

Empowering Pre-service Teachers to Become Change Agents as Global Citizens?  
A Comparative Study between the University of Helsinki (Finland) and the National Institute  
of Education (Singapore)

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates if and how pre-service teachers are empowered to become agents of change as global citizens by comparatively studying the cases of the University of Helsinki in Finland and the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore. The study specifically investigates how global citizenship education (GCE), experiential learning (EL), and change agency interplay in empowering pre-service teachers to become agents of social change as global citizens. A comprehensive analysis of each case and comparative analysis between two cases suggest the interrelation of GCE, EL, and change agency and if and how similarly and differently pre-service teachers at each institution have experienced the empowerment in becoming change agents as global citizens. The study also provides recommendations for other teacher education institutions, which give meaningful insights to improve their teacher education to empower their students as active global citizens who create social changes.

**Keywords:** *global citizenship education, experiential learning, teacher agency, change agents, pre-service teacher, teacher education.*

## Résumé

Cette étude examine si et comment les enseignants en formation initiale sont habilités à devenir des agents de changement en tant que citoyens du monde, en étudiant de manière comparative les cas de l'Université d'Helsinki en Finlande et ceux du National Institute of Education (NIE) à Singapour. L'étude examine spécifiquement la manière dont l'éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale (ECM), l'apprentissage expérientiel et l'atteinte d'un pouvoir de changement interagissent dans le processus d'autonomisation des enseignants en formation initiale. Une analyse complète de chaque cas et une analyse comparative entre les deux cas suggèrent l'interrelation de l'ECM, de l'apprentissage expérientiel et du pouvoir de changement, et si et comment les enseignants en formation initiale de chaque institution ont expérimenté de manière similaire et différente l'autonomisation en tant qu'agents de changement, étant des citoyens du monde. L'étude fournit également des recommandations pour d'autres institutions de formation des enseignants, offrant des indications significatives pour améliorer leur formation des enseignants afin de mieux habiliter leurs étudiants à devenir des agents de changement de la société locale et mondiale.

**Mots-clés :** *Éducation à la citoyenneté mondiale, apprentissage par l'expérience, agence de l'enseignant, agents de changement, enseignant en formation initiale, formation des enseignants.*

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## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background and Statement of the Research Problem**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, societies have encountered remarkable changes and transformations in a greatly interconnected world. Globalization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has diminished the limitations of time and space caused by geographical constraints, transforming education as well as every aspect of society and peoples' lives in the world (Maguire, 2010; Tan, 2015). The changes in a globalized world have required teacher education today to respond to the new demands and expectations for quality teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century through the reformation of teacher education and raised the question of who can be considered as a competent teacher in a globalized world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Goodwin, 2010; Maguire, 2010; UNESCO, 2014; Tan, 2015).

Though the understanding of who are quality teachers and how to train them are varied, there is an agreed-upon discussion that teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century need to be prepared as ethical and responsible citizens of the world and understand their role as a prime agency to create positive changes in a local and global society (Goodwin, 2010; UNESCO, 2014, 2015; Pantić & Carr, 2017). Andreotti et al. (2011) argued that teachers themselves first need to become global citizens to guide their students toward global citizenship. Gaudelli (2016) also supported this claim by stating that “if teachers do not see themselves as global learners, their students may be unlikely to adopt a similar perspective” (p.121). In order to empower their future students to become global citizens as change agents, it is necessary for pre-service teachers to become active global citizens creating positive social changes through their teacher preparation.

In search of the answers to the question of how to train quality teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup>

century, there has been much discussion in different areas of teacher education research. In the field of ‘global citizenship education’ (GCE), how teachers can be prepared as global citizens in teacher education programs has been an important research topic (UNESCO, 2013, 2015, 2017). Along with GCE, there have been growing discussions on ‘teacher agency’—teachers play a role as change agents in creating positive changes in the local and global community along with their classrooms and schools (Hansen, 2001; Campbell, 2004; Carr, 2007; Pantić & Carr, 2017). With regard to the pedagogical strategy to promote holistic learning and provide pre-service teachers opportunities to engage in social changes locally and globally, ‘experiential learning (EL) theory’ (Dewey, 1916, 1938) has been the pivotal theoretical underpinning in teacher education research and practices (UNESCO, 2014, 2016).

Each discussion on GCE, teacher as a change agent, and experiential learning has contributed to responding to the question of training quality teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, who can create meaningful changes in a local and global society beyond their classrooms with their competencies, values, attitudes, and actions (Hansen, 2001; Campbell, 2004; Carr, 2007; UNESCO, 2014, 2016; Pantić & Carr, 2017). However, in spite of the correlation between those themes in responding to the question, they have been discussed irrespectively in most of the existing studies without investigating the interrelation and how each theme can interplay in empowering teachers to become agents of change as global citizens through ‘learning by doing’ (Dewey, 1916, 1938; Pantić & Carr, 2017; UNESCO, 2014, 2017).

In addition, compared to the theory-level discussions on GCE, EL, and teacher as a change agent, these themes have been little discussed with empirical cases from the international teacher education practices (UNESCO, 2014, 2017; UCL IoE, 2017; Bamber, 2020). In this context, there has been also little research investigating GCE, EL and teacher’s change agency with the cases of Finnish and Singaporean teacher education.

Finland and Singapore achieved remarkable innovations in the teacher education system to train quality educators for the 21st century. As the result of their ongoing and successful reformation, teacher education and teacher quality of these two countries have been regarded as the top in the world, which made their cases become models of teacher education to those of many other countries (Westbury, Hansén, Kansanen, & Björkvist, 2005; Tan, 2015; Tan, Liu, & Low, 2016; Aspfors & Eklund, 2017).

For this reason, the curriculum and policy or academic and professional performance of each case have been often discussed in teacher education research and practices, while the question of if and how those high-performing teacher education programs are empowering pre-service teachers to become change agents through GCE and EL has remained unexplored in the existing body of knowledge (Aspfors & Eklund, 2017; Tan, Liu, & Low, 2016; Tan, 2015; Westbury, Hansén, Kansanen, & Björkvist, 2005).

### **1.2. Statement of the Research Purpose**

In order to fill this gap in the body of knowledge, this research will investigate if and how pre-service teachers are empowered to become agents of social change as global citizens in relation to all these three theory/concepts – global citizenship education (GCE), experiential learning(EL), and ecological perspective on change agency. It will be investigated by comparatively studying the cases of the teacher education program at the University of Helsinki (UH) in Finland and the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

Under the aim of the research purpose, the following research questions will be explored in this study.

1. Are pre-service teachers at the U of Helsinki and NIE empowered to become change agents as global citizens? If so, in what ways?
  - 1.1. How differently and similarly do pre-service teachers experience GCE at each institution?
  - 1.2. Do pre-service teachers experience experiential learning, which creates the values of GCE through local or international service? If so, what do they experience differently and similarly?
  - 1.3. Have their engagements empowered them to become change agents as global citizens?
    - 1.3.1. If so, how were they empowered with what changes?
    - 1.3.2. How do global citizenship education, experiential learning, and agency of change interplay in the empowerment process? (What is their interrelation?)
2. What are the lessons to other teacher education institutions from the cases of NIE and the U of Helsinki?

#### **1.4. Abbreviations**

**UH:** University of Helsinki

**NIE:** National Institute of Education

**GCE:** Global Citizenship Education

**EL:** Experiential Learning

**TE:** Teacher Education

**SL:** Service-Learning

**NIE SLC:** NIE Service-Learning Club

### **1.5. Preview of the Study**

Following this chapter one (Introduction) that provides the context, focus, and specific research questions of the study, the next chapter (Chapter 2) will first discuss how this study frames the concept of ‘change agent’ and provide a thorough review of the literature from the fields of an ecological perspective on agency, global citizenship education (GCE), and experiential learning (EL), which are the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study framing the entire structure and research procedures of the study. Then, chapter 3 will provide the national and institutional contexts for comparison by discussing the culture, education and teacher education of each case. Then chapter 4 (methodology) will articulate the research design, data collection and analysis procedures, and the background information of research participants will be provided. The finding chapters (chapters 5 & 6) will present the result of the data analysis of each case. In specific, chapter 5 will discuss the UH case, and chapter 6 does the NIE case. After presenting the result of the comprehensive analysis of each case in these chapters, chapter 7 (discussion) will discuss the results of comparative analysis between two cases, more explicitly connecting those to the research questions. Lastly, the conclusion part (chapter 8) will recap the study briefly and discuss the contribution and limitation of the study as well as further area of research.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review: Situating the Study**

The chapter will begin with discussing how the study understands and conceptualizes change agents. Then, ecological perspective of agency, global citizenship education (GCE), experiential learning (EL), which are the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study, will be thoroughly discussed through the review of relevant literature. In the final section, the gaps in the existing body of knowledge will be identified.

### **2.1. Introduction: Teacher as a Change Agent**

There has been growing interest and discussions on teacher agency today in the field of teacher education. This growing attention has been reflected in curriculum and policy level changes in the recent teacher education over many countries. Some of those changes are such as returning to a bottom-up approach, rather than taking a prescriptive or top-down approach, and also emphasizing teacher quality and teacher's role as a change agent, putting teachers at the center of educational curriculum (Bourn, 2015). This shift reflects the discussions that teachers are the individuals who bring about positive changes in students' lives and societies, as well as leaders who advise on various issues in students and communities, as key players in securing the changes in those (Freire, 2005; Tikly & Barret, 2013; Bourn, 2015). However, despite growing discussion on teacher agency recently, the concept of agency remains still vague, and it has been poorly conceptualized. In addition, there has been very limited perspective on teacher agency, which views teachers as agents of change in their classroom and schools but ignores a broader impact of their change agency in the local and global society beyond their teaching contexts (Bourn, 2015; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015).

However, in today's globalized society, teachers' role and impact are not limited to their teaching contexts, but rather their role needs to be understood as a prime agency in creating positive changes not only in their classrooms but also in their local and global

society as citizens of the world. In this regard, the study conceptualizes change agent as a global citizen who creates positive changes at multi-levels of their surroundings – classrooms, schools, nations, regions and local and global communities, understanding the ecological linkage between local and global dimensions. Teachers, who are change agents as global citizens, understand themselves as citizens of the world with the sense of belonging to humanity (Lee et al., 2016), and the implications of their responsible actions are not limited to creating changes in their local communities or nations, but the impact reaches out to a global society (Wintersteiner et al., 2015; Stein et al., 2016; Bosio & Torres, 2020). The further description of a global citizen, global citizenship and global citizenship education will be discussed in depth, after discussing the ecological perspective on agency in the following section.

## **2.2. Ecological Perspective on Agency**

The study understands agency with an ecological perspective, thus regarding teacher's change agency as something to be achieved by engaging in certain settings and specific contexts rather than an inherent capacity in teachers (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015). According to Biesta and Tedder's study (2007), "the achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations" (p.137). From their understanding, agency is something that people do or achieve through concrete contexts rather than they have or do not have. Viewing agency in such a way leads to the understanding of "how humans are able to be reflexive and creative, acting counter to societal constraints, but also how individuals are enabled and constrained by their social and material environments" (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015, p. 3).

This ecological understanding of agency draws on Emirbayer and Mische's study (1998) that theorized agency in a way that overcomes one-directional approach of understanding agency in existing theories. Priestley, Biesta & Robinson (2017) had noted that such existing theories focused either on "routine – that is, on the experience and expertise teachers bring to their work – or on purpose – that is on the orientations that guide teachers' work – or on judgement – that is, on the decisions teachers make about what to do and how to do it in the here and now" (p.5). In this context, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) made a theory of agency that encompasses all these three dimensions. They maintained that agency must be understood in a comprehensive way that encompasses the past experience and its influence, orientation toward a future, and present engagement. They defined these three dimensions as the *iterational*, the *projective*, and the *practical-evaluative* dimension (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2013).

Based on this theory, the ecological perspective of agency understands agency as the one to be achieved through the dynamic interplay of past, present, and future, appearing as a "temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past, oriented toward the future and 'acted out' in the present" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.963). Therefore, teacher's change agency is something to be achieved through the interplay of what teachers bring to the specific context and what that concrete situation brings to them. It implies that the context and environment in which teachers are situated today will impact their future change agency, considering the agency today is affected by the past. Although individual pre-service teachers come to teacher education programs with their individual capacities, the context, situations, and environment that teachers interact with may be able to promote as well as disable their agentic capacity.

However, policy and curricula on teacher agency have focused more on the individual

capacity that teachers bring to teacher training programs or their profession, ignoring the significance of providing teachers with proper structural conditions and concrete contexts, which play a crucial role in empowering teacher agency (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015). In other words, ‘agentic capacity’ has been more emphasized than ‘agentic spaces’ in shaping agency in teacher education programs (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015). However, the ecological approach on teacher agency emphasizes that teacher education policy and curriculum need to give more explicit attention to the contextual dimensions such as cultural and structural aspects, which configure teachers’ work, especially when the main goal of policy and curriculum has been in developing teacher’s individual capacity (Priestly, Biesta & Robinson, 2015).

### **2.3. Global Citizenship Education (GCE)**

#### **2.3.1. Emerging Context of GCE**

##### ***Citizenship & Citizenship Education***

Citizenship indicates being a part of a political community, and members of a state are expected to have equal legal rights and duties to their state. In this regard, citizenship has been understood as both a ‘legal status’ that reflects the relationship between political members and a state as well as “a social relationship between citizens” (Wintersteiner et al., 2015, p14). In this sense, citizenship of a state creates the notion of ‘we’ who belong to the same political community and ‘you’ who do not. A delineation of this sort is inevitable to form one’s identity situated in a state, but they must not be used for the purpose of racial or violent exclusion (Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

The concept of citizenship has been developed with the following three dimensions - “legal status,” “political participation,” “feeling of belonging” (Wintersteiner et al., 2015,

p14). ‘Legal status’ in democratic states is expected to give access to the rights to social benefits such as services for education, welfare, civil rights, and freedom such as freedom of opinion and speech, religion, and political participation. However, these rights and freedom are limited to only the citizen of a state, which makes the citizens actively participate in their politics and social movements to advocate their rights and freedom. It thus creates the feeling of ‘belonging’ to their national community among citizens, based on the shared values, contexts, situations, politics and realities of citizens of a state (Osler & Starkey, 2005; Bloemraad et al., 2008; Stack, 2012; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

In this context, the importance of ‘citizenship education’ was raised to enable learners to understand democratic values and systems, be critically aware of politics and power relations, and know their political and civic rights as well as their responsibility, thus leading them to engage in politics and democratic procedures actively. Citizenship education puts a special emphasis on practicing political participation because active participation of citizens is one of the most crucial factors that determine the success of democracy (Osler & Starkey, 2005; MacDonald, 2007; Bloemraad et al., 2008; Stack, 2012; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

### ***Globalization & Global Education***

Globalization refers to the process of increasing global connections in a variety of areas. The examples of this phenomenon are economic interdependence among continents, countries and local communities, increasing international (im)migration and travels, and academic and cultural networks that foster the exchanges in knowledge, skills, and capital of goods and people with the development of IT technologies (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). These examples show that globalization has blurred the boundaries of the continents, nations, and local communities. Because of the transformative advance in technology and wealth accumulated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, crossing the national borders has become much easier, and it

is happening more frequently than any other time in the past (Bloemraad, 2008; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

Because a globalized world is greatly interconnected, problems and challenges of the world affect every part of the region. Climate change and global warming, wars and terrors, pollution, and economic and political conflicts between nations and regions have influenced peoples' lives and societies at a local, national and global level. Thus challenges in globalization have demanded global cooperation to protect and promote universal values such as respect, equality, peace, justice, and sustainability. It also has led to the development of NGOs (non-governmental organizations), international organizations (IOs) and other transnational institutions and organizations. Growing international collaboration and the growth of transnational and international institutions have diminished the role and action of national states and governments in making decisions on global agendas. This emerging trend has raised the issue of how to understand citizenship, democracy and civic participation, which were conceptualized in the national context, in the new context of a transnational, interdependent and interconnected global community (Marshall, 1949; Mouffe, 2005; UNESCO, 2014, 2015; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

In this context, 'global education' emerged to react to those global challenges and the complexity of life in a greatly interconnected world. It is a concept integrated with many other pedagogical domains, such as development education, intercultural education, peace education, human rights education, education for sustainability, and environmental education. Global education, as a globally oriented civic education, takes global dimension into its consideration in any educational curriculum and investigates topics at both local and global level with multiple perspectives, thus broadening its angles of teaching and learning into a global context (MacDonald, 2007; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

### ***Global Citizenship***

In globalization, the traditional understanding of citizenship was challenged, and it led to the discussion on ‘global citizenship’ as an alternative concept of traditional citizenship, extended to a global dimension. Although there have been numerous discussions on what ‘global citizenship’ means, there has been no widely agreed definition. Global citizenship has been referred to such as ‘citizenship transcending borders or national states’ or ‘cosmopolitanism’ as a more inclusive and broader concept or ‘planetary citizenship’ that focuses on responsibility for preserving the earth as a narrower definition (Bellamy, 2000; Henderson & Ikea, 2004; Myers, 2006; Pugliese, 2015; UNESCO, 2014, 2016, 2018).

Despite a variety of interpretations and conceptions of global citizenship, there has been a common consensus that global citizenship is not referring a certain legal status attached to particular regions, but rather about a sense of belonging to the community of this world and also about participation and responsible action for a global community based on human solidarity. Given that global citizenship is understood similarly with human rights as it is a status entitled to every human despite their social and economic status, ethnicities, origins and cultural backgrounds, it is understood that rights and responsibilities of a global citizen are bestowed to everyone living on the planet regardless of their ages, socio-economic backgrounds, nationalities, and legal status (Davies, 2006; UNESCO, 2018).

Global citizenship requires its citizens to have ‘glocal’ perspective with which they consider their duty and responsibility not only in their national and local context but also in a global context (Wintersteiner et al., 2015; Stein et al., 2016; Bosio & Torres, 2020). In this regard, global citizenship demands more than just acquiring knowledge of global issues or learning about other countries and cultures. It further requires the understanding of the interconnectedness of local and global society. The popular slogan ‘act local, think global’

suggests the ecological linkage in local and global actions and their implications in an interconnected global society (Brownlie, 2001).

### **2.3.2. Global Citizenship Education (GCE)**

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) can be conceptualized as “the educational extension of global citizenship” (Bosio & Torres, 2020, p.7) and can be also understood as an expanded pedagogical concept of civic education to a global dimension in a broad manner (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). GCE emphasizes the role of education in forming citizenship in the context of globalization. UNESCO (2014) describes “GCE inspires action, partnerships, dialogue, and cooperation through formal and non-formal education” (p.15). Its aim is directly related to the function of civic, social and political socialization, as well as its contribution to empowering learners to change and transform today’s world into a more peaceful, just, and sustainable place by taking actions locally and globally (Lee et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2016). GCE overlaps with other pedagogical domains such as citizenship and global education, intercultural education, peace and human rights education, environmental education, and education for sustainable development. Thus it takes a multifaceted approach with various pedagogical concepts, methodologies, and theories from other related fields (Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

#### ***Approaches to Global Citizenship Education***

The absence of one singular theory and its integrative approach encompassing all the different typologies, GCE is described as ‘multi-layered’ or ‘multi-vocal’ symbols that could be defined and understood in multiple ways as there are competing groups understanding global citizenship in different ways, based on their theoretical positions and beliefs, and interpretation of globalization (Turner 1975; Bosio & Torres, 2020). In this context, Torres (2017) described GCE as an “intervention in search of theory” (p.14), indicating that GCE

cannot be characterized in one singular way, but rather it is a process of discovering the multi-layered interpretations and the context of those understandings. Thus these multiple concepts and contents of GCE may be determined by “underlying perspectives of globalization and global citizenship” (Lee et al., p.9).

Since there have been a variety of terms and descriptions used to explain the approaches to GCE in existing literature, it has caused confusion in understanding them clearly. In spite of similarities among the understandings of global citizenship and global citizenship education, agreed-upon definition on them has been absent (Hartman, 2008). Through the review of existing literature, however, it was found that the approaches to GCE are conceptualized mainly as the following three ways in a broad manner: a) competency-based (pragmatic or skill-based) approach, b) value-based (moral-based) approach, and c) critical approach (Andreotti, 2006; Bosio & Torres, 2020; Kleibard, 2004; Lee & Yoo, 2018; Nussbaum, 1996; Torres, 2017; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

*‘Competency-based Approach’* has a close connection with human-capital theory, individualism, and western-centric neoliberalism in understanding global citizenship and its educational approach. From its understanding, global citizen is a global leader and economic cosmopolitan who participates in and contributes to the global free market. Therefore, this approach considers it important to prepare learners to equip skills and competencies to survive and compete successfully with others in the world market (Bosio & Torres, 2020; Lee & Yoo, 2018; Stewart, 2007; Kielbard, 2004; Torres, 2017). Marshall (2011) noted that the “technical-economic instrumentalist agenda of much of the global citizenship education policy requires of students (and teachers) a pragmatic and mostly neoliberal understanding of legal structures, rights and responsibilities” (p.417). The market-driven approach puts its curricular focus on enabling students to obtain specific skills to become competent,

communicative, and contributive, especially in a global market (Kielbard, 2004; Stewart, 2007; Connors, 2015; Stein et al., 2016; Lee & Yoo, 2018; Bosio & Torres, 2020).

*'Value-based or Moral-based Approach'* is based on the perspective of 'moral cosmopolitanism,' 'moral universalism,' 'multiculturalism,' and 'humanitarianism,' which emphasize individual's ethical responsibility, morality and justice, social responsibility, and universal values such as respect for other cultures, human rights, and freedom of individuals. It also draws attention to the need for actions to tackle global challenges to change this world into a more peaceful, just, and sustainable place (Andreotti, 2006, 2010; Bosio & Torres, 2019, 2020; Lee & Yoo, 2018; Nussbaum, 1996; Osler & Vincent, 2002; Wintersteiner et al., 2015). This approach is also described as a transformative approach, and it has a value-creating orientation that pursues empathy and solidarity with humanity, respect for different cultures, and actions to promote those values.

It also places emphasis on the importance of tackling global challenges with those values and with international cooperation and collaboration (Bosio, 2017, Dobson, 2005; Tarozzi & Torres, 2016; Torres & Bosio, 2019, 2020; Gaudelli, 2016; UNESCO, 2014, 2015; Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Its approach considers it crucial that informing knowledge of global problems and issues, developing empathy and moral responsibility based on human solidarity to promote universal values such as justice, equality, and respect and taking actions to solve global problems and making positive changes with active cooperation, while recognizing the interconnection between local and global realities (Andreotti, 2006, 2010; Bosio & Torres, 2019, 2020; Dower, 2002; Lee & Yoo, 2018; Osler & Vincent, 2002; Wintersteiner et al., 2015).

*'Critical Approach'* understands GCE from the perspective of critical theory and post-colonialism. It raises critical questions of global citizenship itself, arguing that its

derivation came from the western perspective. This approach suggests that GCE needs to educate students to critically investigate the origin of global poverty and structural problems of global inequality beyond gaining knowledge of global issues. Critical approach emphasizes enabling learners to have critical reflexivity on their social and political status and critically examine the local and global issues. It requires learners to understand world policies, power dynamics, and underlying power relations embedded in global challenges with a critical lens. Critical approach also urges active actions to transform the current unjust and unequal global system with critical reflection on power discourse (Andreotti, 2006; Dolby & Rizvi, 2007; Lee & Yoo, 2018).

***Middle Way between Value-based & Critical Approach: The Approach of the Study***

This study takes a middle-way approach merging value-based and critical approach because these two approaches are reciprocal and interconnected rather than independently exist (Wintersteiner et al., 2015, Torres, 2017; Bosio & Torres, 2019). The middle-way approach understands GCE as an “ethical-critical global pedagogy that aims to foster and promote not only skills but most importantly, also values and actions, engaging, rather than evading, problematic questions about global disparities” (Bosio & Torres, 2019, p.3). In this regard, the study rejects a dichotomous approach between value-based and critical approach. Bamber et al. (2020) noted that promoting universal values and ethical principles “open up spaces for critical democratic engagement, creating possibilities for nurturing criticality” (p.6). This argument is also in line with what Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary” (as cited in Simpson, 2020, p.41). Shultz (2007) also highlighted this middle-way position by mentioning “accompanying the other on a journey to find just and compassionate responses to injustice” (p.256). GCE must

seek human rights values, peace, social justice, and sustainability, necessarily with a critical understanding of the structural injustice and inequality, as well as underlying power relations rooted in the challenges of globalization.

The study acknowledges the universal values and ethical principles for human beings on the planet to co-exist and co-prosper in a more just, peaceful and sustainable way.

However, there is a reality that not everyone on the planet has equal access to the rights to create those values and freedom to advocate them, not because of their individual problems but because of systematic injustice, oppression and inequality situated in their social and political structures. In terms of this, the study considers it important not only to promote and create universal and ethical principles, but also to critically understand structural inequality, discriminations toward certain ethnic backgrounds, xenophobia, history of slavery, imperialism and colonialism, and neo-liberalism regenerating oppression as a different form of colonialism through economic power dominance. In order to make real changes happen by tackling the roots of the global challenges, the realities of injustice, inequality and oppression must be informed and reflected with a critical perspective in GCE.

### ***Discussion on Conceptual Frameworks of GCE***

There has been an agreement among scholars that the two most influential pedagogical fields to the emergence of GCE are global education and citizenship education (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Global education and citizenship education are overlapped in many ways but especially in their educational goals and aims. Both global education and citizenship education consider it important to gain knowledge of social and political issues for decision-making and problem-solving and take active actions as responsible citizens. Both are also driven by the desire for the future collective well-being of their political communities (Davies et al., 2004; Davies et al., 2005; MacDonald, 2007; O’Byrne, 2003).

These considerable overlaps provoked arguments among researchers that it is timely to blur the barriers between those two fields and make one single pedagogical concept as ‘global citizenship education.’ Considering this emerging context, GCE is expected to inform learners of local, national and global issues to help them make informed decisions and take responsible actions locally and globally. In this regard, it is important that the participatory dimension of global citizenship education must be practiced through learner’s first-hand experience, not merely taught or informed through the lectures (Davies et al., 2004; Davies et al, 2005; MacDonald, 2007; O’Byrne, 2003).

In addition to global education and citizenship education, ethical values and moral principles of peace education and human rights education have been regarded as other main pedagogical domains that have formed global citizenship education (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Based on those relevant pedagogies of GCE, scholars have conceptualized the core dimensions of GCE even though the terminology has been used differently among researchers. For example, the conceptual dimension of GCE was described as knowledge, competences, and values & attitudes (Wintersteiner et al., 2015), cognitive skills, non-cognitive skills, and behaviors (Pugliese, 2015), knowledge & skills, attitudes & values, and behaviours (UNESCO, 2014), knowledge, cognitive skills, non-cognitive skills, and behavioral capacities (Skirbekk et al., 2013), social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement (Morais & Odgen, 2010), global awareness, self-efficacy, and global civic engagement (Kronfli, 2011).

UNESCO (2015) synthesized the various terms and concepts indicating the conceptual framework of GCE from the existing literature and recent studies, and it represented the three core dimensions of GCE as a more integrative concept, overarching upper mentioned domains. Its work suggested the following three conceptual dimensions of

GCE - “cognitive,” “socio-emotional,” and “behavioral” dimension. Though scholars in the field of GCE are conceptualizing its pedagogical domains with disparate terms and concepts, they are all commonly addressing the holistic attribute of GCE that “knowledge (cognitive domain) must touch the heart (socio-emotional domain) and turn into action to bring about positive change (behavioral domain)” (UNESCO, 2018, p.2), and all these three domains are interrelated (Kronfli, 2011; Morais & Odgen, 2010; Skirbekk et al., 2013; Wintersteiner et al., 2015, UNESCO, 2014, 2015, 2018).

According to UNESCO (2015), ‘*Cognitive domain*’ indicates acquiring knowledge of local, regional, national and global issues and gaining a critical awareness of underlying assumptions and power relations rooted in the global challenges. It also requires an understanding of diversity in the social, political, cultural, economic, national, religious and cultural issues and discourses of a global society. ‘*Socio-emotional domain*’ refers to promoting and developing universal values and attitudes such as respect and dignity, peace and justice, equality, and sustainability based on the sense of belonging to humanity and human solidarity. ‘*Behavioral domain*’ is about acting responsibly and ethically at the local, regional and global levels to make positive changes and solve the global challenges for a more just, peaceful and sustainable planet (Kronfli, 2011; Morais & Odgen, 2010; Skirbekk et al., 2013; Wintersteiner et al., 2015, UNESCO, 2014; 2015, 2018). GCE integrates intellect, emotion and action, thus aiming to combine students learning with their lives (Lee et al., 2016).

In terms of developing critical reflexivity through GCE, Wintersteiner et al. (2015) maintained that critical reflexivity should be integrated into every learning process of GCE rather than considered as an add-on component, thus making it penetrate every conceptual domain of GCE. GCE needs to encourage learners to be self-reflective and gain a critical

awareness of interrelation between their knowledge of social issues, assumptions, values, actions, and global structure connected to inequality and injustice at different levels of a global society (Andreotti, 2006; Wintersteiner et al., 2015, Torres, 2017; Bosio & Torres, 2019).

### ***GCE in Practice***

Since GCE consists of the holistic conceptual frameworks interconnecting cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions, its curriculum needs to be developed and implemented considering its holistic pedagogical attribute. According to several studies, the real-life experiences can help the holistic practice of GCE by strengthening students' knowledge in the local and global issues while developing critical reflexivity and cultivating their empathetic and ethical mindset and attitude, thus leading to other following actions and participations (Bamber et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2016, 2018). For this reason, the curriculum of GCE must combine learners' real-life experiences to gain and critically reflect their knowledge, values and attitudes, and responsibly act in order to change the local and global societies (Bamber et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2016, 2018).

GCE also takes an integrative approach to its practice. GCE is a life-learning education for students in every age range from early childhood to adulthood. In addition, it does not refer to the education only for and about "global" dimension, but its perspective merges "the local and global into the glocal" (Wintersteiner et al., 2015, p.37) as GCE has emerged in the context of globalization that has blurred local and national boundaries in an increasingly interconnected world, thus developed as civic education expanded into a global scale (Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Its curriculum can be developed as an independent course or integrated into existing subjects according to each school and classroom context. However,

there is an agreement that students can have high-quality learning experience in GCE especially when they learn it through the integrative and holistic approach by making school ethos penetrate every teaching discipline and integrating its curriculum into both formal and informal education, curricular and extracurricular, traditional and untraditional ways of teaching and learning (UNESCO, 2013, 2016, 2018).

When selecting the contents of the GCE curriculum, its learning topics and contents must be deliberately chosen, considering its pedagogical relationship with other relevant disciplines as it integrates many pedagogical disciplines such as human rights education, peace education, environmental education, education for sustainability, and so forth (UNESCO, 2013, 2016, 2018). Its assessment also requires a holistic approach in evaluating its educational outcomes. Skirbekk et al. (2013) suggested that there are three areas to be measured in GCE in a holistic and integrative manner – indicators of societal and cultural structure, atmosphere, and networks at a “society level,” education department, school, educators and curriculum at a “supplier level,” and learners’ cognitive, socio-emotional and behavior dimensions at a “receiver level.”

## **2.4. Experiential Learning (EL)**

### **2.4.1. Experiential Learning Theory**

Dewey (1916, 1938) and, more recently, Kolb (1984) developed and advanced ‘experiential learning theory’ that explains learning happens through the holistic and interactive process of ‘experience, reflect, think and take action.’ Dewey (1938) examined the connections between ‘experience’ and ‘learning’ and maintained that learning happens through experience, although not every experience is educative as some experiences could mislead learners toward distortion and restriction of their further growth and learning.

In order to make meaningful learning happen through experience, he maintained that experience needs to be situated in the principles of ‘continuity’ and ‘interaction’ (Dewey, 1938). The principle of continuity indicates that every experience occurs in relation to one’s experience from the past, and learners will connect their past and present experiences with their future experiences. About the second principle of interaction, he explained that learning happens through the interactions between learners and their surrounding environments. In this regard, Dewey (1938) argued that learning is not a set of the outcome, but rather a process of interaction happening between learners’ experience and environment. He maintained that students can develop authentic citizenship through community engagement in which they are able to experience and interact with their surrounding environments.

Building on Dewey’s idea, Kolb (1984) claimed that “learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p.28). From his understanding (1984), learning is not an outcome, nor is it content; rather, it is a process of developing and adapting knowledge through experiences, and in this process, knowledge is produced and tested continuously. He also emphasized that learning is a holistic process that encompasses cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions, and learning can occur at any age level and in any life situation. He noted that an individual’s subjective experience and objective environment influence each other and the entire learning process. Learning is “the process of creating knowledge” (p.36), and the transaction between ‘social knowledge’ - accumulated cultural experiences of human beings, and ‘personal knowledge’ - accumulated in individual’s life experiences in the learning process.

Based on his idea “knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984, p.31), he developed ‘experiential learning model’ which consists of the following four stages - concrete experience, reflective observation,

abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). According to his idea, learning happens through this spiral learning cycle. 1) Learners encounter new experiences or reinterpret their existing experiences by having a concrete experience. Then, 2) observation and reflection on those experiences from multiple perspectives are followed, leading to the next phase in which learners create abstract concepts and generalization by integrating their observations into a hypothesis. 3) Learners try out the hypothesis and apply gained knowledge to their new experiences. Lastly, 4) they make decisions and use them to solve problems, and it results in new experiences in the future. Kolb suggested that these four stages continue to cycle in the learning process (Kolb, 1984; Friar, 2016).

#### 2.4.2. Types of Experiential Learning

*Internship* aims to give students opportunities to integrate the knowledge gained from the class with practical application in professional settings. Internship can be credit-based or non-credit based and paid or unpaid. It is often project-based during the academic terms or students' vacation and usually not connected to their theoretical academic courses. Students may work with professionals in their field, participate in projects, and support public events or volunteer in co-curricular activities. Their activities are supervised by professionals with whom students work, but faculty members are who usually assess students' internships (Lim & Bloomquist, 2015; Moore, 2010). Similar to internship, *practicum* can be an independent course or practical experience embedded in a course, which requires practical involvement in professional settings. It may be paid or unpaid and could include supervision (Boston University, n.d.; Moore, 2010).

In *undergraduate research*, student participates in research as a research assistant and research collaborator, mostly in the projects led by their faculty members. *Community-based research* gives an opportunity in which students and professors collaborate with community

organizations and conduct their studies while supporting the needs of the community (UTSA, n.d.)

Through *Cooperative Education (Co-Op)*, students obtain practical work experiences throughout multiple semesters with alternation between work and study. It aims that students develop their professional skills and knowledge. Students usually spend several weeks to take courses as full-time students and a few weeks in professional settings as full-time professionals. However, students can work and study simultaneously as part-time students and professionals according to their plans. Students gain academic credits by meeting the requirements for both academic course and work experience (Boston University, n.d.; UTSA, n.d.).

*Fieldwork* provides students with an opportunity for research or practices away from their institutions, and they are supervised by their faculty members. They study in the context directly connected to a specific population, natural phenomena, and other entities in the field to be studied (Boston University, n.d.; Moore, 2010).

In *study abroad* programs, students usually take courses in universities overseas. Its main focus is on cultural immersion to enable students to gain new life experiences by exploring different cultural contexts. Study abroad can be connected with academic courses and also with service-learning or internship (Boston University, n.d.; Moore, 2010).

*Volunteerism* gives students an opportunity to serve a local and global community by engaging in community-based or international programs. Students can partake in volunteering programs through formal or informal channels. Formal channels can be such as non-profit organizations (NGOs), international organizations (IOs) or university and faculty unit. It is also possible for students to join volunteerism through the informal route, organized

by individuals or student groups, such as student clubs or student organizations (Lim & Bloomquist, 2015; UTSA, n.d.).

*Service-learning* is often described as a pedagogical technique for integrating community service with academic outcomes. A well-designed service-learning curriculum can benefit both students and the local or global community by encouraging students' learning and meeting the needs of the community (Dewey, 1938; Erickson & Anderson, 2012). It can also be more elaborately described as a method that students can participate actively in organized service experiences where students can learn how to meet the actual needs of the community through the integrated academic curriculum and structured reflection (Furco, 1996). Service-learning aims to benefit both the provider and recipient of the service, and this reciprocal relationship between students' learning and community service distinguishes service-learning from other types of experiential education such as community service, internships, and other types of field education (Furco, 1996). Although there have been a number of discussions on definitions of service-learning, Flecky (2011) stated that the essence of service-learning is grounded on the philosophy of service and learning from experiences, engagement, and reflection in the collaborative relationship with community partners.

## 2.5. Conclusion: Significance of the Study

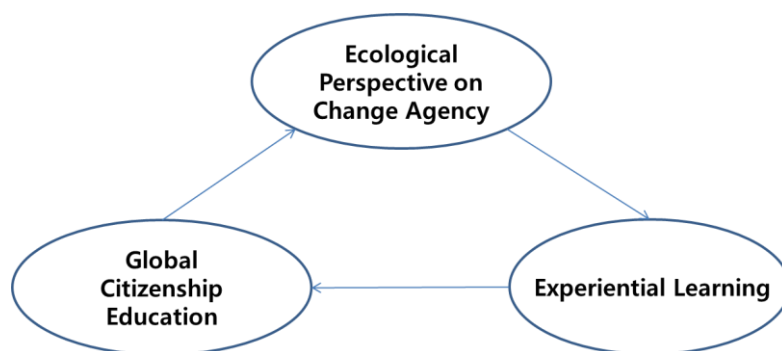


Figure 1. Conceptual & Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

From the review of the literature, I found the need to search for the interplay of three conceptual frameworks in empowering pre-service teachers to become change agents. Those three conceptual frameworks are highly interconnected in that each claim contributes to the discussion on the significance of holistic learning in empowering pre-service teachers to become change agents as global citizens. However, their dynamic interplay and relationship in achieving change agency have not been clearly investigated in the existing body of literature. In addition, the review of literature on those themes showed that there is little research investigating the topics of GCE, EL and change agency with empirical cases from international teacher education practices.

In order to fill these gaps in the existing body of knowledge, this study aims to search for how ecological perspective on change agency, global citizenship education (GCE) and experiential learning (EL) interplay in the process of empowering teachers to become change agents and investigate it with the empirical cases of teacher education programs around the world. Specifically, this research comparatively studies the teacher education program of the U of Helsinki (Finland) and the National Institute of Education (Singapore) for this aim. The national and institutional context of each case will be discussed in the next chapter to help a comprehensive and comparative understanding of the two cases, and further description of the research methods and justification for studying those cases will be provided in detail in the methodology chapter (chapter 4).

## **Chapter 3. National & Institutional Contexts for Comparison**

### **3.1 University of Helsinki (UH) in Finland**

#### **3.1.1. Overview of Finnish Culture, Education, & Teacher Education**

Finland has a parliamentary democracy with sparse population, situated in northernmost Europe. It has been described as a mono-cultural country regarding ethnicity and religion, but its culture is actually diverse especially in terms of religion, ethnicity, language use, views on politics, socio-economic status, and people's way of living depending on where they live in the country. Finnish society has become more and more culturally diverse in globalization due to the increased mobility and immigration. Its geographical position in the border between East and West often led Finland to be involved with many power struggles in the past, especially with Russia and Sweden, and these two countries have much influenced Finnish culture historically (Räsänen, 2009).

In the 1970s and 1980s, there was a strong consensus among people about the need of welfare system and quality education for every citizen in Finland. With agreed-upon supports from all political parties and social groups, comprehensive school reform happened in 1970, called 'the mother of all reforms' because this reform generated overall changes and transformation in all other sectors of Finnish society. The uniformly high-quality education system of Finland has been evaluated as one of the main drivers of striking success in social and economic growth in Finland and its successful economic internationalization in the 1990s (Aho et al., 2006; Räsänen, 2009).

Due to its successful reformation in education all-around, including the teacher training system, Finnish teacher education is regarded as one of the most successfully

reformed and high-quality teacher education systems in the world, along with the one in Singapore (Tan, Liu & Low, 2016). Finnish teacher education system has been reformed to have a stronger integration between theory and practice, and it created partnerships in and out of the universities to help pre-service teachers equip both research skills and practical teaching techniques, and learn how to integrate theory and practice when they teach in schools (Westbury, Hansén, Kansanen, & Björkvist, 2005; Aspfors & Eklund, 2017).

Finnish teacher education has become an initiative of research-oriented teacher preparation program since its reformation in the 1970s. All teacher education is provided at university level, and the minimum qualification for becoming a teacher is obtaining a Master's degree. Pre-service teachers learn how to conduct their research and write a dissertation during their preparation. Research skill is a key component student teachers should obtain in Finland while collaborating with educational stakeholders such as university faculty, school supervisors and other student teachers to conduct their research. As a result, Finnish student teachers are trained to equip high autonomy in managing their teaching and engaging in decision-making process based on rational evidence from research as well as experiential arguments. Teachers can gain critical and evidence-based thinking throughout their inquiry-based teacher preparation, which helps innovative problem-solving in diverse educational contexts (Westbury, Hansén, Kansanen, & Björkvist, 2005; Schleicher, 2012; Aspfors & Eklund, 2017).

In Finland, teachers are highly respected in its society, and it is one of the most attractive professions among young people. It is mainly because the requirement to become a teacher demands a long-standing and high level of education and its social atmosphere appreciating and respecting teachers' work. In Finland, around only 10 percent of the

applicants who are highly motivated and have multiple talents with excellent academic skills are admitted to a class teachers' program for basic education (grades 1-6) (Räsänen, 2009).

### **3.1.2. Finnish Context of GCE and Challenges**

In Finland, the terms corresponding to 'global citizenship education' have been 'education for global responsibility,' 'intercultural education,' and 'global education.' 'Education for global responsibility' puts emphasis on ethical responsibilities, and 'intercultural education' draws attention to "Finland's cooperation with other nation states, about the relations between North and South, East and West, the mainstream culture in the country, old ethnic minorities (Such as Swedish speaking Finns, the Sami and Roma people) and the newly immigrated minorities, religious minorities, cultures of social classes and youth cultures" (Räsänen, 2010, p.12). Along with those terms, Rantakokko (2018) suggested that the term 'global education' has been used more commonly in current Finnish curriculum documents than 'global citizenship education.'

Finnish education policies have a history promoting internationalization, global and sustainable education, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). In this context, Finnish national policies regarding GCE have emphasized a more school-wide and integrated approach. (Aho et al. 2006; Ministry of Education, 2007; Räsänen, 2009; Pudas, 2015; Rantakokko, 2018). The Global Education 2010 programme, which aimed at setting national objectives for global education, suggested that the goals and values of global education must be integrated with every formal and informal curriculum such as academic subjects, extracurricular programs and student-led activities (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Researchers in the field have noted that all the current Finnish national curricula suggest the significance of global education at every school level throughout every

curriculum (Aho et al. 2006; Räsänen, 2009, 2010; Pudas, 2015; Rantakokko, 2018) and global education is expected to respond to the emerging challenges from increasing diversity and migration and any changes in economic, socio-cultural and ecological dimensions. In the Finnish core curriculum of 2016, the goals of global education are presented to all education as underlying values. According to its curriculum (Finnish National Board of Education, 2015, as cited in Rantakokko, 2018), “basic education leads the foundation for global citizenship that respects human rights and encourages the pupils to act for positive change”(p.16), and values, such as justice, peace, empathy, respect, human dignity and equality are emphasized with intercultural communications, global responsibility and sustainable development as well as critical thinking skills and students’ active participation.

According to Räsänen’s study (2009), although much national effort to build global education throughout Finnish schools and teacher education programs has resulted in many positive changes, there needs to be more reformation in teacher education programmes in many aspects. She argues that Finnish teacher education programmes have a solid structure from its long and strong tradition, which has made it difficult to introduce new components to the existing teacher education programs. When new perspectives, approaches or any other new components are introduced to the teacher education programs, they used to become ‘add-on’ to existing curricula rather than being integrated (Räsänen, 2009; Pudas, 2015). Räsänen (2007) additionally addressed the problem that Finnish teacher education programmes have “traditionally been very ethnocentric and based on monocultural view of Finns and Finnish culture” (pp. 20-21). She pointed out that it has been very difficult for non-native Finns to be accepted into the teacher education program.

In this context, except for few teacher education institutions in Finland, the

curriculum for global citizenship education has been marginalized in overall teacher education programmes (Räsänen, 2007; Menon et al., 2021; Pashby et al., 2021). Thus objectives of global citizenship education have not become the main learning goals in mainstream curricula, causing difficulties in changing students' perspectives and nurturing knowledge, values, and attitudes required for global citizens (Räsänen, 2009; Pudas, 2015).

### **3.1.3. Overview of TE program at the Department of Educational Sciences of the U of Helsinki**

The University of Helsinki is Finland's largest and oldest university, established in 1640. As one of the Faculty units, The Faculty of Education Sciences at the U of Helsinki is where pre-service teachers are educated and trained. The faculty consists of two departments – the Department of Education and the Training Schools (two internship schools). Since 2017, the Faculty of Educational Sciences has provided six study tracks in Finnish and three in Swedish within one Bachelor's degree program. The Finnish tracks are Special Education, Home Economics Teacher Education, Textiles Teacher Education, Kindergarten Teacher Education, Class Teacher Education and General and Adult Education. It also provides Swedish tracks of Kindergarten Teacher Education, Class Teacher Education and General and Adult Education. It is mandatory for all students to continue to study for 2- years of Master's degree after 3- years of Bachelor's degree. Primary and subject teacher education programs, except for kindergarten teacher education, require pre-service teachers to complete a second-cycle university degree to obtain formal qualification (University of Helsinki, 2021).

## **3.2. National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore**

### **3.2.1. Overview of Singaporean Culture, Education, & Teacher Education**

Singapore is located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. It is a multicultural nation, populated with multi-ethnic, religious, and language groups with a Chinese majority, surrounded by Muslim countries. Singapore became an independent country in 1965 by separating from Malaysia. Due to various challenges and instability in the society shortly after the independence, the primary goals of education were in economic development and citizenship formation for human resources and social cohesion through a centralized education system, directed by the People Action Party (PAP) government. Singapore achieved rapid economic and societal growth over the three decades since its independence under the strong direction of the government with the emphasis on “economic pragmatism and rationality, built on the principles of multiracialism, meritocracy and multilingualism” (Sim & Print, 2009, p.706) to survive and build a prosperous nation and in this regard, the culture in Singapore has been described as (soft) authoritarian and paternalistic in the “centralized power structure and a close elitist policy-making apparatus” (Sim & Print, 2009, p.706)

Tan (2011) and Gopinathan (2012) explain the evolution of Singapore education has a close tie with the development of its nation state. There was the first way of educational change after World War II, which had a massive expansion of secondary and higher education. Then the second and third ways of educational changes were followed since its independence. In the late fifties and sixties, its education put a huge emphasis on nation building and educating committed citizens to its social and economic development. Then by the late eighties, there was a radical transformation in Singaporean education, giving more attention to learners and equal education opportunity. Entering a globalized economy, the nation

realized its limitation of centralized decision-making infrastructure, thus making an attempt to decentralize the school system, giving more flexibility and autonomy to educators and schools. After the second and third ways of evolution, there has been so-called ‘the fourth way’ that has shifted the educational focus on the efficient/effective system toward a more flexible, inclusive, value-driven and holistic education.

This fourth way has also been reflected in the teacher education reformation of Singapore. The National Institute of Education (NIE) is the only teacher education institute in Singapore and an autonomous institute of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Under the shift of ‘the fourth way,’ NIE developed and implemented a new values-driven Teacher Education Model for the Twenty-First Century (TE<sup>21</sup>) which revolves around two pillars - V<sup>3</sup>SK philosophy and Graduand Teacher Competencies (GTC) Framework. V<sup>3</sup>SK model represents values of ‘Learner-centredness,’ ‘Development of a strong sense of teacher identity,’ and ‘Service to the profession and community,’ and Skill and Knowledge necessary for competent teachers of the twenty-first century (NIE, 2009). Graduand Teacher Competencies (GTC) Framework articulates “a set of professional standards and goals which integrates the V<sup>3</sup>SK model and the MOE (Ministry of Education) competencies framework for beginning teachers, using three performance dimensions – professional practice, leadership & management and personal effectiveness” (NIE, 2017, Graduand Teacher Competencies (GTC) Framework).

### **3.2.2. Singaporean Context of GCE and Challenges**

From the review of the scholarly literature and official documents (Gopinathan, 2012; Ho, 2013; Tan & Tan, 2014; MOE, 2015; Tan, Liu & Low, 2016; Chiong & Copinathan, 2018), it was found that GCE in Singapore has been often discussed in the frameworks of

‘the education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ in a broad manner and ‘multicultural education’ or ‘character and citizenship education’ in a narrow sense by discussing national citizenship in a globalized context.

According to Chiong & Copinathan (2018), in spite of the successful educational reformation and increased autonomy in the fourth way of evolution, the Singapore education system is still remaining highly centralized. Much research suggests that the state has not appropriately reflected emerging changes in learners and fast-changing socio-political realities in a globalized world in its citizenship education, sticking to the national-centric approach. This national-centric and top-down approach of citizenship education has been criticized numerous by scholars for providing learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with irrelevant education by viewing students as passive stakeholders of citizenship rather than active ones. Chiong & Copinathan (2018) maintained that this approach shows the ignorance of changes in the Singaporean youths who do not confine their citizenry identity only into their national context but reflect more diverse perspectives of citizenship and have an active attitude toward it in a globalized world.

Researchers discussed that the philosophical ground of citizenship education of Singapore is mainly communitarian (Tan, 2013; Tan & Tan, 2014; Chiong & Copinathan, 2018), “built on shared national value and a unified conception of national identity, to foster feelings of rootedness to the nation” (Chiong & Copinathan, 2018, p.7), and also claimed that Singapore has coped with the challenges of globalization, emphasizing national identity and the shared values, which is also described as ‘Asian Communitarian,’ that represents the Confucian perspective of harmony that “the collective is prioritized though discrete parts are valued in their own right” (Chiong & Copinathan, 2018, p.9). Choing and Copinathan’s study

(2018) suggested that although the Singapore state has achieved remarkable success in fostering social cohesion and economic growth, its centralized system and national-centric approach to citizenship education challenged global citizenship education in Singapore. They maintained that the state only has focused on educating economic-cosmopolitans who can benefit Singapore's global economy but not on global political or cultural cosmopolitans. There have also been challenges that the current curriculum little discusses the relevance of Singapore and other regions in the world, thus providing an irrelevant and divisive understanding of issues in national, regional and international contexts while creating superficial opportunities for global engagements (Ho, 2013; Chiong & Copinathan, 2018).

### **3.2.3. Overview of NIE Teacher Education Program**

NIE is one of the autonomous institutes of Nanyang Technology University (NTU) in Singapore, founded in 1991 and the only national teacher education institution of Singapore. Initial teacher preparation programmes offer two Bachelor's programs for primary and secondary levels - Bachelor of Arts (Education) – BA (Ed) (Full-time) and Bachelor of Science (Education) (BSc[Ed]) (full-time) with the following nine tracks - BA(Ed) (General) (Primary), BA(Ed) (Chinese/Malay/Tamil Language Specialisation) (Primary), BA(Ed) (Chinese/Malay Language Specialisation) (Secondary), BA(Ed) (General) (Secondary), BSc(Ed) (General) (Primary), BSc(Ed) (Physical Education & Sports Science) (Primary), BSc(Ed) (General) (Secondary), BSc(Ed) (Physical Education & Sports Science) (Secondary), BEd (Primary). NIE also provides Postgraduate Diploma in Education – primary, secondary and Junior college level, and the Diploma in Education for the primary and the lower secondary level with specialized subjects (NIE, n.d.).

## **Chapter 4. Research Methodology**

### **4.1 Methodology**

#### **4.1.1. Overview of the Research Design: Qualitative Comparative Case Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how global citizenship education (GCE), experiential learning (EL) and change agency interplay in empowering pre-service teachers to become change agents as global citizens and if and how similarly and differently pre-service teachers are empowered in each teacher education program at NIE and UH. Regarding this research purpose, the focus of this study is not on quantifying or generalizing the result of the study but exploring the meaning of the phenomenon, which is the primary characteristic of qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In the framework of qualitative research, it is particularly designed as a comparative case study because the study aims to investigate the research questions by comparatively studying empirical cases from international TE practices. Thus, this qualitative comparative case study aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of phenomena by collecting evidence from each case and find meaningful implications by comparing similarities and differences between cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

#### **4.1.2. Selecting the Cases**

The University of Helsinki in Finland and the National Institute of Education in Singapore were selected with the following criteria.

- 1) The cases are regarded as high-performing teacher education and have become models to other teacher education programs in the world.
- 2) The cases are situated in disparate regional, cultural and educational contexts.

The first criterion was set in order to draw more attention from teacher education research and practices internationally by studying the cases of model teacher education of many countries, wanting to contribute to more TE research and practice. The second criterion was set to suggest the lessons and insights applicable to broader cultural and institutional contexts of TE institutions situated in diverse contexts in the world.

For the case of Singapore, NIE has been the only national TE institution, so there was no consideration of other institutions. In contrast, Finland has several TE institutions in different universities in its nation, but I selected the U of Helsinki as its teacher education can be one of the good representatives of Finnish teacher education considering its long tradition and the highest reputation in and out of the nation. It also has built a partnership with NIE for academic and research exchange, which may indicate each TE program is equivalent enough to be compared in this study.

The researcher's personal interest also affected selecting the cases. I thought the fact that both Singapore and Finland developed high-quality teacher education systems in very disparate contexts would give me a better chance to think and reflect more deeply and comprehensively when analyzing data of each case, considering their different contextual factors that may have affected each TE programme and participants' responses. In addition, while studying in the field of teacher education, I encountered much literature discussing teacher education of Finland and Singapore as quality and transformative ones in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and it motivated me to study their cases further on the research topic further.

## 4.2. Research Methods and Data Collection Procedure

### 4.2.1. Semi-structured Interviews

The primary research method for data collection of this study was a semi-structured interview. ‘Semi-structured interview’ is between ‘a fully-structured interview’ that has a rigid set of questions and an ‘unstructured interview’ that does not have a prearranged interview questions. In between those two interview methods, a semi-structured interview has prearranged questions with main themes, but it is structured more loosely than a structured interview, thus enabling interviewees to share their experiences and express their thoughts and feelings more freely but within certain frameworks. The study had a questionnaire set that guided the interviews, but according to each participant’s response, some follow-up questions were additionally and spontaneously asked to understand the participants’ responses more clearly and thoroughly. Participants were also able to share any relevant experiences and information even when those were not necessarily related to the research or interview questions, express themselves, and speak more openly and freely following their flow of thoughts and feelings (Bailey, 1994).

For this reason, semi-structured interview played a primary role in collecting important data that mainly responds to the research questions of this study by enabling me to listen to participants’ voices in a more flexible and relaxed interview setting. Each semi-structured interview was individually conducted for 120 - 180 minutes on average per participant in English through the ZOOM platform, without follow-up interviews. The interview questions consist of mainly three themes – their experiences in GCE and EL, their experiences in being empowered as change agents through their engagements, and their evaluation and recommendation to TE practices of their own and other TE institutions.

### *Participants Selection*

I used purposeful sampling in selecting the participants of the study. Purposeful sampling is a widely used technique in qualitative research, which involves selecting individuals or groups of individuals who have specific knowledge or experiences in the phenomenon of the research interest (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Clark, 2017). With the purposeful sampling method, the following criteria were set for the participation selection.

First, participants are pre-service teachers currently studying in the teacher education programs in the faculty of educational sciences at the U of Helsinki (UH) and the National Institute of Education (NIE) to become future teachers in each country. The first criterion was set to gain the most up-to-date information of their teacher education programs by listening to their live experience overall in their teacher education programs and particularly GCE and EL currently being implemented at each institution.

Secondly, participants are those who have engaged in experiential learning program(s) locally or internationally during their teacher preparation, which particularly meets all three criteria in the following.

- 1) Its purpose is to create positive changes through local or international service
- 2) Its activities promote learning themes and create the values of global citizenship education
- 3) It is based on the teacher education faculty, whether it is a student or faculty-led program

These criteria were set to investigate their experiences in relation to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study - global citizenship education (GCE), experiential learning (EL) and achievement of change agency in order to study how these frameworks interplay in empowering them to become change agents of local and global society as ethical, responsible and active global citizens.

About the sample size of the study, I decided to recruit three participants meeting all of these criteria in each case. According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), “samples in qualitative research tend to be small in order to support the depth of case-oriented analysis” (p.2). Supporting this claim, Malterud et al. (2015) also maintained that the more in-depth and rich information the sample provides, the smaller the sample size needs to be. In this regard, I planned to recruit a small number of participants - three pre-service teachers from each institution, thus six in total, to collect more in-depth and rich information from each participant. The feasibility also affected determining the sample size in that it was regarded as a feasible number to recruit participants overseas remotely, especially during the global pandemic.

### ***Recruiting Process***

Due to the pandemic, there was a significant delay in recruiting participants because visiting those institutions for research exchange and all plans for the data collection were suddenly cancelled. In this changing situation, I decided to find participants and interview them remotely instead. I was able to find the first NIE participant through my Singaporean acquaintance at McGill and contact the first UH participant by sending her an email via my external supervisor at UH. Then I recruited two other participants in each institution through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling, as one of the purposeful sampling methods, is that participants whom the researcher already has contacted use their social networks and introduce other people who could potentially become other participants of the study to the researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). With the snowball sampling, those first participants in each institution connected me with other participants, who also showed interest in the study while meeting the selection criteria.

### ***Background Information of UH Participants***

**Aina (pseudonym).** Aina is in her fifth year of the class teacher education program. She was born and raised in Helsinki and wants to become a teacher to positively impact future generation's way of thinking and their lives through education. She has been a co-leader of Penkere International Committee in Condus ry (further information will be provided in chapter 5) with another participant (Elea), which main aim is to promote and sustain the internationality of the faculty, advocate international students' rights, and coordinate communication between them and the faculty. The committee members also participate in the work to create an equal and inclusive environment for international students and promote communications and exchanges between local and international populations. She has been one of the leaders of the Penkere International Committee in Condus, and now she is mainly in charge of student advocacy, environment, and well-being for the entire student body in the faculty of educational sciences. She has participated in the Condus because of her interest in meeting new people and working with those people for the meaningful vision and goals of the organization. Among three participants, she addressed the topic of diversity most often. She has an exchange program experience in the Netherlands which motivated her more to the work of the Penkere International Committee and provoked comparative perspective in cultures. Her interest in the topic of diversity and difference was reflected in her understanding of who is a global citizen. She thought a global citizen is someone who respects and is interested in different cultures, people, and languages with a passion, knowledge, and skills to create changes for a better society.

**Elea (pseudonym).** Elea is in her third year of the Textiles Education program. She was born and raised in Finland and decided to become a teacher to have a meaningful impact on other people's lives. She has been a co-leader of the Penkere International Committee at Condus ry with Aina. Similar to Aina's work at Condus, she has supported international

students' lives in the faculty, advocated their rights, organized events or workshops, and taken responsibility for international affairs in the faculty. Her motivation for joining Condu was driven by that she felt her program does not have much connection with other TE programs due to its strong emphasis on practice. Thus she wanted to make a closer connection and more active communications between her program and other programs at the faculty. She defined a global citizen as someone who actively takes actions in a local community considering a greater implication of their local actions to a global society in today's interconnected world. Though every participant had a strong passion for future change, she was the one who showed the strongest interest and passion for creating future changes at both macro (structural) and micro (individual) level beyond her classroom and teaching context.

**Calle (pseudonym).** Calle is in a class teacher education program, with his minor studies in history and political science for the secondary level education to teach those subjects in a secondary school. He is now in the sixth year of the program. He was born in the U.S. but moved to Finland when he was a kindergarten child. He has dual citizenship in the U.S. and Finland, which made him travel often between the U.S. and Finland since he was a child. He found that he has a natural inclination toward teaching and loves to be with kids, which led him to apply for the TE program at UH. He has been a leader of both Pedu ry and Condu ry (further information will be provided in chapter 5) in various committees such as student advocacy and international affairs. He was also a vice-chairman of the board of the student's union council that represents the entire student population of the U of Helsinki. His role has been mainly advocating students' rights and communicating and negotiating with the faculty and the university to tackle the challenges and find solutions on behalf of the entire student population. He was motivated for these roles because of his interest in meeting other students and creating positive changes in faculty and students in the university. Among the

three participants, he was the one who had the most extensive leadership experiences in several student organizations and showed strong motivation and passion for serving other students in the university and community. He understood the glocal implication of his actions and conceptualized a global citizen as a holistic figure who equips with knowledge of global issues, has values and attitudes such as empathy and human rights, and acts to make positive changes in a local and global community. He was the one who talked the most often about privilege and reflected the strongest critical perspective on power discourses among the UH participants.

### ***Background Information of NIE Participants***

**Henry (pseudonym).** Henry is in his fourth year of Bachelor of Science in Education and majoring in biology and chemistry at NIE. He was born and raised in Singapore and decided to become a teacher due to the good teachers he has met in his school days and their meaningful impact on his life. He shared his experience as a participant and a leader of the project Love Sikkim for two years at NIE Service-Learning Club (NIE SLC) (Further description will be provided in chapter 6). He joined NIE SLC because he wanted to experience different perspectives by experiencing other parts of the world. He thought of a global citizen, firstly as a citizen of one's own nation, but also who concerns about the issues and challenges in other parts of the world and contributes to tackling those challenges. Out of the three participants, he showed the most critical reflexivity on intercultural communication between different cultures. He also showed the strongest national identity in understanding who is a change agent as a global citizen.

**Ken (pseudonym).** Ken is in his fourth year in his Bachelor of Arts in Education with a specialization in history and social science. He was born and raised in Singapore and decided to become a teacher with a passion for humanities due to its significant role in education and

the entire society. He met an outstanding history teacher in his school days and wanted to pass on the passion and the legacies from his previous teachers by becoming a history teacher. He understood a global citizen as one who can contribute to firstly their own nation and other parts of the world. He articulated his two years of experience as a participant and leader of the project Nalanda at NIE Service-Learning Club and the international service-learning trip to Vietnam from SALT program (The information of these programs will be further provided in chapter 6). He joined these programs to broaden his global perspective and hone his teaching skills by teaching students in service-learning sites. Out of the participants, Ken showed the most critical awareness of the power structure of society and economic inequality along with the critical reflexivity on culture. His strong interest in tackling inequality issues and critical reflection on underlying power discourse came from his personal interest, more strengthened through service-learning experiences at NIE and his specialization in social studies and history. He reflected the strong teacher identity throughout his interview and closely connected it with his SL experiences and empowerment outcomes.

**Min (pseudonym).** Min is in her fourth year of Bachelor of Arts in Education, and she is majoring in both English and Linguistics. She was born in India, spent her childhood in Taiwan and the U.S. and then moved to Singapore. She said she does not have a special attachment to other nations where she lived but does to only Singapore as she was too young and did not spend many years in those other countries. However, she said living in many countries definitely gave her curiosity and passion for other different cultures. She added that her perspective had also been influenced by her family members who have many international experiences. She spoke about her experience as a leader at GESL (local SL), a participant of BUILD (Internship), and the project love Sikkim (International SL) at NIE SLC (descriptions will be followed in chapter 6). Like the other two participants, she joined NIE

SLC for her interest in experiencing other cultures, while she wanted to broaden her perspective beyond the teaching discipline through BUILD, and engaged in GESL as it was compulsory for all undergraduate students in TE programs at NIE. She defined a global citizen as one who has knowledge of global issues and critically understands those issues with empathy for other parts of the world. Out of three participants, she discussed and emphasized ‘empathy’ the most often throughout her interview.

#### **4.2.2. Document Analysis**

Document Analysis was adopted as the other research method of the study. It is one of the research methods commonly used along with the interview in qualitative research and can be used as a means of triangulation by cross-checking the data driven from different methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Document analysis in this study was mainly used to provide further information and relevant contexts or backgrounds of the participants’ experiences, but also to cross-check the data collected from the interviews. The documents were collected from the websites of experiential learning programs in which participants have partaken at each institution and from the official websites of NIE and the faculty of educational sciences at UH. I collected data of only the programs in which the participants of this study have engaged. Therefore there could be other experiential learning programs at each institution that meet the study’s specific criteria on experiential learning program, though not addressed in this study.

### **4.3 Data Analysis**

#### **4.3.1. Overview of the Analysis Procedure**

Thematic analysis was adopted as the approach of data analysis of this study. Thematic analysis can be defined as “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). It allows both inductive and

deductive approaches in finding themes from theoretical perspectives and ideas generated by data, thus enriching the data analyzing process with more flexibility (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Braun & Clark (2006) suggested the six steps of the procedure in thematic analysis – familiarization with data (e.g. transcribing), coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up. These six steps are not fixed procedures but could be flexibly adapted according to researchers (Braun & Clark, 2006). For me, those six steps happened simultaneously in most of the analyzing procedures, with both deductive (data-driven) and inductive approaches (theory-driven), and also both semantic (explicit content of data) and latent (underlying assumption or context of data) approaches.

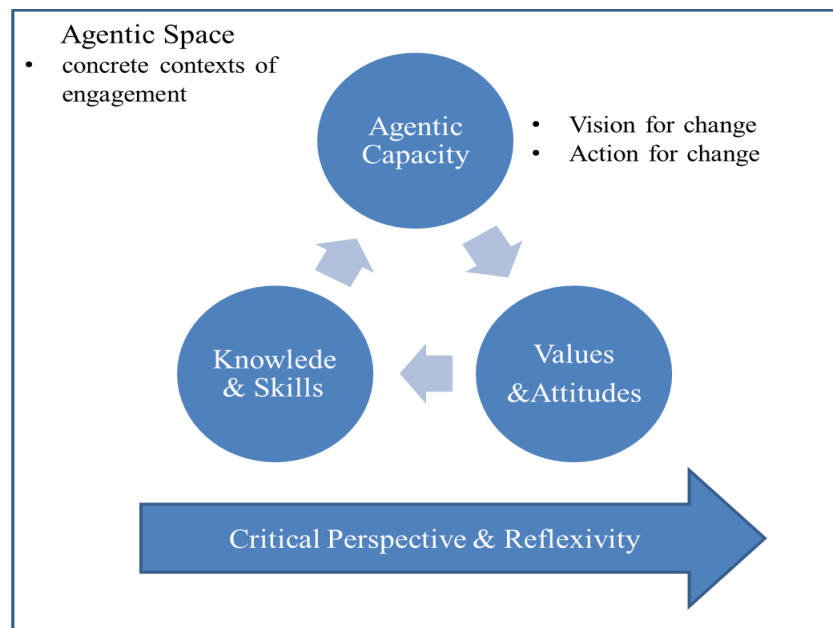
Considering the research design of comparative case study, thematic analysis was applied throughout two phases which are ‘within-case analysis’ and ‘cross-case analysis.’ In within-case analysis, each case was analyzed comprehensively. Then, the findings from the analysis of each case were analyzed and compared in the second phase of cross-case analysis.

For each case in the phase of within-case analysis, I transcribed the participants’ interviews, interpreted their responses during the transcription and took notes on my thoughts, understandings, and interpretations in each participant’s responses, reflecting the study’s theoretical and conceptual frameworks and the research questions. Then I started comparing every participant’s response with my notes with interpretation and interview transcripts to generate codes and create themes. I also collected documents to provide further explanations and background information of participants’ responses and their experiences. I generated codes through the interactive process between deductive and inductive approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006), reflecting themes generated from both collected data and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study – global citizenship education, experiential learning, and ecological perspective on change agency, as well as the research questions of the study.

In the coding procedure, I used the Nvivo software for the efficiency in managing huge data from the interviews, but it was me who created codes and themes through that interactive logical process. This interactive coding process with both inductive and deductive approaches generated the analytical framework, used in interpreting and systematically analyzing the interviewees' responses from each case, which also became the framework for systematic comparison between two cases. I will describe the created analytical framework in the following section, providing a detailed description of it.

#### **4.3.2. Analytical Framework**

The interview questions consist of the three main themes reflecting the research questions and the frameworks of the study, which are 1) their experiences in GCE at each TE institution, 2) experiences in becoming change agents as global citizens through their engagements in EL, and 3) the evaluation and suggestion to their and other TE institutions to improve the current practices. The following analytical framework was created to particularly analyze the data responding to the second theme, which consists of the vast volume of the data collected from the interviews while having the most significance in responding to the research questions.



**Figure 2. Analytical Framework for Pre-service Teachers' Empowerment Outcomes from Engagements in EL**

In this framework, ‘agentic capacity’ (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015) indicates pre-service teachers’ vision for change and action for change. ‘Knowledge & skills’ refers to students’ outcomes in gaining certain sets of knowledge and skills needed to become change agents as global citizens. ‘Values and attitudes’ are such as students’ perspectives, ways of thinking affecting their actions, ethical sense, and any other value-driven components. Agentic capacity, knowledge & skills, and values & attitudes are interconnected dimensions grounded on the conceptual framework of GCE that connects cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions of learners (Skirbekk et al., 2013; Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Agentic capacity consists of two sub-categories – vision for change and action for change. Vision for change denotes the learner’s understanding, belief, perspective or reflective ideas on change. Action for change represents current or future action for change. Critical perspective & reflexivity indicates learners’ critical awareness, reflection, and understanding of underlying power discourse embedded in their individual backgrounds and surroundings, as well as

issues and problems in a local and global society, enabling learners to understand and tackle the roots of the local and global challenges. The dimension of critical perspective & reflexivity is not separated from the other dimensions in the analytical framework, but rather this study understands critical reflexivity becomes a lens penetrating and underlying learners' values & attitudes, their knowledge & skills, and their visions and actions for change (Andreotti, 2006; Wintersteiner et al., 2015). Agentic space (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015) in the analytical framework denotes the concrete context of experiential learning in which participants have engaged and actively participated. It also includes specific contextual factors which provoked participants' changes and transformations that generated the empowerment outcomes during their engagements.

In order to study each case comprehensively and comparatively, this analytical framework and analysis procedure explained above will be applied throughout chapters 5 & 6 for the within-case analysis of each case and chapter 7 for the comparative analysis between each case. In the analysis process, the data collected was systematically classified into thematic schemes reflecting interpretation to some extent rather than simply representing descriptive categories. In regard to discovering the interrelation of the study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks, the analysis goes into especially the phase of "making inferences, developing models, or generating theory" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 215) by dealing with not only observables, but also unobservables (Miles & Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

#### **4.4 Credibility and Transferability**

I engaged in triangulation to increase the credibility of the study. Triangulation refers to the use of a combination of different valid sources to overcome the weakness or biases coming from one single source when collecting data, thus enabling the researcher to compare

and cross-check the data collected from those multiple sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Patton, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Documents from multiple resources and interviews in this study complemented each other's lack of descriptions and information and also verified whether the data collected by each method is trustworthy. However, because the study relies primarily on the data collected from the interviews, which plays a key role in responding to the research questions, there is a possibility that triangulation in this study could be limited to some degree; thus may not be able to increase the credibility of the entire results of the study.

In terms of transferability, the study does not aim to generate certain principles that could be applicable to every context. But as Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested, I, as an investigator of the study, support the claim that "the burden of proof lies less with the original investigator than with the person seeking to make an application elsewhere. The original inquirer cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can do." (p.298). The study acknowledges that three participants from each case cannot be representative of the phenomenon. Instead, it expects that appliers in teacher education practices flexibly and adaptively apply the lessons and insights from the result of the study to their own practices, considering their specific and unique contexts.

## **Chapter 5. Findings: University of Helsinki (Finland)**

### **5.1. Pre-service Teachers' Experience in GCE and Understanding of GCE Curriculum**

#### **Integrated Approach**

The UH participants understood that GCE curriculum was integrated into the overall TE curriculum rather than separately or individually developed. Students responded that they could not find the exact term - 'global citizenship' or 'Global Citizenship Education' in the course syllabi. There were mandatory courses that include the GCE topics and some elective courses relevant to GCE, but the number of the mandatory courses was very few, and none of them took the other elective courses due to their busy schedule. Though they had much interest in topics of GCE, they expected taking electives would give them much extra workload to their already fully packed schedule in the program.

Even though they thought that the institution has an integrative approach rather than develops independent curricula for GCE, they did not think there had been much integration of GCE into the overall courses as they felt their TE curricula had been mainly focusing on and dealing with local and Finnish context than global context.

There are integrated, or those themes are integrated, slightly into the program I went to, like I mentioned, there's a few courses where these topics are covered, or were covered. But there are, to my recollection, there are separate academic courses, which are voluntary, ah, that do focus exactly on this topic. But so there's like a small level integration throughout the curriculum, like the mandatory curriculum, but there are separate courses that are voluntary. (Calle)

#### **Value-based with Critical Approach**

The participants thought GCE and overall TE curriculum at their faculty had focused on inculcating ethical values and attitudes such as empathy, human rights, equality and social

justice, and critical perspective. Their experience in GCE, mainly grounded on the components of critical reflexivity and values & attitudes during their TE, led all three participants to be aware of the importance of critically investigating underlying power structures and discourses in education and various aspects of society, pursuing ethical principles and universal values as individuals and educators.

Um, mainly, I think pursuing universal values and ethical principles is maybe a big theme throughout the program, because teachers should be something that one to take care of human rights and peace and justice for all students and all people in the world. But also, I think we've talked a lot about power relations and structural problems in Finnish school system or more in the society. (Aina)

We did have a lot of courses like basically, the entire underlying principle of Finnish education, or Finnish teacher education, I felt sort of those have an underlying pursuit for universal values and ethical principles...we did have a lot of courses that critically investigate underlying power structures within like, the education curriculum, or like, what's the politics behind. (Calle)

### **Curricular Focus on Socio-emotional Dimension**

The participants stated that among cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral dimension of global citizenship education, the institutional emphasis had been on the socio-emotional dimension in that they often encountered the values and attitudes of global citizens in their TE curricula and felt those values and attitudes had been underlying in their school culture as well as Finnish society. They also talked about the cognitive dimension of GCE as a minor focus with regard to some academic courses in which they could learn about the topics of GCE, though not many. The participants commonly pointed out the lack of experiential learning opportunities in the faculty. They said that there had been almost none of the experiential learning programs affiliated to their official TE curriculum, except for two teaching practica.

Um, I think it is the socio-emotional, the values and attitudes...But also maybe a little bit about the cognitive part...and what comes to the behavioral dimensions? I think, we don't have that much. (Aina)

### **Main Focus on Local along with Some Glocal Context**

The UH participants explained that they had experienced more local-based curriculum and engagement opportunities from their TE. They thought there had also been a glocal dimension that connects local and global contexts in the activities of the student organizations or social events at the faculty. However, they agreed that, overall, there had not been many international engagement opportunities.

Ah, well, I see the emphasis is on community-based things. But I'd say there was a merging of local and global that would say, like the emphasis is on the local dimension, but then there was a lot of glocal dimensions as well. (Calle)

Maybe, it would be the local community-based action, for example, in our teaching training schools or doing things there. Of course, there's always you know, hanging around the global part. But my experience on our courses is more like we don't have that many projects or such that we could do international or global communication, yeah, I think it's more local. (Aina)

## **5.2. Becoming Change Agents as Global Citizens through Actions**

### **5.2.1. Agentic Space**

#### ***Condus ry***

Condus ry is a student organization in the faculty of educational sciences at the University of Helsinki, and it is the cooperation and umbrella student organization that represents all member organizations from each different program at the faculty. It consists of several committees dealing with international affairs, student welfare and environment, advocacy, event planning, and equality. *Penkere international committee* is one of the affiliated committees of the Condus ry, and it aims to increase and foster the internationality

of the faculty, support international students' needs, and advocate their rights. It also organizes a variety of social events and activities to promote cultural exchange (Condustry, n.d.).

The central mission integrated into every committee of Condustry is to advocate students' rights in the faculty of educational sciences, support students' needs, and create meaningful changes for every education student by solving the problems and finding alternatives, actively communicating and negotiating with the faculty. Along with the role of student advocacy, another primary role of Condustry is to promote the values such as social justice, equality, diversity and sustainability by organizing seminars, activities, and social events on and off-line, and all affiliated committees work collaboratively for this aim. Students occasionally collaborate with a local community or Non-Government Organizations and cooperatively act to make changes in both the university and the local community (Condustry, n.d.).

### ***Pedukary***

Pedukary is one of the sub-organizations of Condustry and the representative of students in class teacher education and general and adult education programmes. It promotes equality, advocates students' rights, and encourages international exchange or supports exchange students' needs in those two programs. It works collaboratively with Condustry and other affiliated organizations to achieve its goals (Pedukary, n.d.).

### ***Contextual Factors for Empowerment***

**Encountering Difference and Experiencing Diversity.** Every participant commonly articulated that their experiences being exposed to difference and diversity while engaging in the works of Condustry made some significant changes in the way of seeing themselves, others, education and society. They said meeting diverse people from different backgrounds

and perspectives fostered their comparative perspective, which developed the critical reflexivity on their own privilege and underlying power discourses in a local and global society. They further explained that the diversity in the population of a student organization also enabled them to learn how to communicate with and respect others with different perspectives and backgrounds.

I think just getting to know people who are not from your own bubble or not from your own city, even within Finland helps. I already have improved my way of thinking. And, you know, how you perceive the country and the world, but especially when we are talking about people from all over the world that obviously changes the way you think, and I, as I said, the way you see education, and, you know, whether it is right, or if it's something you have to achieve, and how these different school systems work, and what is the role of education in different societies, all that is actually really, really interesting to me. (Elea)

I became a lot more aware of how my own background and my own sort of, I mean, not just from the, you know, this one relationship, but working with so many people that were interested in the same themes, I became a lot more aware of my own privilege, for example, you know, having been a white cisgendered, you know, heterosexual male with the dual citizenship, I have, like an amazing amount of privilege that I never was really aware of when it came to. (Calle)

**Participation in Democratic Process.** All the participants also shared their experiences in active participation in democratic process for student advocacy during their engagement. They had communicated vigorously and negotiated with the faculty members to promote students' rights, tackle the problems in TE programs, and find solutions on behalf of the entire students in the faculty of educational sciences. The participants gave an example that they now have one more teaching practicum (which was only one time in the past) through this democratic procedure.

We have some cases about a student who has a problem with his or her studies, or like a teacher, or some courses that have some problems. And we've tried to have a

discussion with the course teachers and the students and try to come up with a solution that's good for all. We are also there if students need our help with their studies or more whatever comes to their mind, like if they have some problems in everyday life. (Aina)

**Influence from Colleagues.** The participants stated that they could learn much about the topics of GCE, such as social justice and sustainability, and cultivate the values and attitudes of global citizenship while interacting and working closely with their colleagues who were passionate and active on those topics in Condustry.

I learned a lot from these different people from different backgrounds. And I remember there's this one member of our board, who advocates a zero-waste lifestyle, she was so passionate about it, she spent hours educating us on, you know, what little things we can do to reduce our own, you know, carbon emissions and how we can like with purchasing choices we make, how can we possibly affect global warming and whatnot, I admired her passion, she was amazing, you know, sharing that in a supportive and understanding way. (Calle)

### 5.2.2. Empowerment Outcomes

#### *Knowledge & Skills*

**Knowledge.** The participants responded that during their engagement, they especially obtained in-depth knowledge of environmental issues by organizing social events with the theme of environmental protection and by updating posts about environmental issues and climate actions regularly on the Facebook and Instagram pages. Along with sustainability and environmental issues, the participants also gained knowledge of other GCE topics by organizing and attending the events with the themes such as social justice, equality and human rights. According to Elea, she naturally gained knowledge of global issues and the educational issues in other countries by interacting with international students and supporting their student-life on campus.

And now it's the third year I'm doing the International Committee. And it's been, you know, I have been more aware of all the global aspects of education these past three years than I have been before (Elea).

During my years in university and especially participating in student organizational stuff, I have been transformed, or I feel like I've become a lot more aware of global social, political, economic issues. (Calle)

**Skills.** The participants shared some common skills gained through their participation.

***Problem-solving, Negotiation, and Communication skills.*** UH participants tried to figure out and tackle the problems and challenges in their classes and the faculty by listening to students' opinions and negotiating and communicating with the faculty members and administrators. This process of advocating students' rights and supporting their needs had led the participants to gain more sophisticated communication and problem-solving skills. Calle talked about the effort and contribution of Condus ry to improving the past practices of the teaching internship at the faculty.

I think the negotiation skills and the experiences that we've had a good experience with the teacher and the student and then everyone could have moved along with their lives and have had a good solution or problems (Aina).

I managed to advocate some changes when it came to like... our first teacher internship was and still is very stressful, and the amount of time the faculty had preserved for preparation for the internship was quite short. So I managed to double that, which was, I think, significant... I think that I did achieve at least some of the goals I had, which were, you know, increasing student cohesion or feeling, making sure everyone felt belonged and, you know, they were a member of our faculty and studying in our faculty, you know, I really strived to make it as easy as possible (Calle).

***Intercultural Communication Skill.*** The participants learned how to communicate with people from different backgrounds with respect for differences and diversity. Elea added her experience in gaining confidence when interacting with new people from different

cultures regardless of her English proficiency.

I've also gained a lot of confidence from having that much contact with other people from all around, you know, sometimes who did not share some very basic values of mine, or they were very different people from me, or maybe they spoke very differently, so they might not understand me easily, or I might not understand them easily, or whatever it is, I think I've become more courageous with seeing and meeting various people, like very different from me. I've become more courageous. If I pronounced something incorrectly, I just tried to communicate what I'm thinking about. But in the past, about speaking English or Swedish, I was maybe a bit too ashamed because I'm not at a fluent level. So I think that has changed in me during these three years. And then, then also, on a personal level, I was not that comfortable talking with the new person, I didn't know what to talk about, and all that I have found myself now to be a bit more courageous and outgoing than before. I think that's partly because of the committee and international work. (Elea)

***Leadership and Organizational Skills.*** UH participants said that they could hone and strengthen organizational and leadership skills during their involvement in Condus ry.

I've learned to make big events even like, yeah, just like if it's a just a party or a baker event, such as, like a big dinner party or, event that there's a speaker from outside that comes in from like a nonprofit organization. (Aina)

Especially, Calle had extensive experience in leadership roles at both the TE department and the university, and he thought of the most important leadership capacity as 'listening' and 'empathy' when he recollected his leadership experiences. He emphasized, to be specific, a democratic leadership style.

I noticed that when it comes to civilian leadership, I learned a lot about like, how to try to motivate people who are doing stuff voluntarily. That's really hard. planning, organizing the importance of plans. And also listening, like, you have to plan ahead, and you also have to have a vision that you want to share with who are trying to lead. And but yeah, that goes with, you know, being able to listen, and not just like, dictate that is what we're going to do... I would try to listen to as many opinions as possible before I make a decision. Like if this was a tip that I

learned from my predecessor that, like, if you're having a board meeting, my job would be to sort of facilitating the conversation, not dictating. (Calle)

### ***Values & Attitudes***

**Respect for Diversity & Difference.** The participants explained that they came to appreciate more and became more sensitive to diversity issues. They also said that they were able to inculcate an attitude of respecting other peoples' different backgrounds and cultures. Being exposed to a greater diversity led the participants to gain a comparative perspective of their own background, cultures, and local and global society.

Especially for Elea, her experiences in the international committee fostered her interest in meeting diverse people and also significantly affected her decision on what and where to study for her Master's program. It became the most interesting topic for Elea to compare the different systems and perspectives of education in different societies. She thought she needs to encounter more diversity by meeting a more diverse population with different perspectives to critically reflect her perspective and beliefs in education.

When we are talking about people from all over the world, that obviously changes the way you think, and I, as I said, the way you see education. And, you know, whether it is right, or if it's something you have to achieve, and how these different school systems work, and what is the role of education in different societies, all those are actually really, really interesting to me. And I think speaking with these other people from very different parts of the world, that has been one major part of getting to the point where one of my main interests is and maybe dealing with people who have been studying abroad, I actually just got accepted to the Stockholm University, and I think I'm doing my Masters there. So I think it has changed partially because of my experiences with people who have studied abroad and how they talked about and how that changed my way of seeing. (Elea)

**The Values of Democracy, Social Justice, and Equality.** UH participants explained that one of their important roles as the leaders of their student organizations had been creating an inclusive and equal environment for every student at the faculty, thus leading them to put

their effort in making everyone's voice heard. As the participants relate creating the values of democracy, social justice and equality to morality, they viewed that their moral sense can be better developed and more sensitized when seeking and creating those values in the faculty.

We've done to make the community safer and make it more equal and more accessible for everyone. (Aina)

We had a lot of discussions on and we implemented a lot of rules on how to make parties in like events, safe for everyone and inclusive for everyone, and how can we make it by our own actions. As an example, we can then argue to the faculty that these things need to be addressed. (Calle)

Um, one of the most important for sure, and maybe, when we are talking about morality, I would say like equal treatment, even though it is obviously easier to communicate with someone who has a bit more similar experience from life that you do, You know, it's easier, but still, it has to be, you have to be equal. And you have to also push yourself to communicate these things with someone who has a different background. (Elea)

**Cosmopolitan Values & Attitudes.** The participants responded that their experience in Condus ry helped them to be more aware of and interested in global issues beyond their local and national contexts and to expand their perspectives and focus of teaching and life from local to a global dimension. They also mentioned that their experiences in engagements and changes in their perspectives led them to think of themselves as global citizens.

I do think those experiences helped me become a global citizen or I like to think of myself as a global citizen myself. (Calle)

### ***Critical Perspective & Reflexivity***

All three participants showed strong critical reflexivity on their backgrounds, culture, education, and social issues in a local and global society. From the interviews of Aina and

Elea, It was found that they could develop their critical awareness mainly from their experiences being exposed to diversity and differences. Aina addressed that she had critically reflected mainly on her own identity and background, while Elea especially showed her critical reflexivity on educational system and structure in an international context, which had shaped her vision and provoked actions for change to improve educational systems at a global level. It was also found that Elea was relating critical reflexivity with an individual's ethical sensibility and morality.

Education might be very widely privatized (in the world), for example, or like, more of money, there is more of money aspect to it than the humanity aspect and when there is no, for example, not enough resources to maintain quality education systems or whatever. The role of education and place of an educational institution and all the institutions are very different. And I think understanding that has the ethical and moral aspect as well, because, well, it's something I think most Europeans are struggling with that our worldview is extremely Europe-centered because the world and that the market is quite Europe-centered. And then, of course, you are studying here, you're living here, and your experiences come from here. And, you know, challenging that, in regard to education, which I think is what I want to work with, for my career. (Elea)

Likewise, Calle also pointed out that being exposed to diversity and difference and the comparative perspective gained through it made him critically reflect on his own background and be aware of his privilege and prejudice. He mentioned that he took many academic courses on GCE themes and discussed history and politics with a critical lens in his minor studies in political science and history, and it may suggest that both his academic training and his experiences in EL could have contributed to developing and strengthening his critical reflexivity. In addition, his background of having dual citizenship with the U.S. and Finland, which cultures are nearly opposite from his point of view, made him naturally keep sensitizing the comparative and critical perspective on culture and education of the two nations.

When it comes to personal outcomes, and what I learned from that experience is that you know, I became a lot more aware of my own background...I became a lot more aware of my own privilege, for example, you know, being a white cis-gendered, heterosexual male with dual citizenship I have, like an amazing amount of privilege that I never was really aware of when it came to. When I was younger, I had no notion of or like, I didn't really realize how easily I had it. Until I met and worked in these organizations, and I became so much more aware of the sort of how much complicit or how much I can get away with or how easily I can progress through life just based off, you know, something that I haven't achieved myself. I was just born lucky. (Calle)

Among three students, Calle showed the most critical perspective on power discourse underlying a variety of socio-political aspects. He showed critical reflexivity on multi-layered dimensions of power regarding his identity, university, Finnish culture, surrounding people, and power structure. He said that the critical awareness of power relations in his background and surroundings motivated him to actively participate in student advocacy as a leader to make differences and meaningful changes in the faculty and the university.

When it comes to diversity, there could be a lot more diversity. In those organizations, I mean, ultimately, it's a very privileged group as it is, and a lot more should be done towards that. Participating in student organization activity usually means you have to be a university student. And there are systemic issues in place or in even in Finnish society that generally favors the homogenous populations' entry into university, let's say, for example, people who have emigrated to Finland, and that leads to, you know, university students still being actually a pretty privileged group. (Calle)

Especially participating in student organizational stuff that says that I've been transformed or I feel like that I've become a lot more aware of global, social, political, economic issues, and become a lot more critically aware of, you know, why something happens and how something happens. And if anything, like I said, it made me more a lot more aware of my own prejudice, like I'm more aware of, you know, self-aware my own privileges and subconscious prejudice. Yeah, but I'm sure I've at least feel like I've become more self-aware of them. And it actively makes me try to work to improve on them. So that I say that's what university and student advocacy has done. (Calle)

Participants' responses throughout the interviews suggested that the participants'

strong capacity of critical reflexivity on their identities, education and culture is empowered through the interplay between their academic training and experiences in the behavioral dimension of GCE at the student organizations. About the GCE curricular approach at the faculty, every participant responded that inculcating critical perspective had been one of the main curricular approaches, not only specifically for GCE but for the overall curricula of their TE program. Both academic training of critical investigation and their involvement in the works of student organization contributed to developing the participants' strong critical reflexivity and motivated them to take actions for change based on their critical reflections.

### ***Agentic Capacity***

**Vision for Change: Toward a More Holistic Approach to Change.** Every participant showed a strong passion for creating meaningful changes toward a better local and global society through education. Calle and Aina's interest and focus were more on changing their future students and serving their local communities, expecting that the implication of their teaching and local engagement would reach out to a global community. Although they thought their major impact for creating changes would be in schools and their local communities, their responses talking about the interconnectedness of a local and global community suggested that their orientation of change is more in creating 'glocal' changes than 'local-centric' ones.

Otherwise, Elea, who had a strong interest in international education and policy level of educational change, believed that any educational and social changes can occur when the efforts and actions at multiple levels of society (e.g. policy, politics, school, teachers and students, etcetera.) are taken and encouraged. She articulated during the interview that she was mainly interested in creating changes in her classroom and local contexts before joining the Condus ry. However, her perspective on change was shifted toward a glocal outlook that

encourages taking actions at both local and global levels and toward the vision for structural change at the macro level beyond the context of her individual life or teaching profession. It was commonly found that the participants' views on change became more integrative and holistic by merging local and global, which led them to seek cooperative actions for change at multiple levels of society.

I think my view has been shifted a bit from how I wanted to do something where I can influence people a bit and do something good. And my view has been shifted a bit from doing good as a teacher, you know, that's kind of local work, you do it, you can very drastically change a life or for one or two students by being a teacher, and you can affect the life of a lot of students during your career. But maybe my view has been shifted a little bit more to how education as a whole of a system can make a change. And, you know, with all of the politics and policies and all that, how that plays its part in education and how we can, you know, do good and make change with that part of education and yeah, that's a global question, those education systems and what is their place and how their comparative evaluation of these systems is going to affect all of their systems, and I think I have started to lean towards there. (Elea)

**Action for Change.** The participants described that their experiences in the student organization provoked some other following actions for the present and future change. All the participants first mentioned that they had been acting in their current lives and would act for environmental protection and sustainable development. They said they began to take more vigorous actions for environmental protection and sustainability in their daily lives while participating in the Condus ry. They all spoke about one colleague in charge of the environment committee at Condus and how passionate she was on those topics. She influenced and changed the atmosphere of the faculty and their campus and also greatly impacted the lives of Condus ry members in terms of practicing an eco-friendly and sustainable lifestyle. Along with their current actions for environmental protection, they said

they want to teach their future students eco-friendly life and environmental protection to create bigger changes through their students' actions on these issues.

I learned a lot, like from environmental stuff from her. So I eat more, like more vegan food and, and just like, those little things, but think more like, how can I affect (the environment of) my community. So everyone would think more about the environment and how they could change from little things to make a bigger change, and how I can teach kids to do little things and maybe bigger (Aina).

Especially Calle, currently working as a part-time substitute teacher, said that the experience in the Condus ry led him to develop his teaching curriculum integrating critical perspective to challenge his students' underlying beliefs and preconceptions, and he wanted to further strengthen this critical component in the teaching curriculum.

And that's something that I've tried to I can take into my own lessons in education that whenever I teach students, I try to challenge them also to be aware of their privilege, I guess, and I still have a lot more work to do on that and I could and should do a lot more. I'd say that would be probably one of the major things I'd bring up (to his classes) (Calle).

For Elea, she applied for a Master's program in education policy to make changes in education policy of education in the future, and due to her increased interest in studying education with more diverse and comparative perspectives, she decided to study abroad. She said that her engagement in the international committee had significantly influenced her decision on what actions to take for now and in the future to create positive changes in education and global society.

I actually just got accepted to Stockholm University, and I think I'm doing my Master's there. So that, I think it has changed partially because of my experiences with the people who have studied abroad and how they talked about how that changed their way of seeing... with all of the politics and policies and all that, how that plays its part in education and how we can, you know, do good and make change with that part of

education...I have applied to, to the different university, because that's actually what I decided that I wanted to study. (Aina)

### **5.3. Evaluation and Suggestion**

#### **5.3.1. Strength and Weakness**

Every participant believed that the biggest strength of their TE program or GCE at the U of Helsinki is in its high-quality academic courses, professors, and research output. However, they all discussed that its strong emphasis on the research component could become its weakness at the same time. They thought the actional or practical dimension of GCE and overall teacher training had been much weaker than its emphasis on the theoretical or research dimension. They said the engagement opportunities in both local and global contexts were few, in which they can learn GCE through experience and practice in concrete settings. The participants also pointed out the lack of collaborations and partnerships with local and international community partners, with which they can have local or global experiential learning opportunities.

Helsinki University has a big emphasis on academic and theoretical sort of content learning compared to experiential learning or learning by doing. (Calle)

The education is of good quality, and the research for sure is of good quality, and the projects going on in our university, even in all different subjects, but also on the global aspect of education, multiculturalism, all these are, I think, that's strength. But the weakness might be on the practical part, actually, even though a lot of our studies are focused on the practical aspects of teaching, I think, you know, that actually having enough time to practice, going into schools and having practice internships or internships in other aspects of education, those are maybe the weaknesses. We don't have a lot of that. And that's a problem that I know, a lot of students struggle with, is that, not enough practice, even with the global citizenship education, because you don't get to practice that either. (Aina)

I think the strength is the high academic level of our university or our program, and we

have good teachers and good professors who are interested in these topics.... the weakness is we could do more international collaborations or even national collaborations. (Elea)

### 5.3.2. Suggestions

UH participants thought that whether it would be an integrated curriculum to their existing academic courses or individually developed ones, GCE curriculum needs to exist more or be strengthened and improved more than the current practice in their teacher education program.

Yeah, maybe to have more mandatory courses about global citizenship or to have them better in our courses now...there should be more in our program. So more than now and maybe as integrated for, like, every course, but also course just about these topics. And it's also important to have the university professors or teachers interested in these topics, because, for example, like professor A or, or some other professors are really interested in this topic, and they want to have an impact and want to give good lessons for student teachers and empower them. But it's not enough. If it's one or two professors, it should be more. (Aina)

I think it would have been a good thing for us to have a bit more of the official global citizenship education and more like specific courses, maybe on the matter. (Elea)

Calle also addressed the importance of strengthening GCE components of the current curriculum, while he doubted if it is feasible to add those components to their existing curriculum in reality as their TE curriculum is already fully packed and considering the situation in which students had been complaining about even the lack of their teaching practicums. His response suggested that GCE in the TE curriculum must not be an 'add-on' component that could overburden pre-service teachers, but TE rather needs to take an integrative and holistic approach by integrating GCE as an integral part of the entire TE curriculum.

I would have to say it would have to be, you'd have to turn global citizen education into an overarching theme in every course. That it's in every course, like the prism with how we are through which we're approaching this subject, instead of like, something that sprinkled on to a few courses. So if I'd have to, if education would have to be reformed in this way, I would make it an overarching theme. (Calle)

The participants also thought providing pre-service teachers with more engagement opportunities in both local and global contexts is needed.

I think student involvement as a whole. How the faculty and how the university involves students, but also how the students involve themselves within their community (Elea).

We don't do that much for the local community, or the global community. So maybe there could be more projects or opportunities for students to be involved in making better communities (Aina)

Every participant stressed the importance of training critical reflexivity through GCE and maintained that it needs to be one of the key approaches for pre-service teachers in other TE institutions as well. Calle said developing pre-service teachers' critical perspective is crucial in challenging their future students' views and preconceptions. He directly connected developing critical reflexivity with achieving change agency and suggested that becoming agents of change necessarily requires challenging their own beliefs and perspectives with a critical lens.

Well, I think, critical thinking and challenging students is a major part of that if I have to emphasize something that I would emphasize, but of course, there are many ways to approach it. I think if you're not ready to change yourself, it's going to be hard to become an agent of change for others...If you want to become an agent of change, you have to change yourself, you have to be able to sort of be flexible in your beliefs, you have to be able to challenge your beliefs. And that's something that all those courses or whatever program or curriculum is planned, it should be planned towards challenging people's conceptions of what they believe should happen, or what's normal in society. (Calle)

Likewise, Aina maintained that critical reflexivity is necessary for teachers to empower their future students as change agents of society.

The teacher students can reflect and think and discuss and have different kinds of experiences in acting in the society or being a change agent in schools or their local community, or in the global community to empower future students. (Aina)

Elea, who understood critical reflexivity as an ethical and moral sensibility, talked about the importance of critically investigating power discourse on education and maintained it is a question of ethics for every educator.

I think it would have been a good thing for us to have a bit more of the official education and more like an on like specific courses, maybe on the matter, and especially, not maybe just globality, but also maybe other moral questions, you know, forces that are affecting education at the moment. (Elea)

Lastly, there was a recommendation on making the values of GCE become ethos penetrating the whole school culture. Calle explained that he experienced the values such as equality, empathy, respect for human rights and difference, and democratic values underlying Finnish culture and its education throughout his teacher preparation and engagements in the student organization. And because those values had been underlying and penetrating the whole culture of the university and the TE faculty, it enabled him to inculcate those values through his every experience on campus in and out of the classes. Thus, he said that he wants to share this value-driven education of Finland and the U of Helsinki with other TE institutions around the world, emphasizing the importance of a holistic and integrative approach toward GCE.

And what I've learned in my own experiences work at like studying at Helsinki University and being active in student organizations is that I'd like to bring up the concept of appreciating people for who they are, giving everyone the possibility to sort of enjoy the human experience of learning and improving yourself. You don't

have to be the best at everything ever. Not everything is based on how well you perform. The appreciation of equality and equal opportunity for everyone. If that's something I could bring in, something I would love to share, from what I've learned, is appreciating people for their own backgrounds, and giving everyone a voice and chance to participate. And it shouldn't be limited on what's your socio-economic background, or your ethnicity or whatever. I'm not saying the Finnish education system is perfect, or that my education in the teacher training program is like an exemplary model of this idea, but it's something that's at least brought up a lot in the values that are present in our, in my education is that having compassion for other people, caring about people, trying your best to make the world a better place. (Calle)

## **Chapter 6. Findings: The National Institute of Education (Singapore)**

### **6.1. Pre-service Teachers' Experience in GCE and Understanding of GCE Curriculum Integrated or Separated**

The participants thought that the values and attitudes of GCE were integrated into the overall TE curriculum of NIE. Henry and Min responded that they think NIE takes an integrative approach to GCE curriculum as they have not experienced an individually devised one in their TE program. Ken also shared his experience in common with the others about the integrative approach in terms of values and attitudes, but he maintained that the cognitive dimension of GCE was not integrated enough into their TE curriculum as he had not encountered content-based knowledge of GCE in the overall courses, but only in few courses or particular study tracks at NIE. Participants' responses implied that they had experienced that the values of GCE had been laden in their whole teacher education programs. But overall, they felt there had been little emphasis on GCE during their teacher preparation.

I think it's more of having a separate course. It is not really integrated throughout the four years. So if, especially if I were, let's say, chemistry or mathematics major, I will only be exposed to such modules in probably my first two years of studies. So the rest of the time, it's more focused on the content itself of my subjects rather than GCE...So as a generic knowledge, which all teachers should encompass, we don't really have that much of a focus on global citizenship education. Yes. So they choose to adopt the most specialized approach whereby if we are to teach global citizenship. So they don't really expect, like a chemistry teacher, to have the knowledge that we do for global citizenship. (Ken)

#### **Value-based Approach**

The participants thought that NIE had taken the value-based approach in developing and implementing GCE rather than taking the competency-based or critical approach. Ken

stated that he had experienced the critical approach to some degree in his study track because of his specialization in history and social studies, but he did not think it had been the main approach in the overall TE curriculum at NIE.

We were focusing some on more of like, the values and sort of the mindset, things like that...it was more about pursuing universal values and ethical principles, as our trip was also guided by some UN sustainable development goals. (Henry)

### **Curricular Emphasis on Socio-emotional & Behavioral Dimension**

The participants thought that NIE had placed a strong emphasis on the behavioral dimension of GCE based on their experiences in several local and international service-learning projects. At the same time, they felt inculcating the values and attitudes of a global citizen was a primary focus of NIE rather than passing on the knowledge of GCE through academic courses. Henry particularly articulated that his engagement in international service-learning trips at NIE and his experiences in communicating with community partners in different cultures enabled him to experience and develop the values and attitudes of GCE.

We wanted to set out to challenge and change some of our mindsets, to experience different cultures and to forge and strengthen partnerships with our community partners...So this included the different values and attitudes we picked up and the challenges and experiences gained from actually planning and participating in the project itself. (Henry)

### **Focus on Local & National Context**

The participants also shared that not only academic courses related to GCE but the overall curricular focus of NIE was largely on a local and national context than a global context.

So we have courses like citizenship character and citizenship education. But that is highly focused on Singapore's context. We have courses that are things like social

contexts of teaching. So that is also focused on Singapore context, but nothing really expands outside our education, our context...It's more, I feel that it's more focused on local context, rather than the international or global context...focuses a lot more on local knowledge rather than global citizenship. (Ken)

In contrast, participants thought quite many experiential learning opportunities regarding the behavioral dimension of GCE, had been provided by NIE at both local and international levels as well as glocal level where they needed to connect local and global projects during their engagement.

## **6.2. Becoming Change Agents as Global Citizens through Actions**

### **6.2.1. Agentic Space**

#### ***Participants' Service- Learning Experience at NIE: Programme Description***

##### **Faculty-led Programmes.**

- BUILD

Building University Interns for Leadership Development Programme (BUILD) is an internship opportunity that is an elective available to students from the Teaching Scholars Programme. It provides a structured process for the students to derive optimal experiences and benefits from learning and serving with relevant institutions, organisations, agencies and companies so as to develop them in their future roles as educational leaders. (NIE, 2017, BUILD)

- GESL

Group Endeavours in Service Learning (GESL) is a service-learning community engagement project which all student-teachers will complete. You will work in a group of about 20 with a partner organisation or organisations on a service-learning project you and your team-mates craft. Each group will have a staff facilitator who mentors and guides the group, and eventually assesses the group on their project. GESL will give you the opportunity of developing nearly all of the desired V<sup>3</sup>SK attributes and the GTCs. GESL enhances awareness and knowledge of community and environment. GESL develops empathy, social responsibility, collaborative learning and practice, and will involve you in community engagement. Skills you will be required to practise during GESL are reflective skills and thinking dispositions, people management skills, self-management skills, communication

skills, facilitative skills and social and emotional intelligence. (NIE, 2017, GESL)

- SALT

SALT programme stems from NIE's goal to provide its student teachers with a unique opportunity for both personal development and international exposure in interdisciplinary training through an overseas immersion experience. Through SALT, you will be able to develop leadership skills and at the same time engage with the communities in a meaningful service manner. (NIE, 2017, SALT programme)

### **Student-led Program.**

- NIE Service Learning Club (NIE SLC)

Service-learning trips from NIE service-learning club is a student-led organization, but the club closely works with and is directed by Singapore's National Youth Council (NYC) and NIE. The service-learning trips of NIE SLC have been a part of the Youth Expedition Project (YEP) of NYC. NYC provides NIE SLC guidelines and training for the leaders for both local and international service-learning trips and supports subsidies for their trips abroad.

*Aims of the Club:* The NIE Service-Learning Club aims to equip student-teachers with the skills to carry out service-learning in the classroom. The Service-Learning Club in NIE upholds service-learning and its principles for all student-teachers. In order to equip student-teachers with the skills to carry out service-learning in the classroom, we present the following 3 objectives of our organization.

1. To develop a heart of compassion in student-teachers for both local and overseas communities
2. Train student-teachers in service-learning pedagogy
3. Provide opportunities for student-teachers to carry out service-learning projects of their own

(NIE Service-Learning Club, n.d.)

*Long-Term Strategy:* We aim to help our members see the need to identify unaddressed gaps within the society, and to use relevant skills to develop projects and ideas while instilling the key values of empathy and compassion within themselves and their students. (NIE Service-Learning Club, n.d.)

In YEP, the participants partook in three consecutive projects that are 1) pre-trip (local service-learning in Singapore), 2) international service-learning projects (e.g. Love Sikkim (India) and Project Nalanda in Chakma community of India, Arunachal Pradesh), and 3) post-trip (local service-learning in Singapore) so that the participants can relate the implication of what they have practiced and learnt during international SL trips to the national context.

NIE service learning club is still under NIE's supervision but fully student-led and organizes service-learning activities though it has the very minimum of oversight from NIE and is in conjunction with Singapore's National Youth Council...NYC runs a program called the youth expedition project (YEP). So this program is for youth to be global and local changemakers. And they do subsidies. They contribute financially very much to your trip. So they give you subsidies, they do sponsorships, and they provide the necessary training for your leaders as well...So as part of this youth expedition project from the National Youth Council, we are required to have two local service-learning projects, as well as this, overseas service-learning project. So this encompasses the entire project. (Ken)

### *Contextual Factors for Empowerment*

**Leadership Position.** Every participant took the leadership role in their service-learning projects, and throughout the interviews, their responses indicated that the key changes and transformations that occurred in them revolved around their leadership experiences in those service-learning projects.

**Encountering Cultural Difference & Interactions with People from Different Cultures.** The participants commonly shared that encountering different cultural contexts provoked some significant changes and transformations in their perspectives. Though the participants experienced both local-based and international service-learning, they commonly acknowledged that their experiences and changes mostly came from international service-learning than local-service learning, in which they were exposed to greatly different cultural

contexts and diverse perspectives. Especially Henry, who articulated a considerable change in his perspective toward a critical understanding of culture, said that interaction with community partners and leaders in Sikkim was the key factor that led his perspective shift. Other participants also mentioned that communicating with people from different cultures and learning from them had been the most critical moments in being empowered as global citizens and change agents.

We had met up with this lady over there...basically what she was trying to say to us was that even though they might not seem they have as much as like us where we came from, but from the children's point of view, that's not really the case, they have a lot of things that they need to be happy. Yeah. And so for them, the mindset is not so much of like, what I don't have, but what I have. So like, I think that was sort of like the message that she wanted us to take as well...Instead of just looking at things from our perspective, and thinking of what we can give to them, we could also look at it from their perspective, and what they want from us...it was when we realized that sometimes it could be a bit ethnocentric when we think. (Henry)

### 6.2.2. Empowerment Outcomes

#### *Knowledge & Skills*

**Knowledge.** The participants responded that they gained awareness and further knowledge of global issues through their international engagements. Min, for example, gained especially knowledge of sustainability and environmental issues through BUILD and her SL trip to Sikkim.

Maybe it broadened my perspective because before that, I didn't know anything about farming. And I mean, it's always interesting to learn more about the environment. So that is something that like, I'm still trying to learn more and figure out more about how to be more environmentally friendly and things like that...I felt like I learned a lot about environmental sustainability on those trips because of how much focus and emphasis there was in their countries, like, their values and things like that. (Min)

Ken also mentioned that the knowledge of GCE he had gained before his engagements in SL trips became personally more meaningful and relevant to his life and teaching when he experienced those topics and knowledge in real-life settings.

You learn about it in class, you know, you have the theory of diversity, okay, everybody is different, but nothing really beats experiencing it by going overseas multiple times with multiple cultures. (Ken)

**Skills.** The participants articulated that they think the three following skills – leadership, organizational, and negotiation and communication skills were mainly gained from their engagements in EL.

***Leadership skill – Democratic (Shared) and Servant Leadership.*** Min and Ken discussed the importance of democratic and shared leadership in service-learning trips. They said leaders need to take not dictatorial or authoritative leadership style but democratic and shared one, trying to respect different opinions and make everyone's perspective and opinion considered.

I think one thing that's really important about being a leader in a service-learning project overseas, is that I think, while it is important that, you know, you set like, the general direction and the goal of your group, I think it's important not to impose them on the group itself. Because I feel like everybody on the trip has an equal state in the project, you know, everybody is spending the same amount of time. Everybody has involvement in the project. So while it's important for us to, like manage everyone's views, I don't think it's good to be dismissive. And to say, like, I'm the leader. So this is my view. This is. Yeah, it's everyone's project. And I think, what really important is that the leaders of the project, do not force, in a way do not impose their views on how the project should go on to the locals over there that we are partnering with. (Henry)

Especially Ken thought it was important for him as a leader of the SL trips to make every NIE participant experience the specific leadership roles during their trips, considering that all of them will become future educational leaders as teachers.

So I think we have a very clear idea that this exposure will help them as future teachers, because they will have to be leaders of their students next time. So we wanted to really expose them to as much as possible even though we were leading, we didn't want them to just follow. (Ken)

Min also said that she learnt about and experienced this democratic leadership during her engagement in SL, and also mentioned that it was the shared opinion with other SL trip members that servant leadership is especially crucial to lead SL trips overseas successfully and meaningfully.

I think a lot of the time, we talked about servant leadership. So we were basically talking about how we can be of help to the communities that we were working for and working towards. (Min)

***Negotiation & Communication Skills.*** The NIE participants talked about the significance of negotiation and communication skills and said that they could hone these skills during the service-learning trips. It was crucial, especially for the leaders of service-learning trips, to coordinate the needs and opinions among all the stakeholders of SL trips - SL partners on-sites, Ministry of Education, NIE faculty members, and trip participants. Henry talked about the importance of managing each different expectation between NIE students and partner schools on service-learning sites.

I guess the bottom line was also to communicate with the partners that we've had over the Sikkim, Right, asking them like, you know, so, what are your needs? This year, you know, that what can we provide service regarding, and then also convey expectations, you know, between our students and between their organizations as well...I think that's one really important thing. Yeah. And I think because of that, sometimes there may be a bit of negotiation that needs to be done between perhaps the partner over there, and between your members who might have different expectations. Yeah, so I think, which is why the whole issue about setting and managing expectations is really important. And when expectations are changed, I feel like we've really gone through a lot about how to convey changes and expectations or mismatches respectfully, you know, to try and reach a new understanding. So we

have to manage expectations on both ends. (Henry)

**Organizational Skills.** The participants also addressed that they were able to develop organizational skills by organizing and planning the entire process and logistics of the SL trips as the leaders.

As the leaders, I think our responsibilities for a lot more. Yeah. I think starting from the whole, writing of proposals, thinking about setting the goal of the entire service-learning trip to negotiating with the National Youth Council, negotiating with the professors NIE member recruitment. The grant application, you know, funding issues, the booking flights and accommodation, right. A lot of planning things... Yeah, just like basically just the overall project. Yeah, just making sure that things are planned for and of course in emergency like contingencies and things like that. (Henry)

### ***Values & Attitudes***

**Respect.** Every participant maintained that mutual respect for every member in SL trips was particularly important to lead the trips successfully as leaders of those projects. They realized that it was the relationship of SL trip members and SL partners that mattered the most in creating meaningful SL experiences for everyone by respecting and taking care of one another rather than prioritizing the work efficiency or specific capacities needed for the projects. Instead, the most crucial things they found were creating the atmosphere of respecting each other and sharing the leadership with all stakeholders of the projects. They also mentioned that they could cultivate the attitude of respecting diversity and different cultures in their international service-learning trips.

So regardless of whether it's me as an individual or me as a teacher, it makes me aware that it is that I need that I kind of need to train a bit more carefully because there are things that I don't know about the different cultural contexts or social contexts which I need to consider. So I think these experiences opened my eyes to the diversity that is out there. And it's more of as a global citizen or a change maker. It makes me respect the concept of diversity a lot more. (Ken)

**Empathy.** All participants said that being situated in different cultural contexts, experiencing the lives of others in different parts of the world, and putting their efforts to serve other communities gave them chances to develop empathy for others. Min, for example, explained that it was surprising for her to realize that she had never had enough empathy toward others, and it led her to think she needs to have much more empathy and try to put herself in others' shoes to have it more.

Feel like empathy is really something that I learned a lot because I think we all have, like some aspect of empathy, but, it just always surprises us. I'm always surprised by how much more empathy I need to have...you know, putting yourself in someone's shoes, but it's like, thinking about how I could be positioned that this person was in. (Min)

**Social Justice & Equality.** Ken and Henry commonly explained how their service-learning trips made them more sensitively aware of the issues of injustice and inequality in their national context and other countries' contexts.

I can tell you that it has solidified or reinforced my concept of right and wrong and areas in which I can contribute in, and I wish to contribute in, in terms of social justice or injustice. (Ken)

Um, yeah, definitely, I think, in terms of addressing issues of equality. I think it has made me a lot more, I think, I'm aware, and a lot more sensitized to issues of equality. Because I'm growing up in Singapore, I think, we don't really think about the access to schooling, access to education being a privilege for some others. So, I guess issues like that relating to equality were like things that perhaps we will have thought about, but we have never really experienced, or we had never really like seen these things happening, I guess, in real life for us, right. So I think being on the service-learning trip has sort of opened our eyes, you know, to all these things that are happening. (Henry)

### ***Critical Perspective & Reflexivity***

Critical reflexivity on culture was the most extensively gained empowerment outcome of all three participants during their service-learning engagement. The participants especially discussed their changes in perspective and attitude toward other cultures during their international service-learning trips than local ones. Those trips and interactions with local people and partners in the SL communities fostered their critical reflexivity on their own backgrounds and other cultures.

Although we are talking about service-learning, we are supposedly thinking of going to help a community that is less developed or less rich than us. It is not. You recognize very quickly that you are not the savior of everybody there. They have plenty to teach you as well... So we learn from them as well as they learn from us. So it really sort of brings you down from your moral high horse... And I guess this is what these programs are meant to highlight to you as well. (Ken)

Through SL trips overseas, they were able to reflect on their pre-existing assumptions and perspectives with which they had been likely to interpret and approach other cultures based on their own criteria and dominant discourses from their own culture. However, they found it is greatly important to overcome the ethnocentric view and have a culturally grounded approach to other cultures.

And that what, you know that what we see as like, being better, or being worse, it may not be the case for people who may not have had the same upbringing and the same culture as us. So I think that awareness that a lot of our own views are ethnocentric, I think is really important in the first step towards being a global citizen, right? Because I feel like maybe perhaps to contribute to, you know, like global discussions and things like that about different issues, you will first need to be able to understand that we all come from different cultures and different perspectives. So like, it may not be the most helpful if we were to stick to our own ethnocentric views, right, when engaging in discussions like that. So that was one of, I guess, the insights that we've gained and I've gained as an individual. (Henry)

What I've definitely learned as well is that respect for others is crucial, especially if you look at social justice or global citizenship, because everybody comes into a global situation with their own experiences. But I think what I have learned is also that my experiences are exactly not necessarily always what other people want to replicate. So what we see as social injustice sometimes doesn't be transferred to other people. So I guess another learning point that I had is that my own morality doesn't necessarily mean that it is transferred to other people as well. So I need to appreciate the context of which they operate in as well. Rather than assuming that they will share the same thoughts as I do (Ken).

They also realized that building a good relationship and strong partnership with SL partners cannot be possible if SL participants try to assume the cultures of service-learning sites with their own cultural criteria and discourse. In this regard, having critical reflexivity on other cultures was significantly important for them to work and communicate with SL partners to build a reciprocal partnership based on equal respect.

I think that has opened my eyes at least, to the importance of basically just not assuming. Yeah, and maybe like checking in with them. And just to, you know, be there with them...Yeah, not assume...So like, instead of just looking at things from our perspective, and thinking of what we can give to them, we could also look at it from their perspective, and what they want from us...through the service-learning projects, I feel that I am better able to appreciate that there is a cultural aspect to these things, you know, that what may be normal for them, and what may be normal for us might be very different. (Henry)

But I think in terms of like, leadership, in terms of working with other people, I think, when we went there, we realized, it's difficult to come in with these preconceived notions. And when you're working with someone as a partner, in that sense, it's much more important what they want, rather than what we want. So I think in that sense, the leadership, there is more of treating someone else as an equal partner and making sure that both of our goals are equally met. Or like, rather, like yeah, both of our goals are equally met. Rather than maintaining you guys' positions or perspective, but sharing the leadership and listening to each other and respect each other equally. (Min)

It is noteworthy that the NIE participants connected their critical awareness of culture

with other values and attitudes they experienced and gained through SL, such as respect for difference and diversity, humility, shared leadership, reciprocal relationship and mutual respect for service-learning partners, and ethical and cultural sensitivity. According to the participants' responses, critical reflexivity became a basis for cultivating those other values and attitudes of GCE.

In terms of morality, I think it's definitely made me a lot less black and white. So I think before this, I was always like, this is right, this is wrong. But then, I think in hindsight, I realized that what is black and white to me is not what's black and white to someone else and society where they shape their perspective. (Min)

Yeah, I guess being culturally sensitive ways into morality and ethics, then I would say that we have become a bit more ethical and a bit more moral. (Henry)

### *Agentic Capacity*

#### **Vision for Change.**

*Change Agent as a Singaporean.* The participants' responses suggested that their orientation of future change is mainly toward the national context. Out of the three participants, especially Henry showed a strong national identity in understanding who a change agent is and the orientation of change. When discussing the implications of GCE, he firstly addressed that GCE can bring about a positive impact on tackling the national challenges and especially managing the diversity of Singapore.

I think, because we do have quite a few cultures going on in Singapore, we have different races and different cultures. So I feel like perhaps learning more about others will help us to learn a bit more about ourselves as well and how to interact with people from our own country of different cultures and different backgrounds. There are still issues of discrimination, everyday racism in Singapore, and this has been something that the government has been trying to tackle for quite a while. So I feel like perhaps if we were to learn more about others, about interacting with others, you know, it could also help us to interact with ourselves. Yeah, I think that's also an important point to me. (Henry)

He said that he thinks the primary goal of GCE at NIE is to prepare its students as high-quality national teachers in Singapore by strengthening their national and teacher identity.

Because I think at the end of the day, it is kind of a program geared towards, you know, preparing us to teach us in Singapore in the future...So I think at the end of the day, they're trying to prepare us to be teachers in Singapore...And you know, the global experiences and things like that, while they are important in helping us to be more open-minded and to look at things from different perspectives and to integrate different teaching pedagogies and approaches, I think at the end of the day, they would not really have a separate approach. They will not try to make it like separate from their main goal, which is to develop teachers in Singapore, yeah. (Henry)

***Change Agent as a Teacher.*** The participants' responses suggested that they consider it important to become change agents as global citizens regarding its positive impacts on their teaching profession and its contribution to their nation. The participants' responses indicated that they understand 'who a change agent is' more in relation to the 'identity of a teacher and Singaporean' than that of individual-self. When I asked if they also relate the empowerment outcomes with their individual growth apart from the growth as a national teacher, they responded that the empowerment outcomes brought about self-development as well. However, they considered it meaningful when the growth of individual-self contributes to their teaching profession. In this respect, they maintained that the growth of an individual and that of a teacher are inseparable.

Yeah. So both for personal as well as being a teacher. I don't see the two as independent of each other. (Ken)

It seemed that Ken and Min have a stronger teacher identity than national identity, while Henry showed the strongest national identity out of the three participants. Especially,

Ken's responses indicated that he has the strongest teacher identity among the participants, and it is worth noticing how he interprets his experience in achieving change agency and connects it with his teaching profession.

I think there's definitely a major consideration in my role as a teacher in the future. So I think that is a very big driving force for why I would want to engage in this. So even as I grow myself as a global citizen, by having these experiences, knowledge, and, you know, exposure to other cultures and people make me grow, also make me a better teacher in the future... And to convey this, the experiences that I've had to my students in the future, so everything that people learn tends to be on paper in the textbooks, they want to read on the web, but I feel that someone conveying this knowledge to them, especially when they have experienced it themselves, comes a lot more true and personal. So in a way, it helps me to connect with my students more in the future. (Ken)

Min showed the narrowest perspective on 'becoming a change agent as a teacher' and 'making changes' in that she was not sure about what and how to do as a teacher to create changes beyond her classroom and school settings.

Do I think that I can impact outside of the classrooms? I think I could. But I think, yeah, I think I definitely have the skills and knowledge to do it. But to be honest, I'm not sure if I would do it...Um, I think because I'm not sure what exactly I would want to do in that sense. So, for example, if I got the opportunity to go overseas after this, then I would see how I can create that impact. But to me, it feels like unless I initiate something in my local community. I'm not sure how I will be making, like a direct impact, perhaps, versus if I'm in the classroom and can teach students what I've learned in the same values. I think that's more tangible to me. (Min)

***Teaching as a Way to Empower Future Students to Become Change Agents.*** All participants believed that when they become agents of change, they can empower their future students as change agents, thus creating greater social changes through their teaching profession.

I definitely will feel that it will benefit teachers in them being educators and them

being change makers and teaching future change-makers as well...I think what we always talk about in NIE is how teaching is supposed to be a ripple. So the idea is that you are dropped in this pool of water at the end of it ripples outwards. So as a teacher gives his input, it ripples outwards to affect more and more students, it sort of like has a domino effect for students, and you'll never really know where the influence stops.... have no idea when this will stop. No idea when my teachings will stop for my students. (Ken)

I would say definitely, yes. I think it's because of the impact that teachers have on their profession. So I think, if you do manage to impact a few students in the class, I think that makes a very big difference in a very big change. (Min)

***Beyond Singapore.*** Though the participants related their experiences and empowerment outcomes to mainly Singaporean context in creating changes, their responses implied that they became more aware that their actions could impact and create changes beyond their national context.

Yeah, I think it has definitely changed some of my views and has sort of empowered me into being a bit more conscious and aware of the impact that I can have on like, um, you know, like global issues, or like, people and things beyond Singapore. (Henry)

Yeah, I would say understanding of other people, it's really just, I think it's just having like a broader perspective, maybe. So I think sometimes it's very easy to be narrow and to just think about what I'm doing and what's happening around me. But I felt like these programs really forced me to think about the broader perspective and also think about how me as an individual, should, or how I can contribute to this broader perspective, maybe a step further as to like what I can do. (Min)

They also commonly addressed that SL trips made them realize the interconnectedness of the world and the linkage between Singapore and other parts of the world.

My program which required local service-learning together with overseas, I think it helped me to draw a very direct comparison. So I see this overseas, but I am aware that I see it locally as well. So, it helps to draw that link rather than thinking that it was just overseas that this problem only occurs overseas...From these experiences, I

think I realized that there had been a lot of potential learning opportunities and the potential impact that my actions can have on people. (Ken)

### **Action for Change.**

*Current Action for Change.* The participants' engagements in service-learning encouraged them to take other following actions to create positive changes in their daily lives. As an example, Henry, who experienced a huge perspective change in understanding other cultures, said that he had been practicing critical reflexivity when analyzing and interpreting the information from social media, especially on cultural discourses.

I've been through, you know, like the service-learning projects, I feel that I am better able to appreciate that there is a cultural aspect to these things, you know, that what may be normal for them, and what may be normal for us might be very different... when you go onto social media, and when you see a lot of the comments, a few of them are made from very ethnocentric points of view... I feel like when engaging in discourses globally, I think it's important to have some sort of cultural sensitivity mind, knowing to just be aware of what's normal and what's right. Yeah. According to one culture may not be so for another culture. (Henry)

For Ken, his service-learning experiences have led him to keep constantly learning about other cultures and cultural diversity.

And I guess to a certain extent, it also encourages constant learning on my part as well. Because I mean, everything is just so diverse. There's never you'll never stop learning in terms of diversity, and understanding of other cultures. (Ken)

*Future Action for Change.* Ken, who reflected critical reflexivity on understanding cultures, also showed his strong passion for tackling the inequality issues in the economy and education beyond the classroom and school contexts. He said that facing the issues of inequality in the communities where he visited for the SL trips made him more passionate about tackling the inequality issues in those areas. In regard to the teaching context, he spoke that he wants to challenge his students' pre-existing assumptions and views on other cultures

and help them understand those with a critical perspective.

I'm very passionate about economic inequality in Singapore, and having seen what economic inequality can do, especially overseas, made me even more convicted to be a change-maker in this area for myself. (Ken)

Generally, students have been exposed to the dominant culture, or the dominant race, or the dominant identity. So people from the dominant culture rarely see issues faced by minorities. They tend to be skeptical about issues, the issues of the minorities. And I think this experience helps me sort of to give them (his future students) a little bit more empathy so they might have a second look, or they might check their biases a little bit more in terms of what they think of they know. (Ken)

Every participant said that they want to improve the current service-learning curriculum in the Singaporean schools, and they believed that they could contribute much to it with what they have learnt from their engagements in service-learning projects at NIE.

In terms of me being a supervisor, in terms of, let's say, service-learning or social justice projects, it creates a lot more passion because I did not learn what I learned now when I was in secondary school. I learned it in university, but I feel that many of these lessons should be in secondary schools. So me as a teacher supervising students next time, who will be embarking on such projects, I feel that I can guide them better, and enhance their own learning experience as well, which relates to them being able to give more service to their community because they are more equipped and more capable. (Ken)

Henry said that he wants to pass on important attitudes and lessons gained from their SL experiences at NIE to their future students.

In Singapore, a part of the school curriculum, there's a thing called the Community Involvement project that helps out different parts of the community, local community, and sometimes they go overseas as well. I feel like my own experiences with service-learning, you know, like, my own views, regarding partnership, regarding equal respect between my partners in service, learning relationship and of course, like cultural sensitivities things like that, I think because I'm more aware of these issues, I will definitely pass them on to my students best as I can and try to make them a bit more aware of such issues as well. (Henry)

Min strongly maintained that the actions from in-service teachers are needed to improve the current service-learning curriculum in schools and overcome its limitations and challenges in superficially dealing with the needs of the community, not tackling the roots of the problems. She said that she wants to contribute to improving and reforming the existing SL practices at schools when she starts her teaching profession.

Service-learning is actually a big part of the education system, and I think that these experiences have also made me realize a lot of what we do, the impact on our students. So students learn a lot, but in the end, we don't necessarily impact the community to the extent that we want to. So all of our solutions that we think of it like, that our students carry out to seem like band-aid solutions. They don't solve the root cause of the problem that we are facing in our community. So I think that is something needed to really think in our service learning, like curriculum and how we approach service-learning with our students. (Min)

### **6.3. Evaluation and Suggestion**

#### **6.3.1. Strength and Weakness**

##### ***Strength***

The participants' experiences in GCE at NIE suggested that NIE places a strong emphasis on the behavioral dimension of GCE. NIE has provided a variety of engagement opportunities in which pre-service teachers can engage in both local and international service-learning. It has also built a strong partnership with the government to provide more students with better service-learning opportunities. NIE collaborates closely with MOE (Ministry of Education), and its students can gain leadership training and practical guidance for SL trips from MOE and get subsidies for their international SL trips, which enables more NIE students to partake in service-learning opportunities.

NYC runs a program called the youth expedition project (YEP), So this program is

for youth to be global and local change makers. And they do subsidies. They contribute financially very much to your trip. So they give you subsidies, they do sponsorships, and they provide the necessary training for your leaders as well. (Ken)

Yeah, so it is, sort of really the equality that we have. Everybody gets an equal opportunity to go. And it is not because of grades that you don't have to have, like a perfect GPA or very stellar, very outstanding groups to go. So long as you have the interest and you have that passion for engaging in such enrichment programs, that opportunity is given to you (Henry).

Along with its strong partnership with MOE, NIE has also built strong and long-standing partnerships with local and international community partners. It has enabled students to have concurrent service-learning experiences in consecutive years, making it possible to build a close and strong relationship with their community partners.

This is our sixth year, the sixth consecutive year of sending our team over there. So I think it is quite special because it's not one project. Surely it is concurrent and recurring. So we have formed a relationship with the people there. And I mean, I don't think our job ends the moment we leave. Like now, we are still in contact with them. So recently, with the COVID situation, we had to do, we did fundraisers and everything for them to buy masks to buy hand sanitizers and rice and things like that, for the community over there. So we still keep in close contact. (Ken)

Since 2005, over the past 13 years, we have established many long-term overseas partnerships with community groups whom we visit almost on a yearly basis. In 2019, we were awarded the NIE Strong Partnership Award (Overseas) for the third consecutive year. (NIE Service-Learning Club, n.d.)

The participants also mentioned that NIE's strong emphasis on reflection throughout the service-learning trips made their SL experiences more meaningful by making their overseas experiences relevant to their local and national context. They additionally said that they appreciate the strategic support from NIE, which helped their SL trips with administrative and logistic support and also with necessary guidance from the professors.

I will say that NIE is pretty supportive of us when we do decide that we want to go for the programs, right? They have a team of admin personnel, right, who are managing like the finance matters, who are managing the admin matters, and they are

always quite responsive. Whenever we have questions about setting our teams and when we have questions about when we need help liaising with the National Youth Council. So they do offer quite a bit of support to us regarding that, and we are quite thankful for that. Because if not, I think it's not very possible for us to be able to do this all by ourselves. Right. So I think the support is important. (Henry)

### ***Weakness***

The participants pointed out that it is still largely voluntary for NIE students to join international SL despite various SL opportunities provided by NIE. They said that the government's subsidy is greatly helpful in participating in the projects; however, there are still many students who do not join the international SL trips because of financial concerns.

As another weakness, they thought their TE curriculum does not take an integrative approach to GCE. They pointed out that NIE and schools in Singapore had been taking a divisive approach to GCE. According to their shared experiences, the main focus of their character and citizenship education and other mandatory courses relevant to GCE had been limited to their local and national context. Even in the classes mainly discussing global issues, those issues were addressed irrespective of the Singaporean context. Ken especially elaborated his experiences in this divisive approach to GCE. He said that the interrelation between Singapore and other countries was rarely discussed, ignoring the interconnectedness of a globalized society when dealing with local and national issues.

When we look at Global Citizenship education, especially in Singapore, we see we tend to view it in terms of the region or global or North America, Europe, but rarely we see it as Singapore versus the world...You don't see the linkage between Singapore and the world, you just see the world. And you see Singapore as two separate entities...What I see is, what I feel is happening in teaching in general in Singapore, we tend to see the local and global contexts differently. So we see it as separate rather than connected...Yes, I mean because NIE courses are all local-centric. For the compulsory courses are all local-centric. So there is little integration of a global context into these courses. So I guess it's kind of natural that teachers who are trained like that will see local and global as two separate things. (Ken)

The participants also shared their opinions that there must be more emphasis on GCE to empower NIE students as active global citizens creating social changes. In terms of active citizenship, Ken claimed it is problematic that active citizenship promoting social changes had not been emphasized enough or considered as important in Singaporean society and its education. He also stated that he personally feels there has been little emphasis on the topics of GCE and becoming agents of social change in overall educational curricula in Singaporean schools.

I feel that the idea of being a change-maker in Singapore isn't as developed yet. Because people tend to be a bit, we tend to fall in line with what has happened, what is going on, rather than wanting to rock the boat and change something. So I think the first thing that I would tackle is the willingness to change and the willingness to do something about it. Because I think there's a real issue that we have here in Singapore, where everybody just waits and sees, rather than try to do something about it. (Ken)

In line with Ken's argument, Min thought that compared to the strong emphasis on the behavioral dimension of GCE, which enabled her to engage in several EL programs, she had not learnt much on the content knowledge or topics of GCE in her TE program. She also did not often think about the importance of GCE concerning being empowered herself or empowering her future students as global citizens who actively create social changes. The weaker implementation of the cognitive dimension of GCE made her difficult to find an explicit relationship between her engagements in EL and to become agents of change as global citizens.

We wanted to do a service-learning project, but we didn't really think of it in terms of global citizenship. And then also, like I said, the civics and that one course called character and citizenship education, it's just like teaching values in class and things like that...A lot of action part while not emphasizing the becoming global citizen, do

not have much content or knowledge on the topics regarding global citizenship...we don't really have a lot of content, maybe that's an area for improvement as well. But I think, like I said, it's not very explicit that we learn being a global citizen. So I think there's a lot of the action part, but then there's not a lot of the knowledge part (Min).

### **6.3.2. Suggestions**

The participants' evaluation on GCE from their experiences at NIE suggested that GCE needs to be implemented in a more holistic and integrative way in teacher education programmes. The participants stressed the importance of pre-service teachers' engagements in EL during their teacher training to become change agents as global citizens. Especially they talked about the huge impact of international service-learning trips on achieving change agency, which significantly contributed to empowering them to become change agents as global citizens. They emphasized the importance of practicing what they have learnt and known through real-life experiences to achieve change agency. Ken, in this regard, said that most of the empowerment outcomes and even his knowledge of GCE mainly came from his engagements in the service-learning projects.

So it is between what you know and what you want to do about it. I feel that the important thing for people is to start doing something about it, rather than just knowing about it...I think if you're looking at pedagogical approach, I think, as you can probably guess, from my responses, it will be experiential learning. Most of my knowledge came from experiential learning. So I believe that is quite an important factor and something that is very effective moving forward... So more linkages between the global and local context rather than seeing it differently, and improving in terms of actionable activities. So implementing activities rather than just knowing about them theoretically. (Ken)

According to the interviewees, despite various SL opportunities at NIE, only around half of NIE students usually partake in international SL because most of them are not required programs, unlike local SL programs. Thus they thought it would be important for TE

to find ways to engage more pre-service teachers in international service-learning during teacher preparation, considering its huge impact on preparing them to become change agents as global citizens. Henry suggested some practical ideas on it, such as integrating the international SL into the official TE curriculum or providing academic credits to it.

And also in terms of like, you know, providing more opportunities for people. So like, making it part of the course requirement, or maybe giving it a few academic credits, things like that (Henry)

They also commonly stressed the importance of dealing with the interconnectedness of a global society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century when discussing the issues in multi-regional contexts of the world – the issues at local, national, regional and international levels. They also recommended that GCE curriculum needs to be strengthened in TE curriculum and holistically developed and implemented by emphasizing and connecting every dimension of GCE - knowledge, values & attitudes, and actions. They argued that NIE needs to integrate especially the cognitive dimension of GCE more into their TE curriculum so that it could also be emphasized enough along with the socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions of GCE, which have been relatively well integrated into their TE programs.

Yeah, I think it could be more integrated into the curriculum, both in terms of like, the knowledge component, so like, maybe in terms of academic courses, And also in terms of like, you know, providing more opportunities for people. (Henry)

## **Chapter 7. Discussion: Responding to Research Questions from Comparison**

### **7.1. GCE in Practice at UH and NIE**

#### **Pre-service Teachers' Experiences in GCE**

The participants from both cases responded that they experienced GCE as an integrated curriculum in their TE program than an individually developed one. They also experienced in common that the values of GCE were laden and integrated into their entire TE curricula, although UH participants' responses may suggest that they were experiencing a stronger value-based approach than NIE participants. UH participants said that the values of GCE are underlying in the culture of the faculty, the university, and Finnish education and society.

#### **Curricular Focus: Conceptual Dimensions, Approach, and Regional Focus of GCE**

Regarding conceptual dimensions of GCE (cognitive, socio-emotional, behavioral), UH participants thought its curricular focus was mainly on the cognitive dimension, while NIE put a strong emphasis on the behavioral dimension. The teacher education of UH has been well known for its strong research-based and inquiry-based approach (Westbury, Hansén, Kansanen, & Björkvist, 2005; Schleicher, 2012; Aspors & Eklund, 2017), and UH participants' responses suggested that the participants had experienced this research and theory-oriented approach to GCE in their TE much more than other dimensions with the least emphasis on the behavioral dimension. In comparison, NIE participants talked about the strong emphasis on behavioral dimension in their TE, considering many experiential learning opportunities that promote the values of GCE through local and global engagements. However, their experiences suggested that there had been weaker implementation on the

cognitive dimension of GCE as they did not often encounter knowledge-based content or academic courses on themes of GCE during their teacher preparation. The participants' responses from both cases implied that the values and attitudes of GCE (socio-emotional dimension) are relatively well integrated into their existing TE curricula than the other two dimensions, while the cognitive dimension has stronger emphasis at UH and does the behavioral dimension at NIE.

In regard to the approaches to GCE (competency-based, value-based, critical) at each institution, UH participants said that they had experienced mainly value-based with critical approach – the universal values and ethical principles were greatly valued, and there was also a strong emphasis on critically investigating underlying power relation rooted in issues of education and society. UH students thought that the critical approach was one of the main pedagogical approaches embedded in their entire TE and not limited to the only GCE. NIE students' responses, on the other hand, indicated that they did not have much experience in the critical approach in their TE program. However, NIE participants, similarly to UH participants, experienced that their academic courses, as well as experiential learning, were driven by universal values and ethical principles such as equality, social justice, empathy, peace, and sustainability. Considering that the majority of higher education institutions and teacher education programs in the world are still taking mainly the competency-based approach to GCE, which focuses on preparing students to equip necessary knowledge and certain competencies or skills to become competitive human capitals in a global market (UNESCO 2014, 2015; Bourn et al., 2017), the primary approach to GCE at UH and NIE shows the difference from the one at TE in other parts of the world.

Regarding the focus of regional context, GCE practiced at each case mainly took a

local-centric approach in their academic courses. The academic courses at both institutions discussed mainly their local and national context, but UH students said when discussing their local and national issues, the interconnectedness and interrelations between Finland and other countries were also importantly addressed, whereas NIE participants spoke about the lack in making the relevance of their national context with other nations' contexts, dealing them as irrespective ones without relating the issues of each other. Though the participants from both cases spoke about the local-centric approach, NIE students mentioned more often its national and local-centric approach than Finnish participants, not only from their experiences from NIE but also from their overall school days in Singapore. In terms of experiential learning, UH students felt there had been more local and glocal (merging local and global) engagement opportunities than international ones. However, they thought that the number of local and glocal engagements was even not enough, and the international opportunities were very few at the faculty. In contrast, NIE students had experienced a variety of local and international EL programs along with glocal engagements that connect their local and global EL projects.

## **7.2. Becoming Change Agents as Global Citizens through Actions**

### **7.2.1. Agentic Space: Specific Context of Students' Engagements and Contextual Factors for the Empowerment**

UH students' agentic space in which they served other students, creating the values of GCE, was the student organization of the faculty of educational sciences (Condustry and its affiliated committees and organizations). For NIE participants, the concrete contexts of their engagement were situated mainly in their service-learning programmes organized at both institutional level (GESL - local, SALT - international) and student-initiative level (NIE

SLC – both local and international) and the leadership building internship program (BUILD) organized by NIE, which also has a service-learning component.

Although the participants' experiences in experiential learning at each institution were all different, it is noticeable that they experienced similar contextual factors during their engagements, which provoked changes and empowerment in them to become change agents. Firstly, the participants addressed that encountering differences and experiencing diversity fostered their comparative perspective, leading them to develop and sensitize their critical reflexivity. However, when the participants talked about the difference and diversity, the contexts of diversity UH participants addressed were mainly in their student organization, the TE faculty, and UH, while NIE students talked about those in a disparate culture out of their home country and NIE.

All the participants from both cases also described that there was a great influence on developing global citizenship from their colleagues working together in the student organization or service-learning projects. NIE participants especially thought that the interactions with local people and community leaderships overseas during their international service-learning trips had a huge impact on shifting their perspectives and attitudes by challenging their previous assumptions and perspectives toward other cultures.

Lastly, every participant in both cases experienced leadership roles, promoting democratic actions and procedures in which they advocated students' rights, listened to the students' voices, coordinated communications to moderate different needs and expectations, and liaised with partners, the faculty members, and the university to solve the problems and find better alternatives.

### **7.2.2. Empowerment Outcomes**

#### ***Knowledge & Skills***

The participants from both cases responded that they could gain the knowledge of overarching themes of GCE through their engagements, such as sustainability, social justice, and human rights and also became more aware of the issues in a global society. Out of the topics, especially sustainability and environmental protection, was mostly mentioned and discussed in both cases. At UH, the members at Condus ry were very active in informing the environmental issues and engaging its student body with the activities to promote sustainability in the faculty, the university and the local community. Likewise, several local and international SL trips from NIE SLC dealt with sustainability and environmental issues. The participants in both cases experienced that their activities about environmental protection in their agentic spaces imparted relevant knowledge of the topic.

The participants in both cases also shared that their knowledge became more relevant and meaningful to their teaching and real-life contexts by experiencing what they learnt through actions. They also shared quite similar skills gained through their engagements. They said that they gained mainly three following skills - democratic leadership skill, negotiation and (intercultural) communication skills, and organizational skill.

#### ***Values & Attitudes***

The participants from each institution also showed the similarities in overall values and attitudes they had gained through their engagements in EL. First, the participants shared their experiences in which they could nurture the attitude of respecting differences. They also talked about the values of equality, democracy and social justice. Every participant said that they also gained a more cosmopolitan perspective by understanding the interconnectedness of

local and global society, the expanded concept of citizenship, and the responsibility as citizens of the world. It led them to learn and care more about global issues and challenges and tackle those through active actions.

### ***Critical Perspective & Reflexivity***

The result of the analysis suggested that critical reflexivity was one of the major empowerment outcomes of the participants from both cases. Interestingly, both NIE and UH participants related critical reflexivity to ethical sensibility and morality, which will be important for pre-service teachers not only to become ethical teachers but also to empower their future students as ethical and critical agents of social change. While the participants in both cases had a critical perspective on power discourse, the main focus of their critical investigation was different. The explicit difference was that while UH students addressed more of their personal backgrounds and their surroundings, such as people around them, education and culture in the Finnish context, NIE participants reflected strong critical reflexivity on power discourse on culture and intercommunication with different cultures.

The difference in their main focus could be from the contextual difference in their agentic spaces. UH students' experiences in diversity and difference were mainly situated in the contexts of their faculty, university and Finnish culture, interacting with other university students bringing different personal backgrounds, perspectives and thoughts to the student organization. On the other hand, NIE participants' main agentic space was in very disparate cultural contexts out of Singapore, in which more extensive communications and exchanges between different cultures had occurred.

Every UH participant spoke about realizing their privilege as the educated, Finnish, and European (also living in one of the Scandinavian nations). Their responses suggested that

their critical awareness mostly came from encountering diversity that helped to develop their comparative perspective between themselves and different others. It led them to think of what must be their role and the given responsibility to make a better local and global society, which motivated them to engage more actively in the works of student organizations. Their critical reflexivity was mostly on their identities and backgrounds or their surroundings such as the university, university students, Finnish education, culture and society, and Europe. Finnish students explained that gaining and developing critical reflexivity through their engagements further motivated their active actions in the student organization and thus led them to gain more knowledge of GCE and inculcate its values and attitudes.

In contrast with the case of UH, NIE participants showed strong critical reflexivity on culture and communications between different cultures. The participants' view of culture was shifted from an ethno-centric one toward a culturally-grounded perspective, especially during their international service-learning trips. It is noteworthy that their responses suggested that their critical reflexivity on culture enabled them to cultivate other important values and attitudes of GCE, such as respect for difference and diversity, humility, shared leadership, equal relation and mutual respect for service-learning partners, and ethical and cultural sensitivity.

### *Agentic Capacity*

Regarding the participants' perspective and orientation of change (indicated as 'vision for change' in the analytical framework), UH students' responses indicated that they developed the glocal perspective that connects the implication from local and global actions. Either they were talking about 'local context' or actions in the 'global context,' their responses reflected that they were understanding the interconnectedness of local and global

dimension, thus knowing either their local or global engagement will have a glocal impact in the end. Their responses also indicated that there must be multi-level and multi-dimensional cooperation and actions (micro, meso and macro levels of society) to create social changes in reality. NIE students also experienced the changes in their perspective from local or national centric ones toward a more glocal outlook, but their responses indicated that their orientation of change still remained in largely school and national context without much glocal orientation.

Next, every participant from both cases shared the belief that teaching is a way to empower their students as change agents, thus making it possible to create bigger changes in local and global communities. In this respect, they thought that they, as pre-service teachers, become change agents is crucial to create positive changes in their future students, thus making continuous impacts and greater changes in society. But one of the distinct differences in their perspective of creating change as change agents was on how to understand their identity as a change agent. For example, NIE students showed a much stronger national identity and teacher identity than Finnish students in their responses. NIE participants understood that GCE and education to empower them as change agents are firstly and mainly to prepare them to become high quality teachers in Singapore. In this sense, they thought the achievement of change agency would become meaningful as long as it contributes to their teaching and Singaporean society positively. Thus NIE participants believed that ‘individual growth as a change agent’ and ‘the growth as a teacher as a change agent’ are indivisible. In contrast, Finnish students’ responses showed that they were not closely relating their empowerment outcomes to their national or teacher identity. Rather, their responses suggested that they were understanding the empowerment process and its outcomes more as the changes and growths happening in ‘individual self.’

This difference may reflect the cultural differences between two cases in understanding ‘self’ in relation to ‘other,’ possibly affected by more dominant cultural discourse underlying in each case - individualism regarded as dominant in the western culture and collectivism considered as much prevailing in the eastern culture. Their disparate perspectives may also reflect their different experiences in their national education. As we discussed the context of Singaporean education in chapter three, Singapore education has put its strong emphasis on building national citizenship based on the shared national values and the strong feeling of rootedness to the nation throughout its national curriculum and citizenship education at any level of its national education (Chiong & Copinathan, 2018). Finnish teacher education, relatively, one of the main focuses of its curriculum has been training students to equip high-autonomy in decision-making process and solve the problems with critical and evidence-based thinking (Westbury, Hansén, Kansanen, & Björkvist, 2005; Schleicher, 2012; Aspors & Eklund, 2017). Those discourses may have not necessarily affected differences in participants’ perspectives, but it is still important to critically interpret and understand their responses, being aware of each dominant cultural discourse that could be underlying in participant’s perspectives and understandings.

Those visions for change and their experiences in EL encouraged other following current actions in their daily lives and led them also to think of future actions for change with each different plan based on their specific contexts of life and vision for change. They wanted to connect current action for change with their future actions as individuals and educators. They addressed the actions for climate change, training critical reflexivity (for themselves and their future students), changes in educational policy, and improvement of experiential learning programs for their future students, reflecting their EL experiences during their teaching preparation.

### **7.3. Interplay of GCE, EL and Change Agency in the Empowerment Process:**

#### **Theoretical Implications**

The conceptual framework of GCE is holistic in that it consists of cognitive (knowledge), socio-emotional (values & attitudes), behavioral (action) dimensions and emphasizes the interconnection of those three dimensions in both theory and practice. Along with the understanding of this holistic attribute of GCE, the study regards critical reflexivity as an underlying dimension that penetrates those other dimensions of GCE (Morais & Odgen, 2010; Kronfli, 2011; Skirbekk et al., 2013; Wintersteiner et al., 2015, UNESCO, 2014, 2015, 2018).

However, several studies pointed out that this holistic attribute of GCE has been undervalued and gotten limited attention especially in GCE practice than theory (Bourn et al., 2017; Bamber, 2020). In teacher education practices, it has been rare that GCE curriculum is developed and implemented based on its holistic conceptual frameworks, and especially the cognitive dimension of GCE has been the primary focus in many teacher education programs, while other dimensions have not been considered enough (Bourn et al., 2017; Bamber, 2020).

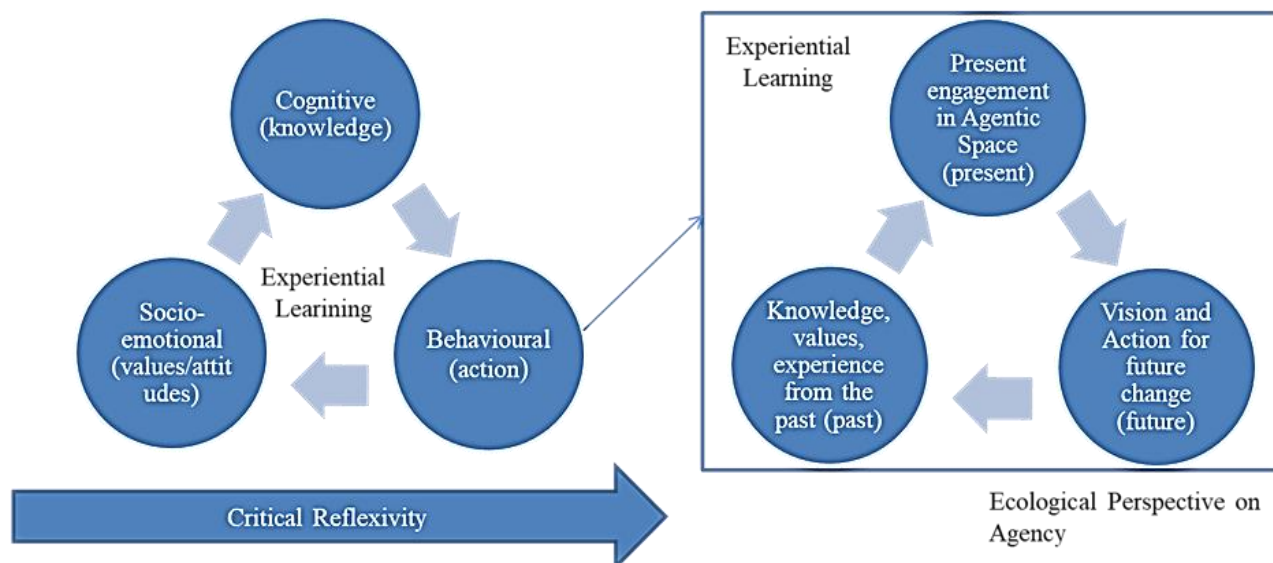
It was found that the participants' experiences in GCE practices in both cases support the results of the study mentioned above by suggesting that they have not holistically experienced or understood GCE in their TE program. NIE participants' responses indicated that NIE has been strategically supporting and operating experiential learning in the TE curriculum along with the strong academic training and value-driven approach. However, in terms of GCE, the participants overall felt its cognitive dimension has not been considered enough in that they did not often learn or discuss the topics of GCE in their academic courses. They also said that even the courses dealing with GCE themes discussed local and global

issues irrespectively most of the time, not addressing the interrelation between local and global contexts. In contrast, UH students responded that the behavioral dimension of GCE had gained very little attention while socio-emotional and cognitive dimensions of GCE had been much emphasized in their TE.

At the same time, their experiences in GCE suggested that the participants from both cases similarly experienced that experiential learning had helped them overcome this challenge and experience GCE more holistically by connecting what they have learnt with their actions in concrete situations. Experiential learning theory (Dewey, 1916, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2009) claims that meaningful learning happens through experiences enabling a holistic learning process that interconnects learners' knowledge, emotion and behaviors. Students in both cases said that the knowledge became more meaningful, relevant, and realistic to their teaching and daily lives when they practiced what they know through real-life experiences.

In terms of critical reflexivity gained through this holistic learning process, NIE students mainly talked about the critical reflexivity on culture, developed throughout their service-learning trips, which became a basis of developing other values/attitudes and gaining further knowledge of GCE. UH participants said that training critical reflexivity through academic courses and practicing it in the concrete settings enabled them to further develop and sensitize their critical reflexivity, which motivated them to participate in the student organizations more actively, leading to the achievement of more other empowerment outcomes - knowledge, values and attitudes, and agentic capacity.

Holistic conceptual frameworks  
of GCE



**Figure 3. Interrelation between GCE, EL and Ecological Perspective on Agency**

Participants' responses indicated in common that their engagements in EL, which created values of GCE by serving others and communities, can be considered as a part of the behavioral dimension of GCE, and those experiences played a key-role in interconnecting each three dimension. Along with this finding, participants' responses and the theory of experiential learning and ecological perspective on agency contributed to conceptualizing the empowerment process in which participants achieved change agency through experiential learning (See Figure 3).

The theory of ecological perspective on agency (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2013) maintains that agency of change is achieved through the dynamic interplay of past, present and future, appearing as a "temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past, oriented toward the future and 'acted out' in the present" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p.963). The participants explained that they encountered the concrete situations (agentic space) through EL, bringing their past experiences and perspectives to their current

engagements and experienced the transformation and changes (empowerment outcomes) from the interactions between their past experiences, current engagements, and the orientation of and action for future change (agentic capacity). (refer to the analytical framework demonstrated in chapter 4)

Dewey (1938) also accentuated the interplay of learners' past, present and future experiences, as well as the interactions between learners and their surrounding environments to make 'learning by doing' happen, and in this regard, his idea shares similar understandings of the empowerment process with those of ecological perspective on agency. Dewey (1938) specified that learning by doing happens through the following two principles. First, learners interconnect their past and present experiences with their future experiences. Second, learning happens through experiences and interactions between themselves and their surrounding environments. Dewey (1938) argued that learning is not a set of the outcome, but rather a process of continuous interaction between learner's past, present and future and also between learners' experience and their surrounding environment.

To conclude,

- Experiential learning, developed in the frameworks of GCE, which aims to create positive changes by serving others in a local or global community, can be used as a powerful pedagogical strategy to implement GCE holistically by connecting cognitive and behavioral dimensions first, then connecting those with socio-emotional dimension by generating GCE values & attitudes in learners.
- During the engagement in experiential learning, developed and implemented as the behavioral dimension of GCE, the interplay of learner's past experience and

perspective (past), current engagement (present), and vision and action for change (future) occurs in the process of achieving change agency.

- Holistic implementation of GCE interconnecting each dimension through experiential learning motivates learners for further actions and more active participation for change, and it fosters and activates the empowerment cycle in which the interplay between their past experience, current actions, and vision and action for change occurs.
- Pre-service teachers can be holistically empowered to become change agents as global citizens when GCE is holistically implemented in its TE through considerably developed experiential learning by connecting each dimension of GCE and providing pre-service teachers with the agentic space in which they can partake in actions for social changes as active global citizens in concrete settings.

#### **7.4. Lessons to Other Teacher Education Programs: Implications for Practice**

The participants talked about their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses in GCE practice at each institution and provided recommendations for other teacher education institutions based on their experiences. I provide the following suggestions by synthesizing their responses, which could give meaningful insights to other teacher education practices to empower their pre-service teachers to become change agents as global citizens.

First, there should be more emphasis on the achievement of change agency and GCE in teacher education programs. It will be important that TE addresses the importance of teachers' becoming active global citizens and achieving change agency, being aware of

teachers' role in creating positive social changes in a local and global society.

Secondly, the holistic and integrative attribute of GCE pedagogy must be well and enough considered when TE develops and implements GCE. Rather than GCE becomes an add-on as an extra component to the existing TE curriculum, it must be integrated into the whole TE curriculum, and its values and attitudes need to penetrate and underlie the culture and ethos of TE institution so that pre-service teachers can learn those values and attitudes not only from their academic courses but also from the extra-curricular activities and their daily lives in the TE faculty. It is also important that they learn their subjects, discussing the relevance of their local and national issues with those in different parts of the world. Pre-service teachers need to develop a glocal outlook that they can think of and understand the interconnectedness between local and global dimensions, being aware that their local actions will have a greater and broader impact influencing other parts of the world.

Most of all, it will be important that TE implements GCE as a holistic pedagogy through experiential learning as a part of its behavioral dimension. For this aim, there must be strategic support and effort at the institutional level to provide agentic space to pre-service teachers where they can engage in social changes as global citizens through local or international services. Thus experiential learning must be deliberately and considerately developed for this aim, making explicit relation with GCE, achievement of change agency, and actions creating meaningful changes in local and global communities. In order to provide quality experiential learning experiences to pre-service teachers, building vigorous, continuous, and a variety of partnerships at both local and international levels will be also important. In addition, considering the significant importance of providing pre-service teachers with agentic spaces to empower them as change agents, there must be an

institutional level of strategies to engage more students with experiential learning opportunities as most of them are not being integrated into their official curriculum, thus still largely voluntary in many teacher education programs.

Lastly, it will be necessary for pre-service teachers to develop critical reflexivity on power discourse on their backgrounds, surroundings and the socio-political, economic and cultural issues in a local and global society. Training and fostering critical reflexivity with which pre-service teachers critically investigate the mainstream discourses in every social aspect will help to prepare teachers to be better aware of the fundamental roots of social problems and power relations underlying those issues. Then it would further motivate pre-service teachers to take more active actions in order to tackle those fundamental problems with more social-justice mindedness by critically understanding and addressing those challenges.

## **Chapter 8. Conclusion**

### **8.1. Overview of the Study**

The study began by asking this broad question – how to empower pre-service teachers to become change agents of their local and global society? To investigate this question, I started finding relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks – which are ecological perspective on agency, global citizenship education (GCE) and experiential learning (EL). In order to investigate the question with the empirical cases from international teacher education practice, I chose two cases that both are leading teacher education institutions in the world, but situated in very disparate institutional and cultural contexts— which are the teacher education program at the University of Helsinki (Finland) and the National Institute of Education (Singapore). Based on the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study and with those two cases, I developed more specific research questions to be investigated.

1. Are pre-service teachers at the U of Helsinki and NIE empowered to become change agents as global citizens? If so, in what ways?
  - 1.1. How differently and similarly do pre-service teachers experience GCE at each institution?
  - 1.2. Do pre-service teachers experience experiential learning which creates the values of GCE through local or international service? If so, what do they experience differently and similarly?
  - 1.3. Have their engagements empowered them to become change agents as global citizens?

1.3.1. If so, how were they empowered with what changes?

1.3.2. How do global citizenship education, experiential learning, and agency of change interplay in the empowerment process? (What is their interrelation?)

2. What are the lessons to other teacher education institutions from the cases of NIE and the U of Helsinki?

In order to respond to those research questions, data from two cases were collected through document analysis and in-depth semi-structured interviews with three pre-service teachers currently studying at each institution, thus in total, six of them were interviewed through ZOOM. Then, the collected data were thematically analyzed with within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. Comparative analysis of two cases showed pre-service teachers need a holistic empowerment process to become change agents as global citizens, and it suggested this process will be possible when experiential learning, as a part of the behavioral dimension of GCE, plays a role in interconnecting each dimension of GCE, thus implementing it as holistic pedagogy. The similarities and differences in how pre-service teachers are empowered with what changes were discussed thoroughly throughout chapters 5 & 6 & 7.

The suggestions for better GCE to empower teachers as change agents, synthesized from students' responses from both cases, were mainly within the following four domains – 1) stronger emphasis on GCE, EL, and teacher's role as a prime agency of changing local and global society in their TE curriculum. 2) Holistic implementation of GCE connecting every dimension through considerably developed EL with vigorous partnership in local and global communities and strategic support at an institutional level to engage more students with EL

experiences. 3) Integrative approach to GCE, which interconnects local and global dimensions and creates institutional culture and ethos in which GCE values and attitudes penetrate to foster students' learning in GCE throughout their academic studies and their lives on campus. 4) Training critical reflexivity through both academic courses and experiential learning, which can keep motivating teachers for further actions for change by tackling the roots of the problems in a local and global society.

## **8.2. Contribution of the Study**

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) has been one of the popular topics in education research in today's globalized world. In this context, how to prepare teachers to become global citizens has been an important issue in teacher education research and practice (Maguire, 2010; Tan, 2015; Goodwin, 2010). In discussing quality teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has also been a growing body of research that argues teacher education must help teachers be aware of their role as a prime agency to change their society and understand it as the extended teaching professionalism (Pantić & Carr, 2017). Along with those themes, experiential learning has also been one of the popular topics in both research and practice in the education of today, with the raised awareness of the importance of holistic learning (Dewey, 1916, 1938; UNESCO, 2014, 2016).

Although there has been a proliferation of research studying each topic respectively and those topics have gained fairly much attention nowadays in both teacher education research and practice, there was almost no attempt to interconnect those concepts and theories as well as investigate their interrelation in preparing teachers to become active global citizens who create positive social changes. By investigating how they interplay in empowering teachers to become change agents as global citizens with the empirical evidence, the study

will enrich the body of knowledge in GCE, EL, and teacher agency, filling the knowledge gap in the existing body of research. In addition, considering there are none of the studies investigating their interrelation through the comparative case study between Finland and Singapore, in specific, the teacher education programs at NIE (Singapore) and the University of Helsinki (Finland), it will also contribute to the body of research on international and comparative education. These two cases are situated in very disparate historical, socio-political, cultural and educational contexts, but both achieved remarkable success in reforming the teacher education system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, thus becoming model teacher education to those of many other nations. In this regard, the result of the study can also give insightful lessons to other teacher education institutions situated in disparate institutional and socio-cultural contexts in order to reform their teacher education to empower their teachers to become change agents. Especially in terms of developing and implementing global citizenship education and experiential learning programmes, the result of the study would give practical guidelines that could be applied and developed adaptively and flexibly, grounded on their specific and unique TE contexts.

### **8.3. Limitation & Further Area of Study**

The limitation of this study is mainly in the small number of participants from two cases and the limited number of data collection methods that could affect the credibility and transferability of the study. Especially regarding GCE implementation at each institution, the participants' understanding of GCE curricula could be different from that of other students and the faculty members at each institution or the government. Although this qualitative study does not aim to make a generalization from the study result, the credibility of the study could be increased when more data is collected from more multiple resources.

For the further area of the study, more relevant theoretical and conceptual frameworks relevant to the topics of the study may need to be found, which can further enrich the theoretical body of the research topic. Next, it will be an interesting and important question to be investigated if every experiential learning program embedded in TE programs can contribute to some extent to empowering them as change agents or if there are specific kinds of experiential learning programs which are especially impactful and more powerful in empowering pre-service teachers as change agents, and if so, why. Lastly, further study is needed to discover the relationship between the participants' motivation for their engagements and their experiences in being empowered as change agents - if their different levels of motivation and goals of engagements make a difference in how extensively they experience changes and transformation in becoming change agents as global citizens.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Protocol**

### Basic Information

- 1) In what programs are you in?
- 2) Year
- 3) Nationality and where you were born and raised before entering the TE program.
- 4) Why did you decide to become a teacher? (your motivation for becoming a teacher)

### Global Citizenship Education

- 1) How do you define a global citizen? What knowledge, skills (competencies), values or attitudes are needed for the global citizen?
- 2) Have you experienced any global citizenship education in your program or department? (academic courses & experiential learning programs)

If so, what did you learn through it? (any new skills, abilities, understandings, information, knowledge of history, culture, people, environment, personally, morally, politically and so on.)

- Separate academic course? Or integrated in the overall curriculum of your teacher education program?
  - Was GCE you have experienced was more about 1)gaining skills and competencies working successfully for the global market? Or 2)pursuing universal values & ethical principles such as human rights, peace and justice or 3)critical investigation of underlying power relations rooted in the global problem and transforming those structural problems?
  - Emphasis more on GCE's 1)cognitive (knowledge) dimension or 2)socio-emotional (values, attitudes) or 3)behavioral dimensions (participation and action)? (are cognitive, socio-emotional, behavioral dimensions all equally emphasized?)
  - Participation Emphasis on 1) International? 2) Community-Based (local)? 3) Glocal? (merging the local and global)
- 3) Were there any academic courses devised specially for Global Citizenship Education you took before?
    - If so, (1) general information on that course (2) motivation for taking that course (3) personal outcome and implication for you in terms of developing global citizenship

### Experiential Learning, Global Citizenship & Change Agency

- 1) What kinds of active participation and engagements have you experienced to serve the community locally or globally? Could you give me a description and information about that?
- 2) What was your motivation for the engagements and participation?
- 3) What did you exactly do during your engagement & participation? What was your position or role in the activities of those programs?
- 4) What were the personal outcomes and achievements gained through your actions and participation? What was the most meaningful lesson you have earned from your experience?
- 5) Do you think those experiences helped you in terms of becoming a global citizen who contributes to making changes for a more just, peaceful and sustainable world?
  - If so, could you describe how those engagements locally or globally affected you to become an active and responsible global citizen?
  - What were the specific changes or transformations that happened in you during and after your participation? (e.g. personally, academically, politically, spiritually, habits, thoughts, lifestyle etc.)?
  - What was the most remarkable and impactful moment or occasion during those engagements that led to those changes in you (if there are any)? When did it happen? From what?
- 6) Do you think your engagement affected your development of morality (your ethical sensibility) and leadership skills as well?
  - If so, why do you think so, and how did it happen?
  - What kind of leadership skill was especially important during your engagement? How those changes and impacts are affecting your current life as a teacher candidate (pre-service teacher)? And how would they affect your life and teaching after you become a teacher (future implication)?

### Teacher as Change Agent & Suggestions

- 1) Do you think it is necessary for especially teachers to equip global citizenship to become change agents? If so, why do you think so?
- 2) Among what you have learnt and experienced related to global citizenship education during your teacher preparation, what do you think of the most

important and effective approach to empower a pre-service teacher to become a change agent as a global citizen? And why do you think so?

- 3) What do you think of the strengths and weaknesses of your institutions' approach toward global citizenship education? What should be improved or reformed in your institution to provide better global citizenship education?
- 4) From your experience in GCE in your TE institution, what could be the commonly valuable things and can give lessons to the global citizenship education at teacher education institutions in other parts of the world?

## Appendix B: Consent Form

### **Informed Consent Form for Student Teachers in Initial Teacher Education Program (The University of Helsinki)**

During the study, data pertaining to your participation in the study will be generated and recorded. In addition, we will collect from you your personal data. We refer to all such data as “Your Study Data,” which will be specifically regulated in the EU/EEA under the General Data Protection Regulation (the “GDPR”).

The purposes of collecting this data include: to carry out the study; to confirm the accuracy of the study; to monitor that the study complies with applicable laws as well as best practices developed by the research community; to comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including requirements that data from this study, without information that could directly identify you, be made available to other researchers not affiliated with the study sponsor or with the study team. It is possible, for example, that as part of efforts to make research data more widely available to researchers, regulatory authorities in some countries may require that Your Study Data, without information that could directly identify you, be made publicly available on the internet or in other ways.

The following entities and organizations may engage in Data Processing of Your Study Data:

- Principal Investigator – Haeun Kim
- Supervisor – Joseph Levitan
- The ethics committee or institutional review board that approved this study
- Domestic and foreign regulatory agencies and government officials who have a duty to monitor or oversee studies like this one.

The GDPR gives you certain rights with regard to Your Study Data. You have the right to request access to, or rectification or erasure of, Your Study Data. You also have the right to object to or restrict our Data Processing of Your Study Data. Finally, you have a right to request that we move, copy or transfer Your Study Data to another organization. In order to make any such requests, please contact [haeun.kim2@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:haeun.kim2@mail.mcgill.ca)

You may withdraw your consent at any time. This you will need to finalize on both Consent Forms based on to how long you intend to keep identified and de-identified data, whether you will anonymize or code and how long you intend to keep code keys. If you destroy the code before the seven year period, which is McGill policy for data retention following publication, you need to inform all participants that they have a “limit to withdrawal.”

Please select the following section to see if you agree to give consent to participate in this study.

*Please select the following section to see if you agree the audio recording during the interview.*

Y\_\_\_\_\_ / N\_\_\_\_\_ I agree the audio recording or video recording during the interview.

*Please select the following section to see if you agree that the researchers may use data from this study in future related studies.*

Y\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_ I agree for my data from this study to be used in future related studies.

*Please select the following section to see if you understand that your identity will always be kept anonymous.*

Y\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_, I understand that my identity will always be kept anonymous.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights and welfare as a participant of this study, please feel free to contact the McGill Ethics Officer, Ms. Lynda McNeil, at [lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca](mailto:lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca).**

**Informed Consent Form for Student Teachers in Initial Teacher Education  
Program  
(The National Institute of Education, Singapore)**

Y\_\_N\_\_ I agree for my data from this study to be used in future related studies.

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.

Participant's Name: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights and welfare as a participant of this study, please feel free to contact the McGill Ethics Officer, Ms. Lynda McNeil, at [lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca](mailto:lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca).**