UN International Year of
GLOBAL understanding
An Initiative of
The International Geographical Union (IGU)
Global thinking and global action demand global understanding. This International Geographical Union (IGU) initiative aims to bridge the gap in awareness between local acts and global effects through research, education, and information.

In the face of global change, we must think globally.

Local actions alter global processes.

Global understanding clarifies the connections between the local and the global.

The IGU seeks support to have the UN General Assembly proclaim 2016 the International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU). We invite you to support this vital initiative.
WHAT IS THE IYGU?

Connects local actions and global challenges.

Focuses on global sustainability of local action.

Emphasizes social and cultural elements in the transformation of nature.

The International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU) addresses the ways in which we inhabit an increasingly globalized world. How do we transform nature? How do we build new social and political relationships for the emerging global reality? Societies and cultures determine the ways we live with and shape nature. They influence how we perceive the global consequences of our everyday actions. We need to understand what our daily actions mean for the world as a whole in order to overcome global challenges.

WHY DID THE IYGU ARISE?

To integrate natural and social sciences.

To provide scientific and public support for UN and UNESCO priorities.

To translate the results of previous UN Years for sustainability into practice.

The IYGU flows from agendas for global sustainability research established by the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the International Social Science Council (ISSC); it contributes to the Future Earth program in manifold ways and builds on the outcomes of previous UN International Years.

By promoting a new level of focused research collaboration, the IYGU reinforces existing UN priorities. Global understanding supports and extends initiatives such as the UN Millennium Development Goals, as well as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005 – 2014.
Everyday actions matter for global climate change.

Everyday decisions depend on lifestyles.

A global view reduces the risk of regional conflicts.

Our world faces social, cultural, and economic change, as well as a changing climate. Human actions play a key role in creating such world-wide challenges. However, human actions also provide solutions. If individuals know what their day-to-day routines mean for the planet, they can take appropriate action. Global understanding helps overcome the knowledge-action gap and supports policy decisions that promote sustainability.
Local choices shape global change.

Individuals’ decisions affect global challenges.

Change should emerge from the bottom.

Promoting joyful ways of living sustainably.

Global challenges require swift, yet considered, goal setting and political action. We cannot afford to wait for the ideal decision-making body or a global jurisdiction – it may never happen. Instead, change should come from the bottom.

Individuals make choices, vote, and drive policies at the local, regional, and national levels. Widespread global understanding embeds awareness of the global consequences of individual choices. It helps shape sustainable and joyful future ways of living.
These six brochures – each with a triple focus – will address everyday behavior in the light of the UN Millennium Development Goals, the connections between the global and the local, and actions to improve global sustainability.

Prior to the IYGU, a first set of brochures will summarize relevant current knowledge. A second set, produced after the IYGU, will evaluate, collect, and promote the results in research, teaching, and information.
Connecting science and everyday life.

Global understanding is based on joint social and natural science research.

Research focuses on the logic behind everyday activities.

Global understanding calls for the reconciliation of the global and the local, of science and everyday lives. The IYGU focuses on essential daily activities such as eating, drinking, housing, working, travelling, and communicating.

Why do we make the choices that we do? Which societies – rich and poor – make more globally sustainable choices? Natural and social scientists will jointly provide answers.
Global change may be climatic, social, cultural, and economic.

Climate change is an example of the links between global and local effects.

Societies need global understanding to manage change sustainably.

Global sustainability cannot come about without local sustainability. Actions that may seem disconnected in space and time are often fundamentally linked. Many people know about the need for sustainability, but few make the corresponding decisions.

Global understanding empowers people to make such connections.

The IYGU’s main goal is to promote global understanding so that actions and decisions yield sustainable outcomes, every day, all over the world.

Global understanding is a bridge builder ...

... changing from knowing about sustainability to living sustainably.
The IYGU will make global processes and challenges understandable.

The IYGU will encompass research, teaching, and information.

The IYGU will highlight the power of everyday local choices for global change.

The IYGU will remind global citizens of their global responsibilities.

The IYGU aims to yield deep, but actionable, insights into the ways all peoples can live together more sustainably. The focus will be on developing strategies for targeted local projects with a global reach. There are three elements to this: research, education, and information. Research will bring scientists together to understand the global impacts of everyday local activities related to culture, society, economy, and nature. The IYGU will empower bottom-up movements for sustainable everyday politics. Classrooms throughout the world will use the research results at all educational levels. The IYGU will provide information and promote knowledge sharing to increase public awareness by means of publications, computer games, TV programs, etc.

Ultimately, the IYGU will encourage everyone to make daily decisions in the light of global challenges.
The IYGU’s program will be guided by world-leading social and natural scientists, as well as philosophy and humanities scholars from the Global North as well as from the Global South.

**Steering Committee**
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- Anantha Duraiappah (Malaysia); Lord Anthony Giddens (UK);
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- Georg Gartner (Austria); Yukio Himiyama (Japan); Ali Akmal Zadeh (Russia); Peter Jackson (UK);
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**Outreach Panel**
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- Margaret Robertson (Australia); Eric Tsang Po Keung (Hong Kong, P.R. China)

**International Relations & Fundraising**
- Sybbie De Jongh (Brazil); Ingeolure Schreinem (Brazil)
IYGU CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS

Contributions to United Nations
The IYGU addresses key UN Charter Constitution issues. It aims to strengthen international co-operation by preparing new strategies to face global challenges.

Contributions to UNESCO
Better global understanding supports economic, social, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. The IYGU’s new level of goal-driven scientific cooperation will produce advanced educational modules. The IYGU will promote practical routes towards a global understanding of the cultural and social implications of new geographical living conditions and new global realities.

Implementations of UN Initiatives
The framework of the IYGU contributes to the ICSU-ISSC Future Earth program and seeks to support the implementation of the Rio+20 Declaration. To achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals, we must ensure that we share the responsibility for our living conditions globally. The IYGU will complement the outcomes of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) 2005 – 2014 with a focus on practical ways of introducing its key results into everyday practices. The IYGU will provide sustainability education and public information, establishing processes for embedding the ESD’s principal results in future generations’ routines.

Implementations of the findings UN-International Years
IYGU will draw on and promote the findings of relevant International Years such as
- IY of Mountains (2002)
- IY of Freshwater (2003)
- IY of Planet Earth (2008)
- IY of Biodiversity (2010)

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS OF IYGU

ICSU
International Council for Science

CIPSH
Conseil International de la Philosophie et des Sciences Humaines

IHDP
International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change

ISSC
International Social Science Council

World Map of IGU Members Countries

Member
Observer
Other