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Teaching Global Citizenship: The Global Leadership Initiative, its Impact and Challenges

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Abstract

In 2015, as part of the University of Sheffield's strategic commitment to innovation in its approaches to internationalization, as well as recognition of both the importance of student employability and growing opportunities in student-led research, the Faculty of Social Sciences established a unique learning and research initiative in the shape of the Global Leadership Initiative as part of the Global Learning Opportunities in the Social Sciences programme. Its mission reflects both a desire to develop Social Sciences students as global citizens with an international outlook and a belief that staff and students can, and should, collaborate as partners in research. To this end, these initiatives have provided students, who would not normally have the opportunity, with the means to blend an international experience into their studies and understand the Social Sciences in this context. At the same time, they have sought to provide students in the Faculty with a unique Social Sciences research-based opportunity that will enhance their employability. This article outlines the development of these Global Citizenship Education initiatives before exploring the pedagogical benefits and challenges of the programme from an academic and student perspective based on semi-structured interviews, surveys and student evaluations.

Bringing the classroom into the real world

Like many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the world, the University of Sheffield (TUOS) has highlighted global citizenship, employability and collaboration between academic staff and students around research as key objectives of a university education. To this end, TUOS developed a 'list of skills, characteristics and attitudes which all students should have had the opportunity to develop during their time at Sheffield' (The University of Sheffield, 2019). TUOS graduates will be *inter alia*:

Confident in considering issues within local, national and international contexts,
equipped to work in diverse cultural settings;
Aware and respectful of a range of perspectives and considerate of diversity;

Experienced at working in partnership with others, including communities and external partners;
An excellent team worker who is able to manage their time efficiently;
Experienced in the processes and methods of research;
A skilled communicator, comfortable with different styles and audiences.

In response to the institutional priorities and commitment to provide opportunities to achieve these attributes, the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) at TUOS established the Global Leadership Initiative (GLI) as part of the wider Global Learning Opportunities in the Social Sciences (GLOSS) scheme in 2015. The former is based on three objectives: 1) providing students and staff with unique opportunities to collaborate as partners, co-learn and increase their mutual skill-sets in an international environment; 2) creating innovative training opportunities for students to produce high-quality policy analysis of the activities and declarations of global summits and disseminate this to stakeholders; and 3) giving academics and students a unique opportunity to conduct real-time on-the-ground research so that they can build and expand their international research networks while creating impact through policy engagement.

Since 2015 this innovative learning and teaching initiative has delivered on institutional priorities around global citizenship, employability and the development of students as researchers by bringing together 77 undergraduate students, 69 taught postgraduate students and 24 members of academic staff to form collaborative and non-hierarchical research teams. These teams have secured access to a wide range of international organizations, forums and meetings, including the Group of Seven (G7) and Group of Twenty (G20) summits, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Governing Body Meeting, UN-Habitat, and the Global Land Forum (GLF). In collaboration with the academic journal *Global Policy*, their work has been disseminated as co-authored blogs and single-authored policy briefs, as well as through engagement with the media.¹ Indeed, one of the most rewarding elements of the scheme for the students has been the opportunity to provide expert commentary from the various summit media centres, even appearing on international television news programmes. In this article, we outline the changing priorities in HEIs as well as TUOS's response through the development of GLOSS and the GLI before exploring, based on student and staff evaluations as well as semi-structured interviews, and post-graduation surveys with a sample of participants, the initiative's pedagogical benefits, unforeseen outcomes and ongoing challenges.

Changing priorities in Higher Education

Over recent years, universities across the world have sought to better prepare their graduates for an increasingly globalized workplace by developing their sense of global citizenship, while at the same time taking the idea of students as collaborators in related research seriously. However, global citizenship is more than simple résumé-padding intended to appeal to prospective employers. It has become a vehicle by which the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) has sought to realize the primary objective outlined in its Constitution that '[s]ince wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed' (UNESCO, 2019a). To this end, UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aims at 'empowering learners of all ages to understand that these are global, not local issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies', and seeks to 'instil in learners the values, attitudes and behaviours that support responsible global citizenship: creativity,

innovation, and commitment to peace, human rights and sustainable development' (UNESCO, 2019b). This resonates closely and is informed by Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

By 2030, ensure that all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016).

However, the very term 'global citizenship' is widely contested and the apparent benefits and laudable goals of GCED should not be accepted uncritically as its adoption and implementation often raise serious questions. As regards definitions, global citizenship can mean anything from the simple and uncritical acquisition of the skills of cultural agility and sensitivity demanded by employers in a globalized workplace, via a vague sense of a 'common world' or 'world community' that might transcend and subvert traditional loyalties to the nation-state, through to activism that seeks to challenge global inequalities and change the structures that foster them (Fanghanel and Cousin, 2012; Grimwood, 2018). In a similar vein, Tiessen and Huich (2014) characterize our understanding of global citizenship as ranging from 'thin' to 'thick'. As regards implementation, Munck (2010) explores the position of GCED within a university education and whether it should be 'core business or desirable add-on'. In the case of the latter, the danger emerges that it becomes little more than a marketing tool by which universities seek to distinguish themselves in an increasingly competitive marketplace that can 'be dispensed with as economic conditions turn from boom to recession' (2010, p. 32).

As Sklad *et al.* (2016) demonstrate, in practice GCED is not simply an exercise in adding a global perspective or knowledge about the world to the university curriculum or teaching training programmes, whether they be mandatory or voluntary (Howe, 2013). To avoid reinforcing existing prejudices, they argue for a more transformative approach in order to challenge long-held assumptions, impact upon attitudes and skills and foster an understanding of the interplay between the global and local. In related but more practical terms, they also raise issues around the evaluation of GCED initiatives and outline their own Global Perspective Scale developed to measure the impact on students of their *Going Global* initiative. As a result, they highlight two specific challenges, First, 'find[ing] a balance between stimulating critical thinking and affording students a feeling of global efficacy, that is, in the sense that they can put global citizenship into practice' (2016, p. 337). As explained below, this is an opportunity that the GLI specifically sought to provide through fully funded field trips, working to ensure that they avoided becoming little more than poverty tourism or 'globetrotting' (Tiessen and Huich, 2014), and instead challenged existing assumptions, embraced the idea of students as researchers and fostered research collaborations between students and staff. Second, the tendency of GCED programmes to preach to the converted and, as voluntary activities, only recruit students who were already attracted to and/or possessed the attributes of global citizenship.

The rising importance of student employability and the idea of students as fellow researchers relate strongly to each other as well as to GCED. As regards employability, Tiessen, Grantham and Cameron explore the student perceptions of several experiential

learning opportunities, including GCED, highlighting that students regard their employability to be enhanced through the acquisition of applied, real-world knowledge, new skillsets (including the research, communication and teamworking skills outlined below) and influential networks (2018, p. 24).

Edifying as this example is, rarely, if ever, will an international experience in and of itself secure employment, instead employers' perceptions still need to be factored into the design of any GCED initiative. In addition, a blind spot remains in our understanding of the relationship between employability and GCED within the specific context of networking. Early indications have suggested that GLI alumni have the potential to create new networks of their own in the future as they progress through their chosen careers and become the next generation of global policymakers and influencers.

A number of recent developments with employability in mind have sought to expose students to the experience, expectations and benefits of collaboration with academics surrounding research. For example, *Reinvention: An International Journal of Undergraduate Research* was established in 2007 as a result of a cross-institutional project between Warwick and Oxford Brookes Universities that was extended to embrace Monash University and expose undergraduate students to the world of open access, peer-reviewed academic publishing. GLOSS and the GLI sought to go beyond the simple dissemination of student research and emphasise the extension of the classroom into the real world and the co-production of research between staff and students within a GCED programme. This resonates with Dickenson *et al.* (2016) who highlight collaborative knowledge production as a key factor in developing students' employability skills, rather than simply regarding them as recipients of knowledge, an important factor in developing innovative learning and teaching practices.

Dickenson *et al.* (2016) also identify confidence as one of the key challenges in fostering students as researchers, especially when the research requires students to develop and ask their own questions, rather than those already provided to them. This challenge is compounded when the project extends the classroom beyond familiar desk-based work into real world practicality and embraces an international or global aspect requiring students to travel to and engage with previously unfamiliar parts of the world. It is however the experiential nature of engaging with practitioners, academics, media and participants in active research settings that provides the platform for students to develop as independent and collaborative researchers by drawing these linkages between research and real-world policy impact. It is an understanding of this landscape that demonstrates to student researchers the impact HEIs' research has on the wider world, and implicitly, the impact that they and their work can have. This process of research *experience* then establishes an underlying confidence in students' own research abilities that enables them to develop their own research questions.

Additionally, Henneman *et al.* (1995) have denoted the important role that time and commitment to relationship development play in successful collaborative student-staff research projects. As demonstrated below, the GLI project provides substantive evidence that successful collaborative work knowledge co-production can occur between students and staff within short time periods providing the right elements are present. First, an open and deliberative research working environment in which ideas are generated and discussed with neither reservation nor judgement, alongside an

attitudinal framework that is predicated upon the individual project designers' own initiative at the outset (Hordern, 2012). Second, this discussion has to be premised on a clear framing by staff members that the students and staff are part of a team for whom there are no hierarchies (Illich 1973) that will impact upon working practices, knowledge creation, and recognition, nor in the starting point of idea generation and output content. This commitment to equality of working practice has been demonstrated to be vital to effective collaborative research production amongst student-staff research projects (John-Stiener *et al.*, 1998; Curtis *et al.*, 2012; Mitlin *et al.*, 2019). Third, a key part of the GLI has been time pressure. A shortened time frame is an inherent characteristic of global summitry and when coupled with clear and immovable publication deadlines provides the foundations of a group ethos and successful collaborative research outputs.

As such, the GLI soon highlighted the importance of establishing a collaborative research framework that goes beyond staff overseeing students' work, and actively encourages non-hierarchical (Mountz *et al.*, 2015) peer review: each 'team' worked collectively to develop each member's research outputs, whether nominally by staff or students. This deliberate circular process of ideas generation, data collection, writing and editing, provided the 'community' feel (Dickenson *et al.*, 2016, p. 261) that enhanced students' confidence in their own abilities, enabling them to successfully co-produce research outputs.

GLOSS and GLI: Overview and examples

TUOS is similar to other HEIs in terms of its priorities, as seen in the development of its *Sheffield Graduate Attributes*.² In 2015, FSS established GLOSS as a vehicle to deliver these attributes. GLOSS is an umbrella term that regards 'global learning' broadly and seeks to both refine existing and develop new opportunities that resonate with this term. The GLI, which provides undergraduate and taught postgraduate students with opportunities to work as fully accredited policy analysts at major global summits and publish their work in the journal *Global Policy*, was one part of this wider initiative.

The GLI was first initiated by academics and students from the Department of Politics and International Relations and the School of East Asian Studies who attended the 2013 G20 summit in St Petersburg, Russia, and discovered that there was a significant gap in informed analysis of the topics under discussion. Indeed, it was striking how, even amongst much of the global news media, detailed knowledge of global summitry in general or the G20 specifically, let alone the substantive policy debates under discussion, was considerably sparser than expected. The GLI was piloted in 2015 at the G7 Schloss Elmau Summit in Bavaria, Germany. In order to bring the classroom into the world, two members of staff and four students secured media accreditation through their *Global Policy* connection and spent three days observing and commenting on developments at the summit from within and outside the G7 International Media Centre. Their co-authored blogs and sole-authored policy briefs addressed developments and themes at the summit and were disseminated on the *Global Policy* website.³ Some members of the team also engaged with local and global media to provide analysis, comments and soundbites.

As a result of positive student feedback and media exposure for the university, the GLI was expanded to include a range of other organizations, forums and summits. Staff from

across the faculty who could secure access to these meetings – whether in their respective media centres or in some other way – as a result of their research interests, were encouraged to volunteer to take a team of student analysts and all expenses were supported by FSS. Diversity in the composition of these staff teams was consciously advocated: they generally comprised academics from different departments and also people at different career stages, including post-doctoral researchers and those on temporary contracts. A GLOSS Steering Committee was established and reviewed all applications. Successful applicants were then supported in the recruitment of their student collaborators and encouraged to consider diversity in their selection. Successful students received pre-departure media and cultural training, as well as guidance in terms of the event they were attending, writing blogs and policy briefs. Since 2015, the GLI has supported further trips to the G7 summits in Ise Shima, Japan (2016), Taormina, Italy (2017), and Quebec, Canada (2018); in addition to the G20 summits in Antalya, Turkey (2015), Hangzhou, China (2016), Hamburg, Germany (2017), Buenos Aires, Argentina (2018), and Osaka, Japan (2019). The GLI has also supported repeat trips to the International Land Coalition’s (ILC) GLF in Dakar, Senegal (2015), Bandung, Indonesia (2019), as well as the Global Entrepreneurship Congress in Medellin, Colombia (2016) and Manama, Bahrain (2019), and the International Labour Organization in Geneva, Switzerland (2015, 2016 and 2017). Other trips have included the Habitat III conference in Quito, Ecuador (2016), the Oslo REDD+ Exchange Conference in Norway (2016), the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Conference in Lima, Peru (2016), the Creative Commons Global Summit in Toronto, Canada (2017), the Organic World Congress in New Delhi, India (2017), the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2018), the World Summit on the Information Summit in Geneva, Switzerland (2019) and the Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (2019).

In total – so far – 144 co-authored blogs and 141 single-authored policy briefs have been disseminated and media engagement has included live and recorded interviews with Asahi Shinbun (Japan), the British Broadcasting Corporation, China Daily, CTV Television Network (Canada) and TRT World (Turkey), among many others.

Example 1: The Global Land Forum

In this, and the following, section, we offer two examples that illustrate the pedagogical benefits of the GLI and associated challenges. Since 2015, GLOSS has engaged in a partnership with the ILC and sent a delegation of staff and students to the GLF – an international conference that takes place every two to three years in different parts of the world. This unique event brings together ILC members and other stakeholders from grassroots organizations, activists, local and international NGOs, and researchers, to multilateral organizations and government agencies from around the world to advance understanding of the complex and dynamic political, economic, environmental and social linkages between land governance, food security, poverty and democracy.

In September 2018, two members of staff and a team of eight students (four undergraduate and four taught postgraduate) from the departments of Architecture, Geography, Law, Politics and International Relations, and Urban Studies and Planning attended the GLF in Bandung, Indonesia. This international meeting brought together more than 1,000 delegates to engage in discussion on the theme ‘United for Land Rights, Peace and Justice’ and an exchange of experiences around challenges and opportunities

of meeting United Nations SDG 15 on life on land. The GLI team provided social media support for the ILC, drafting summary blogs of different thematic sessions, engaging in live tweeting as well as in exchanges with conference attendants and local students from Bandung.

The theme of global citizenship featured prominently in students' reflections on their participation in the GLF. All of the students that participated in this trip expressed interest in global issues, such as development, environmental sustainability and poverty, and many were pursuing careers focused on addressing global challenges. However, few students were aware of the links between land rights and sustainable development or about the rise in violence against land rights defenders globally in recent years. As one student explained, '[When I got home,] I didn't shut up about [what I learned through the GLF]. It was so interesting. There was so much going on and a lot of it was new for me because ... I had not read about indigenous peoples land rights' (Interview, 30 October 2019). Others commented that the GLF 'opened their eyes' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018) to the importance of land rights by providing them the opportunity to 'listen to those at the very heart of the land-based issues' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018). Even a student from Indonesia commented that he was not aware about the land issues taking place in his own country until attending the GLF as the mainstream media tends to sideline local and social injustices (Interview, 30 October 2019).

Participation in the GLF also helped students to develop an understanding of the interplay between the global and the local, and how global inequalities shape these dynamics. The complicated relationship between global decision-making fora and local needs and realities was most clear to students on the opening day of the GLF when a large protest unfolded in the streets surrounding the conference venue. The protests were planned by those living in Bandung affected by a national program of agrarian reform, which has been financially supported by the World Bank – a founding member of the ILC. The protests generated productive discussions within our group and thoughtful writing by the students about whose voices are heard and silenced in global spaces. In the words of one student, these protests showed 'how cooperation is possible when people work together, but also the challenges... [Global events] may not always be the best way to achieve change because it just seems impossible when you put so many people in one place and everyone has a different opinion about the best way to do things' (Interview, 30 October 2019).

A critique of experiential learning is that it can often encourage 'thin' forms of global citizenship – namely, training that exposes students to global issues but does not impose any obligation on the students to change or respond (Cameron 2013). However, at least in some instances, it seems that the GLI fostered a form of 'thick' global citizenship through direct engagement with policymakers and media organisations by providing analysis of the global issues under discussion. A number of comments from students demonstrate that through their participation in the GLI, they became more cognizant of prevailing power structures and their relatively privileged position within these structures (Cameron 2013). One student explained: 'I think of individual people more than before. I imagine the farmer behind the palm oil [when I buy something with palm oil in it], because I was exposed to these people and their situations and challenges during the GLF' (Interview, 30 October 2019) while another offered a very similar

sentiment about purchasing coffee from growers that have control over their land (Interview, 30 October 2019). Another student from the School of Architecture with experience in property development described how attending the GLF had shaped his thinking in relation to his career: 'Before, I used to only think about the building when working on assignments, but now I think about the land and space around the building too' (Interview, 30 October 2019). By attending the GLF, he came to recognise how developing land can alienate or even destroy local communities and this is something that he pays attention to in his academic studies and in the workplace (Interview, 30 October 2019). These observations highlight how participation in the GLI can shift student perceptions and encourages them to challenge global inequalities and the structures that enable global inequalities to persist (Fanghanel and Cousin 2012; Grimwood 2018).

Students specifically highlighted that participation in the GLF significantly enhanced their future employability and confirmed their interest in pursuing a career that is international in outlook or, as one student put it: 'This experience has given me the confidence to pursue a career in public policy or international policy' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018). This example of the relationship between the aims of GCED and employability was highlighted further by the opportunities that attendance at the GLF provided for students to develop professional skills and networking with potential employers and senior policymakers. The GLI team's integration into the ILC's social media team, combined with live reporting from the GLF in Bandung further demonstrates the transformation from 'thin' forms of global citizenship to direct participation and action that constitutes 'thick' engagement with the aims of GCED.

While all students found the above-mentioned activities challenging, they considered them key for their future employment: 'I did not realise ... how useful [social media skills] would be. I feel that I can now link my twitter to LinkedIn to demonstrate my interests outside the workplace in a professional way' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018). Another student explained that the GLI experience helped in developing 'time-management and writing skills (...). These are the skills that are definitely crucial for my job in the future' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018). Students who have since left university and are now in employment also highlighted that reflecting back on their experience at GLF helped them develop crucial leadership skills such as coordinating teams and developing empathy for co-workers (Gentry *et al.*, 2016). For example, one former student who now works as an executive coordinator in a small NGO emphasised that the GLF experience provided initial insights on 'how development really works' and noted that skills developed in Bandung now help her in effectively 'engaging in written communication with the government' but also to 'empathise more with the [social media] team' whose work she coordinates (Interview, 30 October 2019).

Being directly involved in the day-to-day running of the GLF helped students build their confidence in articulating their own thoughts and interacting with more senior professionals. For example, one student highlighted that the GLI experience has 'boosted my confidence in asking questions to get the answers I need. It has given me invaluable experience ... to talk about in professional interviews' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018). Another student considered the interactions with conference participants as a personal highlight of the GLI experience: 'I had great conversations with several experts and governmental officials which were just amazing' (Student

Evaluation, 26 October 2018). Students also mentioned that they continued conversations with conference participants and possible future employers after the end of the GLF. One student was directly approached by a participating organization with an offer for a volunteer placement. Skills developed around networking and public speaking further were applied by students upon return to TUOS, with one student highlighting in a follow-up interview: 'GLI told me to express my curiosity. I now do this in lectures where I openly ask questions and challenge the tutor's perspective, especially around issues of social justice' (Interview, 30 October 2019).

The time spent traveling and working together during this trip to the GLF helped to balance and equalise relationships between staff and students or, as one student put it: 'It puts you in a more equal position with your lecturers' (Interview, 30 October 2019). The GLF provided a unique opportunity for students and staff to work together. Both members of staff not only accompanied students but were also actively involved in the work of the GLI team, contributing to social media output, engaging in conference activities and providing continuous feedback on the written outputs of students. Students commented positively on this: 'the academics also shared their relevant knowledge with participants regarding the issue(s) that are being discussed during the event' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018).

Having the time to get to know students on an individual level both during work at international events and outside of work during meals and other social activities, staff could further explore students' interests and understand their ambitions. This provided the opportunity to offer more tailored feedback on writing and engage in more meaningful dialogue. Students rated this experience very positively, emphasising, among other issues, that 'staff were super helpful and gave constant feedback' and that staff 'were a constant source of support throughout the conference, particularly when we were stressed about the completion of all our outputs on time' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018). One student also highlighted that, during the time at the GLF, 'it felt like we were working on things together rather than being taught by [staff] at the front of the room... You just learn better when you know people and you spend time together outside of the seminar room' (Interview, 30 October 2019).

Example 2: the G7 and G20

The GLI has sent teams to more G7 and G20 summits than any other meeting: they were the starting-point for the initiative in 2015 and occur annually. By the time of the most recent – the Osaka G20 in June 2019 – the GLI had established a well-structured programme refined by five years of experience. Within this, the flat team structure is extremely important and all students appreciated it in terms of the genuine autonomy and control that they enjoyed. 'There was no hierarchy' one suggested, 'and this made us all feel like valued policy analysts; not once did I feel like a student on a university trip' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka student, 2019). Simple measures, like encouraging team members to self-describe *as* 'policy analysts' when on the trip helped – along with individual business cards with that title printed – as did the structured working practices with staggered deadlines set out in advance. Policy briefs were finished at different times throughout the final day of the summits, as some could only be completed with information from the later press conference. However, this offered the opportunity for constant peer feedback which many noted helped them develop ideas and, interestingly, keep their motivation high as they felt they were contributing to an

individual piece of work that was also part of a high-quality collective project. As one noted: 'I learned that I need to surround myself with highly motivated, politically engaged, and fast paced people. It is in this kind of teamwork environment where I am most driven and produce the best work' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019). Another suggested that 'everyone felt quite special being able to write for *Global Policy* and trust developed between us, leading us to become a team of co-authors and editors' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019). This was intrinsically beneficial, but it also impacted on the process itself due to the high level of camaraderie that was generated:

There were many moments when all of us felt inadequate or were frustrated by the imperfections in our work. These were the moments where our comradery got us through. By checking over each other's work, praising the good parts and helping to rewrite where necessary, we all grew so much closer through an appreciation that we had been validated and intellectually lifted by one another (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019).

The supportive environment was also crucial for students with specific challenges, like dyslexia, anxiety or ADHD: these difficulties cropped up occasionally and impacted on individuals' work but were always resolved by collective support. The way the team functioned also taught students the wider value of meaningful collaboration, as one noted: 'I am now much more open to having my ideas challenged by others, I enjoyed the fast-paced atmosphere and I learned how to produce pieces of work quickly that are highly sensitive to real-world developments' (Student Evaluation, G20 Hamburg 2017).

Substantively, the range of issues covered in their work, and the 'unique opportunity' (a phrase used many times) to analyse them in a real-world policy environment was a consistent theme in their feedback. These waxed and waned according to the specific themes of the summit, and included: multilateralism and global governance; trade, agriculture and finance; gender issues; labour and decent work; growth and infrastructure development; technology, automation and cybersecurity; climate and environment; as well as a range of region- and country-specific issues that resonate with the UN's SDGs and GCED. Many students stated that 'being situated in the hustle and bustle of the official media centre created a deeply authentic experience' by exposing them to 'the reality of diplomacy' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019). Expressing a common sentiment, one student also suggested that 'the opportunity to interact with ministers, officials, and media representatives from all over the world gave meaning to the academic study of international relations' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019). Students sat just metres away from several world leaders: Xi Jinping, Claude Juncker, Donald Tusk, Angela Merkel, Emmanuel Macron, Justin Trudeau, Shinzo Abe, Ban Ki-Moon, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and many others. This represented a real opportunity to not simply practice real-world policy analysis or apply their academic learning to the 'real world', but also to get deeper insight into the prosaic functioning of summitry. For international students, it was especially compelling because – particularly for those from authoritarian countries – they managed to get closer in some cases to their leaders than many other journalists or private citizens.

As regards fostering 'thick' forms of global citizenship, several themes can be pinpointed. First, students felt they performed a crucial service: 'The GLI scheme provides serious, informed, well-researched policy analysis in a world of clickbait

headlines and gossip, where media coverage of the policy issues at hand only scratches the surface' (Survey Response, G20 Buenos Aires student, 2018). The substantial output that we have now accumulated from successive summits certainly attests to this. Second, students themselves learned a huge amount about the world simply by reading their colleagues' policy briefs and spending time discussing essentially the same issues from very different disciplinary vantage points with others who have studied different subjects to them and also those with distinctive regional knowledge (especially in the case of the international students in the team). Third, they became even more empathetic: as one suggested, 'the experience also reminded me that the world is full of diverging and conflicting opinions; the key is compassion and compromise' (Student Evaluation, G20 Osaka 2019). Fourth, for the UK students, again, they recognised the insularity that can afflict substantial parts of even a university education in a largely monoglot society and emphasised how previously they had not fully appreciated the diversity of interests, issues and ideas that animate global politics. One noted that they 'had a much better appreciation of just how difficult it must be to reach global consensus on any subject given how different each country's national priorities are (Student Evaluation, G20 Hangzhou, 2016). Fifth, our students interacted with a wide range of people. This included fellow students from the host country's HEIs, as highlighted by one student: '[t]he most positive aspect was working alongside the Argentine students and having the opportunity to talk to them about what the summit meant and their country's geopolitical position' (Student Evaluation, G20 Buenos Aires, 2018). At the same time, the ability to network with, for example, people working for NGOs and business organizations was extremely valuable, both in terms of discussing their chosen issues with those knowledgeable about them but also in terms of the feeling of empowerment they received from engaging in dialogue – as equals – with real-world policy experts.

A similar form of empowerment was evident in the skills development of the students, a reflection of the original mandated purpose of TUOS graduate skills development and employability factors; many students noted that they were terrified of the time pressure they would be under at the summit, but nearly all said they surprised themselves with their ability to meet the deadlines and found this seemingly trivial achievement extremely rewarding. This derived from the huge amount of trust and faith that was placed in them, and the pride they took in this. One suggested that, although there is 'nothing stopping you from writing your own blog about politics' during a degree, 'the relationship with *Global Policy* journal provides a platform for this work to have much more clout and impact and is therefore immensely beneficial as much more than an educational initiative' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019). It was clear that the experience dramatically improved students' writing ability – 'the most useful skill I learnt was how to simplify my writing style into blog/policy brief format, whilst still maintaining a high level of nuance and complexity' (Student Evaluation, G7 Quebec 2018) – with a number remarking that it even positively influenced the remainder of their degrees. There are clear lessons here for universities, too: on the one hand, the 'responsibility, access and opportunity to apply the transferrable skills developed at university into the policy analyst role and be treated the same as all of the other accredited media at the summit' was, quite simply, 'not something I expected from my politics degree!' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019). Yet, on the other, 'such experiential learning is highly underrated in terms of higher education pedagogy' (Survey Response, G20 Buenos Aires, 2018).

Unquestionably the most striking theme that emerges from the student feedback is that participating in the GLI built their confidence and, in many cases, raised their aspirations. It is not an overstatement to say that almost every single student that has taken part over the past five years, in both the evaluations and surveys, mentioned this in some way. One put it very neatly: 'It has given me huge confidence in myself, both professionally and personally' (Student Evaluation, G7 Ise Shima, 2016). Another identified how the summit is grounded in a 'sociable, fun and, above all, supportive culture, wherein attending a room with 20 of the most powerful people on earth or conducting a live television interview doesn't seem nearly as daunting as it ought to in the abstract: to say that the GLI catalyses confidence would be an understatement'.

The impact of this is multifaceted. One element is simply the acknowledgement that many who are now in exciting careers started from a similar position and are approachable people. A second is that students learned much about themselves: from 'how to discuss difficult topics in professional environment and maintain composure' to 'discovering a passion for writing and editing that I did not know I had' (Survey Responses, G20 Osaka, 2019), participation in the GLI often decisively shaped their future ambitions, their desire to achieve them, and, crucially, their self-belief that they could do so. As one suggested, it 'provided us with an opportunity to show that you don't need decades of experience or family connections to be good at something, which has given many of us the confidence and experience we need to pursue careers we weren't sure we would be able to' (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019).

In sum, the employability bonus for the students as individuals was substantial: in almost every case, students – some of whom were of course already extremely able, but not all necessarily amongst the very highest achievers in their cohorts – have since gone on to outstanding corporate careers and postgraduate education. Part of the benefit to students was undeniably overcoming the chicken and egg situation where they require experience for roles but cannot gain that experience because being hired is difficult without it, as well as having substantive examples to draw on during interviews. But it was about more than this: it opened doors to interviews in deeply competitive employment markets simply because it is such a unique and novel experience that recruiters would not expect or encounter in any other candidate. Moreover, not only did it distinguish students from competitors, it also gave them a huge reservoir of fascinating insight to draw on when discussing real-world policy challenges. It even made them more plausible for roles that would otherwise be out of reach: as one noted, 'it allowed me to be the non-STEM student to be accepted into the "Emerging Technologies" practice at my firm' due to the substantial policy knowledge accumulated, which could, crucially, be evidenced by a published piece in a serious journal (Survey Response, G20 Osaka, 2019). This depth of properly researched knowledge, especially on unusual topics like artificial intelligence or cryptomarkets, is extremely appealing to many employers.

Conclusions

It is clear that students and staff have benefited from the GLI in a number of ways that resonate with its three objectives. First, student feedback repeatedly highlights how they came to appreciate the 'thinness' of their previous understanding and this experience opened their eyes to the reality and challenges of addressing an issue like

development, their 'thick' engagement with policymakers and media challenged previously held assumptions regarding student engagement with GCED. Second, students perceive the experience as having assisted them in securing employment after graduation. In particular, they cite their enhanced confidence, expanded skillsets and the unique networking opportunities. Since graduation, a number of GLI alumni have been successful in securing employment or internships including the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, the Learning and Work Institute, Save the Children, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Department for International Trade, in addition to doctoral research. Third, students and staff demonstrated that they can create non-hierarchical and highly productive teams of researchers responding to events as they unfold and disseminating informed analysis across a range of outlets. TUOS regarded the initiative positively in terms of the above objectives but also in terms of a unique selling point that was embedded in departmental recruitment strategies across FSS.

The initiative has been recognized through a number of awards, commendations and recommendations. Sir David Warren, former UK Ambassador to Japan, has supported the GLI believing that '[t]his important initiative exposes students specialising in international studies to the realities of global diplomacy and international relations in the most practical way. At a time when the pressures of globalisation are influencing the political dialogue in the developed world away from overseas engagement and towards superficial nationalist solutions to intractable problems, this project helps to redress the balance and ensure that a new generation of internationally-minded graduates have the skills and experience to play their part in finding global solutions to global challenges'.

However, a number of pre-existing and emerging challenges, which we have been (at least so far) unable to resolve, require further consideration by any HEI that is considering the establishment of a GCED initiative. First, it is necessary to develop a strategy for ensuring the diversity of the student teams in their selection from the outset, rather than on *ad hoc* basis as was the case with the GLI. Second, despite student perceptions, it is difficult to single out the impact of the GLI on student employability. In the words of one student: 'I feel that most people on the trip, including myself, were people who already have experiences supportive of finding employment after university' (Student Evaluation, 26 October 2018). This issue partly relates to the previous point regarding a systematic approach to diversity but also demands a dialogue between academic leads and employers as regards the benefits of the initiative and how they resonate with employers' needs. Third, it could be argued that the GLI is an expensive and carbon-intensive undertaking that only benefits a limited number of students despite high applicant numbers. In this light, consideration needs to be given to the scalability of this, or any other, initiative and the dissemination of the benefits to as wide range of students as possible in the most cost effective and environmentally-sustainable way.

Finally, in an increasingly competitive Higher Education environment, unique learning and teaching opportunities enable students to distinguish a HEI's offer. However, one unexpected challenge was the lack of visibility of GLOSS and the GLI across the institution. This led us to adopt a more proactive approach to the marketing of this initiative. The most effective development was to invite a member of the TUOS Media Team to accompany the team of staff and students who attended the G20 Hamburg

Summit in 2017 with the goal of promoting GLI activities more widely through social media and video marketing materials used on webpages and by all FSS departments at open days. This led one external observer to tweet: 'It's incredible how forward looking @sheffielduni is when its students are in the room with likes of #Macron @GLOSSshef #GoSheffield'.

These benefits and challenges lead us to recommend that HEIs should engage actively with the GCED mission as core business, not just a desirable add-on, for reasons that go beyond the neoliberalization of Higher Education. They should embed 'thick' models of GCED and where possible extend the classroom into the real world and foster meaningful collaboration between staff and students. Any GCED initiative requires regular self-reflection on its governance, impact and scalability. This is especially the case in terms of widening participation and diversity if these initiatives hope to avoid the accusation of preaching to the converted and only recruiting white, middle-class staff and students.

A natural and understandable response among HEIs to Covid-19 and the post-pandemic world is to regard GCED initiatives as a desirable add-on rather than core business and direct limited funding elsewhere. However, we would argue that the need for programmes like the GLI could not be more urgent. From a commercial perspective, if carefully designed and executed they still provide HEIs with a unique selling point at a time when student recruitment will be increasingly crucial to the financial survival of HEIs. From a GCED perspective, as Howe has argued '... nationally determined citizenship education is no longer adequate in light of globalisation' (2013, p. 61). If the Covid-19 pandemic teaches us anything, it is that a global challenge requires a global response that transcends immediate national interest and it is through GCED that these solutions emerge in the minds of future generations.

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¹ All of the blogs and policy briefs dating back to the beginning of the programme can be found at the dedicated page on the *Global Policy* website: <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/global-leadership-initiative/global-leadership-initiative>

² For information on the Sheffield Graduate, see: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/sheffieldgraduate>

³ Again, see: <https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/global-leadership-initiative/global-leadership-initiative>