






Teaching History for Global Citizenship Education (GCED): A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Although the Global Citizenship Education framework (GCED) has been promoted for implementation in schools worldwide, operationalisation and contextualisation face numerous challenges. Developing a shared and clear definition of GCED can facilitate its realisation and adaptation in schools. This systematic literature review examined the teaching of History for GCED in secondary schools. The review used a systematic approach to gather data, which was then analysed using a thematic method. Data were sourced from five databases, following the PRISMA guidelines. After applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, 25 relevant articles were selected. The study found that GCED holds different meanings for various people, influencing how the concept is applied in schools globally. Furthermore, despite the lack of a universal definition and ongoing confusion about implementation, several strategies have been used, including learner-centred approaches, class discussions, projects, individual assignments, and documentaries. Nonetheless, the review identified significant challenges in the process, such as limited resources and training for teachers, teachers' fears of addressing controversial and sensitive topics, and the integration of GCED into citizenship and national history. The review recommended additional research on the opportunities and successes of GCED. It also highlighted that, although GCED has been examined recently, there is limited research focused on Zimbabwe. Additionally, the study suggests a need for further investigation to integrate GCED into history lessons. This review provides insights and contributes to scholarly understanding for history educators and policymakers worldwide regarding the challenges, opportunities, and successes in embedding GCED into history education.

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching history for global citizenship education (GCED) at the secondary school level plays a significant role in addressing and redressing the challenges currently experienced across the globe. These challenges call for correct attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and communication abilities, as they are critical to ensuring that citizens effectively act as global citizens.¹ GCED refers to the education system's civic, socio-political fabric, ensuring that learners belong to the global community.² GCED seeks to inculcate learners with the

¹ UNESCO, "Preparing Teachers for Global Citizenship Education: A Template," (Unesco Paris, 2018).

² Joanna Leek, "Global Citizenship Education in School Curricula. A Polish Perspective," *Journal of Social Studies Education Research* 7, no. 2 (2016).

knowledge, skills and values to address issues that transcend national borders like inequality, climate change, and human rights violations.³ Thus, teaching for GCED aims, among other things, to inculcate critical values in learners that are important in pushing them to be proactive as they take active roles in participating in initiatives that aim to circumvent global challenges and to become proactive in a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world. The guiding key principles and expected outcomes of teaching GCED are knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences, hinged on three learning domains: cognitive development, socio-emotional and behavioural development, to enable learners to recognise and examine beliefs and values.⁴ These key tenets are designed to help learners recognise and appreciate the differences and multiple identities that exist within a global village.

On the other hand, history subjects or education use approaches that focus on developing knowledge, critical thinking skills, and a critical understanding of the past to develop critical democratic citizenship.⁵ Therefore, History as a subject has much to offer to global citizenship education. For instance, they teach World History and Global History in the United States of America.⁶ However, World History is developed in such a way that it prepares learners for skills, beliefs, and concepts of going beyond national borders. Thus, World History education provides the potential environment and platforms that foster commitments that promote democratic living and global competencies across the globe.⁷

In the United States of America, the school curriculum, among other things, focuses on instilling democratic values to promote responsible citizenship.⁸ Thus, there is a huge alignment with the concepts of GCED, as it advocates for issues of democracy and other things. Similarly, secondary school history education in Indonesia is designed to ensure the transmission of values that can foster the development of Indonesian society beyond its borders. Although the primary focus of the Indonesian History curriculum is to produce patriotic citizens, there is also evidence of topics that go beyond their national boundaries. Equally, the Zambian secondary history curriculum is also designed to advance the development of values to produce graduates who will fit into the global village.⁹ In other words, history education in many countries is designed to hold its fundamental value in developing learners' "capabilities and shaping the character of a dignified global citizen". In addition, the curriculum of the United Republic of Tanzania has been included in the civic curriculum.¹⁰ For example, the Form 1 syllabus has a topic on human rights, while the Form 2 syllabi have topics on democracy, all critical issues emphasised by the GCED framework.

Furthermore, the teaching of GCED and history for liberation to learners in Southern Africa, particularly in the United Republic of Tanzania, is critical, as it teaches History that transcends Tanzanian national boundaries.¹¹ For instance, the History of the genocides of the Herero against the Nama is also taught. Therefore, in the Tanzanian curriculum, the concepts of GCED are complementary and not antagonistic. In Angola, DRC, Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe, their history curriculum covers GCED topics and ideas, particularly regarding Human Rights and Ubuntu. However, one of the drawbacks is the unavailability of resources that guide GCED in the region, as each country uses its own guide and teaching materials, so there are no relationships, coordination or linkage.¹²

³ UNESCO, "Preparing Teachers for Global Citizenship Education: A Template."

⁴ *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives* (UNESCO, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.54675/DRHC3544>.

⁵ Carly C Muettteries, "What Kind of Global Citizen? A Framework for Best Practices in World History Civic Education," *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice* 17, no. 2 (July 18, 2022): 103–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/17461979211038502>.

⁶ Karen Pashby et al., "A Meta-Review of Typologies of Global Citizenship Education," *Comparative Education* 56, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 144–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2020.1723352>.

⁷ Muettteries, "What Kind of Global Citizen? A Framework for Best Practices in World History Civic Education."

⁸ Pashby et al., "A Meta-Review of Typologies of Global Citizenship Education."

⁹ Yvonne Malambo Kabombwe and Innocent Mutale Mulenga, "Implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum by Teachers of History in Selected Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia," *Yesterday and Today*, no. 22 (2019): 19–41, <https://doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2019/n22a2>.

¹⁰ Tapiwa V. Warikandwa et al., "Global Citizenship and Southern Africa Liberation History Education in Southern Africa: A 21st Century Socio-Legal Perspective," *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 1 (December 31, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2023.2207884>.

¹¹ Warikandwa et al., "Global Citizenship and Southern Africa Liberation History Education in Southern Africa: A 21st Century Socio-Legal Perspective."

¹² Warikandwa et al., "Global Citizenship and Southern Africa Liberation History Education in Southern Africa: A 21st Century Socio-Legal Perspective."

Although there are elements of global citizenship education in Zimbabwe, the overall thrust is designed to foster national identity, patriotism and citizenship education. The review of the Zimbabwean History syllabus appreciates the transformative potential of history education to promote global citizenship.¹³ Although Zimbabwean history education over the years since its independence has traditionally prioritised nationalistic narratives, recent curricular changes suggest efforts to align with global educational frameworks. As such, this systematic literature review explores how history education is being conceptualised and operationalised to advance GCED, as well as strategies and challenges that are being experienced as a result of implementing this framework.

The rationale for this systematic literature review comes from the need to contribute to the body of literature on teaching History for GCED, as this topic has not been fully explored, especially in the SADC region. Understand how teaching History for GCED is being conceptualised across the globe. Moreover, while there is a growing body of literature on GCED as a concept around the globe, there is limited research focusing on teaching History education for GCED. As such, this systematic literature review aims to fill this gap by exploring this topic. The study seeks to address the following objectives:

1. To understand how History is conceptualised and practised in GCED.
2. To assess the strategies used to teach History for GCED
3. To identify challenges in teaching History for global citizenship education (GCED).

METHODOLOGY

This research used a systematic literature review methodology to collect all the data that helped the researcher answer the research objectives of this study. This systematic review was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological rigour, transparency, and reproducibility.¹⁴ The PRISMA framework provides a structured approach for identifying, screening, eligibility selection and synthesising relevant literature, making it particularly suitable for this study. In addition, PRISMA provides a detailed understanding of the subject under review and sheds light on new perspectives that would require further research.¹⁵ These stages are shown in the figure below.

Screening and Selection Process

The screening process followed the PRISMA flow diagram, which involves four stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.¹⁶

Identification

Initial searches of the databases yielded a total of 850 records. After removing duplicates, 500 records remained.

Screening

Screening of the 500 records that were selected due to their importance to the study was done using titles and abstracts. Studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded, leaving 50 records for full-text review.

Eligibility

The eligibility of full-text articles was verified based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. A total of 25 articles were included in this study and therefore were used in this study, as shown in the diagram below.

¹³ J. Wassermann, "Islam in the Urban Landscape of Accra: The Role of Migration, Education, and Social Identity," *African Journal of Religious Studies* 29, no. 1 (2005): 112–29.

¹⁴ Matthew J Page et al., "The PRISMA 2020 Statement: An Updated Guideline for Reporting Systematic Reviews," *BMJ*, March 29, 2021, n71, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>.

¹⁵ Aifang Xu, Norhakimah Khaissa Ahmad, and Siti Nadhirah Abd Rahman, "Impact of Multicultural Literature on Intercultural Communicative Competence Development in English Language Education: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 23, no. 11 (November 30, 2024): 308–24, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.11.16>.

¹⁶ Page et al., "The PRISMA 2020 Statement: An Updated Guideline for Reporting Systematic Reviews."

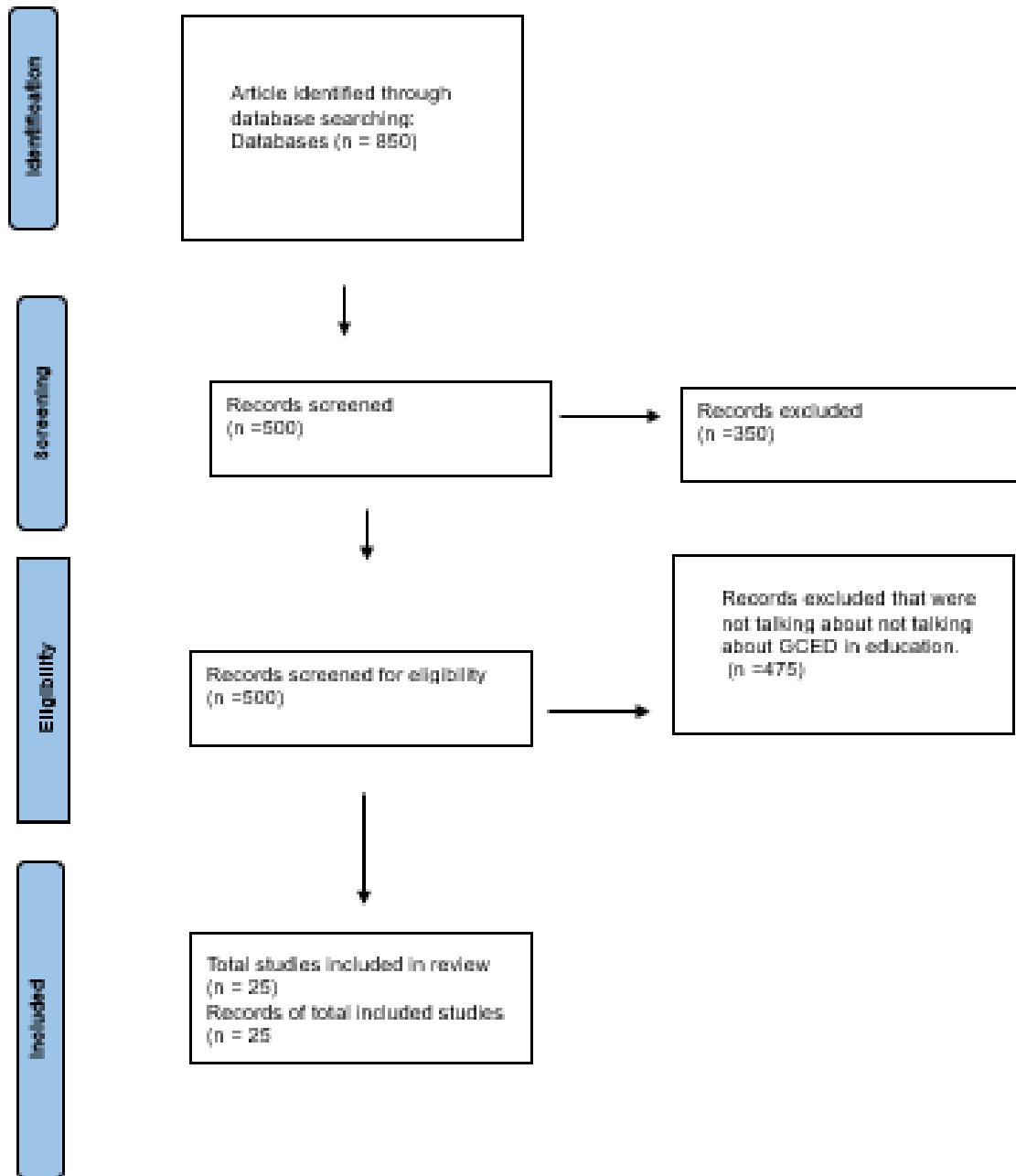


Figure 1: Diagram showing systematic literature review selection process

The search strategy was designed to identify peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025 that address history education and global citizenship education. In addition, only English-language publications were included. The study used five databases: ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre), JSTOR, Scopus, Web of Science, African Journals Online (AJOL) and Google Scholar. These databases were selected due to their comprehensive coverage of education-related literature, particularly in the context of the study reviewed. Several ways, including the use of keywords and Boolean operators, were used to refine the search. The primary search terms included: History education AND (global citizenship OR global citizenship education). Variations and related terms such as decolonisation, post-colonial education, national identity, curriculum reform, liberation History, and civic and social studies were also included to capture a broader range of relevant studies. Boolean operators (AND, OR) combined terms and ensured precision in the search results. For example, (History education OR history curriculum) AND (global citizenship education OR GCED).

Eligibility Criteria

The research followed the eligibility criteria as follows.

Inclusion Criteria

In this study, peer-reviewed studies were used that included articles, book chapters, and policy documents published between 2015 and 2025. Focus on history education and global citizenship education. Studies addressing curriculum design, social studies, civic education, pedagogy, policy, or teacher or student perspectives.

Exclusion Criteria

Non-peer-reviewed sources. Studies focused on other subjects without linkage to history or GCED. Studies published before 2015 or in languages other than English. The table below summarises the sources used in this systematic literature review, showing the theoretical framework and research approach used.

Table 1: Type of study used

Author	Type of Study	Theory	Country
Heel Goren & Miri Yemini	Qualitative research	Global citizenship education	Israel
Timothy Patterson & Jenni Conrad	Qualitative research	Critical global citizenship	USA
Miri Yemini	Qualitative research	Global citizenship education	U. K
Saloshua Vandeyar	Qualitative research	Pedagogy of Compassion	South Africa
Skaras	Qualitative research	Critical global citizenship	South Sudan
Miri Yemini et al	Mixed approach		Israel
Judy Bruce et al	Qualitative research		New Zealand
Pashby et al.,	Qualitative research	GCED	U. K
AIAbri	Qualitative research		Omani
Duarte and Jones	Qualitative research		Netherlands
Beckwith	Qualitative research		New Zealand
Goren et al	Qualitative research		Israel
Warikandwa	Qualitative research		SADC
Muetterties	Qualitative research	Global citizenship education	USA
Mukwacha	Qualitative research	Citizenship theories	Zimbabwe
Goren & Yemini	Systematic literature review (Mixed approach)		Israel
Duarte	Mixed methods		Netherlands

Data Analysis

Data were analysed and interpreted using thematic synthesis. This approach was used because of its usefulness and flexibility in aligning with many paradigms.¹⁷ This approach involves three stages: coding, theme development and interpretation. Inductive coding was used to classify repeated themes and forms in the data. Codes were generated based on the study's content.

Additionally, codes were grouped into broader themes that capture the review's key findings. Lastly, themes were interpreted according to the study's research objectives, which involved examining how the findings contribute to understanding the role of history education in the promotion of global citizenship. The table below illustrates the results based on the sources used.

¹⁷ Lorelli S Nowell et al., "Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017): 1609406917733847.

Table 2: Sources used

Author(s)	Year	What was the study about	Conceptualisation of GCED	Strategies	Challenges
Saloshna Vandeyar	2021	The study explored the issues of immigrants and how teachers are coping with social transformation challenges to promote GCED.	Specifies that it is an unfamiliar perception to several educators.	The study found that teachers used teacher-centred approaches.	The study found that some topics are too sensitive and controversial to teach.
Heela Goren & Miri Yemini	2016	The study explored teachers' perceptions of the conceptualisation of GCED.	The study found that the teacher's conceptualisation of GCED was a soft understanding of GCED.	-Inclusive teaching strategy collaborations.	- The study found that global citizenship requires resources.
Miri Yemini	2018	This study investigated the links between GCED and what he termed Critical GC.	This study explored the issue of GCED and how it is being implemented in one of the schools in the UK.	Leading class discussions through various learner-centred approaches	The study found that GCED requires an understanding of cultural diversity
Miri Yemini, Felisa Tibbitts, Heela Goren	2019	This study investigated the views and understanding of teachers on the issues of GCED in teacher education training.	Class discussions, project-based.	Critical pedagogy	The study found that teachers face the challenges of limited understanding of GCED.
Judy Bruce, Chris North, & Jessica FitzPatrick	2019	The study explored the understanding of preservice teachers of GCED.	There is confusion due to the multiplicity of definitions.	To gain an understanding of students.	Uncertainty about the definition of GCED.
Victoria Beckwith	2022	The study explored how GCED was conceptualised and how lack of clarity affects the implementation of GCED.	There is limited clarity on the conceptualisation of GCED.	Critical pedagogy	Lack of support from stakeholders.

Tapiwa V. Warikandwa, Chiku Mnubi-Mchombu, Aimate Jorge, Eugene Libebe, Christian Harris & Pius Iikwambi	2023	This study examined the integration of GCED in the SADC region.	The study found that while GCED has found its way into History syllabi, there is no evidence that it is being taught correctly.	Political environment	Lack of synchronisation across the region.
Carly C Muetterties	2022	The study examined the relationship between different histories that are offered in the USA.	There is an unclear definition of GCED, affecting how it is conceptualised.		Fear of global citizenship that clashes with national identities.
Joana Duarte	2023	The study investigated the operationalisation of global citizenship education in the Dutch education system.	The study found no clear plan for conceptualisation as there is a lack of materials.		
Khalaf Al'Abri, Bushra Al-Ghaithi, Ali Al-Ghafri & Hafidha AlBarashdi	2024	The study focused on the role played by GCED in Oman schools.	There is no clarity on the GCED concepts, as there are no available materials.	Done collectively – collaborations, school trips.	Lack of support for GCED from stakeholders.
Simbarashe Edgar Mukwacha		The study explored the implementation of GCED FOR Zimbabwean Teachers.	There is limited understanding of GCED.	They use learner-centred approaches.	Fear of teaching some topics.
Karen Pashby, Marta da Costa, Sharon Stein & Vanessa Andreotti	2020	The study reviewed previous studies on the implementation of GCED.	Teachers are still not clear on the correct way to implement GCED.	Group discussion, constructivist approaches.	Cultural diversity is the sensitivity to some topics.
MERETHE SKÅRÅS	2020	The study examined the local and global world views regarding the new curriculum framework in the South of Sudan.	The study found that there is still confusion surrounding the concept of GCED.	Inclusive teaching approaches.	Incorporation of GCED into citizenship.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This systematic literature review examined the teaching of history for GCED, focusing on studies published between 2015 and 2025. This review is guided by the research questions that were associated with themes and subthemes, and this will be discussed in greater depth below.

Understanding and Conceptualisation of GCED

Definitions of GCED play with setting and understanding, making it contested, leading to the vagueness of the concept of GCED.¹⁸ Therefore, defining GCED is a complicated and challenging task considering the multiple definitions and the lack of one agreed-upon definition within the scholarship. The absence of one agreeable definition of GCED has resulted in a plethora of definitions, which has led to challenges in implementing it.¹⁹ A study in New Zealand found that the significant challenge facing teachers and students in implementing GCED was confusion regarding the lack of an acceptable definition of GCED. As such, this has affected how this is conceptualised, as both teachers and students are unsure how to conceptualise the concept.²⁰ This position has led teachers to have a mixed conceptualisation of GCED, as definitional consensus is absent.²¹ In other research, GCED was found to be a poorly understood concept, mainly because of linguistic and cultural ambiguities translated from English to Arabic, potentially undermining national and cultural autonomy.²² Thus, many different viewpoints on the concept of GCED have resulted in confusion and various ways teachers conceptualise GCED in other regions and countries.

Furthermore, in South Sudan, because of this confusion surrounding the multiplicity of definitions of GCED, teachers are negotiating the challenges of migration and social transformation to promote GCED and found that most teachers regard GCED concepts as alien concepts that however in the syllabus, and they therefore teach it according to each teacher's understanding of the concept.²³ The findings of several research studies reviewed in this study on how GCED is being implemented in Dutch schools found that GCED concepts are not found in teaching materials and teaching methods. As a result, teachers found it challenging to create slots to implement it or familiarise themselves with the concepts.²⁴ Thus, due to the absence of teaching materials, teachers have a limited conceptualisation of GCED concepts as they rely primarily on teaching materials for understanding and conceptualisation of concepts. Several studies reviewed in this study found that teachers conceptualise GCED as a soft understanding of GCED. As such, this may be caused by a lack of legislative texts that directly mention GCED, although indirect mentions of general values are present.²⁵

The research found that different conceptions of GCED coexist as restrictions attributed by educators to their understanding of GCED appear closely linked to the degree to which they

¹⁸ Heela Goren and Miri Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 48, no. 3 (May 4, 2018): 397–413, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2016.1273096>.

¹⁹ Victoria Jane Beckwith, "Conceptualisations of Global Citizenship and Global Citizenship Education: Does Lack of Clarity Impact Global Citizenship Education in Aotearoa New Zealand?," *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* 21, no. 2 (2022): 85–99.

²⁰ Beckwith, "Conceptualisations of Global Citizenship and Global Citizenship Education: Does Lack of Clarity Impact Global Citizenship Education in Aotearoa New Zealand?"

²¹ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

²² Khalaf Al'Abri et al., "Achieving Sustainable Development by Promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCED): The Role of School Principals," *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, March 15, 2024, 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2024.2330365>.

²³ Saloshna Vandeyar, "Pedagogy of Compassion: Negotiating the Contours of Global Citizenship," *Journal of Research in Childhood Education* 35, no. 2 (April 3, 2021): 200–214, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2021.1880991>.

²⁴ Joana Duarte and Charlie Robinson-Jones, "Bridging Theory and Practice: Conceptualisations of Global Citizenship Education in Dutch Secondary Education," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 22, no. 2 (March 14, 2024): 315–31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2022.2048800>.

²⁵ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

observe global citizenship to clash with national identities.²⁶ GCED is a concept understood by teachers in different ways; thus, it is complicated to pick one definition from several postulated by people.²⁷ This supports the view that GCED is a framework that is interpreted and operationalised in different ways in different locations.²⁸ Hence, different views and interpretations given to GCED mean that there is no consistency and consensus in the conceptualisation of GCED across the globe. As a result, the concept of GCED is ambiguous and unclear. Thus, one clear and agreeable definition helps teachers operationalise and conceptualise GCED.

This study is of this review that teachers in India, particularly in social studies, have a limited understanding of the concepts of GCED, leading to a lack of confidence in GCED concepts. However, GCED concepts in India have increased. The study also stressed that there is no agreement among Indian social studies teachers on the conceptualisation or interpretation of global citizenship. However, the review found that both local, national and global settings have different expectations, which in turn aid their disagreement regarding the conceptualisation of GCED, creating the best environment for the confusion surrounding the conceptualisation of the GCED framework.²⁹ This means that different expectations from different settings also add to the confusion of teachers. Hence, educators are aiding the students' outside world exposure while declining the understandings, practices, and beliefs that students possess naturally from their homes.³⁰ Thus, GCED is, therefore, a concept that carries different meanings as people understand it depending on their backgrounds.

The critical aspects are absent from the definition of GCED, which confirms that it is not being promoted in schools. There is a diversity of definitions, which in turn, affects the understanding and implementation of GCED in schools. Teachers in South Sudan believe that GCED is a foreign and illusory concept. The uncertainty about GCED, as most members faced serious challenges defining it and its interrelated perceptions, and this limited understanding could be traced to limited experiences of travel abroad and limited multicultural experiences.³¹ Thus, the review concluded that there is a different understanding and knowledge of GCED as some link it to humanity, relations, common factors and integration of the individual, society and world. Thus, variations in interpretations of GCED have led to it being linked to a concept meant to overshadow national allegiance to GCED.

Strategies used to Implement GCED in Schools

This systematic literature review found different strategies for implementing GCED in schools. According to the findings of this review, various approaches were found to be useful, implemented and promoted GCED, including dialogue, as it promotes critical thinking.³²

Teachers employed critical pedagogy as the leading method that encourages critical thinking and critical....., as this aligns with the expected outcomes.³³ More investigations of the findings confirm a positive inclination in using advanced and adaptive pedagogical methods for GCED, confirming that GCED is a well-supported concept by school principals and curricula, as

²⁶ Al'Abri et al., "Achieving Sustainable Development by Promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCED): The Role of School Principals."

²⁷ Beckwith, "Conceptualisations of Global Citizenship and Global Citizenship Education: Does Lack of Clarity Impact Global Citizenship Education in Aotearoa New Zealand?"

²⁸ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

²⁹ Beckwith, "Conceptualisations of Global Citizenship and Global Citizenship Education: Does Lack of Clarity Impact Global Citizenship Education in Aotearoa New Zealand?"

³⁰ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

³¹ Judy Bruce, Chris North, and Jessica FitzPatrick, "Preservice Teachers' Views of Global Citizenship and Implications for Global Citizenship Education," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 17, no. 2 (March 15, 2019): 161–76, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2018.1558049>.

³² Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

³³ Miri Yemini, Felisa Tibbitts, and Heela Goren, "Trends and Caveats: Review of Literature on Global Citizenship Education in Teacher Training," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 77 (January 2019): 77–89, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.09.014>.

its values are mentioned clearly in the social studies curriculum.³⁴ The study thus found that teachers are directed to incorporate GCED principles and values across three domains in their teaching, which are cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural, through teamwork and volunteering in schools. In this regard, the study indicated that most school activities are performed collectively. Thus, activities aimed at promoting GCED in social studies are done collectively, for instance, through school trips.

Another study reviewed the use of an inclusive teaching strategy in delivering the curriculum in line with the GCED.³⁵ For example, collaborative group work was preferred as this strategy promotes engagement between diverse learners of different backgrounds and countries.³⁶ GCED is being implemented through multicultural, multilingual teaching methodologies and careful balance.³⁷ This, therefore, posits that dialogue informed by critical thinking and a critical democratic outlook, which he calls the question and answer technique, is the strategy best for implementing GCED.³⁸

Challenges of Teaching History for GCED

Limited Training

One of the challenges that this systematic review found to be affecting the smooth implementation of GCED across the globe is the issue of limited training programs for teachers who are key curriculum implementers.³⁹ Limited training has been required by a limited budget and, in the process, prevented teachers and school principals from undertaking creative activities promoting GCED.⁴⁰ Consequently, this has been a major stumbling block in the implementation of GCED, as teachers generally need rigorous training, especially on the issue of content interpretation, delivery methods, assessment methods, and other expectations that come with each policy. For instance, GCED favours learner-centred teaching strategies, particularly those that allow learners to experiment hands-on and take charge of their as this bridges the gap between theory and practice. However, as with any approach, these methodologies threaten the most commonly used and common approaches and often require teachers to undergo rigorous training. In addition, students showed ambiguous tendencies toward concepts of GCED, which could be linked to limited resources and teachers' knowledge of the concepts, possibly linked to the issue of limited training to teach these concepts.⁴¹ In tandem, their study harmonises the view that teachers in Oman had not received formal training related to GCED and its principles.

Furthermore, the study also found that due to limited availability of teaching resources, such as textbooks and overcrowded classrooms enforce memorisation and rote learning are enforced, which affects the focus on active and engaged learning activities as required by the GCED framework.⁴² Teachers fear the politicisation of GCED. As such, their level of knowledge of GCED is just as generic as it comes from their insights and self-learning.

³⁴ Al'Abri et al., "Achieving Sustainable Development by Promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCED): The Role of School Principals."

³⁵ Vandeyar, "Pedagogy of Compassion: Negotiating the Contours of Global Citizenship."

³⁶ Bruce, North, and FitzPatrick, "Preservice Teachers' Views of Global Citizenship and Implications for Global Citizenship Education."

³⁷ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

³⁸ Vandeyar, "Pedagogy of Compassion: Negotiating the Contours of Global Citizenship."

³⁹ Warikandwa et al., "Global Citizenship and Southern Africa Liberation History Education in Southern Africa: A 21st Century Socio-Legal Perspective."

⁴⁰ Warikandwa et al., "Global Citizenship and Southern Africa Liberation History Education in Southern Africa: A 21st Century Socio-Legal Perspective."

⁴¹ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

⁴² Maren Seehawer and Anders Breidlid, "Dialogue between Epistemologies as Quality Education. Integrating Knowledges in Sub-Saharan African Classrooms to Foster Sustainability Learning and Contextually Relevant Education," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 4, no. 1 (2021): 100200.

Incorporation of GCED Principles into Citizenship Education

A study by Goren and Yemini concluded that most textbooks, particularly history and social studies ones, focus on citizenship education, which focuses on national interests. The study stressed that teachers expressed a lack of freedom and often find it difficult to choose between teaching curricular goals, advocating the integration of GCED concepts in the classroom, and social practices of patriotism, which posits that learners should be taught about nationalism.⁴³ Their previous studies found that teachers in Israel, due to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, professed the fight as a major barrier to teaching GCED for two central explanations, which are the survival fight, that obscures the chances of looking at the bigger cause and leads Israeli society and curriculum framework to be patriotic and militaristic. Thus, teachers in Israel, because of their high national values, pride and loyalty, find it challenging to teach GCED as they may be deemed unpatriotic. This is mainly caused by the fact that GCED is vague and requires a guide and framework document as well as training, and the absence of these leads to teachers questioning the purpose of GCED.⁴⁴ This aids the meaning that countries which are highly democratic have a higher chance of incorporating and operationalising GCED in teaching materials, compared to less democratic and conflict-torn countries.

Lack of Support for GCED from Stakeholders

GCED faces resistance from key stakeholders because it is not considered a choice made, but rather a need forced on the school.⁴⁵ Another challenge this study found was the lack of acceptance of GCED concepts by key stakeholders in several countries. The assumption that it is being imposed on their culture and against national boundaries has been one of the reasons for the lack of support for GCED concepts. This has made the concept of GCED woven within national Histories.⁴⁶ For instance, in New Zealand, most of the concepts of GCED have been co-opted into the national curricula. Topics that are deemed to further accentuate the division in the country, considering the always conflicts that arise, are oftentimes skipped as teachers fear the consequences and the relationship these topics and citizenship education have, making it difficult to comprehend how peace education could successfully be incorporated into the civics curriculum frameworks.⁴⁷ This means that teachers often avoid teaching topics they deem sensitive, problematic, and controversial in many different forms. However, cultural elements of GCED are highly predominant in the literature on teacher education, suggesting that social topics may be among the most common justifications for teaching GCED, given their practical relevance to everyday life.⁴⁸ Therefore, the school advocates for GCED as a common value that teachers transmit to students. Despite their efforts, the principals identified particular cultural and societal challenges in promoting GCED.⁴⁹ They mentioned the lack of cooperation in terms of following their children's behaviour. We believe that principals should approach parents to strengthen their relationships with them. Moreover, the study confirms the linguistic vagueness of GCED as a concept, which may hinder its adoption. In addition, some principals mentioned other societal challenges, such as the lack of acceptance of GCED topics, especially among older individuals, who may take them as an imposition upon their culture. Each culture should conceptualise GCED based on its customs, traditions, and other societal characteristics.

⁴³ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

⁴⁴ Al'Abri et al., "Achieving Sustainable Development by Promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCED): The Role of School Principals."

⁴⁵ Goren and Yemini, "Obstacles and Opportunities for Global Citizenship Education under Intractable Conflict: The Case of Israel."

⁴⁶ Muettterties, "What Kind of Global Citizen? A Framework for Best Practices in World History Civic Education."

⁴⁷ Muettterties, "What Kind of Global Citizen? A Framework for Best Practices in World History Civic Education."

⁴⁸ Yemini, Tibbitts, and Goren, "Trends and Caveats: Review of Literature on Global Citizenship Education in Teacher Training."

⁴⁹ Al'Abri et al., "Achieving Sustainable Development by Promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCED): The Role of School Principals."

Fear of Teaching some Topics

The study also found that school staffs including learners who took part in the USA programs that were aimed at advocating for GCED were found unwilling to teach, read and even touch any teaching resources that were believed to be alleged as unpatriotic as they attributed to the term global citizenship to the idea of appearing not patriotic and dismissive of countries values as a result of having incorporated GCED in the teaching and learning process.⁵⁰ Teachers dislike teaching sociopolitical topics of GCED and prefer moral GCED, mainly because conflicts in the region lead to a tense classroom environment that closes space for teachers and their students to openly discuss issues related and linked to ethnicity, as teachers cannot freely feel safe.⁵¹ For instance, GCED is extremely difficult to plan and teach in conflict-ridden South Sudan. However, in Zimbabwe, there is a lack of understanding of GCED in the Zimbabwean education system, as teachers feel that the predominant socio-political atmosphere in Zimbabwe curtails meaningful delivery of GCED.⁵² Another agenda has hijacked the desire to educate students through genuine GCED to indoctrinate them for the sake of narrow partisan interests. As such, teachers find it challenging to teach and encourage students to be respectful, tolerant and good collaborators when some leaders from the government of Zimbabwe, through hate speech directed at minority groups, go against the values of GCED.⁵³

Political Environment/ Geopolitical Conflicts

The geopolitical conflicts constitute a significant obstacle to the implementation of GCED, as both teachers and students deliberately neglect topics linked to social division and fighting in their societies.⁵⁴ This postulates that some environments create classroom environments that limit space and pedagogical support to discuss issues connected to ethnicity critically.⁵⁵ For instance, with South Sudan gaining independence in 2011, and a civil war since 2013, ethnic violence and national identity are not well defined, and local and national heritage are rooted in ethnic identities; these issues become too sensitive and controversial to teach or discuss in class.

Moreover, there are no laws and regulations or legislative texts on GCED.⁵⁶ There is evidence of a lack of cooperation from parents regarding GCED, and it comes as a sabotage of efforts to promote GCED. Cultural misunderstanding of the concept of GCED, as they argue the term should be contextualised based on cultural background, due to a lack of acceptance of some topics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, the study recommends that the implementation GCED needs support from the national level, right through to the classroom, in several ways, including enacting policies that support it and stipulating how it should be implemented. The study found that the key challenge impeding the smooth implementation of GCED is resistance and lack of support from key stakeholders such as religion and politicians; therefore, the study recommends an inclusive approach that involves all stakeholders throughout the process. This will ensure there is less resistance.

⁵⁰ Miri Yemini, "Global/Local Nexus: Between Global Citizenship and Nationalism in a Super-Diverse London School," *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 27, no. 2–3 (July 3, 2018): 271–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2018.1429946>.

⁵¹ William Mpfu, "Xenophobia as Racism: The Colonial Underside of Nationalism in South Africa," *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies* 3, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.13169/intcritdivstud.3.2.0033>.

⁵² Simbarashe Gukurume, "New Pentecostal Urbanities in Harare: Landscapes of Everyday Life and Visions of the Future," *African Identities*, July 22, 2024, 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2024.2381483>.

⁵³ Shalote Chipamaunga et al., "Response to the Impact of COVID-19 by Health Professions Education Institutions in Africa: A Case Study on Preparedness for Remote Learning and Teaching," *Smart Learning Environments* 10, no. 1 (2023): 31.

⁵⁴ Heela Goren and Miri Yemini, "The Global Citizenship Education Gap: Teacher Perceptions of the Relationship between Global Citizenship Education and Students' Socio-Economic Status," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 67 (October 2017): 9–22, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.05.009>.

⁵⁵ Seehawer and Breidlid, "Dialogue between Epistemologies as Quality Education. Integrating Knowledges in Sub-Saharan African Classrooms to Foster Sustainability Learning and Contextually Relevant Education."

⁵⁶ Al'Abri et al., "Achieving Sustainable Development by Promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCED): The Role of School Principals."

Moreover, the study found that teachers and school principals do not teach some topics for fear of being labelled unpatriotic and, in some cases, for fear that the topics may accentuate the ethnical and regional conflicts. Hence, the study recommends that there should be total autonomy of schools and putting in place instruments that protect teachers and school principals against victimisation; this will help them freely teach topics deemed sensitive, controversial and contested. This process promotes the full implementation of GCED.

Lastly, the study found that there is confusion surrounding the concept of GCED among teachers, learners and school principals mainly due to limited training, and the unavailability of textbooks and other teaching materials, as such, the study recommends that the governments unveil funding for researchers to do more research and write more teaching materials that will support the teaching of GCED as well as doing conferences and workshops that unpacks and train teachers and school principals this concept of GCED.

CONCLUSION

History education is an important subject at the secondary level across the globe, and valuable insights were gained in this systematic literature review, especially on the conceptualisation of GCED, strategies and challenges experienced by teachers in understanding and operationalising GCED in their teaching and learning processes. The review identified several gaps in the literature, including a lack of an agreeable definition of GCED, which would help teachers better understand the conceptualisation and operationalisation of History for GCED. The research also reviewed several insights into how the implementation of GCED is being affected by several factors, among them is the fear of teaching sensitive and controversial topics as well as the absence of a conducive geopolitical environment for teachers to discuss freely some of the concepts of GCED like human rights, topics on ethnicity and well as topics that seem to threaten national identity and patriotism. Furthermore, the findings of this study also highlighted that although GCED concepts can be infused in any subject, History is the best-suited subject, as by its very nature, it is designed to inculcate analytical skills and an understanding of national Histories. Despite the potential that History has to drive the GCED concepts, the study reveals that there is still confusion and misunderstanding about what GCED means and how it should be implemented. Therefore, future research should clarify and propose the best way to implement it. In addition, this review highlighted the challenges of history education in teaching History Global Citizenship while also highlighting gaps. The findings have important implications for practice, policy, and research, calling for a more systematic and inclusive approach to integrating GCED into history education.

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