Promoting Global Citizenship Education

in Arab universities

Proposals for action

UNESCO – a global leader in education

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education, providing global and regional leadership to drive progress, strengthening the resilience and capacity of national systems to serve all learners. UNESCO also leads efforts to respond to contemporary global challenges through transformative learning, with special focus on gender equality and Africa across all actions.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to "*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*" The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

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1. Introducing Global Citizenship Education

What is Global Citizenship Education?

Global citizenship education (GCED) 'aims to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies,' according to UNESCO's definition[1]. UNESCO's work to support GCED grew out of the recognition that peaceful coexistence cannot be achieved through reliance on hard power but requires the efforts of all global citizens to work towards these goals through education, exchange and collaboration.

However, the values of global citizenship have existed long before UNESCO. For example, as early as the 12th to 13th centuries, the Manden Charter was established in the Mandingo Empire, advocating for inviolable human rights, diversity, peace, security and freedom of expression[2]. Furthermore, GCED exists in many forms around the world, although not necessarily under the label 'global citizenship education'[3].

Currently, there are numerous examples of global citizenship in primary and secondary education, but far less attention is paid to these issues in higher education. This overview examines the role of higher education institutions in fostering GCED, specifically as it is enacted in the Arab States region. The purpose of this overview is to spotlight existing GCED efforts and to provide guidance for those higher education institutions that wish to promote global citizenship further.

GCED domains of learning

UNESCO's work on GCED is guided by Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Target 4.7:

> ensure that all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development[4].

Achieving these goals requires multiple opportunities across the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural domains for all learners, throughout their lifespan (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Conceptual domains of GCED

Cognitive	To acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations
Socio-emotional	To have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity, and respect for differences and diversity
Behavioural	To act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world

Source: Adapted from UNESCO. 2015. *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives*, p. 15.

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1   See https://en.unesco.org/themes/gced/definition
2   UNESCO. 2018. *Global Citizenship Education: Taking it Local*. Paris, UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265456.
3   Ibid.
4   UNESCO. 2016. *Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All*. Paris, UNESCO, p. 21. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656.

A local approach to GCED

Since its emergence in the global discourse on education in 2012, GCED has been a contested concept. For some, it is perceived as dissociated from local needs and realities, while for others it is a timely approach that underlines the need to sharpen the relevance of education. Tensions and debates around GCED have been particularly intense in contexts where the words 'global' or 'globalization' are misconstrued as referring to processes that are exogenous to their societies – for instance, with globalization being equated with 'westernization'.

Against this backdrop, UNESCO conducted a study in 2018 that led to the identification of *three core notions of GCED that are shared across cultures*:

1. a shared sense of humanity;
2. respect for diversity; and
3. solidarity (see Figure 2)[5].

Some version of each of these shared values can be found in concepts such as *Shura* (consultation) in Oman, a tradition of public participation in decision-making in a pluralistic society, which is reflected in current educational practice. Identifying, describing and operationalizing these practices in multiple cultural contexts is important for promoting the goals of global peace, sustainability and cooperation.

This report draws on the local perspectives of faculty and students from higher education institutions in the Arab States, using research, strategic documents from a number of educational institutions, and perspectives shared during a regional consultation organized by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States on 28 October 2021. In doing so, it seeks to identify local conceptions regarding what GCED should include and what the role of universities should be in promoting GCED, and to share examples of practice that can provide guidance for future efforts.

Figure 2. Three core notions of GCED and local variations
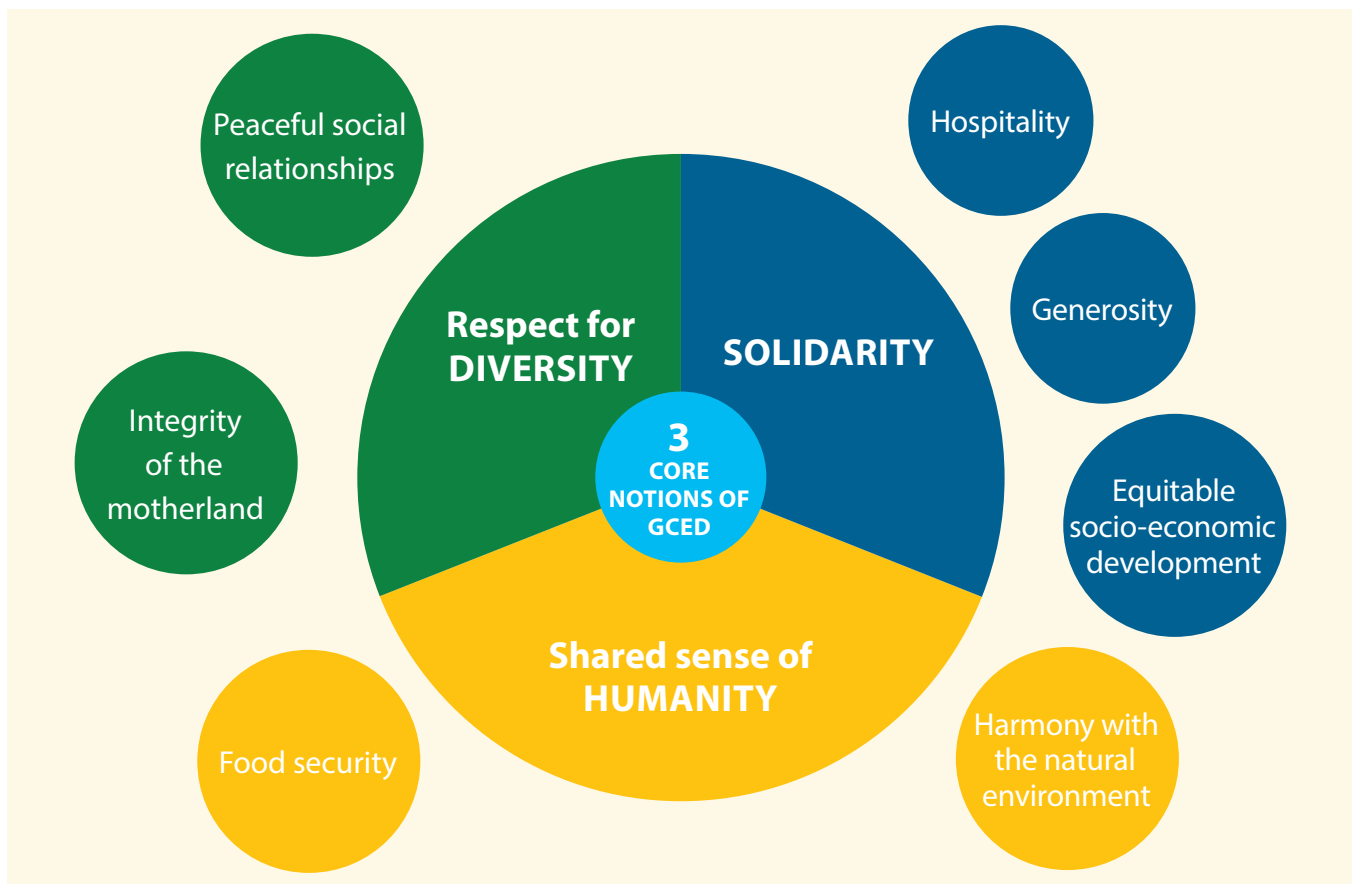
Source: UNESCO. 2018. *Global Citizenship Education: Taking it Local*, p. 9.

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[5] UNESCO. 2018. *Global Citizenship Education: Taking it Local*. Paris, UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265456.

2. GCED: Why universities?

GCED as a lifelong process

GCED begins early in life and does not stop at the end of secondary school. The years of transition from late adolescence to emerging adulthood (approximately 18–24) are important for predicting longer-term interest and participation in citizenship activities[6].

Higher education can play an important role in GCED by providing incentive, opportunity and support for young adults to learn about global issues, engage across diverse cultures, and practice the skills of GCED at a time of intensive personal, social, political and career exploration. Furthermore, higher education institutions can encourage students to take these skills and values into their adult lives to share with others and continue the lifelong process.

Universities as mini public spheres to support GCED outside the classroom

Higher education institutions are typically larger and serve a more diverse student population than can be found in local communities. Students who attend university have the opportunity to learn about and empathize with the experiences of those from different cultural, socio-economic, geographic, and religious backgrounds. Through class projects, study groups, and campus life, universities create opportunities for students to learn to cooperate with others from differing backgrounds. Furthermore, universities have infrastructure (meeting spaces, shared list serves, student clubs and associations, faculty and adult advisers) that can support the behavioural aspects of GCED. For example, a recent study of civic engagement with youth from the Middle East and North Africa found that the most common support for civic engagement cited was through schools and universities[7].

As an increasing number of universities embrace internationalization, there is an opportunity to examine and articulate the overlapping goals of GCED and internationalization efforts[8].

Universities as leaders that mobilize the surrounding community

Beyond their impact on students, universities can also support the lifelong process of GCED through their role in the local community. Universities not only train future leaders in health care, education, and business, among others; they also provide outreach and training for the local community. They can also provide leadership to convene members of the community to discuss common concerns, such as learning emerging approaches for sustainable development or peace and reconciliation. Furthermore, universities can provide support for community-building and intercultural exchange through the arts and recreation.

Melitas/Shutterstock.com

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6   i) Flanagan, C. 2013. *Teenage Citizens: The Political Theories of the Young*. Harvard University Press.
    ii) Youniss, J. and Yates, M. 1999. *Roots of Civic Identity*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
7   Stolleis, F. 2018. Civic engagement. J. Gertel and R. Hexel (eds), *Coping with Uncertainty. Youth in the MENA Region*. London, Saqi Books.
8   Horey, D., Fortune, T., Nicolacopoulos, T., Kashima, E. and Mathisen, B. 2018. *Global citizenship and higher education: a scoping review of the empirical evidence. Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp. 472–92.

3. Practices that support lifelong commitment to global citizenship

There are many different kinds of experiences that can support the goals of GCED. These will be discussed below. However, research has identified common qualities of GCED experiences that increase the likelihood that these experiences will have the desired impact of promoting the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural outcomes of GCED (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Qualities of effective GCED for emerging adults

Critical analysis of issues that connect to youth priorities

Opportunities for connection and collaboration

Qualities of effective GCED for emerging adults

Structured opportunities for meaningful impact

Accommodates economic realities and career goals

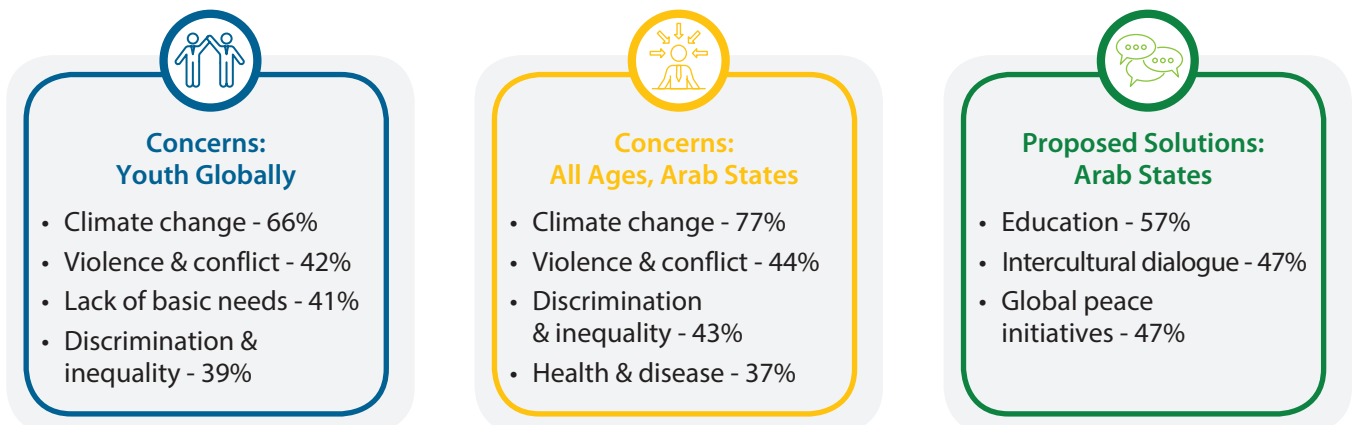## Critical analysis of issues that connect with youth priorities

A common challenge to youth civic engagement is when the opportunities for engagement focus on issues that are not relevant to their concerns.

UNESCO's *The World in 2030* public survey asked more than 15,000 global citizens about the top concerns facing the world[9]. Youth participants (those under 25) noted climate change, violence and conflict, lack of basic needs (food, water, housing), and discrimination and inequality as top concerns. These were also among the top concerns among the 377 Arab States respondents of all ages (see Figure 4).

Another recent study of 9,000 youth in the Middle East and North Africa reinforced the importance of environmental issues and attending to living conditions and additionally notes the need for targeted services for the poor, vulnerable and elderly, as well as for youth themselves[10].

These are complex issues that cannot be solved with good intentions or simple solutions. There are frequently substantial disagreements regarding the scope and nature of the problem, as well as the best solutions. Efforts to address these issues become particularly

Figure 4. The World in 2030 survey: Top concerns and proposed solutions

Concerns: Youth Globally
- Climate change - 66%
- Violence & conflict - 42%
- Lack of basic needs - 41%
- Discrimination & inequality - 39%

Concerns: All Ages, Arab States
- Climate change - 77%
- Violence & conflict - 44%
- Discrimination & inequality - 43%
- Health & disease - 37%

Proposed Solutions: Arab States
- Education - 57%
- Intercultural dialogue - 47%
- Global peace initiatives - 47%

Data Source: UNESCO. 2021. *The World in 2030: Public Survey Report*. Paris, UNESCO. Available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375950.locale=en

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9 UNESCO. 2021. *The World in 2030: Public Survey Report*. Paris, UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375950.locale=en
10 Stolleis, F. 2018. Civic engagement. J. Gertel and R. Hexel (eds), *Coping with Uncertainty. Youth in the MENA Region*. London, Saqi Books.

contentious when deciding how to resource them (e.g. in terms of money, time, effort, and opportunity costs). It is crucial that youth develop critical analysis skills to deepen their understanding of these complex and multidimensional issues. Critical inquiry that addresses the role of power, conflict and opposing views has been viewed as important for moving beyond good intentions and engaging more deeply with global issues[11]. Furthermore, critical global citizenship provides much-needed focus on postcolonial perspectives, which responds to concerns about GCED as being rooted in efforts to influence others rather than efforts to learn from them[12].

Opportunities for connection and collaboration

Long-term engagement is supported when youth feel attached to the community and can identify areas of shared interest and concern even among those they do not completely agree with[13]. This inspires engagement and action to contribute to the community, but more importantly for the purposes of the behavioural aspects of global citizenship, it builds social capital. Social capital is situated in the network of relationships we have with others we might call on to help achieve a goal or who might call on us to participate in a common cause.

Structured opportunities for meaningful and impactful action

A major predictor of multiple forms of civic action (voting, volunteering, attending meetings to address public problems) is recruitment or being asked to participate in a specific activity[14]. The most commonly reported barrier to civic engagement among 9,000 youth interviewed in the Arab region was lack of opportunity, particularly in rural and low-income communities[15]. Institutions frequently overlook youth participation and thus the opportunities for meaningful participation are limited. In UNESCO's 2021 *The World in 2030* survey, youth reported elevated concerns about 'not being listened to or part of decision-making' (29%) and 'being less and less able to express themselves freely' (38%)[16].

Accommodates economic realities and career goals

Another barrier to engagement is economic pressure. Youth who are unengaged point to the need to take care of family and survive. Opportunities that help youth develop knowledge, relationships and skills that support their career goals are more likely to be attractive. This may be through projects to address a societal need that help develop transferable skills such as communication, problem-solving, leadership, etc. Alternatively, this can be achieved by opportunities to consider how one's career sector activities support or detract from global citizenship values and to engage in projects that use career-specific skills (engineering, health care, education, etc.) to benefit the community. With either approach, one cannot assume students will make these connections themselves through participation. Reflection – or opportunities to write or talk about what is being learned or gained – has been consistently found to be a crucial component of experiential learning opportunities[17].

11 Andreotti, V. 2006. *Soft versus critical global citizenship education*. Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review, Vol. 3, pp. 40–51.

12 i) Oxley, L. and Morris, P. 2013. *Global citizenship: A typology for distinguishing its multiple conceptions*. British Journal of Educational Studies, Vol. 61, No. 3, pp. 301–25.
    ii) Torres, A. and Dorio, J. N. 2015. *The do's and don'ts of global citizenship education*. Adult Education and Development, Vol. 82. https://www.dvv-international.de/en/adult-education-and-development/editions/aed-822015-global-citizenship-education/articles/the-dos-and-donts-of-global-citizenship-education/.

13 Kirshner, B. 2015. *Youth Activism in an Era of Education Inequality*. New York University Press.

14 Abramson, P. and Claggett, W. *Recruitment and political participation*. Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 54, No. 4. https://doi.org/10.1177/106591290105400412.

15 Stolleis, F. 2018. *Civic engagement*. J. Gertel and R. Hexel (eds), *Coping with Uncertainty. Youth in the MENA Region*. London, Saqi Books.

16 UNESCO. 2021. *The World in 2030: Public Survey Report*. Paris, UNESCO. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000375950.locale=en.

17 Lakin, R. and Mahoney, A. 2006. *Empowering youth to change their world: Identifying key components of a community service program to promote positive youth development*. Journal of School Psychology, Vol. 44, pp. 513–31.

4. Promoting GCED in higher education in the Arab region

While there are common threads showing commitment to GCED values, the details of how these values are communicated and operationalized are heavily influenced by context. The section below examines how GCED values are taken up in higher education institutions in Arab States, and examples of how GCED can be operationalized in this context.

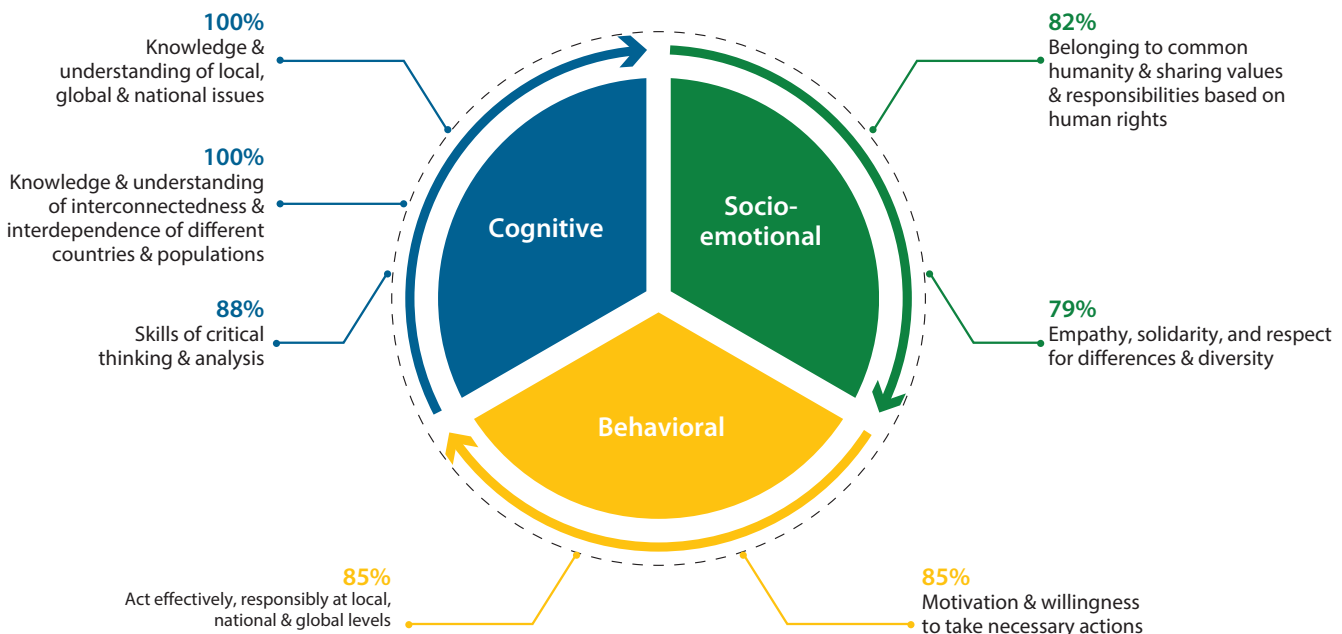## Arab higher education institutions' commitment to GCED

GCED cannot exist in higher education if the values and goals are not aligned with institutional goals and mission. Fortunately, there is ample evidence that higher education institutions in the Arab world embrace the values of GCED. A UNESCO study conducted in 2021 suggests consistent value placed on GCED capacities and expression of the responsibility of the universities to support these capacities (see Figure 5)[18].

The study found a strong commitment among all higher education institutions to support GCED priorities in the cognitive domain, embedded in research, teaching, and academic programmes. A majority of institutions expressed commitments to GCED priorities in the socio-emotional domain found in official statements of institutional values for cooperation, respect for diversity, etc., but also in specific programmes to foster these values within students. Support for principles of GCED related to the behavioural domain, found in a majority of higher education institutions, was identified in curricula and training programmes that directly meet important societal needs, as well as in the research priorities of faculty and academic centres applied directly to local and global issues.

This commitment was also reflected in the attendance of nearly 350 participants from 16 Arab States and 32 countries total at the UNESCO Consultation for Global Citizenship in Higher Education in the Arab Region on 28 October 2021. Interactive polls during the meeting indicated strong support for the notion that GCED is important for the region (98%).

Figure 5. Commitment to GCED in the mission statements of 32 higher education institutions in the Arab States

100%
Knowledge & understanding of local, global & national issues

100%
Knowledge & understanding of interconnectedness & interdependence of different countries & populations

88%
Skills of critical thinking & analysis

82%
Belonging to common humanity & sharing values & responsibilities based on human rights

79%
Empathy, solidarity, and respect for differences & diversity

85%
Act effectively, responsibly at local, national & global levels

85%
Motivation & willingness to take necessary actions

Cognitive — Socio-emotional — Behavioral

Source: Adapted from UNESCO, 2022. *Promoting Global Citizenship Education in Arab universities: A regional outlook.*

18   UNESCO. 2022. *Promoting Global Citizenship Education in Arab universities: A regional outlook.*

From theory to practice

While there is clear evidence that supporting GCED in all three domains is well aligned with the mission and vision of higher education institutions, putting this into practice is a more complicated endeavour. For example, Joudi & Chehimi's review of civic education across four universities in Lebanon found that, while civic education was present, it tended to be relegated to certain majors or communicated informally, suggesting a need for more structured and explicit opportunities[19]. Al-Omari's survey of civic identity among 500 students in Jordan's Hashemite University found high self-reported levels of political awareness and commitment to civic action but moderate levels of self-perception of leadership and interpersonal problem-solving skills, and of social justice and diversity attitudes[20].

This suggests a general sense of interest in and commitment to global citizenship but a need for greater support for critical thinking and the development of skills that will foster meaningful action. In a 2021 UNESCO survey of 336 higher education students in the Arab region, students expressed commitment to some forms of global civic action, such as consumer activism or volunteer involvement in organizations working to address global issues[21]. They additionally expressed some level of faith in their global competence in the areas of intercultural communication, global knowledge, and capacity to make a positive difference on global issues. However, participants were less likely to express commitment to expressing political voice and showed fairly low levels of critique of global injustice, reinforcing the need for greater support for critical thinking and skills to allow meaningful global civic action (see Figure 6).

The activities presented in the following pages, drawing from real examples in the Arab region, facilitate the efforts of faculty, students and administrators of higher education institutions in the region who wish to expand their institutions' efforts to support GCED.

Figure 6. Students at Arab higher educational institutions' self-reported global citizenship commitments, capacities, and values
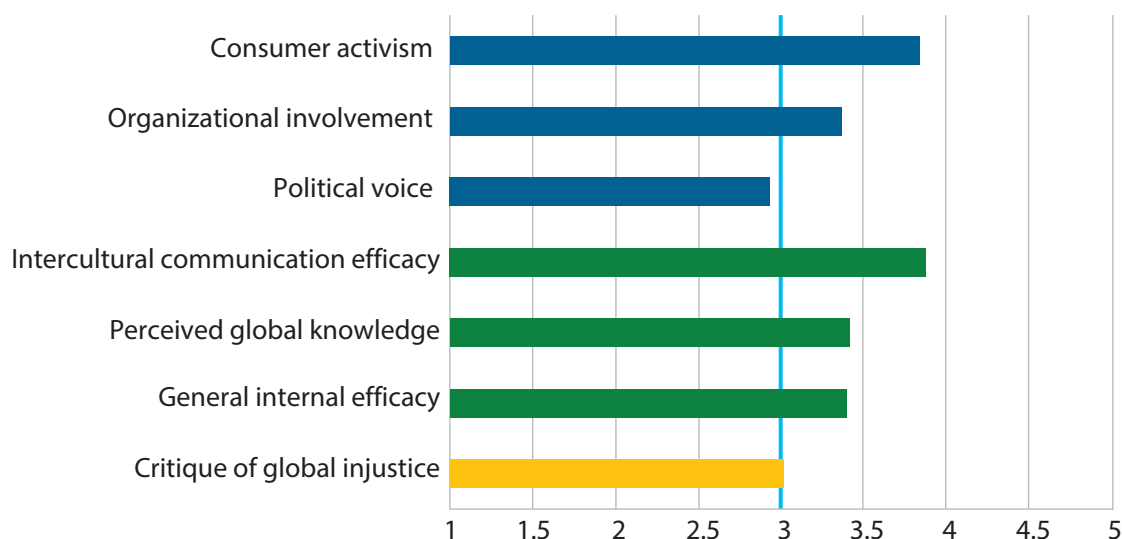
Source: UNESCO, 2021. Internal study (unpublished).

19 Joudi, N. and Chehimi, G. 2017. *The need for civic engagement and competency in higher education in Lebanon. International Journal of Innovative Research in Education*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 186–94.

20 Al-Omari, A. A. 2021. *Civic identity among undergraduate students at the Hashemite university in Jordan. International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 54–61.

21 UNESCO. 2022. *Promoting Global Citizenship Education in Arab universities: A regional outlook.*

Internationalization

Universities are uniquely positioned to facilitate exchange at the global level. A review of the state of internationalization in Arab higher education institutions defines internationalization as:

> the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society[22].

University-sponsored efforts for internationalization include the presence of international students and staff, international topics in course work, double/joint degrees with foreign higher education institutions, student and staff mobility through exchange programmes, virtual exchange opportunities, and exchange of knowledge in courses and through conferences.

Exchange programmes, where students or faculty physically visit another country and spend time studying and socializing with residents, provide intensive experiences for participants. This model is present in the region, but the infrastructure to support internationalization varies. Arabkheradmand et al.'s comparative analysis of student exchange in the Middle East found that, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates had strong structures for internationalization, bringing in students from within the region but also beyond at rates ranging from 13.6% to 19.1% of the student population[23]. However, numbers were lower in other contexts (1.5% to 4%).

Institutional cooperation through twinning structure, franchised or joint degrees also provides structural opportunities for internationalization. For example, the German Jordanian University (GJU), has prioritized internationalization and developed agreements with multiple universities in Germany, Austria, Finland and Sweden to develop compatible curricula, such that students can get credit towards their degree by taking classes in either university (franchised) or to receive a joint degree from GJU as well as a partner university[24].

Internationalization can also be found in **university-sponsored projects, networks and centres**. For example, DIRE-MED (Intercultural Dialogue, Networks and Mobility in the Mediterranean), a project funded by the European Union's Erasmus+, is a network of university partners from nine countries sponsoring international cooperation activities (see Spotlight on Practice: DIRE-MED).

Another approach to internationalization is through **virtual exchange**. When face-to-face interaction is not possible, virtual exchange can help provide opportunities for intergroup dialogue. However, virtual exchange is less intensive than face-to-face exchange and thus requires intentional structures to encourage participants to learn from each other through their interactions. One example is the Soliya programme based in Tunisia and the United States, which hosts a virtual exchange platform that fosters international dialogue to enhance cross-cultural communication and collaboration, empathy and critical awareness, and engaging with differences constructively[25].

🔍 Spotlight on practice

DIRE-MED

This Erasmus+ funded project is a network of higher education institutions from three North African and six European countries.

Activities include:

↘ development of a cooperation framework;

↘ pilot cooperation and exchange, through 'short mobilities' of students, faculty and staff;

↘ promotion of social and intercultural dialogue.

For example, the recent Week of International Dialogue brought students from Morocco, Tunisia, Italy and Spain together virtually to participate in round tables, trainings, plays and games, to facilitate discussion of COVID-19-related concerns and to foster relationships.

Source: El Harras, M. (2021) Presentation to UNESCO *Consultation for Global Citizenship in Higher Education in the Arab Region & diremedproject.eu*

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22   World Bank. 2020. *Internationalization of Tertiary Education in the Middle East and North Africa*. Washington, DC, World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35316.

23   Arabkheradmand, A., Shabani, E. and Nikhoo, S. 2014. *International student recruitment in higher education: A comparative case study of countries in the Middle East. World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Social, Management, Economics and Business Engineering*, Vol. 8, No. 10.

24   Al-Agtash, S. and Khadra, L. 2019. *Internationalization context of Arabia higher education. International Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 68–81.

25   Elbeblawi, S. 2021. Soliya. *Presentation to the UNESCO Consultation for Global Citizenship in Higher Education in the Arab Region*, 28 October 2021, Beirut, Lebanon. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liM9jJ6HGDI.

Community-engaged learning

Universities in the region often position themselves as **community service providers**, providing critical services such as medical care, education and training, and leadership in environmental studies, civic leadership and culture and human rights. This stance provides many opportunities for students to participate in **community-engaged learning**, which fosters the socio-emotional and behavioural aspects of GCED, in addition to enhancing their cognitive understanding of GCED principles through reflection on their activities.

This may take the form of **service convoys**, such as those at Alexandria University in Egypt, where faculty and students travel to other communities to provide medical aid or guidance and awareness on various topics, such as environmental issues.

Community-engaged learning opportunities are also provided through **centres for community service**. Multiple universities across the region have centres dedicated to facilitating relationships between the university and the community and leveraging university resources to support community needs. Prince Sultan University's Center for Community Service and Continuing Education, in Saudi Arabia, sponsors initiatives such as providing technology education to local citizens, programmes for the elderly, and Hike for a Cause, an environmental awareness and clean-up programme. Other universities have **citizenship and civic education course requirements**, such as, in Lebanon, Université Saint-Joseph's Certificate of Solidarity and Citizenship Commitment, as well as the general education course on Citizenship and Civic Education required at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (see Spotlight on Practice: Citizenship & Civic Education Platform).

Community-engaged learning may also be **integrated throughout the curriculum**. Students at Cadi Ayyad University in Morocco have opportunities to learn about and integrate social and cultural learning in their courses and then take ideas related to intercultural mediation and turn them into action. An example includes partnering with local arts and charitable organizations to work to support the social and emotional development of orphans or students with disabilities[26].

Spotlight on practice

Citizenship & Civic Education Platform

As part of the general education course Citizenship & Civic Education, the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik in Lebanon organises:

↘ Presentations from outside experts and groups on issues such as municipal elections, ecological action, social discrimination;

↘ Research/action projects on topics such as sustainable development and cultural and religious pluralism;

↘ Volunteer service in the community related to health, ecological issues, arts, education, etc.;

↘ Student portfolios to allow students to reflect on and present their work.

This multifaceted approach brings together the cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural elements of GCED. Furthermore, courses like this provide a space where students can learn and extend their work beyond the classroom. For example, a Youth in Community Action Group grew from student participation in the course.

Source: Abboud, M. (2021) Presentation to UNESCO *Consultation for Global Citizenship in Higher Education in the Arab Region*

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26   Moubchir, W. and Toulal, A. 2021. *Integrating social and cultural components into daily teaching practice.* Presentation to the UNESCO Consultation for Global Citizenship in Higher Education in the Arab Region, 28 October 2021, Beirut, Lebanon. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiM9jJ6HGDI.

Student social, cultural and artistic activities

What happens outside of the regular curriculum is also important for global citizenship. Clubs and associations provide opportunities for students to develop leadership and collaboration skills. The American University of Cairo in Egypt has a large number of student organizations that provide students with many options to collaborate and cooperate with fellow students.

For example, **community service clubs** provide opportunities to learn about the needs of the community (cognitive), meet and gain empathy for others (socio-emotional) and take action to address community needs (behavioural). Intercultural clubs to promote an inclusive campus climate also include all three elements when students learn about and engage with others from different cultural backgrounds and take action to make the campus more inclusive.

Youth councils can also support GCED by providing a structure for students to represent their fellow students to campus administration. Student council representatives are tasked with listening to and understanding the needs of fellow students, negotiating differences of opinion about policies and resources, and working with fellow council members and administration to take action to benefit the whole campus community. Examples include the Middle East College Student Advisory Council in Oman, the Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University Student Advisory Council in Saudi Arabia, and Holy Spirit University of Kaslik's Student Voice Initiative in Lebanon.

Other student clubs may not focus on all elements of GCED but can be supportive of facilitating elements of it, including **student journalism or publications**, which help provide students with opportunities to explore issues (cognitive) and learn about personal experiences of others (socio-emotional), as well as **arts, literature and cultural organizations**, which provide opportunities for exploration and expression of common humanity (socio-emotional), in addition to building skills of cooperation.

Spotlight on practice

Student/Youth Councils

The American University of Cairo in Egypt is home to a robust network of student organizations that support the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural elements of GCED.

They include:

↘ 11 community services clubs focused on actions to address issues such as cancer, homelessness, and refugee needs;

↘ 4 career-related clubs where students use career development for the good of society;

↘ 5 student publications where students can examine and express views on issues that matter to them;

↘ 8 political and multicultural organizations specifically focused on political awareness and intercultural cooperation;

↘ 4 student governance organizations where students can practice leadership and policy-making skills;

↘ 2 special interest groups focused on current issues (e.g. animal rights, environmental protection);

↘ 2 faith-based intercultural societies.

For more information: see aucegypt.edu/students/organizations

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GCED elective courses

Another approach to supporting GCED in higher education is through the establishment of elective courses, open to all majors, with the explicit goal of exploring and promoting global citizenship.

Sultan Qaboos University in Oman has established a course for students to come together across majors to learn about and reflect on what global citizenship means to them, engage in discussions with others about global issues, and to study leaders who engage in action. AlMaamari's research on the impact of this course on the 2018/2019 cohort found that students were able to expand their cognitive understanding of the meaning of global citizenship, specifically developing a more complex and nuanced understanding of how nations, NGOs and civil society work to support human rights and cooperation[27]. Importantly for this setting, discussing global citizenship in the context of Islam also helped students realize that global citizenship is not solely an external concept. However, while participants were inspired by learning about action to think about their own role going forward, AlMaamari notes that their commitments were more aligned with a 'cosmopolitan' or 'soft' form of global citizenship than an 'advocacy' orientation that shows a deeper engagement with the dynamics of power and conflict one must navigate to address these issues.

This light development of the behavioural domain can be boosted by organizing **experiential learning activities in addition to elective courses**.

Elective courses are also particularly important in teachers colleges as **pre-service training for future teachers**. Indeed, integrating GCED in pre-service training is a key milestone to prepare teachers who will be able to effectively promote GCED at all education levels in their everyday teaching.

🔍 Spotlight on practice

GCED Elective Courses

Sultan Qaboos University in Oman offers a 13-week elective course to introduce students to the following topics:

↘ The concept of global citizenship and attributes of a global citizen;

↘ Education for peace, tolerance and acceptance;

↘ The relationship between global citizenship, human rights and justice;

↘ Global citizenship from the Islamic perspective;

↘ Civil society and social solidarity;

↘ The role of international organizations in promoting global citizenship;

↘ The role of Oman in enhancing global citizenship and peace.

↘ Students participate in class inquiry, discussion outside of class, and development of plans for action.

Source: AlMaamari, S. (2020) & Alabri (2021) Presentation to *UNESCO Consultation for Global Citizenship in Higher Education in the Arab Region*

Melitas/Shutterstock.com

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[27] AlMaamari, S. 2020. *Educating for 'glocal' perspectives at Sultan Qaboos University: Studying students' perceptions after studying a global citizenship education course. Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 69–84.

University centres for sustainability, advocacy and empowerment

Higher education institutions in the Arab region also provide opportunities to engage students in GCED through centres and programmes that focus on global issues. These centres bring faculty expertise and research leadership, but they also organize conferences, challenges or events that bring together students and faculty to learn about, discuss and sometimes act to address their focus issues. For example, the Queen Rania Al-Abdullah Center for Environmental Science & Technology in the Jordan University of Science and Technology is an academic unit that conducts research and provides consultation for the community. They also organize activities for students to engage in environmental education and improvement initiatives. The Beirut Arab University in Lebanon's Morale Project focuses on building capacity in higher education institutions to train NGO leaders, with a focus on inclusion of refugees.

When higher education institutions self-assess their capacity for supporting GCED, there are many activities spread across centres and individual units that apply but may not be labelled 'global citizenship education'. Institutions throughout Tunisia have created partnerships through international initiatives that are designed to strengthen **connections between research and academics and civil society**. For example, the Pasteur Institute of Tunis at the University of Tunis El Manar has developed several programmes in partnership with the multinational inSPIRES project to conduct scientific research in partnership with civil society organizations for the public good (see Spotlight on Practice: inSPIRES). The approach of pursuing research in collaboration with civil society organizations in service of direct public needs, as part of an international network, encourages faculty and students in the sciences to view their work through GCED principles.

Other examples include the Université de Jendouba's participation in the Climate Change in Agriculture Project (CLICHA) to build capacity and awareness for climate change adaptation and mitigation in agriculture, and the University of Sfax's participation in the Dialogue about Radicalisation and Equality Project (DARE), in consortium with an international group of higher education institutions, civil society groups and practitioners, to identify factors of violent extremism among youth and develop strategies to prevent or intervene with youth who have been radicalized.

Spotlight on practice

inSPIRES

The Pasteur Institute in Tunis and the University of Tunis El Manar use a 'science shop' methodology to address public needs through:

↘ Research driven by public needs;

↘ Research–practice partnerships;

↘ A participatory process of sharing scientific knowledge with the public.

Examples include:

↘ DiaTensioZag Project: A partnership to identify the sources of high rates of diabetes in the Zaghouan region paired with awareness-raising campaigns for health workers in the region.

↘ ICHARA: A collaboration to support the education of children with deafness that conducted hearing and language assessments of children in northern Tunisia and paired them with referrals for hearing support.

↘ ATP+: A collaboration to improve care for people living with HIV by identifying factors contributing to low adherence to treatment and by educating care providers.

For more information: http://www.utm.rnu.tn/utm/fr/etablissements--institut-pasteur-de-tunis &
https://inspiresproject.com/isginspiring/a-speechless-collaboration-deafness-in-tunisia

Media and Information Literacy

As the internet and social media have gained in popularity, Media and Information Literacy (MIL) has become a crucial element of GCED. The internet and social media serve not only as mechanisms for receiving information about local, national and global issues (both official and unofficial) but also for exchanging views and organizing efforts to address societal needs at every level. The ability to find information on any topic, connect with others easily across geographic distance and time, and to easily produce and share media can be valuable for the development of all three domains of global citizenship. However, these capacities also facilitate practices harmful to the core values of global citizenship, such as spreading disinformation and fuelling discrimination and racism[28]. Internet access and usage has expanded dramatically over the past decade, with an estimated median of 44.55% of the population across the Arab region reporting usage in 2015, growing to 71.76% in 2019[29].

However, social and geographical disparities still exist. As internet usage grows, so has support for MIL. A survey of 2,554 youth in high school and higher education in Jordan, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates found that 87% of those surveyed use social media, with 52% getting news through social media and 41% using social media to express opinions[30]. The same survey, however, suggested a need for MIL, with participants showing a high degree of trust in online news that is not compatible with what is known about the spread of misinformation. Furthermore, while youth in this study were enthusiastic consumers of social media, relatively few took advantage of opportunities for expression and production of media.

In response to the need for greater attention to media literacy education, the Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue University Network (MILID) was founded in Morocco by UNESCO, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and eight founding universities from different countries (including Egypt and Morocco) to support research, education and citizen participation in media literacy initiatives[31]. Resources from this initiative are available through the UNESCO/UNAOC joint clearing house for Media and Information Literacy[32]. Higher education institutions play a critical role in supporting media literacy, both through direct instruction to students attending the institutions, but also through research, curriculum development and training of educators and community members. The Media & Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut (MDLAB), also helps expanding capacities of higher education institutions in the region to promote Media and Information Literacy (see Spotlight on Practice: Media and Information Literacy).

Spotlight on practice

Media and Information Literacy

The Media & Digital Literacy Academy of Beirut (MDLab) at the Lebanese American University (LAU), Lebanon, brings together faculty from higher education institutions and schools across the Arab world to develop media literacy education curriculum to be taught in their local contexts. The curriculum focuses on skills such as:

↘ Digital research and curation skills;
↘ Social network analysis;
↘ News production skills to enhance understanding of how messages are created and manipulated as well as capacity for expression;
↘ Analysis of media representation of gender, ethnicity and sexuality.

In addition to directly training faculty to create curriculum that can be used in their local context, MDLab makes materials available to the public on its website.

For more information: see Melki, J., & Maaliki, L. (2016). *Helping Arab Digital and Media Literacy Blossom. Opportunities for Media and Information Literacy in the Middle East and North Africa,* 41. & mdlab.lau.edu.lb

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[28] UNESCO. 2021. *Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue University Network.* https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/milidnetwork/responsetocovid19.

[29] The World Bank. 2021. *Individuals using the Internet (% of population)-Middle East & North Africa.* https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS.

[30] Melki, J. 2015. *Guiding digital and media literacy development in Arab curricula through understanding media uses of Arab youth. Journal of Media Literacy Education*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 14–29.

[31] See https://en.unesco.org/themes/media-and-information-literacy/milidnetwork/responsetocovid19

[32] See https://milunesco.unaoc.org/

Promoting Global Citizenship Education in Arab universities

Proposals for action

Higher education can play an important role in promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCED). It provides incentive, opportunity and support for young adults to learn about global issues, engage across diverse cultures, and practice the skills of GCED at a time of intensive personal, social, political and career exploration. Furthermore, universities can encourage students to take these skills and values into their adult lives to share with others and continue the lifelong process.

Arab universities are very committed to GCED. However, the way GCED in concretely implemented needs improvement. While greater attention is paid to the *cognitive* domain of learning, the *socio-emotional* and *behavioral* domains of learning – which best lead to effective transformative engagement – tend to be left behind.

Based on existing practices, this document provides universities, academia and students with concrete proposals on how to better mainstream GCED and its values, through higher education, in the Arab region.

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