

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: TOPICS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

With the transformation of the geographical conditions of everyday life in the course of globalization, long-established worldviews are being confronted on a broad front.

The observable responses worldwide tend to invoke backward “solution” strategies rather than future-oriented approaches.

Global understanding and citizenship



The understanding of one’s own life in a global context is a fundamental prerequisite, a new *conditio humana*, to successfully meet the challenges of new forms and intensities of globalization.

It is widely acknowledged today that humanity’s grand challenges are global in scale. However, the cause of these challenges is the cumulative effect of seemingly small, mundane decisions that individuals make every day—in households, small and large businesses, and politics, etc. Since people’s every-day activities are now intricately embedded in global processes, both socio-cultural and biophysical, understanding the ways in which the local is bound to the global is a prerequisite for effective sustainability policies.

The program of the International Year of Global Understanding (IYGU)—jointly declared by the international councils of the natural sciences (ICSU), the social sciences (ISSC), and the humanities (CIPSH) on the basis of a UNESCO resolution. The IYGU program aims to bridge the gap in awareness between local actions and global effects and will develop a blueprint for a new geographical view of a radically changing world.

General Framework

Globalization has brought far-flung places and people into ever-closer contact. New kinds of supra-national communities are emerging at an accelerating pace. At the same time, these trends do not efface the local. On the contrary, globalization is also associated with a marked re-affirmation of cities and regions as distinct forums of human action. The IYGU's overarching objective is to develop a blueprint for a new geographical view of the world that is fully open to these realities and framed as part of a transdisciplinary approach. With this approach IYGU seeks to work creatively with their inner tensions and potentialities within the broader horizons of peace, democracy, environmental sustainability, and conviviality in the late-modern world.

The principal method to achieve these goals is to work toward a new map of the world. In the sense of an imaginative cartography, this will literally “put on the map” the many forms of interdependence and conflict in the new world order. In the sense of an intellectual program of research and discussion, this will lay the conceptual foundations for an understanding of the new geography of globalization and its political implications. A practice-centered perspective on the current globalized geographical living conditions guides this endeavor.



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The main fields of action are research, education, and information. All three components will be treated in the perspective of the three focal interfaces:

Local || Global
Local actions' global impact

Socio-cultural || Natural
*Culturally adapted, ecologically and
socially sustainable ways of living*

Everyday || Science
*Sustainable action patterns and
technologies for local use*

The IYGU enhances the opportunities for both citizens and decision-makers to benefit from and relate to new research findings and corresponding recommendations. The IYGU demonstrates to a wide range of world citizens—as global citizens with global responsibilities—that most everyday activities share a two-fold embeddedness: in natural contexts on the one hand and in socio-cultural ones on the other; and the link between the local and the global scale is embodied in both. In addition, the IYGU advances science and technology for integrated sustainable development and contributes to the achievement of the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Together with its partners, the IYGU supports global sustainable and equitable development by stressing the everyday dimension of global challenges and developing cross-disciplinary tools and frameworks for sustainability research—starting from understanding basic practices that are key to sustaining human life. Therefore, the IYGU program puts forward three bridge-building processes: bridging (a) the local and the global (global understanding), (b) the multiplicity of socio-cultural worlds and the natural world (integrative research), and (c) everyday life and science (transdisciplinarity).

Bridging the Local and the Global

Building upon a vibrant network of scientists, artists, and private enterprises, the IYGU develops and disseminates new geographical imaginations by fostering a profound understanding of the global condition of everyday life. Through innovative forms of knowledge creation, presentation, and sharing, including interactive maps on “natural resource stories” of everyday artifacts, the IYGU puts forward non-parochial geographical visions. In addition, the project includes anthropological investigations of non-Western and non-scientific forms of knowledge, thus strengthening the cultural dimension of sustainability policies and sustainability research. By promoting and popularizing exemplary local projects and best practices through its well-established communication networks, the IYGU sparks public debate and promotes locally adapted sustainability projects.

In order to further promote cross-disciplinary scientific work, new integrative forms of encounters and cooperation between natural and social scientists as well as scholars from the humanities have been, and continue to be, developed and implemented. In an age of increasingly specialized research, the IYGU program aims at strengthening translational practices between different scientific cultures, for instance, by developing training workshops for young and early-career researchers, or by popularizing best practices of cross-disciplinary research. Furthermore, the IYGU puts forward integrative perspectives on sustainability issues by utilizing artistic or literary forms of knowledge production and dissemination.

Everyday Life and Science: Transdisciplinarity

To improve cooperation between science and policy, we need to deepen our knowledge of sociocultural contexts, improve social and cultural acceptance of scientific knowledge, and develop culturally differentiated paths to global sustainability on the basis of comprehensive bottom-up action. This shall help overcome the discrepancy between people's knowledge about global environmental issues, such as climate change, and the lack of action upon it.

Overall, the project aims to complement predominantly natural scientific sustainability research with social and human scientific perspectives (namely, practice- and lifeworld-centered perspectives), thus seeking to overcome traditional disciplinary divides.

Thus, the IYGU program aims to advance research concerning the change of everyday practices, for example, consumption patterns, that, cumulatively, would yield great sustainability benefits not only in an environmental sense, but also concerning social justice and economic viability.

The idea of global understanding rests on the premise that social and cultural factors shape the way we understand ourselves in relation to our non-human environment and hence how we appropriate and transform this environment. The notion of global understanding focuses on the opportunities and challenges that we are faced with in an increasingly globalized world.

In doing so, the IYGU program specifically addresses the consequences current environment-transforming practices have for global sustainability and how these practices might be altered to yield the best possible outcome from a sustainability perspective. In the field of education, the IYGU program seeks to equip students with the competencies to identify key challenges, comprehensively assess their context, and develop solutions in accordance with the overarching goal of global sustainability.

This practice-centered perspective highlights the two-fold embeddedness of all human activities in biophysical and socio-cultural processes at the global and local levels. Overall, teaching in this perspective seeks to integrate the knowledge of the social and natural sciences and the humanities to gain an understanding of the global impacts and pathways of transformation of everyday local activities (see Figure 1).

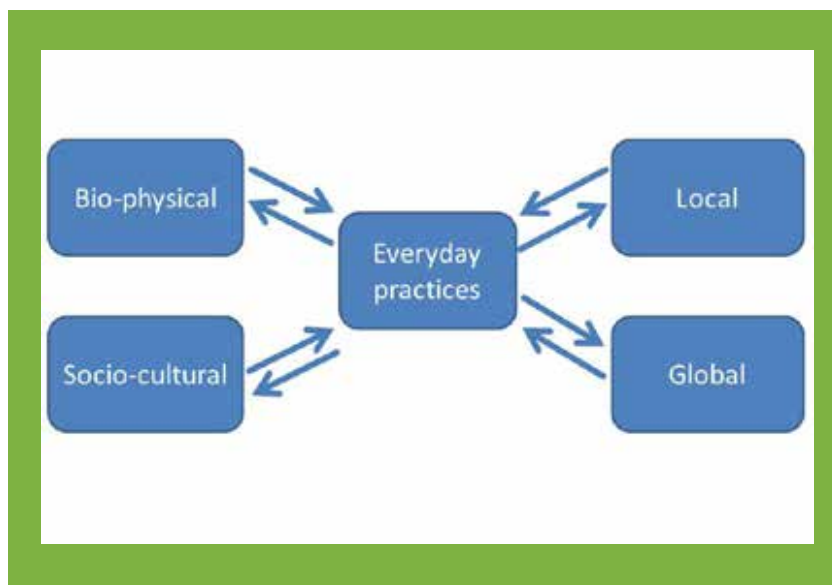


Figure 1. Core dimensions of everyday practices

Besides information, the core elements of the IYGU program are transdisciplinary education and research. A combination of theoretical training, applied research, and practical experiences shall help develop students' critical and creative thinking as well as reflective skills and problem-solving abilities.