



Review

Why not transform the world? UNAI GRACE School for Achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract

The world is facing global issues such as climate change, clean energies, moral decay, materialism, etc. The origins of these global issues were man-made and man-induced and therefore only a major paradigm shift in human mindset and behavior could solve these global issues we face today. However, the current education systems focused on skill set development to contribute to the individual, corporate, and national prosperity. The current education systems have neglected to teach the importance of human morality; honesty, integrity and the social responsibilities of global citizenship such as sustainable growth. To promote intellectual and social responsibility of higher education institutions, the United Nations launched UNAI (the United Nations Academic Impact) in November 2010, and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015. In response to the urgent need of the global initiative to implement Global Citizenship Education for transformation of the 21st Century, the world first UNAI GRACE (Globally Responsible Advanced Citizenship Education) School was initiated in Korea. It was initiated for all universities around the world for intense exchanges of education programs, research and development, and especially for developing countries educating global entrepreneurship for their sustainable development.

Keywords: Climate Change, Sustainable, Transformative, Honesty, Responsibility, GRACE

INTRODUCTION

New age demands a new paradigm of higher education. Each era produced its own problems as well as its own benefits, with the problems getting progressively more serious as we marched into successive eras. As this occurs, a greater need for education was required, carrying progressively higher dimensions of significance. The industrial age was accompanied by pollution and environmental degradation that started out as local, national, and then global issues. The major problem in this information era is privacy and the enormous power of the technology that can cause a major global disruption in international commerce by unleashing its catastrophic consequences if used wrongly. In bio-economy era in the future, the issue may be even greater; i.e. ethics with its potential impact on the very existence of the human being and all living species on earth, with consequences in epic proportions. The only way to address and alleviate these problems is comprehensive higher education for future global leaders addressing not only the academic

elements, but also physical, moral, spiritual aspects with an overall global perspective (Kim, 2006)

Now, we moved from the industrial age of the 20th Century to globalizing the 21st Century. The three essential attributes of the 21st Century education were suggested to be "globalization", the movement from finite borders to infinite-borderlessness, "humanization", human advancement beyond materialism, and "futurization", from present to future-eternal (Kim, 2010). Thinking and working globally will be critical for survival and prosperity in the 21st Century for all mankind sharing one globe. As global citizens, we are required to develop a global mindset: i.e. increase our capacity to think and work on a global intercultural basis. This can be accomplished through new transformative higher education that meets the challenges of the 21st Century.

During the 20th Century industrial era, standardized and tangible products were massively manufactured and the volume of production was an important barometer for

success of industrial prosperity of the country. To meet the requirements of that era, higher education was very narrowly focused. It was focused on mastering in its own department such as mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, biology, economics, law, medicine, etc. to be successful. However, we are now living in a different era. The 21st Century is characterized by software-centered, intangible, highly customized and diversified services which integrate all aspect of life; biology is not independent of economics or law. In order to survive in this life and globalizing era, one needs to be internationally and multi-disciplinary educated. Moreover, the life-cycle of knowledge and information is becoming shorter. The knowledge gained from textbooks becomes obsolete by the time students graduate. Therefore, we need to change the way we educate college students to be able to react and be prepared to this ever changing environment.

New Educational Paradigm: Global Citizenship Education

The 21st Century calls for a new transformative educational paradigm. We have to learn to use our critical creative thinking and analytical reasoning skills to assemble and reconcile seemingly contradictory information to deal with problems that are not easily defined. College education must be inter-and trans-disciplinary to teach how to explore the unknown world, challenge the unprecedented issues, and strengthen the creative ability. Education needs to be able to go beyond academic knowledge; we need Global Citizenship Education. UNESCO defines that Global Citizenship Education is a new educational paradigm for formation and cultivation of global citizenship in the globalizing world (UNESCO, 2014)

Why should we commit to Global Citizenship Education? It required not only the academic training in expertise, but also the cultivation of mindsets, values, and attitudes. Challenges of poverty, terror, violence, and climate change which we are facing are interconnected. The world is becoming more and more chaotic and out of order, followed by "Entropy" of Thermodynamics Second Law (Kim, 2014). What are the basic causes of challenges? They are mainly originated by man-made and man-induced behavior and characteristics. Humanity stands at the center of these global challenges. How can we transform the world into a more harmonious and ordered world? We, human beings, should engage to solve these global issues. How can we change human beings? The only solution is a new transformative educational paradigm. We must shift from disordered chaotic "Entropic" educational paradigm to ordered harmonious "Syntropic" paradigm. As Nobel Prize laureate Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi for the discovery of Vitamin C stated in 1977, entropy is the universal law

governing material world leading to disintegration and decay, while syntropy is the universal law governing living lives (Szent-Gyorgyi, 1977). Instead of disintegration and decay, syntropy leads living systems towards more and harmonious forms of organization, which is opposite of entropy (Vannini, 2005). For sustainable transformation of the world, transition from entropy to syntropy is required. In order to transform this disordered chaotic entropic world into ordered harmonious syntropic world, we cannot overstress the important role of sustainable education. Sustainable education is the key to transform human mind and our world.

How can we achieve sustainable education? Humanity as central agents should be conceived in discovering sustainable solutions to take care of economic development, social inclusion and environmental protection. In other words, a generation with mere skills and competence could not solve these issues. Creative capacity and sustainable knowledge should be cultivated on the rich soil of dignified human characteristics.

However, the current educational system does not provide solution. I believe that through a new transformative Global Citizenship Education this is achievable. It is almost impossible to solve these problems fundamentally with current educational system. It mainly pursued the economic growth and development for one's own individual, corporate, and national prosperity. Current college education was very narrow and highly unsustainable to face the challenges of this ever changing fast dynamic world. It also lacked one core aspect that I call the "human aspect" (Lewis, 2007). Current educational system neglected to teach and emphasize the importance of honesty, integrity and responsibility – the basic characteristics of human being (Kronman, 2008).

Figure 1 depicts comprehensive Global Citizen Education in a form of a tree. Global Citizenship Education should be built on solid basis of responsibility, honesty, and integrity. This will serve as a basis of education. From that, the three main branches of the tree represent the 3 key agenda of Global Citizenship Education – Economy, Environment, and Global Society. The overlapping branches signify that economy and global society are inseparable and that they should be "fair". The overlapping branches of economy and environment should be "feasible" that it should be achievable goals. The overlapping branches of environment and global society should be "fit" meaning one agenda should not dominate the other.

The core area in the middle containing the three overlapping areas of "fair", "feasible", and "fit" corresponds to Global Citizenship Education. The core area of intersecting economy, environment, and global society also represents Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as "Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". (UN SDGs,



Figure 1 Comprehensive Global Citizenship Education



Figure 2: Air View of UNAI GRACE School

2016). The 17 SDGs were adopted unanimously by the 193 countries of the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015.

Current educational system not only lacks the foundation of the tree (Responsibility, Honesty, and Integrity), it is isolated and fragmented by departmental education. Without the moral and ethical foundation, education is very unsustainable and without a basis. College education has a responsibility to make this change. College education needs to require teaching Global Citizenship Education in their classrooms which

encompasses not only knowledge but also values of humanity. Global Citizenship Education will transform the world.

Implementation of Global Citizenship Education

With the vision to establish this new educational paradigm, I served as the founding President of Handong Global University in Pohang, Korea in 1995. Serving 19 years as the President of Handong Global University, I



Figure 3: Six educational Principles of GRACE School

found that the goal of a university is to positively influence these three areas: education, research, and society. I also realized that the ultimate purpose of education could only be achieved when the university provided the training of knowledge together with the cultivation of human characteristic. When education was done in the right manner, other goals – the area of enhancing research and contributing to society – will naturally be accomplished. Students will research to acquire knowledge, and knowledge in the hands of a person possessing responsibility, honesty, and integrity will be used for the society.

Therefore, a true university starts from a balance of knowledge education and human characteristic education. The United Nations has committed to Global Citizenship Education (UNSDGs, 2016). Global Citizenship Education appeared as an umbrella concept that incorporates the different streams of education. The significance of education was reflected in the UN's agenda with Global Citizenship Education as one of the key education initiatives, along with the expansion of access to education and the improvement of education quality. As a result, education was charted in the 4th Goal of UN SDGs. However, Global Citizenship Education should not be restricted to the Goal 4.

In 2010, the United Nations also launched the United Nations Academic Impact, urging institutions of higher education around the world to join the UN initiatives (UNAI, 2010). UNAI currently aligned with around 1,200 universities worldwide with aiming to achieve intellectual

and social responsibilities through higher education. At the General Assembly on November 30th, 2015, the United Nations adopted a resolution that recognizes UNAI's significant role in fostering global citizenship by “filling knowledge gap and facilitating better understanding of the core principles and actions of the United Nations”.

Korea Association of Academic Impact in support of UNAI (UNAI Korea) held UNAI Seoul Forum to make an occasion to convene academia, researchers, government and international organizations to review current status and to set future direction towards Global Citizenship Education. On November 4th, 2016, the 3rd UNAI Seoul Forum was taken place in Seoul, Korea. The title of the Forum was “Global Citizenship Education: Directions and Platforms for its Implementation in Higher Education” hosted and organized by UNAI Korea and Handong Global University. More than 200 global participants from academia reassured the importance of implementing Global Citizenship Education acknowledging that the current educational system does not provide solution to global challenges (Kim, 2006)

Although we are not living in the 20th Century, the current educational system still remains unchanged, pursuing mainly economic growth and development. Furthermore, current college education focuses on building knowledge and neglects to nurture human beings to focus on honesty, integrity, and the importance of responsibility which should form the basis of education as illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 4: Founding Philosophies of UNAI GRACE School to Achieve SDGs

UNAI GRACE (Globally Responsible Advanced Citizenship) School

In response to the urgent need of the initiative to implement Global Citizenship Education, UNAI Korea is now in the process of launching UNAI GRACE (Globally Responsible Advanced Citizenship Education) School in partnership with Handong Global University, figure 2.

UNAI GRACE School will focus on providing a holistic education that is founded on focusing on responsibility, honesty, and integrity to form the basis of education and also teach the importance of global society, environment, and economy. Handong Global University, as one of UNAI’s 10 Global Hub Universities, initiated to foster capacity building in higher education. UNAI GRACE School located in Pohang, Korea, will open to all colleges and universities around the world for intense exchanges of education, research, and development. It will be a place to accomplish the global educational initiative of Global Citizenship Education, as a force to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goals and ultimately transform the world.

UNAI GRACE School will be the world first institution to implement Global Citizenship Education. Its diverse programs will be designed based on six educational principles implied by “E.D.I.S.O.N” figure 3.

“E”: Education of responsibility, honesty, and integrity as fundamentals.

“D”: Dynamic trans-disciplinary education for inculcating actual problem solving capability.

“I”: Innovative entrepreneurship and development for

sustainable economy.

“S”: Synergistic outcome through team work and collaboration.

“O”: Open and borderless international cooperation for peace.

“N”: Nurturing mindset of preserving the ecosystem for a sustainable world.

In order to practice Global Citizenship education in the right way together, I would like share the founding philosophies of Global Citizenship Education as the shape of the railroad “I” shape representing a framework of Global Citizenship Education, see figure 4 above. The foundation of this framework represented by the bottom line of the railroad shape is related to holistic comprehensive education to grow in responsibility, honesty and integrity. The pillar means capacity building for creative entrepreneurship and sustainable environment as the path to global advanced citizen. The roof line completes the framework by representing the centralized education for global citizen. The current educational system excludes to build foundation of the moral values; honesty, integrity and responsibility. However, capacity should be built based on values of human beings. This is the only way to craft a new form of global citizens to transform the world.

In partnership with Handong Global University, UNAI GRACE School will provide integrated Global Citizenship Education program in three areas: Global Entrepreneurship, Protection of Climate Change, and Global Education. Every program will include Global Citizenship Education empowering students to realize

one's own rights and obligation to promote a better world and future. A lot of universities recently attempt to include Global Citizenship Education in their programs. However, one aspect that sets apart Global Citizenship Education in UNAI GRACE School from others is that capacity building in UNAI GRACE School will go beyond simply performing tasks. It will change mindsets and attitudes of the students by establishing capacity building after human characteristics (honesty, integrity, and responsibility) are nurtured. Capacity building in UNAI GRACE School will go beyond simply performing tasks. It will change mindsets and attitudes.

The educational programs of UNAI GRACE School will also contribute to achieve SDGs. Among them, Global Entrepreneurship will also be one of the focuses, as entrepreneurship is a catalyst for development by reducing poverty, creating jobs and enabling sustainable growth. The curriculum includes comprehensive areas of entrepreneurship from global business to international law, technology, and liberal arts. Beyond these practical curriculums, the educational programs of UNAI GRACE School will emphasize two more distinctive aspects: changing mindset and building ethical foundation, as the sustainable success of entrepreneurship is predicated on responsibility, honesty, and integrity.

CONCLUSION

The fundamental purpose of education is to teach what it means to live fully as human beings. However, education has become mainly a means to produce man-power for economic growth rather than celebrate the value of human beings. Education has become very narrow and to certain extent self-centered and an education overhaul has been long overdue. It is time to change the ultimate goal of education from one's own success to the education for one's own country. We currently witness the outcome of the old education paradigm; moral corruption, division of society, terror, and environmental destruction. It has become so severe that it threatens the survival of humankind. Education not only needs to fill in the gaps of the current educational system but also provide vision for the future. It is my firm belief that Global Citizenship Education will transform the world.

We are now living in the unprecedented era of 21st Century where sustainability is directly linked to our survival. Education must change to prepare the sustainability of our world. It should be on the forefront finding global solutions for global issues. Transformative advanced global citizenship education is the key to restore the disordered chaotic "entropic" world into an ordered harmonious "syntropic" world.

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