, religious pluralism, and gender equity, the rule of law, environmental protection, sustainable worldwide economic growth and poverty reduction. GCED produces learners who are able to respect themselves as well as others, regardless of where they live by understanding how the world works, they take part in the community work at all levels ranging from the local to the global and are always willing to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place to live. With global citizenship education, young people are able to solve problems, make decisions, think critically, communicate ideas effectively and work well with others which help them in resolving the 21st century challenges with less difficulty. This educational approach broadens the worldview through which the learners view school subjects hence, bringing young people into the field of global politics, economy, and community. An essential supplement to globalization, a solid GCED can help people solve conflicts, protect human rights, participate in the global economy, and approach development projects responsibly.

Social Contributive Learners:

GCED promotes the rise of social issues and recognition of global injustice and disparity. This results into the respect of global diverse perspectives and construction of an ethic of social service to address global and local issues. It thus creates an understanding of the interconnectedness among countries and its associated global impacts. GCED ensures the teachers focus on getting the learners to examine the existing social issues and distinguishes the numerous samples of inequalities and discrimination in regards to building up the learners' sense of compassion by encouraging them to observe and respect different viewpoints. GCED teaches the learners with skills and attitudes that make them aware, active, critical and social citizens. Learners across the world require these skills to enable them have an active role in the different areas as members of the global village. Hence, GCED is very paramount in creating knowledge and understanding, skills and values related to citizenship (Farahani, 2014).

Professional Advancement of Teachers' Capacity:

GCED is relevant since it promotes professional development of teachers who play a very vital role in the implementation of its activities at school level. Quality education provides all learners with capacities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual wellbeing.

It promotes teachers who are agents of change, the teachers' capacities are enhanced to provide them with the skills and knowledge needed for teaching GCED that is vital to promoting change and education reform.

Protecting Human Rights:

An international code of human rights defines the social contract between global citizens. Protecting that social contract for all people is essential to preserving global society. GCED can draw students' attention to universal human principles thus, benefiting humanity by ensuring learners respect the human rights of others and stand up to those actors who violate human rights. One of the instant and future relevance of GCED is that, learners and teachers will feel that they can be effective in ensuring the world is a better place where people's rights are respected and protected. This improves the peace, respect for values like justice, equality and truth seeking (Farahani, 2014).

Promotion of Civic Committed Learners:

These are people who demonstrate a predisposition towards recognizing local, state, national and global community issues and responding to it by taking appropriate measures including volunteering, political activism and community participation encouraging the adoption and promotion of voluntary work or helping in global civic organizations. They construct their political voices by synthesizing their global knowledge and experiences in the public domain and they engage in purposeful local behaviors that advance a global agenda.

Globally Inclined Learners:

Citizenship is not only about people's responsibilities to the world, but also about the opportunities the world gives its people. Without proper GCED, the global economy can exacerbate cultural tensions and encourage exploitative business practices. With proper GCED for, ideally, everyone, young people from all walks of life can take advantage of the economic opportunities of globalization.

Education and learning objectives are not only focusing on the development of knowledge and work-related skills but is more about understanding and being able to resolve global challenges related to social, cultural, economic, political and environment issues. GCED consequently is vital in promoting globally liable learners who are able to identify their own limitations and abilities for engaging in intercultural encounters. They demonstrate a range of intercultural communication skills and have the abilities to engage successfully in intercultural encounters. Such learners are willing to take up steps in ensuring that the interest and acquaintance regarding the world issues and events are taken care of and they demonstrate abilities in handling the societal issues by supporting an array of personal values which demonstrate that they care about inequities at both local and global levels. Thus the goal of GCED is to empower learners to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges. It is built on the view point of ensuring a lifelong learning which takes into consideration all with people regardless of their background so that no one is left behind by adopting reduction modes and venues including formal, non-formal and informal systems. Flexible pedagogical approaches may be useful in targeting populations outside the formal system and those who are likely to engage with new information and communication technologies, such as social media (Yonemura, 2015).

Belonging to a Global Community:

Promoting GCED at higher levels of education is problematic in connection to the newwave of post-truth populism that prioritizes extreme neo-liberalism, shuns any idea that might imply a downgrading of national sovereignty and explicitly rejects the value of multiculturalism and internationalization. In Africa, traditionally, schools were meant to prepare people to pass exams, proceed to the next level and graduate into the workplace. But currently, the world is facing much greater challenges of raising global citizens. Promoting respect and responsibility across cultures, countries and regions need to be central in the education agenda, education should change the ways of doing things, it should be tailored to ensuring the learning contents are more relevant to contemporary life and global challenges, introducing innovative and participatory teaching and learning styles. Policy makers and educationalist should rethink the purpose of education and prepare students for life, not exams alone.

Obstacles in Global Citizenship Education Implementation and Integration in Uganda

Generally, there is a growing need for global GCED, but teaching, learning and implementing it is facing several obstacles like limitations in human and material resources, timetable and logistical, demographic and technological constraints. All these challenges raise questions related to leadership, citizenship, belonging, recognition of diversity and active democratic participation at all levels. Some of the constraints in integrating, adopting and implementing the GCED into the local education context include the following:

Inadequate Resources:

Given the clear value and importance of global citizenship education and other SDG 4.7 themes, most developing countries cannot support these efforts due to dominance of over-crowded classrooms and scarce resources to engage students in structured, collaborative learning environment. This makes it quite challenging to support schools and teachers who wish to move away from the dominance of rote learning for high stakes examinations to more participatory teaching practices. Postcolonial theory suggests that the legacy of colonialism often continues to shape educational systems in developing countries, where educational practices and resources are still influenced by historical inequalities, limiting the capacity for transformative, student-centered learning (Rizvi, Lingard & Lavia, 2006).

One of the critical policy instruments to promote GCED is the review of the curriculum, particularly textbooks, teacher guides, schemes of work and lesson plans which require adequate resources in terms of money and expertise which may not be readily available in some of the developing countries. These textbooks should be in position to engage learners' hearts as well as their minds. Postcolonial scholars emphasize the importance of decolonizing the curriculum, ensuring that the material reflects local realities and histories rather than perpetuating Eurocentric perspectives that often marginalize indigenous knowledge (Toscano, 2022). To be effective, the quantity of textbooks should be limited and the content chosen selectively, so that students have time to comprehend, analyze and evaluate what they read. Illustrations should be rendered in culturally sensitive, inclusive and level-appropriate ways to enhance students' engagement with and understanding of the text. Even in settings where teachers lack specific pedagogical preparation, well designed textbooks (SangSaeng, 2018).

GCED implementation requires huge investment but in most developing countries like Uganda, education is under-resourced, class rooms are overcrowded and schools lack the required

resources to engage learners in structured, collaborative learning which affects the adoption and implementation of this model in the education system particularly in low income countries. This is even made worse by the fact that most developing countries cannot solely rely on their domestic financing ability for education, and most of them still need a lot more foreign aid. According to Global Partnership for Education (GPE), only 20% of foreign aid in low-income countries is directed for education sector and yet on average education cost in developing countries is approximately \$1.25 a day per child.

Poor and Inadequate Infrastructures:

A child cannot learn without the enabling learning environment. Children in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa are often squeezed into overcrowded classrooms, classrooms that are falling apart, or are learning outside under the tree shades. They also lack textbooks, school supplies, basic facilities like running water and toilets and other tools the learners require for excelling. If nothing is done in regards to this, it will definitely have an impact on the outcome of GCED in developing countries for example, when girls don't have access to safe toilets at school, they are then forced to look for private places to help themselves exposing them to rape and attacks among others. Some girls will also miss or drop out of school when they begin menstruating if they don't have the sanitation facilities or sanitary products to manage their periods with pride and dignity. Learners overcrowded in a classroom in a Ugandan school. Source: Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

Wars and Conflict:

Wars and conflicts often destroy education systems, children exposed to violence are more at risk of under-achieving and dropping out of school but the effects of conflict on achieving GCED cannot be overstated. Learning cannot take place in environments marked by violence and instability, as the emotional and psychological impact on learners prevents them from engaging meaningfully with the curriculum (Dicum, 2008). Conflict prevents governments from functioning, teachers and students often flee their homes, and continuity of learning is greatly disrupted. Without support, conflict-affected children lose out on the chance to reach their full potential and rebuild their communities.

Inadequate Capacity of Teachers (Lack of Awareness):

In developing countries teacher training programs are not adequately equipped with the theoretical understanding and professional skills to effectively involve and enable the learners to become global citizens who are responsible for ensuring a more just, peaceful and environmentally secure world. Postcolonial theorists argue that teacher education in the Global South often fails to incorporate local epistemologies and pedagogical practices, which would help teachers address the specific needs and aspirations of students in their context (Imoh, Castro & Naftali, 2022). Most teachers start their careers with deep knowledge and robust skills essential to respond to the wide diversity of learners in their classrooms. The lack of understanding and knowledge required for teachers to develop the learners' professional competency in educating for global citizenship education can be one of the obstacles in achieving GCED in the developing countries and around the globe. So, there is need for teacher development reforms if they are to take up the GCED skills and transform the way the students are learning by ensuring the teachers are comfortable with the content of what they are meant to teach and the model they are using.

Lack of Understanding and Challenges Related to Transforming the Globalcitizenship Education Guiding Principles with The National Policy

There is a problem of comprehensively understanding how to transform the GlobalCitizenship guidelines with the national policy practice. This implies that there are certain unequal values and measures that are mediated by historical, cultural, economic and political conditions from country to country making the GCED guidelines not to be embraced in all places equally. From a postcolonial perspective, this challenge speaks to the tension between global ideals of citizenship and local realities; it is crucial that GCED principles are not imposed but are instead negotiated with respect to local cultures and values to avoid cultural imperialism. And yet transformative dimension of global citizenship education necessitates the modification of both educational institutions and systems including personal and cultural mindsets. From this angle, a global citizen intricately connects people and issues those cross-national boundaries and yet different countries are faced with different problems making it hard to attain the integration of GCED locally. Cosmopolitanism argues that while the problems of local communities are important, the global challenges that affect humanity as a whole must also be addressed through education, highlighting the interconnectedness of all people (Miller, 2010). GCED has been widely criticized for its strong emphasis on global orientation while being irrelevant to the wellbeing of people of the local communities, hence making it a challenge to integrate its principles and activities into the national education system. For GCED to be effective, then it should identify the local values, beliefs, practices and culture, analyze it, build on it and ensure it is included in the education framework and this will foster its acceptance locally.

In Uganda the government has continued to promote educational policy reforms since Independence in 1962 with the aim of advancing equity among learners, particularly among the marginalized groups. The integration of GCED into the education system has been supported by Ministry of Education and Sports but the challenge is the mainstreaming it across the education system. This is worsened by lack of understanding, awareness and the readiness of the teachers to incorporate GCED elements in the plans. The integration of this movement to classroom practices, where classes are always over crowded with more than 100 learners per stream make the implementation of GCED very difficult practically.

Neo-liberal Policies:

Over the past three decades, neo-liberal policies have promoted open markets, free trade, reduction in public sector spending, reducing state intervention in the economy, and deregulation of markets. It is based on this that the state participates less in the provision of social services such as education leaving these services to the free market and privatization. With high level of privatization in the education sector in developing countries like Uganda, adoption, integration and implementation of GCED becomes challenging because the private schools' major interests are ensuring that the learners pass highly so as to attract more learners and in the end the school proprietors are able to make enough money.

Education is an essential ingredient for economic and social development and most countries are willing to adopt education reforms like integration of GCED framework into the national education sector. The education sector reforms specifically in developing countries however have to continue to be challenged by slow and weak policy implementation in areas like teacher training, infrastructure and livelihood generation for youth. The emergence of privatization and

misappropriation of education funds affectsthe achievement of equity and social cohesion within the education sector and ensuring a smooth implementation of GCED.

Out-dated Curricula and Learning Materials:

In most developing countries schools are still using curricula and textbooks that reinforce stereotypes, exacerbate social divisions, and foster fear and resentment of other groups or nationalities. The curricula are not developed through a participatory process that embraces excluded and marginalized groups. Critical pedagogy advocates for an educational approach that challenges these stereotypes and engages students in a transformative process that critiques power relations and seeks to foster social justice (Freire, 1970; Rahimi, Kushki & Ansaripour, 2015). But change is possible when educators adopt a vision of ethical global citizenship.

Inadequate Focus on Values:

The values of peace, human rights, respect, cultural diversity and justice are often not embodied in the school's lessons. Instead of empowering students to learn and thrive, schools often replicate social inequalities and reinforce social pathologies by tolerating bullying and gender-based violence and subjecting children to physical and psychological punishment. Young people learn much from schools, but what they learn is not only in their lessons. Teachers and administrators must learn to model the skills we want students to develop, such as good environmental practices, participatory decisionmaking, and the control and prevention of violence through reporting policies and clear codes of conduct. This will enable the creation of young generations that value the common good. Goals and targets should be set around 21st century skills and regularly assessed to measure progress.

Recommendations for GCED Implementation

GCED is seen as an approach developed to deal with global challenges which require collective responsibilities to find a way forward to some of the implementation challenges it is facing. For countries to implement GCED activities effectively, they need to adopt among others the following strategies; review of national curriculum, holistic and transformative educational strategy which focuses on emotional and behavior attributes of the GCED, professional teachers' development, regular monitoring and evaluation of the GCED activities and implementation of progress. It should be incorporated in the curriculum and the entire education institution and the learning environment.

Curriculum Review:

The major instrument for education reform globally is for the government to support the review of national curriculum for example learning textbooks, teachers' guides, schemes of work and lesson plans so that education is able to produce students who are ready to go global with employable skills required by the global labor market. Therefore, there is need to incorporate GCED right across the curriculum and the whole school approach would ideally be applied rather than targeting in specific subjects. This implies that there should both broad-based and subject-specific curriculum opportunities across the school years for teachers to address aspects of global citizenship education. Text books should be revised in such a way that it will engage all the learners. Learning materials should be culturally sensitive and inclusive so that all learners are in position to fully understand the text and ensure the teaching methodology focuses on critical thinking, empathetic learners who can work together to resolve global

problems and crisis. This curriculum review should promote opportunities for the learners to be able to compete for global employment opportunities and gain 21st century skills. The school curriculum, apart from helping learners to acquire the necessary knowledge helps the younger generation to develop a global outlook, to learn how to learn and to master lifelong skills that can be used outside schools. This will prepare them to become global citizens. Competency-based curricular approaches focus on what learners can do with their knowledge in addition to what they know. Often competencies are described as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes, and the focus is on observable outcomes which can be measured. Around the world, international organisations scramble to develop their own versions of competency-based curricular, making it a clear example of 'Global Education Policy'. (Tromp & Datzberger, 2019).

Gender issues should be mainstreamed in teacher training and curriculum so as to eliminate gender-based violence in education institutions. Education system should abolish gender bias and discrimination; gender sensitive policies should be put in place. If the curriculum review processes is well-rounded, transformative, value-creating curriculum not only opens students' eyes, but also sets the stage for them to act in ways that are inspired by their course of study and driven by a desire to make a difference locally, nationally, regionally and globally. It challenges traditional views and assumptions, allows students to introduce and access non-dominant perspectives and encourages new ways of thinking.

Adoption of Inclusive and Resilience Education System:

Government should adopt inclusive and resilience education system to overcome challenges posed by conflicts, violence, natural disasters and pandemics which can negatively affect education. Access to inclusive, resilience and equitable education system can promote lifelong learning where learners are in position to acquire the needed skills and knowledge always. Learners should be attracted and retained at school. The values underpinning the inclusivity will include "respect for diversity, tolerance, equality, social justice, cooperation, care for others and the environment, and respect for all people." This can be achieved by government ensuring quality assurance, promoting accountability and transparency principles in education, quality education information/data management, adequate financing procedures and adoption of ICT and innovation so as to strengthen the education system.

Capacity Building of the Teachers:

Teachers play a key role in bringing changes in and through education, and there is an urgent need for capacity-building of educational experts, including teachers particularly in Uganda. As reiterated by the United Nations, the lack of teacher capacity is one of the barriers to foster global citizenship and therefore equipping key educators with relevant knowledge and skills is crucial, which will empower them to become agents of carrying out the transformative educational initiatives in their own local and regional contexts. Although useful to demonstrate globalization, the teacher needs to be prepared by raising awareness of the most effective approach or model of implementing GCED principles in the school system in order to equip the learners with the relevant skills that can enable them to cope with the 21st century skills. To successfully achieve the objectives of GCED, the government needs to invest in teacher professional development since they are the foundation for guaranteeing quality education. Training is the basis for building knowledge about the change and the required skills to succeed

in the future state. Ensuring teachers receive the training they need for education system change at the right time is an essential role for ensuring the approach is adopted timely without resistance from other stakeholders. Teacher training globally is still geared towards academic with less interest in vocational and technical education. We need urgently a new group of teachers willing to make a difference in their profession so as to achieve the global commitment to sustainable development. It should be noted that, education policy makers, leaders and teachers must understand fully the guiding principles of GCED and they should be able to examine their practices, perceptions, values and world view so that they are able to take the learners as global citizens. This therefore implies that, the educators should be well informed about the world, critical thinkers, socially connected and having respect for diversity meaning that; it is very necessary to build the capability of educators and their professional capacity should be developed continuously. This will re-enforce a culture of professional learning in education system as required in GCED principle of peer collaboration, observation, social responsibility promotion, action learning and instilling a sense of community and active participation among the learners.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:

Policy makers should ensure GCED implementation progress, successes and failures are continuously monitored and evaluated to assess its interaction with national contexts and national citizenship, its link to sustainability policies and the cost of implementing it. The issue of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the system needs and obstacles to successful implementation of GCED should be discussed and realistic solution agreed upon between UN system, the global system and national system.

Public Private Partnership:

National governments have a major role and responsibility for ensuring the right to quality education but to achieve the GCED principles and activities, there is need for collective engagement at local, national, regional and international levels. This can be achieved through universal partnership with the public sector, private sector, civil society organizations, UN agencies, the youth and multilateral bodies so as to identify educational issues and build sustainable systems which are inclusive, equitable and relevant to all the learners.

Resource Mobilisation:

Government should increase education funding by unlocking available resources to support the right to education through improved coordination and prioritizing financing. They should be committed to providing adequate and effective financing to education. For instance, the Incheon Declaration encourages increased public spending on education according to each country's contexts. On average, countries allocated 5.0% of its GDP and 13.7% of public expenditure to education sector. To increase education financing can be achieved through widening the tax base in order to raise income to fund education activities, giving priority to disadvantaged children and those affected by conflict, efficient and effective resource utilization, lobbying for external funding, good governance and accountability.

Education Policy Reforms:

Government should adopt education policy which addresses the barriers to education depriving majority of children from accessing quality education. In order to incorporate GCED in the

policy, there is need to review the existing national education sector goals, policies and curriculum to identify areas of synergies with GCED and the national policies, identify existing opportunities and gaps to facilitate a realistic policy reform. Policy makers needs to take into consideration issues to do with strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and gaps in the current national policy environment. And the policy review and reform process should be transparent, inclusive of all people, participatory in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders. Young people should be engaged since they are the driving force behind GCED principles.

Policy reforms will help in confronting with the associated negative trends; it leads to a transformation of value-creating pedagogical approach which gives students opportunities to transcend their local boundaries and enables them to develop a sense of belonging to the global community, while recognizing instances of global inequality and discrimination.

GCED encourages the learners to become more inclusive, non-discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change and it is necessary in developing the critical thinking skills and critical reflection among the graduates and ensuring the teachers are transformative intellectuals. Therefore, this education approach requires moving beyond the creative initiatives of individual teachers towards a more holistic redesign of university curricula.

CONCLUSION

In an era marked by rapid globalization, technological advancements, environmental crises, and growing inequalities, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) remains a vital framework for preparing learners to navigate and address complex global challenges. By fostering critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and a commitment to social justice, GCED equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to more inclusive, peaceful, and sustainable societies.

Using Uganda as a case study, this paper has highlighted both the obstacles and opportunities in implementing GCED, demonstrating that while challenges such as limited resources, policy gaps, and infrastructural constraints persist, strategic interventions can strengthen its integration into education systems. Addressing these barriers requires a multi-stakeholder approach, involving educators, policymakers, and communities in fostering a more globally aware and engaged citizenry.

Ultimately, this paper makes the case for the continued importance of GCED in an increasingly interconnected yet politically and socially fragmented world. As global challenges intensify, the need for education that transcends national borders and instills values of cooperation, sustainability, and shared responsibility becomes more urgent than ever. Strengthening GCED is not just an investment in education—it is an investment in a more just and sustainable future for all.

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