

Globalization School for Citizens of the Interconnected World – Overview

Background—Effects of the Global Crises on Individuals, Societies and Governments.

Over the last two centuries, work has become more than a way to provide for sustenance, for raising children, and for saving for old age. A person's job, position, and income have become key elements of our self-esteem, and reflect significantly on the way we are perceived by society. Often, work is also a social framework, an indication of our personal success, and the seminal value by which we are brought up from an early age.

One of the most significant impacts of the global crises is the rise in unemployment. Not only is the number of unemployed rising, but there is also a decline in the number of jobs available in the marketplace. Put differently, once laid off, it is harder to find a new job and the period of unemployment is prolonged. Some of the unemployed are completely ejected from the job market and stop looking for a job altogether.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), global unemployment is at its highest point ever, "200 million people are out of work worldwide."¹ Also, they warn, "The job shortfall [in Europe] may increase [from 20 million] to even 40 million by the end of 2012."

Unemployment is highest among the young. According to the ILO report, *World of Work Report 2011: Making Markets Work for Jobs*, "Among countries with recently available data, more than one in five youth ... were unemployed as of the first quarter of 2011."² Youth unemployment is rising dangerously high with rates of 21.4% in Europe, with the highest rates being in Spain (48.9%) and Greece (45.1%).³

According to the report, the current state of the job market poses an imminent risk to the political and social stability of many countries around the world. "Social discontent is now becoming more widespread... In 40 per cent of the countries, the risk of social unrest has increased significantly since 2010. Similarly, 58 per cent of countries show an increase in the percentage of people who report a worsening of standards of living. And confidence in the ability of national governments to address the situation has weakened in half the countries.

The Report shows that the trends in social discontent are associated with both the employment developments and perceptions that the burden of the crisis is shared unevenly. Social discontent has increased in advanced economies, Middle-East and North Africa."⁴

The continued advancement of humanity toward a global network of tightening economic and social connections, and toward complete interdependence among us is an unavoidable process. If we can adjust our economic and social connections to fit the changing global-integral reality, we will be able to correct this perilous course.

One example of such global changes was given by Dr. Joseph E. Stiglitz, in the 2011 Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting in Economic Sciences,⁵ when Dr. Stiglitz stated "Today, about 3% of

the population is engaged ... in agriculture in the advanced industrial countries, and they produce more food than even an obese society can consume.” In other words, the current trend of growing unemployment is not a passing phase, but a new state which humanity is entering that no longer requires the employment of a significant percentage of the work force to supply the world’s needs for food.

According to the above-mentioned *World of Work Report 2011*, “The recent slowdown in growth suggests that the world economy is likely to create only half of the jobs needed.” Based on this current trend, hundreds of millions more of the world’s citizens will be out of work within a few years.

If we do not properly address the challenge of massive global unemployment, the growing dissatisfaction and frustration could ignite more social unrest and instability. However, if we embrace the suggested program of the Globalization School for Citizens of the Interconnected World (GSCIW), the global transformation we are undergoing will be a welcome one. We will learn how to leverage and enjoy our interdependence instead of suffering from it.

Objectives of the Globalization School

To deal with the problems of unemployment and growing social unrest, we must incorporate the unemployed into a regular study framework, which will be defined as “employment.” Such a framework would result in:

- Changing the social status and perception of “unemployment”: It is important that anyone who participates be considered employed, to avoid the negative social tag that is sometimes attached to the unemployed. This will help restore people’s self-esteem and will make them more receptive to the program content.
- Prevention of bitterness and mass demonstrations: Just as one’s ordinary job forms a social framework, the GSCIW will itself be a social framework that will alleviate not only social and financial distress, but will also establish a healthy daily schedule and discourage idleness, desperate criminal acts, and addiction.
- Understanding the social structure required in a global and interdependent age: The curriculum of the GSCIW will cover topics such as equality, racism, division of wealth and natural resources, personal growth as a means to contribute to society, mutual responsibility, and mutual guarantee (where all are guarantors of everyone’s well-being).
- Provision of tools for managing one’s personal finances more effectively (home economics).
- Enhanced sympathy with the state and social cohesion, especially in times of crisis. Understanding the crisis and its causes will prevent or lessen disputes, enhance social cohesion and sympathy with the state’s institutions, and will create a dynamic of positive transformation and a sense of sympathy and understanding.

School Curriculum

The curriculum of the GSCIW will be as follows:

- Interconnectedness in economy, culture, and society, and what that means to each of us.
- Interdependence—why we have become interdependent and how it should affect our relations on the personal, social, and political levels. The meanings and implications of such terms as mutual responsibility and mutual guarantee will also come under the topic of interdependence on the national and international levels.
- Improving social, emotional, and mental capacities:
 - Learning how to cope with unemployment and financial insufficiency related stress and depression.
 - Communication skills such as learning how to listen, how to express one's needs clearly, how to respect each other, and how to read body language. The goal is to defuse aggression and bring about better mutual understanding.
 - Resolving domestic conflicts in non-violent manners.
 - Socializing as a means of learning, self-enrichment, releasing tensions, and restoring self-esteem.
- Media consumption: The media are probably the most powerful tools in shaping our minds and determining our values. Wise consumption of media can reduce aggressive tendencies, encourage prosocial behavior, and provide essential information and understanding of the world and one's life. The media include not only TV and radio, but also the internet, primarily social networks, newspapers, and movies.
- Personal finance (home economics): How to maintain personal financial balance when means are limited, how to save on energy bills and gas, possible tax deductions and government benefits, etc.
- Qualifying students of the educational framework as instructors for newcomers into the framework.
- Time-management skills: Utilizing one's time for personal enrichment, expansion of social circles, acquiring new or improved professional skills, and nurturing stronger and more solid family ties.

Note: There are two approaches to the teaching. Where physical attendance is possible, contents will be taught through social activities, simulations, group work, games, and multimedia presentations, and the learning will not be the traditional teacher-class frontal approach. Where physical attendance is not possible, the educational framework will be largely interactive, complete with examples and activities, and mostly designed for eLearning.

Expected Results

- Government stability. The government will not be perceived by people as indifferent or as doing only the necessary minimum, but as a proactive resource that values its citizens and is willing to allocate substantial resources to assist them.
- Improved social cohesion and decreased aggression, crime, and violence.
- Enhanced personal satisfaction, having improved one's family ties, social ties, having expanded one's horizons through training and courses, and having learned how to make the most of one's free time.
- Increased flexibility and openness to changes mandated by the emerging integrated world.
- Decreased government expenses (more on this below in "Funding").
- A strong sense of belonging to one's community, country, and the world at large, having fully grasped the concepts of interconnectedness and interdependence. As enlightened global citizens, participants will derive pleasure from socializing, from helping and nurturing others, from contributing to society rather than taking from it, and will generally maintain a prosocial mindset.
- Prevention of future crises, since many of today's crises stem from the fact that people do not fully comprehend the nature of our growing interconnectedness.

Funding

The need for employment of vast populations has created a colossal amount of redundant jobs, hidden unemployment, and bloating of mechanisms and bureaucracy, especially in the over-inflated public sector. In our current state of hidden unemployment and inefficiency, high wages inflate the expenses of the public sector, hindering the state's ability to service the needs of its citizens.

The anticipated growth in unemployment will not harm the economy or those who have lost their jobs if the GSCIW is established and people are paid a sustenance scholarship instead of receiving a salary. For example, the average annual income in England is £28,000 sterling (approximately \$44,000 U.S.), yet an unemployed person aged 25 or more receives only £3,370 (approx \$5,300) in unemployment benefits, adjusted to annual income. If the sustenance grant is raised above unemployment benefits, to approximately £13,000 (approximate \$23,000), the state will still be able to pay two grants for every laid off person in the public sector.

Project Implementation

The UN, as the leading organization in the world that champions social development among other important goals, could use its existing mechanisms to drive this initiative forward.

This plan complements the objectives of the "Global Initiative of the Secretary General Education for Sustainable Development" to create a global movement for education that is relevant to tackling the challenges that the world is facing. The power and commitment of the Secretary-General can turn this momentum into actions that will transform the pressing issue of unemployment into a promising future for all.

Notes

¹ http://www.oecd.org/document/17/0,3746,en_21571361_44315115_48753169_1_1_1_1,00.html

² *World of Work Report 2011: making markets work for jobs* (International Institute for Labour Studies, 2011), ISBN, 978-92-9014-975-0, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_166021.pdf, p 7

³ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

⁴ *World of Work Report 2011: making markets work for jobs* (International Institute for Labour Studies, 2011), ISBN, 978-92-9014-975-0, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_166021.pdf, p viii

⁵ Joseph Stiglitz, “Imagining an Economics that Works: Crisis, Contagion and the Need for a New Paradigm.” http://www.dictionaryofeconomics.com/resources/news_lindau_meeting