



Implementation of SDG-Based Global Citizenship Education in Inclusive Learning

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<i>Global Citizenship Education 1;</i> <i>SDGs 2;</i> <i>Inclusive Learning 3;</i> <i>Non-Formal Education 4;</i> <i>Community Engagement 5;</i>	<i>This article addresses the urgency of strengthening Global Citizenship Education (GCE) aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to foster inclusive learning practices among marginalized students. The program aimed to integrate SDGs-based GCE principles into community learning activities to promote critical awareness, tolerance, and global responsibility. A participatory action approach was employed involving mentoring sessions, collaborative discussions, project-based learning, and reflective activities. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and participant feedback during the implementation stages. The results indicate increased student engagement, improved understanding of global issues, strengthened intercultural awareness, and enhanced collaborative skills. Learners demonstrated greater sensitivity toward diversity, social justice, and environmental sustainability themes embedded in SDGs values. The implementation also encouraged facilitators to adopt more inclusive and student-centered strategies. These findings highlight that integrating SDGs within GCE frameworks can meaningfully enrich inclusive learning environments in non-formal education settings. The program contributes to advancing inclusive education practices by contextualizing global values into local learning experiences while supporting the development of responsible and socially aware global citizens.</i>

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Global challenges in the twenty-first century, including climate change, social inequality, forced migration, and digital transformation, require educational approaches that cultivate global awareness and shared responsibility. Global Citizenship Education (GCE) has increasingly been recognized as a strategic educational framework to respond to these challenges by fostering critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and ethical engagement among learners (Agoi, 2025). In parallel, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4.7, emphasize the importance of education in promoting sustainable development, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity. Recent studies highlight that integrating GCE with SDGs strengthens learners' global competencies and sustainability-oriented mindsets (Calvo et al., 2025; Monzó-Martínez et al., 2024).

Scholarly attention to GCE has expanded significantly in recent years. A systematic review of Global Citizenship Education research reveals growing implementation across various educational levels; however, most studies focus on formal schooling and higher education contexts (Santamaría-Cárdaba et al., 2024). Empirical research in several Asian contexts further indicates that the operationalization of SDG 4.7 within classroom practices remains uneven and requires innovative pedagogical strategies (Lin, 2026). These findings suggest that while the conceptual discourse on GCE and SDGs is well developed, practical integration within inclusive and non-formal learning environments remains underexplored.

Inclusive education extends beyond access to ensure meaningful participation and equitable learning opportunities, particularly for marginalized communities. Community-based and non-formal educational settings represent strategic spaces for contextualizing global values into local learning experiences. Nevertheless, systematic models that integrate SDGs-based GCE into inclusive community learning practices are still limited in the literature. Therefore, this article aims to describe the integration of SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education into inclusive learning practices within a community-based educational setting and to highlight its contribution to fostering socially responsible, culturally aware, and sustainability-oriented learners.

Problem of The Study

Although Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have gained increasing scholarly and policy attention, their practical integration into inclusive learning environments remains inconsistent. Existing literature predominantly discusses GCE at the conceptual level or within formal educational institutions, particularly at the university level (Monzó-Martínez et al., 2024). While such studies provide valuable theoretical insights, they offer limited guidance on how SDGs-based GCE can be operationalized in community-based and non-formal educational settings.

Recent research indicates that the implementation of SDG 4.7 often encounters pedagogical and contextual challenges, including limited instructional models and insufficient adaptation to local realities (Lin, 2026). Furthermore, systematic reviews reveal that empirical studies focusing on marginalized or vulnerable learner communities are still relatively scarce (Santamaría-Cárdaba et al., 2024). As a result, there is a lack of structured approaches that translate global sustainability principles into inclusive, participatory, and context-sensitive learning activities. Based on this situation, the central problem addressed in this article is how SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education can be meaningfully integrated into inclusive learning practices within a community-based educational setting. This problem emphasizes the need for a pedagogical model that bridges global frameworks and local educational realities while ensuring equitable participation and transformative learning experiences.

Research's State of the Art

Recent scholarly discussions underline the continued relevance of Global Citizenship Education in addressing global crises and sustainability challenges (Agoi, 2025). Empirical studies demonstrate that interdisciplinary and collaborative learning strategies, such as virtual exchanges and project-based activities, can enhance learners' global awareness and engagement with SDGs themes (Calvo et al., 2025). At the higher education level, GCE has been shown to strengthen sustainability-oriented competencies and civic responsibility (Monzó-Martínez et al., 2024).

Moreover, systematic literature reviews confirm the expanding academic interest in GCE research across different educational contexts (Santamaría-Cárdaba et al., 2024). However, these studies also highlight that research tends to concentrate on formal schooling environments and policy analysis rather than practical implementation in non-formal or community-based settings. Studies conducted in Asian contexts further report that translating SDG 4.7 into measurable classroom practices requires innovative and adaptive pedagogical approaches (Lin, 2026). Thus, while theoretical discourse and institutional implementation of GCE are increasingly documented, practical integration within inclusive non-formal learning environments remains insufficiently elaborated. This condition opens space for applied research that demonstrates contextualized implementation strategies.

Gap Study & Objective

Despite the growing body of research on Global Citizenship Education and SDGs integration, limited studies provide empirical descriptions of how SDGs-based GCE can be embedded within inclusive community-based learning

practices. Most existing research focuses on formal education or policy-level analysis, leaving a practical gap in implementation models suitable for marginalized or non-formal educational contexts.

This study addresses that gap by presenting a structured integration of SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education into inclusive learning activities within a community-based setting. The objective of this article is to describe the implementation process, identify its pedagogical contributions, and highlight its role in fostering socially responsible, culturally aware, and sustainability-oriented learners. By doing so, this study contributes to enriching the discourse on inclusive education and offers a contextualized model for integrating global values into local learning environments.

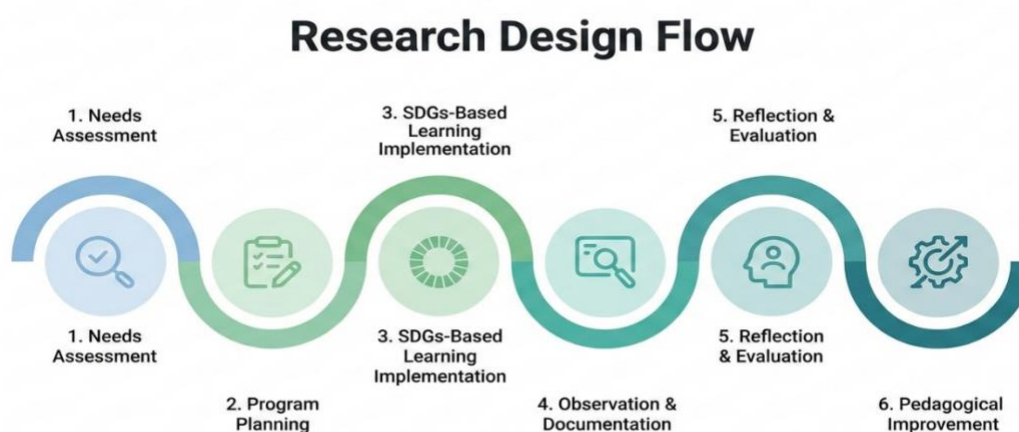
METHOD

Type and Design

This study employed a participatory action research design within a community-based educational framework. Participatory action research was selected to enable collaborative engagement between facilitators and learners while implementing and evaluating SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education (GCE). The research followed cyclical stages consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection to ensure systematic implementation and continuous pedagogical improvement. The intervention aimed to integrate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-based Global Citizenship Education into inclusive learning practices. Learning activities were designed using collaborative discussions, mentoring sessions, project-based learning, and reflective exercises aligned with SDG themes such as quality education, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

The overall research process is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Design Flow



The first stage involved conducting a needs assessment to identify learners' characteristics and relevant SDGs themes. The second stage focused on designing structured learning modules and participatory strategies. The third stage consisted of implementing inclusive SDGs-based learning activities. The fourth stage involved systematic observation and documentation of learner engagement and interaction. Finally, reflection and evaluation were conducted to assess pedagogical contributions and areas for improvement.

Ethical considerations were ensured through voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of participants' identities.

Data and Data Sources

The data used in this study consisted of qualitative descriptive data obtained from program implementation activities. Both primary and secondary data were utilized to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intervention process. The data and their sources are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Data and Data Sources

No	Type of Data	Data Sources	Description
1	Observational Data	Learners	Student engagement, participation, and inclusive interaction patterns during SDGs-based learning activities
2	Documentation Data	Program Records	Lesson plans, learning modules, attendance lists, and student project outputs
3	Reflective Data	Learners and Facilitators	Reflective notes and feedback related to global awareness and sustainability values

Primary data were collected directly from learners participating in the community-based educational program and facilitators implementing the activities. Secondary data included program documentation and learning materials developed during the intervention.

Data collection technique

Data were collected using multiple qualitative techniques to ensure credibility and triangulation. First, non-participant observation was conducted to document learner engagement, collaboration, and inclusivity during SDGs-based learning sessions. Second, documentation analysis was carried out to examine lesson plans, learning modules, and student project outputs. Third, reflective feedback sessions were conducted to capture participants' perceptions regarding the integration of SDGs and Global Citizenship Education principles into learning activities. The combination of these techniques enabled systematic data validation and strengthened the reliability of findings.

Data analysis

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the first stage, collected data were organized and categorized according to themes such as global awareness, intercultural understanding, sustainability values, and inclusive participation. In the second stage, the categorized data were displayed descriptively to identify emerging patterns and pedagogical impacts. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn to interpret how the integration of SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education contributed to inclusive learning practices. The analysis emphasized observable pedagogical transformation and learner development rather than statistical measurement, aligning with the participatory and community-based nature of the research design.

RESULTS

Enhancement of Student Engagement

The implementation of SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education demonstrated a noticeable increase in student engagement throughout the learning sessions. During the initial meetings, participation levels were relatively passive, with limited interaction and minimal questioning behavior. However, after the integration of collaborative discussions and project-based learning aligned with SDG themes, students became more actively involved in expressing opinions, asking critical questions, and participating in group tasks. Observation data indicated improved collaborative interaction among learners. Students showed greater willingness to work in mixed groups, share responsibilities, and present their ideas publicly. The integration of real-world global issues, such as environmental sustainability and social equality, stimulated curiosity and encouraged learners to connect global challenges with their local experiences. This shift suggests that contextualized SDGs-based content can foster meaningful engagement in inclusive learning environments.

Development of Global Awareness and Intercultural Understanding

The findings reveal that learners demonstrated increased awareness of global issues after participating in SDGs-based learning activities. Reflective feedback sessions indicated that students were able to identify connections between local community conditions and broader global challenges, such as environmental protection and social justice. Students also exhibited stronger intercultural sensitivity during collaborative activities. Inclusive dialogue practices encouraged respect for diverse perspectives and promoted constructive communication. Observation records showed reduced dominance by certain individuals and more balanced participation across group members. These patterns reflect the role of Global Citizenship Education in strengthening empathy, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity within community-based learning contexts.

Strengthening Sustainability-Oriented Attitudes

Another significant finding relates to the development of sustainability-oriented attitudes among learners. Through project-based activities linked to SDGs themes, students were encouraged to design small-scale initiatives addressing environmental cleanliness and social responsibility within their immediate surroundings. Documentation of student projects revealed creative ideas and collective problem-solving strategies. Reflective notes further indicated that learners began to express responsibility toward environmental care and social harmony. Rather than perceiving sustainability as an abstract global concept, students were able to translate it into practical everyday actions. This transformation highlights the effectiveness of integrating SDGs into experiential and participatory learning processes.

Pedagogical Transformation in Inclusive Learning Practices

The implementation of SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education also influenced pedagogical approaches adopted by facilitators. Learning sessions shifted from conventional instruction toward more student-centered and dialogical strategies. Facilitators increasingly acted as learning partners rather than sole knowledge providers. Inclusive participation improved as facilitators intentionally structured group dynamics to ensure equitable involvement. Observation and documentation confirmed that collaborative and reflective strategies created a safer and more inclusive learning atmosphere. This pedagogical transformation indicates that integrating SDGs within GCE frameworks not only impacts learners but also reshapes instructional practices in community-based education.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that integrating SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education (GCE) into inclusive community learning practices contributes to enhanced student engagement, global awareness, and sustainability-oriented attitudes. These results align with recent scholarly discussions emphasizing the continued relevance of GCE in addressing global challenges through transformative educational strategies (Agoi, 2025). The increase in learner participation and critical engagement observed in this study supports the argument that contextualized global issues can stimulate meaningful learning experiences.

The development of intercultural understanding and inclusive interaction patterns among learners further confirms the pedagogical potential of GCE frameworks. Previous research highlights that collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches, including project-based and dialogical learning, effectively strengthen global competencies (Calvo et al., 2025). The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that similar pedagogical strategies can also be successfully implemented in non-formal and community-based educational contexts. This suggests that the operationalization of SDG 4.7 does not need to be confined to formal institutional settings. Moreover, the findings resonate with studies indicating that sustainability-oriented competencies can be cultivated through structured integration of SDGs within educational programs (Monzó-Martínez et al., 2024). However, while much of the existing literature focuses on higher education, this study provides empirical evidence from a community-based inclusive setting, thereby addressing the gap identified in recent systematic reviews (Santamaría-Cárdaba et al., 2024). The transformation observed in both learner attitudes and pedagogical practices illustrates how SDGs-based GCE can move beyond conceptual discourse toward practical and contextualized implementation.

The study also responds to concerns regarding uneven implementation of SDG 4.7 in various educational environments (Lin, 2026). By applying participatory and reflective learning cycles, this initiative demonstrates a feasible model for embedding global sustainability values into local learning realities. The participatory action research design enabled continuous reflection and adaptation, ensuring alignment between global frameworks and community needs. Overall, the discussion highlights that integrating SDGs within Global Citizenship Education frameworks can foster inclusive, transformative, and sustainability-oriented learning experiences. The findings suggest that community-based educational programs hold significant potential as platforms for operationalizing global education agendas while strengthening social cohesion and intercultural respect.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education into inclusive community-based learning practices provides a meaningful contribution to the operationalization of SDG 4.7 in non-formal educational contexts. The novelty of this study lies in its structured participatory action research approach that systematically connects global sustainability principles with localized inclusive pedagogical practices. Unlike much of the existing literature that focuses on formal schooling or higher education institutions, this research highlights the potential of community-based learning environments as strategic platforms for cultivating global awareness, intercultural sensitivity, and sustainability-oriented attitudes. The findings indicate that contextualizing SDGs within collaborative and reflective learning activities fosters active engagement and promotes socially responsible behavior among learners.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The implementation was conducted within a specific community-based setting with a limited number of participants, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the qualitative descriptive approach emphasizes observable pedagogical transformation rather than long-term measurable impact. Future research may expand the scope by involving diverse community contexts, applying mixed-method approaches, or conducting longitudinal studies to examine sustained behavioral change and measurable competency development. The implications of this study suggest that educators, community facilitators, and policymakers should consider embedding SDGs-based Global Citizenship Education into inclusive non-formal education programs. Structured participatory strategies, reflective cycles, and project-based learning can serve as practical tools for translating global sustainability agendas into meaningful local actions. Strengthening collaboration between formal and non-formal educational institutions may further enhance the broader implementation of inclusive and transformative global education initiatives.

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