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Education
Sector

# Global Citizenship Education:

# Taking it local

Education 2030

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**Education Sector**

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Education 2030

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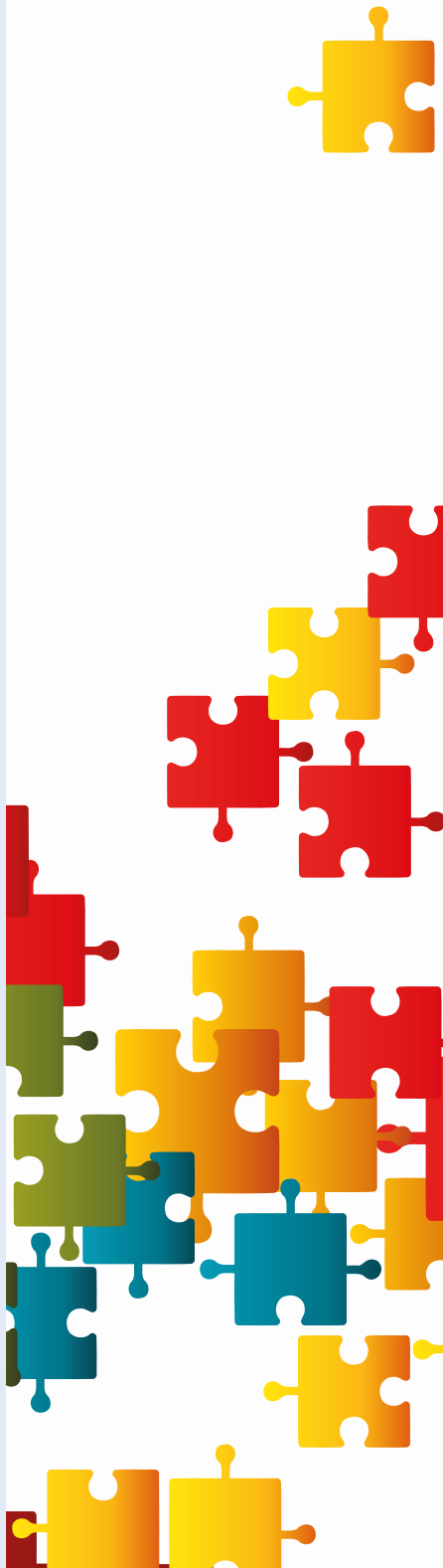

# 1. Introduction

- For UNESCO, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is an educational approach that nurtures respect and solidarity in learners in order to build a sense of belonging to a common humanity and help them become responsible and active global citizens in building inclusive and peaceful societies. GCED, combined with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), converge in Target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- Since its emergence in the global discourse on education (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".

- All the while, UNESCO has observed that many countries and societies have national/local/traditional concepts that promote ideas that echo those at the core of GCED (for example, *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* in France, *Hongik-Ingan* in Korea, *Ubuntu* in Southern Africa). These local concepts resonate with the three notions that distinguish GCED from other educational approaches: (i) "respect for diversity", (ii) "solidarity", and (iii) a "shared sense of humanity".

**Three core notions of GCED**

- These concepts are rooted in local cosmogonies, founding stories, and national histories, and they can often be found in constitutions, national anthems, and government policy documents, as well as in the writings of historical figures ("founding fathers and mothers").

- Unfortunately, these concepts are sometimes insufficiently known and celebrated beyond their regions of origin. They are also sometimes insufficiently valued as meaningful starting points to teach and learn about GCED in ways that are locally relevant. For these two reasons, UNESCO has produced this document.

- The purpose of this publication is to identify examples of concepts that convey similar notions to those found in GCED and can serve as effective starting points for teaching it.

- On this basis, we hope to promote the idea that GCED is not a new concept but a shared aspiration among all peoples to live together in peace, both within and beyond their own borders.

**Target 4.7**

Target 4.7 indicates that by 2030 all learners will "acquire 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."

# 2. A tour of the world through local concepts

## La Charte du Manden (in Mali): "The Charter of Manden"

▶ *Mali, West Africa: Islamic Koranic School*
robertonencini/Shutterstock.com

***Explanation*** - Dating from the 12-13th centuries and established under the rule of Emperor Sundiata Keita of the Mandingo Empire, the Charter of Manden is **one of the oldest recorded references to fundamental rights**, including the concepts of respect for human life, the right to life, the principles of equality and non-discrimination, women's rights, individual freedom, justice, equity and solidarity. Passed down through oral tradition, there are two versions of the Charter, which advocates for social peace in diversity, the inviolability of the human being, along with education, the integrity of the motherland, food security, and freedom of expression and trade. Born from a context of diversity of ethnicity and faith, the Charter of Manden provides guidance on how to respectfully and peacefully interact with other cultures and societies, thereby illustrating notions that are key to GCED, namely *respect for diversity* and *solidarity*.

***Contemporary relevance to education*** - The Charter of Manden is highly respected within Mali, promoting a message of respect, love, peace and fraternity which has been cherished through the ages. It is widely seen to form the foundations of the values at the heart of Malian society. In 2011, the Malian government decreed the Charter to be part of the national cultural heritage of Mali. Also known as the "Kouroukan Fouga Charter", it is now included in the law syllabi of West African universities.

## Ubuntu (in South Africa): "I am because we are – we are because I am"

***Explanation*** - *Ubuntu* is a humanist concept that means "**I am because we are, we are because I am**", speaking to how a person is a person through his/her relation to and respect for others. This refers to an ethos for living together on the basis of care and respect, which is developed through the conviction that a person's actions have impact on others and vice versa, and points to the notion of mutual responsibility. The idea of *shared humanity* is the strongest GCED notion within *Ubuntu*, where South Africans learn from childhood about the oneness of humanity based on biological oneness, spiritual oneness, and the recognition of a common destiny. In addition, the concept

evokes *respect for cultural diversity*, peace and non-violence, as well as human rights, through focusing on the interconnectedness and dignity of all women and men.

***Contemporary relevance to education*** **-** The values of *Ubuntu* were incorporated into South Africa's 1993 interim Constitution and its 2011 White Paper on Foreign Policy, "Building a Better World". It is also referred to in the Department of Basic Education's 2010 *Guide for Teachers: Building a Culture of Responsibility and Humanity in our Schools*.

▶ *Children perform at the "South African Welcoming Ceremony" for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development at Ubuntu Village (Johannesburg, South Africa).*

© UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

## Shura (in Oman): "Consultation"

▶ *Nizwa, Oman: an accountant registers sales in a cash book at the goat market surrounded by clients in traditional dress.*

Heide Pinkall/Shutterstock.com

***Explanation*** – *Shura* is a form of public consultation and decision-making inspired from Islamic practices. It refers to both a process and an institutional structure, namely the 'Majlis Al Shura' (Consultative Council) that is the lower house of parliament. It places value on taking a diversity of views into account, thereby promoting the notion of the **people's participation in the governance of public affairs**. There is a long history of religious pluralism and tolerance which can be seen clearly in the capital, with Muscat having two Hindu temples, one over 100 years old, and significant practising communities of Sikhs and Christians. This cultural diversity and tolerance of pluralism illustrate the embodiment of *Shura* in daily life, as a process of negotiating differences, which echoes the core GCED notion of *respect for diversity*.

***Contemporary relevance to education*** - The concept originates from the Quran. *Shura* is also referred to in the Preamble of the Constitution (1996, and its 2011 amendments). In civic education, *Shura* is expressed as Oman's political model. As detailed in Oman's Ministry of Education *Philosophy of Education Guide*, and in the 12th grade curriculum of civic education, *Shura* is reflected in the promotion of the broad goals of 'international peace and understanding', and 'the world and its contemporary challenges'.

## Hurriya, Karama, Aadala, Nithaam (in Tunisia): "Freedom, Dignity, Justice, Order"

▶ *Tunisian coat of arms*
Asma Samoh/Shutterstock.com

***Explanation*** - *Hurriya, Karama, Aadala, Nithaam* may be translated as: 'Freedom, Dignity, Justice, Order'. The inter-related concepts of *hurriya* and *karama* correlate to **values of human rights and fundamental freedoms, specifically the topics of equality and inclusion and justice** - echoing the core GCED notions of *respect for diversity* and *solidarity*. Peace and non-violence - specifically with a focus on preventing violent extremism - is reflected in the concept of *Nithaam* ('order') or the rule of law, and is underpinned by a commitment to tolerance in contexts of diversity. Tunisia's 2014 Constitution saw the institutionalization of these concepts, which are elaborated in articles covering freedom of religion, gender equality, as well as combating religious extremism and promoting tolerance.

***Contemporary relevance to education*** – There is reference to a commitment to human rights, and human values, with the sources of regional civilization history and Islam, as well as global values expressed in the principles of universal human rights and global human civilization in the Preamble of the 2014 Constitution. The Preamble also elaborates a commitment to 'humankind' and cooperation with all of 'the peoples of the world'.

The Tunisian education system promotes critical thinking through the formal curriculum, including through humanities subjects, such as literature and philosophy, which provide space for learners to develop critical thinking. The system also supports formal embedding of a debate programme in schools that explicitly endorses democracy as a political system and promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, inspired by the concepts of 'freedom, dignity, justice and order.' In this spirit, Tunisia has established citizenship and human rights' clubs, which emphasize participation and a democratic culture.

## Gross National Happiness (in Bhutan)

***Explanation*** - The concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH), pioneered by Bhutan, permeates every aspect of its national policy, underscoring **the prime importance of societal good over economic growth**. Its foundation is drawn largely from the Buddhist faith, and the concept follows the tenets of Buddhism, which include the idea that "all beings pursue happiness." Bhutan's philosophy of GNH was initially constructed to cover four integrated pillars of (a) sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development; (b) environmental conservation; (c) preservation and promotion of culture; and (d) good governance. More recently, it has been expanded into nine domains beyond the original pillars, including: (1) psychological wellbeing; (2) health; (3) time use; (4) education; (5) cultural diversity and resilience; (6) good governance, (7) community vitality; (8) ecological diversity, and (9) living standard - relating most strongly to the core GCED notions of *solidarity* and *shared humanity*.

***Contemporary relevance to education*** - In 2008, it was decided to embed GNH principles in the education system. This was implemented in 2010, with training provided to head teachers, followed by a rollout to individual schools. GNH principles are embedded in the educational system and curricula at all levels, with a focus on issues such as critical and creative thinking; holistic learning concerning the world; and competencies to deal with the modern world.

▶ *Thimphu, Bhutan: Gross National Happiness Commission.*
Vladimir Melnik/Shutterstock.com

## Hongik-Ingan (in the Republic of Korea): "To broadly benefit all humanity"

▶ *Ganggangsullae - a Korean dance*
KPG Ivary/Shutterstock.com

***Explanation*** - The concept of *Hongik-Ingan* is best explained as the guiding principle and ethical foundation of a Korean vision of an ideal existence. The concept emerged during the period of the oldest known dynasty on the Korean Peninsula, the Gojoseon dynasty (2333 BC–108 BC). Dangun Wanggeom, the founding monarch of Gojoseon, put forth the idea which directly translates as "**to broadly benefit all humanity**." *Hongik-Ingan* suggests that the people of Korea adopt a spiritual outlook toward life and aspire to the lofty goal of building a humane society in its highest embodiment of good. It is based on a communal spirit that underscores the principle of well-being and love for all, and is rooted in a vision of solidarity and volunteerism for the common good. Although the concept came about as a founding principle of the first Korean dynasty, it is seen to embrace all humanity, relating to the core GCED notions of *solidarity* and *shared humanity*.

***Contemporary relevance to education*** - The concept of *Hongik-Ingan* can be found embedded in the National Education Act, which states that "the objectives of education, under the ideals of *Hongik-Ingan*, the founding philosophy of Korea, are to help all people perfect their character, develop a self-sustaining ability to attain independent lives, become responsible citizens, participate in the makings of a democratic state, and promote the prosperity of all humankind."

## Multiculturalism/Interculturalism (in Canada)

▶ *Toronto, Canada: families during the annual Santa Claus Parade*
ValeStock/Shutterstock.com

***Explanation*** - Multiculturalism is a national policy in Canada that seeks to ensure that "**all citizens keep their identities, take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging**". Central to multiculturalism is the idea that Canadians, regardless of race, ethnicity, language or religion, are all equal. In the province of Quebec, "interculturalism" is most commonly preferred to the notion of "multiculturalism"– though not legislated in official policy – emphasising the shared responsibility of ensuring peaceful co-existence. Both notions translate to a commitment to pluralism and *respect for diversity*. As stated in the Canadian Constitution, Section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, "Multiculturalism" is a

part of Canada's heritage. The 1988 Multiculturalism Act (MA) recognizes multiculturalism as a fundamental aspect of Canada (Article 3). All ten of Canada's provinces and three territories have some form of policy related to multiculturalism or human rights.

***Contemporary relevance to education*** - The 1988 Multiculturalism Act creates an obligation for the government to promote interactions between cultural communities (MA, Article 3). An important aspect of this work is carried out through the education system and the teaching of other worldviews, and the cultivating of a sensitivity to the diversity of students' cultures and experiences (for instance, The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol – The common Curriculum Framework Grades 10-12 Mathematics). Another example can be found in the province of British Columbia, where, in 2008, the Ministry of Education recognized multiculturalism in its policy framework for schools.

## Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité (in France): "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"

***Explanation*** – "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*", which translates as "**Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**", is the national motto of France. All three concepts are interrelated and are central to the French notion of "valeurs républicaines" (Republican values). The phrase *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* has been linked to François Fénelon at the end of the 17th century, as well as to the French Revolution, when it was first expressed by Maximilien Robespierre in a speech on 5 December 1790. Taken together, these concepts echo the GCED notions of *solidarity*, *respect for diversity* – regardless of class, ethnicity, religious and non-religious beliefs - on the basis of which can be built a *shared sense of humanity*.

▶ *University of Paris, Faculty of Law building*
Spiroview Inc/Shutterstock.com

***Contemporary relevance to education*** - As the national motto, this phrase was written into the 1946 and 1958 Constitutions and is a part of the French ethos. Inscribed on school buildings, coins and even tax forms, *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* is part of French identity and commitment to create unity within and respect for differences. These principles have prompted the early provision (1881) in France of free pre-primary education as a means to ensure equal opportunities for all. More recently, France instated a new moral and civic education curriculum (Bulletin official special n°6 du 25 June 2015), which explicitly states that *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* are core republican values and, as such, should be promoted through education.

## Buen Vivir (in the Plurinational State of Bolivia): "Living well"

***Explanation*** – The concept of *Buen Vivir*, or "**Living well**," centres on the notions of solidarity, generosity, reciprocity and complementarity, related to the goal of social justice and community, and referring to a set of rights related to health, education, freedom, participation, and the Rights of Nature or "*Pachamama*". A holistic approach, the concept speaks to the diversity of elements that condition human thought and action, contributing to the search for 'good living,' such as knowledge, and codes of ethical and spiritual conduct in relation to our surroundings. The concept refers also to caring for the environment, thus broadening the notion of social justice and well-being from the individual to include the community. Rooted in an Andean concept and found in the

2009 Constitution, *Buen Vivir* may be interpreted as a set of principles, such as dignity, social equity, reciprocity and social justice, that are related to human rights. *Buen Vivir* emphasizes a broader understanding of progress and development, with special attention to nature. In these ways, this concept echoes the core GCED notions of *solidarity* and a *shared sense of humanity*.

***Contemporary relevance to education***: The concept of *Buen Vivir* shapes the vision and mission of the Ministry of Education, with all policies aimed at guaranteeing quality education for all that supports the well-being of the community. This vision has contributed to the development of a Base Curriculum of the Plurinational Educational System, the elaboration of regionalized and diverse curricula, together with the participation of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, and the training of teachers and education workers. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education developed the Sectorial Plan of Integral Development of Education for *Buen Vivir* 2016 – 2020.

▶ *Various colourful fruit and vegetable shops at Tupiza market in Bolivia*
Shutterstock.com/Aostojska

## Sumak kawsay (in Ecuador): "Well-being"

▶ *Lloa, Ecuador: group of Ecuadorians in traditional dress dancing for the Spring festival.*
Aostojska/Shutterstock.com

***Explanation*** - *Sumak kawsay* or "**Well-being**," is an indigenous Andean concept embedded in the ethical values of indigenous cultures, and which has heavily influenced Ecuadorian culture. It is based on a worldview centred on humanity as an integral part of the natural and social environment. The concept concerns good living/well-being, relating to respect for cultural diversity, peace and non-violence, as well as cultivation of the knowledge of ancestral cultures, through an emphasis on listening, dialogue, reciprocity, and generosity. *Sumak kawsay* is a way of life that builds on interconnections between all dimensions of life, echoing the core GCED notions of *respect for diversity*, *solidarity* (including with nature) and a *shared sense of humanity*. *Sumak kawsay* has been integrated in the constitution of the Republic since 2008. With the 2008 constitution, Ecuador became the first country to recognize rights to nature. The Preamble of the Ecuadorian Constitution states: "We decided to construct a new form of citizen co-existence, in diversity and harmony with nature, to reach '*el buen vivir, el sumak kawsay*'".

***Contemporary relevance to education***: The concept of "*Sumak kawsay*" is integrated in National Education Law (2008) and included in the curriculum of citizenship education and official textbooks for upper secondary education.

# 3. Conclusion

- The concepts explored here echo ideas found in GCED, most notably three core notions that distinguish it from other educational approaches: (i) "respect for diversity", (ii) "solidarity", and (iii) a "shared sense of humanity".
- "Respect for diversity" is addressed, for instance, through the concept of multiculturalism. "Solidarity" can be identified in several related concepts around the world, including in the idea of *Fraternité*, as well as in the concept of *Hongik-Ingan* and *Buen Vivir*, which extends the notion to include solidarity with nature. "A shared sense of humanity" comes through clearly in the concept of *Ubuntu*, and is found in the concept of *Sumak kawsay*, with its emphasis on the community and interconnectedness.

**Three core notions of GCED and local variations**

- At the same time, there are variations in the way these core notions are put into practice.
  - For example, several concepts underline, in different ways, the importance of nurturing *peaceful social relationships,* which is not as explicit in common understandings of GCED. The concept of *Sumak kawsay* focuses on reciprocal, complementary and cooperative relations, while the concept of *Gross National Happiness (GNH)* and *Buen Vivir* underline the importance of valuing both community and individual relationships.
  - Another noteworthy variation is the relative importance given to equitable socioeconomic development as a key principle, such as in the cases of *the Charter of Manden* and the concept of GNH.
  - Other variations are found in the emphasis on the idea of *hospitality* and *generosity*, *harmony with the natural environment, food security* and *integrity of the motherland*
- This study also highlights several GCED notions that do not seem to emerge explicitly in these local concepts, including the notions of "international understanding" and "non-discrimination".
- The variations, commonalities and gaps identified above raise a question about the extent to which local concepts may be useful as entry points to promote the full range of values, attitudes, skills and behaviours that are at the core of GCED. To be considered as vehicles for GCED, local concepts should echo at least one, and at best all three, of the core GCED notions. At the very least, to be considered, a local concept should not negate one or more of the three GCED notions.
- Overall, this study provides evidence that the core notions of GCED are shared among a wide range of countries, with different contextual specificities that are reflections of how each society has strived to ensure peaceful co-existence throughout history in complex and diverse environments.
- All of this strengthens the call for greater national and local ownership of GCED, regardless of what name it is given. This is important for two reasons: (1) as a means to anchor education in local and national values and traditions that uphold the principles of respect for diversity, solidarity and a shared sense of humanity, and to (2) ensure deeper local and national relevance of GCED notions.

# 4. Looking forward

***On this basis, four recommendations may be considered for the further implementation and contextualization of GCED across the world:***

1. Focus on the common values found in many local concepts as core entry points for GCED, including solidarity, respect for diversity, and a sense of shared humanity.

2. Widen the angle of GCED to explicitly include local concepts that emphasize peaceful social relationships and communities, as well as the environment.

3. Focus on the notion of "interconnectedness between the local and the global" when possible, rather than on the idea of "global", which is often viewed as not relevant at the local level.

4. Encourage implementation of the common values within the community, as well as beyond local and national contexts in order to demonstrate a shared sense of humanity.

# 5. Annex

## About the document

***Selection criteria for examples*** - Relevant concepts were identified in 2-4 countries in each UNESCO region, based on the following criteria. First, these concepts should espouse notions that echo those in GCED. Second, such concepts should be embedded in discourse at national level and expressed in national policy frameworks, constitutions and/or other national sources. Lastly, the concepts should be manifested in some way in the educational system and policies.

***Working definitions of GCED*** – These concepts were selected for their strong links to the notions that make up the concept of global citizenship education as developed by UNESCO. These include cultural diversity and tolerance, inclusion, peace and non-violence, as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms. On this basis, three notions at the heart of GCED that distinguish it from other educational approaches were retained – (i) respect for diversity, (ii) solidarity, and (iii) a shared sense of humanity.

***Limitations of study*** – The selection of examples is not exhaustive. In addition, the focus fell on local concepts with a clear foundation in constitutions, national anthems and/or policy frameworks, at the risk of leaving aside relevant concepts that may not find a place in discourse at national level. Furthermore, we are aware that some of the concepts are associated with several countries in a region. The attribution of the concept to a single country does not imply a recognition of primacy by that country over a concept that may find expression in multiple countries and societies.

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UNESCO is leading global efforts on Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which is at the core of Target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education. To address the perception that the concept of GCED is concerned mainly with global matters and maybe dissociated from local needs and realities, UNESCO has identified local/national/traditional precepts and concepts that are similar to the UNESCO understanding of global citizenship. As culturally relevant expressions of GCED and to contribute to building peace through the implementation of GCED, the concepts identified here can serve as entry-points to teach and learn about GCED in more locally relevant ways.

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