

# Global Competence Amongst Youth is Critical to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals



Global Competence Amongst Youth is Critical to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals  
by Dr. Bill Hunter

To succeed in today's global workforce, youth must have a wide variety of competencies, some of which are dependent on their career path. In addition to functional job skills, which vary from position to position, there are, however, common competencies that all young people need to develop regardless of their chosen field. These competencies include computing and technology skills, time management, critical thinking and inferencing skills, language capability, and also presentation and broad communication skills. **Global competence**, however, is the competency that will have the greatest impact on young people's success in the global workforce, and ultimately support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A consensus definition and framework for "global competence" was thoroughly researched on a global scale, taking into account the perspectives of a wide variety of cultures around the world as well as the needs and expectations of all sectors—education, civil society, government, and business. It has been defined and reported as follows:

*"Having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, and leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively in diverse environments." (Hunter, 2004)*



In addition to the consensus definition for global competence, original research was conducted to identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that encompass the term. The Global Competence Model™ was created to summarize each of the factors resulting from the research. The model has been organized into concentric rings, starting in the core with Self-Awareness, followed by the next layer of attitudes (Risk Taking, Open-Mindedness, and Attentiveness to Diversity, which includes both perceiving and respecting difference). These interior green areas of the model constitute the **Internal Readiness** dimensions. The next layer consists of global knowledge, as displayed by the Global Awareness dimension, which is the overt aspects of culture across many of the nations that play a critical role in today's global society, as well as Historical Perspective, which represents the covert aspects of cultural development. The outermost ring displays the people skills necessary for success, including a person's ability to adapt to varying cultural situations, as represented by Intercultural Capability, as well as a person's ability to interact effectively in a team of diverse people by bridging cultural differences, which is referred to as Collaboration Across Cultures. These outer blue rings are categorized as **External Readiness**.

For a person to be considered globally competent, it is necessary to have skills in all areas of the model and strength across both Internal Readiness and the External Readiness categories. Global competence, therefore, is an umbrella term that includes all eight (8) unique aptitudes mentioned above. A person who is globally competent would have sound capability in all areas. Having only strong knowledge is not enough and cannot compensate for an individual with inferior people skills or poor attitudes. Likewise, a person with good people skills in their home country needs to have knowledge of other cultures in order to determine which approach to take or what adjustments to make when establishing relationships in other cultures; their domestic approaches will not be effective when the cultural context changes. For this reason, External Readiness is a combination of both global knowledge and interpersonal skills.

Functional skills, combined with global competence, will provide youth with the means to reach across all sectors to develop a coalition of the committed – those with firm determination to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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