DEVELOPING TEACHERS' GLOBAL COMPETENCE FOR EDUCATING SUSTAINABLE AND CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES

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In an increasingly interconnected world, teachers play a pivotal role in fostering learners' understanding of sustainability and cultural inclusivity within their local contexts. This article explores the development of teachers' global competence as a critical foundation for educating sustainable and culturally inclusive territorial communities. Drawing on frameworks from global citizenship education and education for sustainable development (ESD), the study examines how teacher preparation and professional learning can integrate intercultural awareness, ethical global engagement, and place-based pedagogies. Using a conceptual analysis informed by recent international research and policy frameworks, it identifies effective strategies for cultivating reflective, globally minded educators who can empower students to act locally while thinking globally. The findings highlight key competencies − such as cultural empathy, systems thinking, and transformative agency −that enable teachers to connect global challenges with local realities. By advancing teachers' global competence, educational systems can better equip communities to navigate complexity, value diversity, and contribute to a more just and sustainable future.

Key words: *global competence; teacher education; education for sustainable development; intercultural competence; territorial communities.*

The twenty-first century presents unprecedented global challenges − climate change, population migration, growing inequalities, and intensifying cultural interactions that demand new educational paradigms. Teachers are no longer merely conveyors of subject knowledge: they must cultivate learners' capacities to interpret, critique, and address complex, interdependent issues. In this sense, global competence is becoming integral to teacher professionalism.

Global competence enables educators to perceive the interconnectedness of local and global phenomena, and to foster a sense of shared responsibility among students. In doing so, teachers help nurture sustainable and culturally inclusive territorial communities − local contexts in which ecological awareness, social justice, and cultural diversity are recognized as mutually reinforcing. This paper argues that strengthening teachers' global competence is essential for aligning educational practice with the goals of sustainability and inclusivity.

The OECD (in its PISA 2018 framework) defines global competence as the capacity to investigate the world beyond one's immediate environment, recognize multiple perspectives, communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, and act responsibly for collective well-being (OECD, 2018). OECD+2OECD+2 This construct is framed as multidimensional − integrating knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values (OECD, 2018). In the OECD's Learning Compass 2030 project, these capacities are further connected to transformative competencies such as reconciling tensions, creating new value, and taking responsibility which are crucial for navigating the moral and practical dilemmas of sustainability (OECD, 2020). Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) emphasizes the integration of environmental, social, and economic dimensions in education, promoting participatory, future-oriented, and reflective teaching–learning processes (UNESCO, 2017). Meanwhile, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), as advanced by UNESCO, seeks to cultivate learners who are aware of global issues, respectful of diversity, and capable of acting toward peace and justice (UNESCO, 2015).

However, a common critique is that ESD and GCED often run on parallel tracks in teacher education, rather than being integrated. Bourn, Hunt, and Bamber (2017) argue that harmonizing

these approaches is vital to avoid fragmentation and to embed global sustainability within core teacher curricula. Cultural inclusivity adds a further dimension: sustainable communities are not only environmentally sound but socially just and culturally plural. Teachers who bring intercultural competence into their pedagogy can help learners appreciate diversity, challenge cultural biases, and contribute to cohesive yet plural territorial communities.

In territorial (place-based) education, learning is grounded in the socio-ecological and cultural context of a community. Teachers become mediators between global frameworks and local realities. They guide learners to see, for example, how global climate policies connect to local land use, energy, or water practices. They also help students understand migration or demographic change in terms of both global trends and local community dynamics. In this sense, teachers perform multiple roles: as cultural interpreters, change agents, and community connectors. Their capacity to contextualize global issues locally depends on their own global competence.

To cultivate global competence, teacher education programs must integrate global and intercultural perspectives across content, pedagogy, and assessment not as addenda but as central strands. Initial teacher education (ITE) curricula should incorporate global citizenship theory, sustainability education, and intercultural studies in synergy. OECD recommendations for teacher education emphasize aligning content and pedagogical knowledge via school-based partnerships and sustained reflective inquiry (OECD, 2022).

Reflective practice is central to this process: when teachers critically examine their cultural assumptions, implicit biases, and power dynamics in classroom interactions, they become more adept at facilitating intercultural dialogue and global inquiry (O'Flaherty, 2025). Research in teacher education settings such as the "Issues in Global Education" course described by Kopish (2017) has shown that integrating critical inquiry, experiential learning, and structured reflection can foster growth in global competence among teacher candidates.

Empirical and conceptual literature suggests several promising strategies:
• Inquiry-based learning: teachers and students collaboratively pose and investigate questions with local and global significance;
• Intercultural dialogue and perspective-taking: activities structured to promote empathy, multiple vantage points, and respectful negotiation of difference;
• Place-based/global linking: embedding global issues into local contexts (e.g. linking SDG themes to community challenges);
• Transformative learning: experiences that challenge teachers' worldviews and foster reorientation toward sustainability and justice;
• Digital/global collaborations: virtual exchanges or partnerships that allow classrooms in different locales to engage meaningfully (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016).

In practice, the Global Teaching Model (as described in the literature) frames globally competent teaching along four domains: situated relevant practice, integrated global learning, critical and cultural consciousness raising, and intercultural collaboration for transformative action (Mansilla et al., cited in research) (Equipping Teachers, 2020). That study showed that while many teachers value global competence, they often struggle with translating theory into classroom practice thus reinforcing the need for scaffolding and tools.

A mixed-methods study of teachers' self-reported practices found that globally competent teaching varied widely; teachers expressed a desire for clearer guidance on how to embed global perspectives into existing curricula (Equipping Teachers, 2020).

Individual teachers' efforts will not suffice without supportive institutional and policy environments. National and regional education policies should embed global competence, intercultural education, and sustainability into teacher standards, accreditation criteria, and professional development frameworks.

Higher education institutions and faculties of education must lead by example—integrating global learning, intercultural research, and community partnerships into their own practices.

Instructors of teacher educators need capacity building in global competence (as explored in recent research on teacher educator needs) (Global competency for teacher educators, 2024).

Professional learning communities, mentorship networks, and ongoing reflective inquiry cycles are crucial for sustaining teacher growth. Moreover, policy initiatives should treat ESD and GCED not as optional add-ons, but as integral to core educational missions and accountability structures (Bourn et al., 2017).

Teachers strengthened in global competence can better mediate between global frameworks and local contexts, fostering students' agency in sustainable, culturally inclusive communities. Well-designed teacher education programs that integrate global, intercultural, and sustainability strands can contribute to the transformation of territorial communities.

Challenges:

• Resistance to integrating «global» themes into heavily content-focused curricula.

• Inadequate professional development and resources to help teachers operationalize global competence.

• The risk of superficial «add-on» global units rather than deep, sustained integration.

• Variability in teachers' cultural backgrounds, contexts, and readiness for change.

• Overcoming these challenges requires sustained institutional commitment, capacity building, and ongoing reflective cycles.

Conclusions. Global competence is no longer a peripheral aspiration – it is central to the educational mission of preparing learners to thrive in, and contribute positively to, an interconnected world. Teachers equipped with intercultural awareness, systems thinking, and transformative agency can transform classrooms into sites where global challenges are linked to community life, and students become empowered local-global actors. By investing in the development of globally competent educators, educational systems contribute not only to more sustainable and inclusive communities, but also to the ethical, cultural, and civic foundations of future generations. In the face of environmental, social, and cultural complexities, the evolving professional identity of teachers must encompass both global vision and local rootedness.

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РОЛЬ МІЖНАРОДНИХ ГРАНТОВИХ ПРОЄКТІВ У ФОРМУВАННІ СУЧАСНИХ ТРЕНДІВ ГЕОЕКОЛОГІЧНОЇ ОСВІТИ І ПРОСВІТНИЦТВА

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За останні 15 років екологічний факультет (нині ННІ екології, зеленої енергетики і сталого розвитку) реалізував більше десяти міжнародних грантових проєктів освітнього спрямування. Цьогоріч розпочато виконання двох проєктів програми Ерасмус+: SUNRISE – «Підтримка нового покоління науковців України: проєкт підвищення потенціалу університетів та покращення докторської освіти» і DOMANI – «Розвиток мікрокредитних екосистем в Україні та Монголії для конкурентоспроможної та стійкої зеленої економіки», основною метою яких є формування в українській освітянській спільноті нових сучасних трендів.

Обидва проєкти спираються на досвід Міжнародної та Національної докторської школи, започаткованої в проєкті «INTENSE - Комплексна докторська школа з екологічної політики, менеджменту та техноекології» (проєкт Ерасмус+, завершений у 2021 році), що об'єднує заклади вищої освіти (ЗВО) Європи, Монголії та України з метою посилення їхніх компетенцій та конкурентоспроможності для підготовки докторів філософії в галузі навколишнього середовища. Проєкт SUNRISE є безпосереднім його продовженням і націлений на розвиток Національної докторської школи.

З огляду на виклики сьогодення, такими як зростаючий вплив на довкілля та приголомшливі прояви зміни клімату, досвід та наслідки глобальних пандемій та війни в Україні, DOMANI розширює сферу своєї діяльності та охоплює ширшу аудиторію. Це відбувається завдяки його генеральній меті, яка полягає в наступному - розвивати гнучкі та інклюзивні можливості навчання шляхом створення функціональних екосистем для надання мікрокредитів студентам та особам, які навчаються впродовж життя, та сприяти зеленій трансформації країн-партнерів, а також стійкості до війни та післявоєнному відновленню в Україні шляхом розробки та пілотування курсів мікрокредитів, орієнтованих на відповідні пули навичок.

В Україні особлива увага приділяється наданню можливостей для навчання мігрантам і переміщеним особам. Визнаючи подібні потреби у створенні гнучких та інклюзивних шляхів навчання, DOMANI прагне зміцнити потенціал для підтримки академічних кіл України з боку суспільства.

DOMANI забезпечує передачу інноваційних підходів та ініціатив у вищій освіті до України. Він розвиває організаційний потенціал для надання мікро-ступенів, що забезпечить гнучкі навчальні траєкторії, визнання неформальної освіти, навчання,