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Research article

# Integrating planetary citizenship as a cross-curricular theme and a whole-school approach: using a value-creating approach to learning

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## Abstract

This article reflects on the double planetary crises of climate impacts and Covid-19 from a study of certain Indigenous perspectives. An early review of the impact of these crises suggests the importance of resilience at the national and regional level to combat these challenges. Value-creating global citizenship education is a pedagogical approach developed from a study of certain Indigenous perspectives to enhance the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and beyond. The key focus of this approach is to build resilience and hope through engaged relationships between learners and their natural, social and educational environments. Using this approach, education for planetary citizenship is proposed as a cross-curricular theme, and a whole-school orientation for education across nation states, within formal and non-formal settings.

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Under this banner, the study of human relationship to Nature and its exploitation, risks such as climate change crisis, threats from global pandemics and lessons from Green Schools and Eco-Schools are suggested as focal points of study. In discussing these issues, this article enacts a dialogic engagement with multiple world views that brings into focus different ways of thinking about ourselves, society and Nature, such as reflected in the Earth Charter, which can enhance the intercultural dimension of education.

**Keywords** planetary citizenship; global citizenship education; education for sustainable development; Soka education; value-creating global citizenship education; climate change crisis; Covid-19; Green Schools; Eco-Schools; Earth Charter

## Introduction

This article is framed around two key questions: How can education be reframed in light of the environmental crisis? And how do we address teaching about sustainability based on alternative paradigms? In responding to the environmental crisis, this article reflects on the double planetary crises of climate impacts and Covid-19 from a study of selected Indigenous and less widely known perspectives. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021: n.p.) has declared the issue of climate change to be the 'single biggest health threat facing humanity'. Youth-led protests around the world have championed this cause, especially since 2019. The second planetary crisis, which has had a fast-moving and sweeping effect on human life, is the Covid-19 emergency, declared a pandemic by the WHO in March 2020.

Scientific warnings, for example by Johan Rockström et al. (2009), suggest a correlation between the global Covid-19 pandemic and environmental crises: 'deforestation and the wildlife trade heighten the likelihood of viruses leaping the species boundary; air pollution increases human vulnerability by weakening respiratory systems; and the expansion of air travel allows epidemics to spread more quickly' (Watts, 2020: n.p.). Minninger et al. (2020) highlight the impact of Covid-19 on countries with the weakest health systems, the increase in poverty and hunger among the poorest populations whose already weakened immune systems make them more vulnerable to the virus and the lack of clean water and adequate sanitation, which means that *physical distancing* is almost impossible in many settlements and slums. The lack of, or delayed access to, vaccinations and booster shots across countries, especially in the Global South, suggests continued gaps in the global health system.

The discussions in this article argue that the two issues of climate change and the Covid-19 crisis must be placed at the heart of education for planetary citizenship from a human rights perspective, as reflected, for example, in the resolution adopted by the United Nations (UN, 2022) General Assembly declaring access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to be a universal human right.

While there is an increased emphasis on a knowledge- and skills-based approach adopted, particularly by policymakers, to meet the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), this article contributes to a values-based approach that is lacking in the discourse on education for social justice and sustainability (see Bourn, 2021; Hicks, 2018; Mitchell and Stones, 2022; Scoffham and Rawlinson, 2022). Value-creating global citizenship education is offered as a pedagogical approach from a study of selected Eastern and other Indigenous, values-based perspectives. This approach has been developed by taking the worldwide phenomenon of Soka studies in education as the focal point of enquiry, and through contextual and comparative studies with other integrated perspectives, such as proposed by the Indian political leader and educator, Mahatma Gandhi. One of the primary agendas of this approach is to draw the contributions of voices from the margins into the mainstream discourse on education for sustainable development (ESD). The key focus of this approach is to build resilience and hope through engaged relationships between learners and their natural, social and educational environments. Using this approach, education for planetary citizenship is proposed as a cross-curricular theme, as well as a whole-school orientation. Developing planetary citizenship must urgently become a top priority for education across nation states, within formal, non-formal, informal and lifelong learning settings. Under this banner, the following must be taken as focal points of engagement:

- the study of human relationship to Nature and its exploitation

- risks such as climate crisis and threat from global pandemics
- lessons from Green Schools and Eco-Schools, for example, researching these schools as sites of transformation of a culture of anthropocentrism, and humanity's unsustainable consumption and exploitation of Nature and various Species
- the need to engage with values-based perspectives, for example, as found within the Earth Charter (ECI, 2022) for a more intercultural approach to education that can bring into focus alternative ways of thinking, being, acting and living that have informed various groups of people and led to the development of sustainable communities worldwide.

The term *planetary citizen* (instead of *world citizen* or *global citizen*) is used to recognise the rights of Nature and all Species, as advocated by the UN Harmony with Nature Knowledge Network, and elaborated later in this article. Further, echoing Moraes and Freire (2020; see also ANGEL, 2022), who find that the phrase *planetary citizenship* could be used as an inclusive term that reflects Indigenous voices, this article suggests that action for planetary citizenship must draw from the vast repository of human wisdom, and from different cultures and traditions, such as considered during the drafting process of the Earth Charter (as also articulated in Principle 16f [ECI, 2022] – see Vilela and Corcoran, 2005).

## Value-creating global citizenship education as a pedagogical approach

The onset of Covid-19, along with the climate crisis, can be viewed as an opportunity for constructive change. Hope and resilience as normative values can move education beyond the current impasse. Studies, including early reviews of the impact of the double crises of climate impacts and Covid-19, suggest the importance of resilience at the national and regional level to combat these challenges, which have especially affected the most vulnerable people and communities around the world (Minninger et al., 2020; Selby and Kagawa, 2020). Further, the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022: 35) calls for 'climate resilient development', described in the report as the 'process of implementing greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation measures to support sustainable development for all'. As the report suggests, climate impacts and risks widen social inequities and make exposed geographical sites more vulnerable, and the impact of these conditions on vulnerable and marginalised communities in turn undermines efforts to reach the 1.5-degree path recommended by the 2017 Paris Agreement and achieve sustainable development.

To provide some context for the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, with active participation by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As stated on the website of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020: n.p.), these 'Global Goals were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030'. Of these 17 goals, SDG 4 aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (UN, 2015: n.p.). Target 4.7 of SDG 4 addresses ESD and related approaches, such as global citizenship education (GCED), to foster global citizens who can meet the challenges of our time. The UN has recognised ESD as an integral element of SDG 4 on education, and a key enabler of all the other SDGs (UNESCO, 2019).

While ESD and GCED have aimed to provide a boost to the momentum for quality education and lifelong learning, existing and emerging scholarly work suggests several gaps in their orientation, including a dominant Western agenda and framework (Andreotti and de Souza, 2012; Bourn, 2020; Dill, 2013; Jooste and Heleta, 2017; Pasha, 2015; Sherman, 2017; Tarozzi and Torres, 2016). Situated within such scholarly discourse, value-creating global citizenship education is proposed as a pedagogical approach for sustainable development. This approach offers perspectives based on an integrated view of life developed from a study of certain Indigenous perspectives.

As mentioned, this approach has been developed by taking Soka studies in education as the focal point of enquiry. Soka or value-creating education is an approach to curriculum that emerged in Japan in the early twentieth century. It is a learner-centred approach focused on the health, well-being and happiness of each student. The concept of happiness that informs this approach is regarded as the ability to lead a contributive life for the welfare of self and others (Ikeda, 2021: 6). It is the experience of growth, and the fulfilment of one's abilities or innate potential, which can be developed through the

process of leading a contributive life. As explained by the Soka progenitor, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1972: 25), 'Creating value is, in fact, our very humanity. When we praise persons for their "strength of character", we are really acknowledging their superior ability to create value.' Value-creating global citizenship education is an outcome of such studies on value-creating education, and education for global citizenship as Target 4.7 of the UN Education 2030 Agenda (Sharma, 2018, 2020). It urges that a belief in the human capacity and resilience to transform challenges and create value needs to be central to the accomplishment of the SDGs and beyond.

A core argument of proposing this approach to learning is that in contrast to the dominant individualistic neoliberal paradigm for ESD and GCED, a value-creating education framework at the most basic level aims at enhancing relationships between learners and their natural, social and educational environments, with the aim of enhancing learners' resilience and capacity to transform challenges into creative solutions that can benefit the individual self, as well as contribute to the welfare of other people. The premise for this argument is that a shift in paradigm and perspectives will have a significant bearing on the praxis and the three interrelated domains of learning – the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural. These correspond to the four pillars of learning described in Jacques Delors et al.'s (1996) report, *Learning: The treasure within*: Learning to know, to do, to be and to live together. This report, published by UNESCO in 1996, proposed an integrated vision for education, and it continues to inspire thinking on education worldwide. It has been critically revisited several times for fresh insights into ways of challenging education for cognitive, behavioural and socio-emotional dimensions of learning.

For developing the practice of value-creating global citizenship education, six themes are proposed that aim to promote:

1. a sense of interdependence, common humanity and a global outlook
2. an awareness of climate change as planetary citizens
3. a commitment to reflective, dialogic and transformative learning
4. a commitment to sustainable development through intercultural perspectives
5. a belief in the value-creating capacity for social and self-actualisation, uncertainty and change
6. an understanding of peace and non-violence as being central to the human rights agenda. (Sharma, 2020: 7)

Each of these themes is developed in response to the present discourse and practice of education for a global content that can be infused or incorporated within formal, non-formal and informal education settings. It can be integrated according to age-specific and student-specific requirements. The discussions and strategies for action proposed through this approach are aimed at fostering youth as citizens. It is also aimed at research scholars and practitioners, and at all those who are interested in promoting sustainability and GCED through schools, civil society organisations and other learning spaces.

Among the six themes proposed for value-creating global citizenship education, two themes contribute to the core arguments of this article and are briefly discussed here. Theme 2 broadens an awareness of climate change as planetary citizens, based on a study of intercultural perspectives (Sharma, 2020). It emphasises the importance of paying attention to different philosophical understandings and critical and values-based perspectives that can challenge the structural inequalities and inequities that act as barriers to creating a sustainable world, as well as bringing forth diverse and creative solutions to global issues, such as environmental degradation and climate change. Further, it can propel people and communities to take part in local, national, regional and global solutions as engaged citizenry whose values inform their action for constructive personal, social and environmental transformation, as discussed below through the example of the Kenyan Green Belt Movement.

Another theme, Theme 5, discusses learning for uncertainty and change, for example, resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, through developing the learner's value-creating capacity for social and self-actualisation, and expands the current emphasis in global education on individual empowerment to fostering citizens for a contributive life (Sharma, 2020). Broadly speaking, this theme advocates an approach to issues concerned with social justice, equality and equity through developing the value-creating capacity of the learner to contribute to individual benefit and social good in any situation. In drawing on discussions related to these two themes from previous studies (Sharma 2018, 2020), this article engages with the topic of education for planetary citizenship.

A central focus within both of these themes is to question humanity's long-term approach to Nature and all life. In the current world scenario, the two global crises discussed in this article – climate change

and the Covid-19 pandemic – are both largely an outcome of humanity's long-term approach to Nature and all Species, and the underlying desire for conquest and progress. This article argues that in teaching about issues such as climate change as an anthropogenic phenomenon, the focus within education must be to re-engage in questions about the relationship between human beings, society and all forms of life, as promoted by certain Indigenous perspectives and lifestyles.

Overall, a value-creating educational environment can enhance meaningful life-to-life connections among people – between students and teachers, schools and communities, and so on. The argument here is that in addressing the issues of climate crisis, and other sustainable goals, there needs to be a more substantial engagement with the human/personal dimension of sustainable development. The UN's 2030 Agenda 'seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and strengthen universal peace by integrating and balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental' (UNESCO, 2018: 3; for a critical review, see Agbedahin, 2019). In addition to these dimensions, this article argues for detailed attention to be paid to the ethical, moral and human/personal dimensions of sustainable development.

To elucidate, let us take the example of the Kenyan Green Belt Movement pioneered by Wangari Maathai and inspired by African tradition, such as the mythology surrounding the sycamore fig tree (Webster, 2012; see also Ikeda, 2012; Soka Gakkai International, 2015). Kenyan folklore and the traditional narratives of the Kikuyu people, the largest ethnic group in Kenya, have long revered and worshipped the fig tree as sacred. Maathai advocated the importance of the fig tree's presence for the entire ecosystem and for the people who depend on the soil and water to live (Webster, 2012). She encouraged rural women to plant trees to combat the negative effects of soil erosion and forest devastation that were causing them social and economic anxieties. Their initiative was confronted by the dictatorial political regime and, consequently, a nationwide movement to protect the natural environment developed that had constructive impacts in terms of economic growth, defending human rights and promoting democracy within the nation. The example of this movement illustrates how, in engaging with the personal dimension – that is, the needs, interests and values of people and communities – it was possible to realise the environmental dimension of sustainable development in terms of protecting the natural environment. It also addressed the social dimension, in terms of defending human rights within a dictatorial political regime, as well as promoting economic growth and the dimension of sustainable development. However, it all started by engaging the human/personal dimension and the agency of individual people.

It might also not be too much of a generalisation to state that due to factors ranging from the dictates of war and conflict to the worldwide influence of neoliberal capitalism, humanity is being forced to move away from various cultural traditions and the constructive effects that they have had upon people's lives and communities through successive generations. For example, the Japanese thinker, and successor of Makiguchi, Daisaku Ikeda reflects on Gandhi's sense of absolute optimism as arising from the kind of deductive thinking that is characteristic of certain Eastern understandings. Elaborating on his view of Gandhi, Ikeda (2010: 146–7) writes:

His belief in non-violence and justice grew out of his absolute trust in humanity . . . His method represents the essence of the type of deductive reasoning that, in the characteristic way of Asian philosophy, always begins in a reflective return to the self. Because it was unconditional, his optimism knew no deadlock or impasse, but promised a vision of unbounded hope and success.

In considering the relevance of these discussions to the task of education, the questions worth considering are related to integrating a more intercultural approach to learning from a study of diverse perspectives. For example, to ask, how and where do we fit in less widely known perspectives within the discourse and practice of ESD and GCED? and how can ESD and GCED facilitate creative solutions to global issues through an exposure to varied perspectives? that is, what are the implications of the examples of diverse voices and perspectives in one's own context? Suggestions in this article include using a value-creating lens to select and integrate an intercultural approach to the curriculum through using a value-creating paradigm that draws on the wisdom from various cultural traditions that appreciate the interdependence of life. Each theme for value-creating global citizenship education helps to develop what Ikeda (2002) calls the living wisdom that can be learned from various cultural traditions that appreciate the unity and connectedness of life, such as the Desana people of the Amazon and the Iroquois people of North America. Ikeda (2021: 6) proposes as an essential element of a global citizen

'the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life'. These alternative ways of thinking about human and all life, and diverse eco-visions, can propel learning for Earth justice, as discussed in this article.

## **Education for planetary citizenship: strategies and approaches**

Such consideration of selected diverse perspectives from worldwide examples works to disrupt dominant ontological and epistemological assumptions of Western liberal capitalism that undergird contemporary instantiations of education for global citizenship. It enacts a dialogic engagement with multiple world views that bring into focus different ways of thinking about ourselves, society, Nature and the universe, and the intercultural dimension of education.

In spite of the urgent need to educate for planetary citizenship, as a UNESCO (2022: 3) finding suggests, 'climate change education and sustainable consumption and production are less often reflected in curricula and teacher education respectively than other themes'. UNESCO (2022: 3) further states that 'ESD and GCED are generally covered in teacher training and student assessments, though the testing of values, attitudes and behaviours is less common than of knowledge and skills'. In addressing teaching about sustainability for planetary citizenship, I use a values-based pedagogical approach developed from a study of less widely known perspectives.

Using this approach, planetary citizenship is proposed as a cross-curricular theme and a whole-school approach within education across nation states, within formal and non-formal settings. This theme can be used to develop age-specific learning objectives, with assessments focused on the development of a global awareness within institutions of learning. As a starting point to education for planetary citizenship, it is necessary to address the causal factors behind global issues. The Covid-19 pandemic can be taken as an initial point to understand the interdependence between humans, Nature and all Species, including a study of zoonotic diseases (zoonoses) that are caused by harmful viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi, and spread between non-human animals and people. Moving on, teaching about climate change can aim to show how human beings have negatively impacted Nature and the limits to which Nature can support human and all life on this planet. The theme of planetary citizenship must provide the space to engage in discussions related to the anthropogenic causes of global issues such as global warming and climate change. An Earth-centred approach must be at the heart of such education for planetary citizenship, which studies the nature of interdependence between all forms of life from a biocentric position (see Sant et al., 2018) – for example, in the work carried out by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), an independent intergovernmental body established by states to strengthen the science–policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.

Further, institutions and initiatives that uphold Earth-centred perspectives include the efforts made by Earth Charter International (ECI) at the University of Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica, and the UN forum Harmony with Nature, based in the US. The Earth Charter (ECI, 2022), as the name indicates, is an ethical and values-based framework, with 16 ethical principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the twenty-first century. This people's charter was launched in 2000 and since then it has been endorsed by over 6,000 organisations, including many governments and international organisations. It is considered to be a soft law document, as outlined by the ECI (2022) website. Soft law documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are considered to be morally, but not legally, binding on state governments that agree to endorse and adopt them, and they often form the basis for the development of hard law. The four pillars and interdependent principles of the Earth Charter are: respect and care for the community of life; ecological integrity; social and economic justice; and democracy, nonviolence and peace.

As with the Earth Charter, the UN Harmony with Nature programme has also advanced the need to promote an interdependent view of all life (<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/>). This initiative is an integral part of the work on the SDGs. In 2009, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 22 April as International Mother Earth Day. In so doing, member states acknowledged that the Earth and its ecosystems are our common home, and expressed their conviction that it is necessary to promote harmony with Nature in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations. The same year, the General Assembly adopted its first

resolution on harmony with Nature. As a member expert with the UN Harmony with Nature programme, I advocate an Earth-centred world view of mother Nature, also called Earth jurisprudence. The network seeks to advance the implementation of the SDGs, including SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, Target 12.8 of which states, 'By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature' (UN, 2018: n.p.).

An engagement with Earth-centred perspectives, such as that advocated by UN Harmony with Nature and the ECI, can have several constructive outcomes for an education for planetary citizenship and sustainable development. For example, while promoting student action and engagement with sustainability issues, there is also merit in enhancing learners' intercultural understandings through a study of diverse Indigenous perspectives, such as are promoted through these forums. These different world views can shed light on the notions of interdependence, as reflected within diverse cultures and communities. It is also important that students are not taught in a way that leads them to regard themselves as being rescuers of the planet, an image that might inadvertently be promoted through recent video games designed to inform learners about the SDGs (MGIEP, 2022; see also Farrell et al., 2022). An alternative term that is also used fairly often is *custodians of the planet*, which seems to promote the helper–helpee relationship. Sant et al. (2018: 162) describe this relationship in their summary of the contested history and present-day practice of ESD and GCED: 'at the heart of both are key tensions around who is seen as developed or developing and as helper and helpee, and how to challenge those binaries in order to promote a notion of interdependency that is at the core of our earth's sustainability crises'.

It is crucial that students acquire such critical understandings in being educated for planetary citizenship. In his book, *The Rights of Nature*, Boyd (2017), who is a UN Harmony with Nature expert, offers several examples of the legal foundations and constitutional rights being given to Nature and Species across various countries, including through the impact of Indigenous perspectives. Integrating such conversations about Earth-centred law within learning spaces can provide students with the opportunity to further enhance their critical thinking.

Similarly, discussions in class about the Earth Charter can engage with its comprehensive set of values as a global ethical framework, while a more critical analysis aims to locate the values and norms that are absent in this document that originate from religious, cultural or social traditions (see Dower, 2004). Overall, the use of the Earth Charter as a values-based framework can help scholars and practitioners to situate their position within the field of ESD and planetary citizenship. The Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development at UPEACE offers useful materials, including correlations between the Earth Charter and international laws, with an emphasis on environmental law (see Febres, 2012; Rockefeller, 2015; Vilela and Corcoran, 2005).

While it is imperative to equip the learner with accurate facts and information related to climate change through initiatives such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2020) and the Paris Climate Change Agreement under the banner of Action for Climate Empowerment, education for climate change should also engage with the values, interests and perceptions that students bring into the classroom, so as to create a learning environment that reflects different perspectives. This includes welcoming the identities and concerns of students who come from families who do not accept the reality of the climate crisis, as well as acknowledging students' eco-anxiety and the traumatic experience of engaging with the issue of climate change, especially for younger students (see Bryan, 2022; Pihkala, 2020). At the same time, several young people have also taken positive action and have led the campaign to combat the climate crises, for example, the UNFCCC youth champions. An important question that can be raised here is, how can education be oriented in promoting hope for sustainability and global citizenship (see Bourn, 2021)?

Moving ahead, a values-based approach to learning for sustainability can help individual learners to articulate how their personal values align with the action for climate crises and the achievement of other SDGs. Here, Katharine Hayhoe is a pertinent example. Hayhoe, who is an expert on global warming, is also an evangelical Christian. It has been suggested that Hayhoe (2018: n.p.) 'has emerged in recent years as a leading voice sharing the science of climate change to skeptics – many of whom are fellow evangelical churchgoers', and that she 'said it is that same Christianity that fuels her dedication to climate science'. In drawing inspiration from such examples, there is also a need to engage with the scholars and initiatives offering insights about teaching controversial political issues, such as climate change, within the classroom (see Hess and McAvoy, 2015; see also Alstein, 2019; Oxfam, 2018; Sharma, 2020; Vilela,

2021). These insights can be integrated, for example, within UNESCO's (2016a) guidelines on ESD and climate change.

In this context of uncertainty and change, a greater emphasis on Green Schools and Eco-Schools is needed. Although the definitions of these terms vary, these schools place a strong emphasis on addressing sustainability issues through the process of education across the world. Examples include developing an environmental education curriculum and implementing a whole-school transformation, for example, through environmental management policies and student-led strategic activities to develop a greener school campus, which often includes engaging the neighbouring community. These activities allow spaces such as the classroom, school buildings and school grounds to function in a more sustainable manner, with the aim of reducing environmental impacts and costs, creating a healthy environment and developing a sustainable mindset. More scholarly work could also be conducted on these schools relating to the topic of teaching peace through the elimination of violence, for example, through a study of Green Schools and Eco-Schools as sites of transformation of a culture of anthropocentrism.

Moving ahead, future research on student-led actions within these schools, along with youth-led movements on sustainability issues, such as Fridays for Future for climate change could also be included as an important topic of study for future work on education for planetary citizenship. For example, such studies can aim to make links between the two initiatives of ESD and GCED. One of the UNESCO (2016b: 3) guidelines on global citizenship clarifies that ESD and GCED are not to be treated as independent areas of work:

both are concerned with global challenges and actions that are needed to tackle them, while the thematic topics associated with them tend to be specific – global citizenship education is more associated with global challenges related to peace and conflict, and education for sustainable development with global challenges related to environmental warnings and natural resources.

One of the guidelines set forth by Ikeda at Soka University of America (SUA), which he established, is to 'foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity' (Henderson and Ikeda, 2004: 152). Ikeda expresses this in his dialogue with Hazel Henderson, a world-renowned futurist and evolutionary economist. Ikeda comments: 'The "creative coexistence of nature and humanity" summarises the environmental curriculum necessary for future generations. It is completely right for peace-related policies to be part of environmental education' (Henderson and Ikeda, 2004: 152). Ikeda further states that this guideline derives from the philosophy of his predecessor, Makiguchi: 'The idea that true value is manifest only when human beings live in harmony with nature and society permeated all his books, including his *Geography of Human Life*' (Henderson and Ikeda, 2004: 153; see also Ikeda, 2012). The Environmental Studies concentration, of the five concentrations offered by SUA, aims to fulfil this founding principle of the university. As stated on the SUA (2022: n.p.) website, 'The Environmental Studies concentration fulfills one of Soka's founding principles: to "foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity"'.

A more detailed investigation into the call by Ikeda for a 'creative coexistence of nature and humanity' (Henderson and Ikeda, 2004: 152), through learning that takes place within one's local community, can help bring together citizenship and environmental education. As Sant et al. (2018) also point out, these are often taught in separate silos, and they cite Hayward (2012, as cited in Sant et al., 2018: 159), who suggests that bringing them together 'recognises that citizenship is not only legally-defined membership of a political community, but also a state of belonging, feeling affiliation and participation in communities that can extend across national borders and acknowledge intrinsic value of the non-human world'.

Overall, the attempt must be to facilitate discussions through classroom pedagogies that challenge utilitarian ways of treating the environment, while also engaging with diverse perspectives on Nature and all life from the lens of Indigenous world views that generate the socio-emotional disposition of reverence for life, such as the philosophy of dependent origination (*pratitya-samutpada* in Sanskrit), which is central to the Soka paradigm – the view that 'all beings and phenomena exist or occur in relation to other beings or phenomena. Everything is linked to an intricate web of causation and connection – and nothing – whether in the realm of human affairs or of natural phenomena – can exist or occur solely of its own accord' (Ikeda, 1991: 4; see Sharma, 2018, 2020).



Further, critical thinking around how climate change intersects with issues that have to do with people's ideologies and lifestyles can shed light on the unsustainable consumption patterns of living, especially within more affluent societies and communities (Farrell et al., 2022). It also gives students the opportunity to reflect on how rising nationalism across modern nation states impacts climate change, such as by generating rapid fossil fuel-led economic growth, by using money from fossil-fuel companies to support political campaigns and by the way in which climate change has become a partisan issue, for example, in the US (Remnick, 2022).

## Conclusion

To reiterate the arguments of this article, suggestions for planetary citizenship as a cross-curricular theme and a whole-school approach are aimed at providing a space for the discourse and practice of sustainability and the environmental crisis. As an alternative to the dominant neoliberal paradigm, value-creating global citizenship education is introduced as a pedagogical approach. The disposition and agenda of value-creating global citizenship education is to promote criticality for social justice, and value creation for social and self-actualisation, uncertainty and change. The key focus is on enhancing relationships between the individual learner and their natural and social environment. The aim is to build hope and resilience through engaged relationships, and to expand the current focus in education from individual empowerment to bold, collective efforts. Overall, the suggestion is that a value-creating paradigm will help to foster individuals who think critically and can collectively take action for Earth and social justice. Based on the arguments in this article, the following suggestions are offered for future research to enhance GCED, ESD and planetary citizenship, taking the four pillars of learning, as described in Delors et al.'s (1996) report.

- *Learning to know*: Integrate conversations on Earth-centred perspectives in our teaching and daily lives, such as championed by Green Schools and Eco-Schools and promoted by forums such as UN Harmony with Nature and the Earth Charter, with a focus on locating linkages between education for sustainability and global citizenship. Key topics related to the breach of planetary boundaries can be integrated across educational programmes to help foster critically engaged citizens taking the lead in sustainability issues at an individual and collective level – for example, climate justice, biodiversity loss, air pollution, land-use changes and nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, as well as planetary matters at risk, including chemical pollution, soil pollution, freshwater use, ocean acidification and ozone layer damage (see Gough et al., 2020; Scoffham and Rawlinson, 2022).
- *Learning to be*: Enhance notions of interdependence through a study of alternative paradigms and perspectives on self, others, Nature and the universe, as represented within the Earth Charter, with a focus on generating the socio-emotional disposition of respect for the dignity of life, while also, as Ikeda (2012) suggests, encouraging feelings of affection for one's community and the determination to treasure it, inspiring a sense of appreciation for the actions – including the productive and economic activities of others that enhance one's own life – and encouraging daily actions based on that sense of appreciation. Further studies on alternative paradigms can engage diverse forms of knowledge, such as Ubuntu and Buen Vivir, which have emerged from sub-Saharan Africa and South America, respectively, as examples that promote understanding of interdependencies for education as a common good and an interconnected future.
- *Learning to do*: Engage in discussions about what action learners can take in their daily lives within families, schools and communities as planetary citizens. What inspiration can be drawn from the learners' family, faith tradition and other areas that can serve to protect the sanctity and dignity of life within their community? There is a need for a values-based approach to education for sustainability. There will be challenges to securing engagement with alternative paradigms within education, especially in the face of neoliberalism entrenched in political, educational and social structures across modern democratic nation states. However, where can teachers and policymakers find the space to engage diverse perspectives? For example, through a worldwide selection of values-based actions, such as the Green Belt Movement, through stories in pre-kindergarten and through critical engagement for older students, as well as through providing students with more contemporary relevance from climate activists, such as Greta Thunberg and her influence on other youth and people, including through the use of social media, even during the Covid-19 pandemic (see Clark, 2020).

- *Learning to live together*: As Ikeda (2008) shares, there is a need to revisit Makiguchi's notion of a humanitarian competition to solve the global environmental crises, such as climate change. Ikeda (2008: 14) describes humanitarian competition as 'a vision of an international order in which the world's diverse states strive to positively influence each other, to coexist and flourish together rather than pursuing narrowly defined national interests at each other's expense'. At a strategic level, the UN (2020a) goal of 'leave no one behind' can strengthen the focus on lifelong learning and action for the sake of future generations, especially for vulnerable groups such as migrant populations (Laverack, 2018) and children who lack access to basic health, welfare and education (Kharas et al., 2019).

The report by the UN (2020b) on the lack of initiative across nation states to achieve the SDGs and the absence of social contract in many countries, as suggested by the Covid-19 crisis (The Lancet, 2020) are amongst several indications of the urgent need for an awakened citizenry to respond to pressing global issues and planetary crises. The 50th anniversary of Earth Day was marked on 22 April 2020. Voices from across the world, including Greta Thunberg, called for a combined effort to tackle Covid-19 and the climate crisis as a 'new way forward' (Watts, 2020: n.p.). Reflections of deeper global commitment were shown at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021 (UNFCCC, 2021).

Moving ahead, at the policy and institutional level across schools and communities, there is a need to empower youth through listening to their voices, and to support their collective action being taken within communities across the world. These actions to stand up for the Earth and social justice are inspiring examples of hope and resilience. The question for educators and policymakers, and for all those who support the task of education, is to think how best to engage the passion of youth and to participate in an intergenerational dialogue across schools, societies and communities to educate for planetary citizenship aimed at the happiness of the learner, and for a sustainable planet.

## Declarations and conflicts of interest

### Research ethics statement

Not applicable to this article.

### Consent for publication statement

Not applicable to this article.

### Conflicts of interest statement

At time of publication the author is a member expert of the UN Harmony with Nature programme. All efforts to sufficiently anonymise the author during peer review of this article have been made. The author declares no further conflicts with this article.

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