

Adopting Teaching for a Global Citizenship Education Framework: A Case Study of Zimbabwean High School History Teachers

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ABSTRACT The integration of global citizenship education into history teaching is critical for equipping learners with the key skills, knowledge and competencies required to make the world a better place. This qualitative single-case study explored how high school history teachers in Zimbabwe incorporate GCED into their lessons. Based on transformative learning theory, the research was conducted in five high schools in Zimbabwe with ten teachers sampled using convenience sampling. Data collection included document analysis, lesson observations and semi-structured interviews, which were analysed thematically. The results revealed that there is a need for improved teaching resources and a thorough curriculum review to embed the GCED framework in the Zimbabwean history syllabus. Therefore, the study recommends that the Zimbabwean government allocate more resources to organising workshops and training sessions. It also offers valuable insights into effective strategies for implementing the GCED framework and enhancing teaching methods to integrate GCED into the curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

The need for learners to be inculcated with values, skills, knowledge and competencies aligned with the global citizenship education (GCED) framework has grown significantly in the recent past. GCED ought to be implemented given the world's increasing interconnectedness and interdependence, marked by disruption, volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and diversity (Bercasio 2023). Consequently, GCED has emerged as an essential component of quality education in the contemporary world, as humanity confronts increasingly complex and pressing challenges (Yemini et al. 2019). In alignment with this perspective, a study by Habumugisha et al. (2025) revealed that GCED ought to be thoroughly incorporated into school curricula, with proponents endorsing its integration and teachers trained to facilitate the development of global competencies in students, thereby empowering them to express their views and engage in discussions on ethical, moral, social, and civic matters. Çolak et al. (2019) highlight that in various European and Asian countries, such as England, Scotland, Wales, the USA, Canada and Australia, GCED is regarded as a crucial element of so-

cial studies and civic education. Consequently, Tsekwen et al. (2025) argue that history education holds significant value at the secondary level worldwide. Thus, the subject plays an important role in advancing GCED objectives by fostering essential knowledge, skills, and values among learners. Additionally, teachers should acknowledge their role in this process to determine how effectively they can weave GCED themes into their teaching curricula. For instance, nations like Tanzania and others are increasingly focused on inculcating learners with skills that are in sync with the aims of the GCED framework. Despite being recognised as a promising framework, only a few countries have successfully implemented educational programs centred on GCED (Saleem et al. 2022; Buchanan et al. 2018). This has been caused by several reasons, as stressed by Tarozzi and Inguaggiato (2018), that the adoption of any curriculum framework in education systems is a complex task requiring coordination among multiple stakeholders across different time frames and government levels. Moreover, Goren and Yemini (2017) observe that even with the growing significance of the GCED framework, there remains a lack of critical discussion within

empirical research and policy development. This gap poses a risk of insufficiently providing the necessary foundation for incorporating the components of the GCED framework (Rapoort 2010; Lim 2008; Davies 2006). Nevertheless, much of the available literature focuses predominantly on classroom practices and teachers' experiences, resulting in an inadequate analysis of teacher training methods relevant to this context.

Supporting this, Andrews and Aydin (2020) suggest that integrating GCED into the social studies curriculum can be a challenging task. This is because GCED is a dynamic and contested field, full of tensions and paradoxes (Yemini et al. 2019; Rapoport 2010). Despite its contested nature, as stressed by Chinengundu and Hondonga (2022), integrating GCED in national curricula is essential in creating platforms to address contemporary challenges, particularly through the promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence among students. Therefore, given this scholarly gap, the present research aims to explore ways to adopt this framework and to develop a contextually relevant model for Zimbabwe and comparable countries worldwide. History teachers are vital in implementing national and global education initiatives, and this study aims not only to raise their awareness about the framework but also to involve their insights in proposing how it should be integrated. Without including these key stakeholders, the adoption of the GCED framework may remain inconsistent. Thus, this study seeks to examine how the GCED framework can be incorporated into high school history education in Zimbabwe.

Objectives of the Study

The following research question guided the study: What are the ways that can be used to improve the adoption of the GCED framework in the teaching of History?

Implementing the GCED framework in Zimbabwe's curricula would provide learners with the information, skills, competencies, and values essential for becoming responsible global citizens and contributing positively to sustainable development at community, national, and global levels. This study is significant for its contribution to the acceptance and implementation of the GCED paradigm in high school histo-

ry education in Zimbabwe. This study intends to bridge the gap between theory and practice by developing clear, practical methodologies and presenting a framework for global educational institutions to incorporate the GCED framework within their curricula.

Literature Review

Global Citizenship Education Framework

UNESCO (2015:28) defines GCED as a framework that "aims to be transformative, building the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that learners need to be able to contribute to a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world." Therefore, the GCED framework, due to its emphasis and potential to produce responsible global citizens, has become a fundamental part of quality education that aims to provide solutions to the complex challenges faced around the globe (Yemini et al. 2019). As a result of this, GCED covers three domains of learning, which are cognitive, socio-emotional (affective), and behavioural (psychomotor).

Domains, Key Aims, and Competencies of the GCED Framework

According to UNESCO (2015), Cognitive means to investigate knowledge, comprehension, and analytical reasoning regarding global, regional, and national matters, as well as the relationships and mutual reliance among various nations and communities. In addition, Socio-Emotional aims to foster a feeling of connection to shared humanity. It is essential to embrace values such as empathy, solidarity, and respect for diversity and differences while also acknowledging collective responsibilities. Behavioural aims to act effectively and responsibly on local, national, and global issues for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Adopting the GCED Framework

The findings indicate that for the GCED framework to be successfully implemented, it is essential to come up with policy and structural reforms within curricula. These reforms should enable teachers to adopt the framework while

also feeling supported by the relevant educational authorities. In support of this perspective, Chitamba and Chitamba (2025) emphasised that curriculum changes necessitate modifications in both the content and teaching methodologies utilised by teachers. Therefore, adopting the GCED framework requires changes to the curriculum that add content and pedagogical strategies aimed at achieving desired learning outcomes. Furthermore, these insights align with those presented by Duarte (2023), who contends that either adopting GCED concepts into existing subjects or establishing them as a separate subject necessitates curriculum adjustments to accommodate new ideas or elements related to GCED. Similarly, Amin et al. (2023) proposed that creating a curriculum in accordance with the new framework is the most effective means of facilitating its adoption.

Additionally, research conducted by Tarozzi and Inguaggiato (2018) highlighted that reforming national curricula involves strategic actions such as enhancing teacher training, updating textbooks to include global citizenship education themes, and promoting global networks of schools alongside teacher exchanges. Matsika (2020) further suggested that curriculum revisions should employ a hybrid approach, merging global competencies with local contexts. This integration is crucial for bridging the information gap between citizens and policy documents, as noted by Marovah (2016). Habumugisha et al. (2025) assert the necessity of embedding GCED within school curricula, advocating for its inclusion among supporters. Consequently, these perspectives reinforce findings from this study indicating that incorporating the GCED framework into history education mandates significant curricular changes to integrate GCED principles effectively.

Theoretical Framework: Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)

This paper is grounded in the Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) proposed by Jack Mezirow. According to Cranton (2023), TLT is founded on constructed assumptions. In addition, Mezirow (2000) characterises it as addressing problematic frames of reference to enhance inclusivity, discernment, openness, reflexivity,

and emotional adaptability. Consequently, TLT emphasises transformative learning that allows teachers to explore, modify, validate, and question various phenomena. Several studies suggest that TLT focuses on facilitating change within a specific frame of reference, particularly in relation to the GCED framework. Thus, transformative learning can be understood as a process aimed at altering one's frame of reference (Mezirow 2000; Dirkx et al. 2006; Fleming 2022; Cranton 2023). This theory aligns with the GCED framework in promoting transformative learning while aiding learners in recognising their underlying assumptions. The focus on critical reflection regarding learners' beliefs and assumptions resonates with the three dimensions or domains fundamental to the GCED framework. Furthermore, TLT highlights the importance of meaningful learning experiences and underscores the teacher's role in fostering critical skills by positioning them as facilitators rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. This perspective supports the objectives of GCED in cultivating an environment conducive to critical thinking and dialogue.

METHODOLOGY

This single-case study qualitative research was framed by a constructivist research paradigm and generated data from document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and lesson observations. Ten high school history teachers were conveniently selected from 5 schools, which were purposively selected in line with the suggestions by Mehrad and Zangeneh (2019). Schools were chosen taking cognisance of their sizes, locations, and socioeconomic variations to come up with compelling findings and representative of any size, location, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, in accordance with established data protocols and procedures, the researchers obtained approval from the General/Human Research Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State under protocol number UFS-HSD2024/2528. Additionally, consent was obtained from the Zimbabwe Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Zimbabwe Research Council, as well as from the heads of all five schools involved in this research project. The researchers also secured permission from all ten participat-

ing history teachers to record their interview sessions. The gathered data underwent thematic analysis following an approach where the researchers meticulously listened to the recorded interviews multiple times to identify and develop themes based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process.

RESULTS

This paper examined the ways that could help high school history teachers to adopt the GCED framework and was guided by the research question of this paper.

Ways to Adopt the GCED Framework

Providing Curricular Clarity on GCED

The findings of this study revealed that the adoption of the GCED framework in history teaching requires the support of the government through providing clarity on how teachers should adopt and implement the framework.

Supporting this view, Teacher 5 said, *"I think first of all we should create a topic on Global Citizenship Education, as a topic, and perhaps insert it in the list of syllabus."* This position was further cemented by Teacher 8 when they stated, *"...firstly...global citizenship education has to be defined... That's the premise, defining the global education system... Once it is defined, teachers will then get to understand what it is about."* In support of the argument that for this framework to be fully adopted and embraced by history teachers, it needs to be defined first so that teachers are well aware of the framework, what it means, and how it should be implemented, Teacher 10 said, *"We might perhaps need to redefine them so that it's clear that we are teaching about global citizenship education."* This position was buttressed by Teacher 2, albeit in a different manner, as the teacher said, *"So, we need to have a broad topic which says Global Citizenship Education. Yes. Then we have components there..."* Supporting findings from document analyses indicate that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) ensures curricular clarity and standardisation across Zimbabwean schools. Notably, all schools participate in uniform examinations assessed by the

same criteria. However, documents revealed that, despite that, the documents analysed did not explicitly mention GCED, despite related topics being present.

Providing Resources

From the analysis of documents, it was found that the Zimbabwean government established a school financing policy aimed at facilitating the implementation and adoption of educational frameworks. This initiative includes a government-driven funding strategy, such as an education levy, designed to guarantee state-supported education. However, insights from semi-structured interviews indicated that the adoption of the GCED framework has been significantly hindered by resource limitations. This was confirmed by Teacher 4 when they said, *"...some resources like textbooks must be given to the teachers. For example, textbooks that suit the curriculum."* This was further supported by Teacher 1 when they said, *"I think the need for training is necessary for us to be aware of the current situation."* Teacher 5 also supported this position when he said, *"...we can come up with textbooks targeting that area, fully compiled textbooks."*

Provide Curriculum Reforms

The findings emerged from the document analysis, such as the advanced level history syllabus of 2024 to 2030 and the heritage-based curriculum, revealing that GCED topics like human rights and responsibilities, democracy in Zimbabwe, and protection and intellectual property. However, none of these curricular texts mentions GCED. Supporting these findings, the results from the semi-structured interviews revealed that for the GCED framework to be adopted in the teaching and learning of history, there is a need for policy and structural reforms of the syllabus to be explicit about GCED. Thus, the strategy to adopt the GCED in history was captured by Teacher 3 when he said, *"The government must include GCED in the syllabus..."* In addition, this position was further emphasised by Teacher 2, who went further, supporting this view by saying, *"So if the government wants their citizens or their learners to learn about*

the Global Citizenship Education, they can just include more aspects of that, you know, Global Citizenship Education in their syllabus."

Provide and Guarantee Academic Freedom

The findings that emerged from this study revealed that one of the ways that promotes the adoption of GCED in the teaching of history in Zimbabwe is to open up space and give full autonomy to teachers to teach GCED concepts like human rights, democracy in Zimbabwe, freely, without interference from politics and politicians. This was confirmed by Teacher 2 when he said, *"You teach learners about their rights, and then they go and explain what happened in school to their parents. Tomorrow they will come back... Yes, you are teaching opposition politics."*

This was also shared by Teacher 10 when they proposed that, *"I think the classroom needs to be freed from the deep politics. The classroom needs to be free from political scrutiny. The classroom needs to be very free for teachers to express themselves."* This position was also shared by Teacher 2 when they said, *"The ministry should also provide some measures that, after teachers have taught...will be protected after that."* This means that another way that promotes the adoption of GCED in the teaching of history in Zimbabwe is by ensuring that discussions in classrooms are not scrutinised and teachers are given academic freedom, and also feel protected. These same sentiments were also expressed by Teacher 7 when they said, *"I think they should provide some statutory instruments so that they will protect the teachers. And after something had happened, they would be able to reproduce those statutory instruments so that they cover up for the teachers."* This was also confirmed by Teacher 3 when they said, *"The political environment censors everything. So, there is a difference between something being in the syllabus and how authorities may react to what one will have taught."* The findings from the school syllabi revealed that schools omit topics such as constitutionalism, democracy in Zimbabwe, elections in Africa, and human rights and responsibilities, topics critical for the GCED framework.

DISCUSSION

Ways to Adopt the GCED Framework

Providing Curricular Clarity on GCED

The findings emerged from the study revealed that one way to improve the adoption of GCED in the teaching of history is not only to include the components as is the case, but also to have a well-dedicated topic named GCED and all its components under it. To enhance GCED adoption, it is recommended to include it as a distinct topic in syllabi, clearly defining its components. Having a clearly dedicated topic provides structure, which in turn helps teachers understand what they are expected to do. In supporting this submission, Chitamba and Chitamba (2025) stressed that without a structured curriculum, teachers may lack assurance that they are delivering pertinent content or offering students the necessary opportunities for success in their subsequent educational pursuits. A position which was supported by Rapoport (2010) when he posited that without a national standardised curriculum, teachers end up deviating from the expected standards. Thus, as Andrews and Aydin (2020) posit, adopting GCED in the social studies curriculum requires a clear framework, as doing it without a clear framework is an arduous task. This view is further clarified by Chitamba and Chitamba (2025), who argued that the curriculum defines the content to be learned by learners, as well as giving teachers methods for evaluating and assessing student learning outcomes. As such, the findings of this research concur with the previous research mentioned above in that the adoption of the GCED framework requires the responsible ministries to ensure there is clarity on the framework. As Ngwenya (2020) noted that a lack of understanding of the new curriculum content among teachers is a significant barrier to implementation.

Providing Resources

The findings that emerged from this study indicate that the implementation of GCED in history education necessitates government support through a responsible ministry, as insufficient resources significantly hinder its adoption.

Chisala (2025) emphasises that, despite the growing prominence of GCED in Africa, a significant challenge remains the insufficient training and awareness among teachers, especially in Zambia. Warikandwa et al. (2023) argue that countries, including Angola, DRC, Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe, have notably incorporated GCED-related topics, such as human rights and Ubuntu. Amin et al. (2023) highlighted that the successful application of the GCED framework requires significant investment in training for both school teachers and university professors, which is essential for the effective assessment of their teaching methods and evaluations. The findings of this study align with those of Tarozzi and Inguaggiato (2018: 23, 31), who emphasised the necessity of a teaching exchange program among educators from various countries to effectively promote cultural understanding. This has been significantly impacted by the lack of resources (Evershine 2025; Warikandwa et al. 2023). Investing in training serves as a strategy that facilitates the adoption of the GCED framework. The findings indicated that although the government allocated resources to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, additional resources were necessary, as the funds provided did not support the implementation of the GCED framework. Evershine (2025) asserts that resources are essential for equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge required for effective curriculum implementation. The findings indicate that the government ought to allocate resources to facilitate the implementation of the GCED framework in history education.

Provide Curriculum Reforms

The findings indicate that for the GCED framework to be successfully implemented, it is essential to enact policy and structural reforms within curricula. These reforms should enable teachers to adopt the framework while also feeling supported by the relevant educational authorities. In support of this perspective, Chitamba and Chitamba (2025) emphasised that curriculum changes necessitate modifications in both the content and teaching methodologies utilised by educators. Therefore, embracing the GCED framework requires alterations to the curriculum that integrate content and pedagogical strategies aimed at achieving desired learning outcomes.

Furthermore, these insights align with those presented by Duarte (2023), who contends that either integrating GCED concepts into existing subjects or establishing them as a separate subject necessitates curriculum adjustments to accommodate new ideas or elements related to GCED. Similarly, Amin et al. (2023) proposed that creating a curriculum in accordance with the new framework is the most effective means of facilitating its adoption.

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Provide and Guarantee Academic Freedom

The results of this research indicate that one effective strategy for promoting the integration of the GCED framework within history instruction is to ensure teachers have academic freedom. This perspective aligns with findings by Hatley (2019) and Swanson and Pashby (2016), who noted that the absence of genuine GCED often leads to its appropriation and endorsement by national governments and institutions to advance their own agendas and political motivations. Furthermore, Ngoshi (2021) highlighted that the increased focus on scholarly discourse surrounding democracy and oppression reflects a regime's fear of its citizens and a lack of commitment to democratic values. Consequently, as Goren and Yemini (2017) pointed out, educators frequently experience limitations im-

posed by curricular objectives that advocate for GCED's inclusion in educational settings, alongside cultural norms rooted in nationalism and a scarcity of practical resources that hinder their ability to teach it effectively.

Proposed Framework of the GCED in the Zimbabwean Context

This study aimed to proffer ways to adopt a GCED framework in the teaching and learning of high school history in Zimbabwe. This section, therefore, proposes a framework that can be adopted in Zimbabwe whose central principle or core values are embedded in the ubuntu/unhu/Vumunhu philosophy. This proposed GCED framework is rooted in the Zimbabwean values while embedding universal global citizenship

velop learners who are critically aware, deeply empathetic, ethically grounded, and empowered for active participation. It also aims to develop learners who are rooted in their Zimbabwean identity while fitting into global interconnectedness and responsibilities, which are essential for building a more just, peaceful, and sustainable Zimbabwe and the wider world.

Figure 1 illustrates the suggested GCED framework for adoption in the teaching and learning of high school history in the Zimbabwean education system.

Transformative Learning Theory and Constructivist Philosophy

This proposed framework is underpinned by TLT, which is the theoretical framework that was

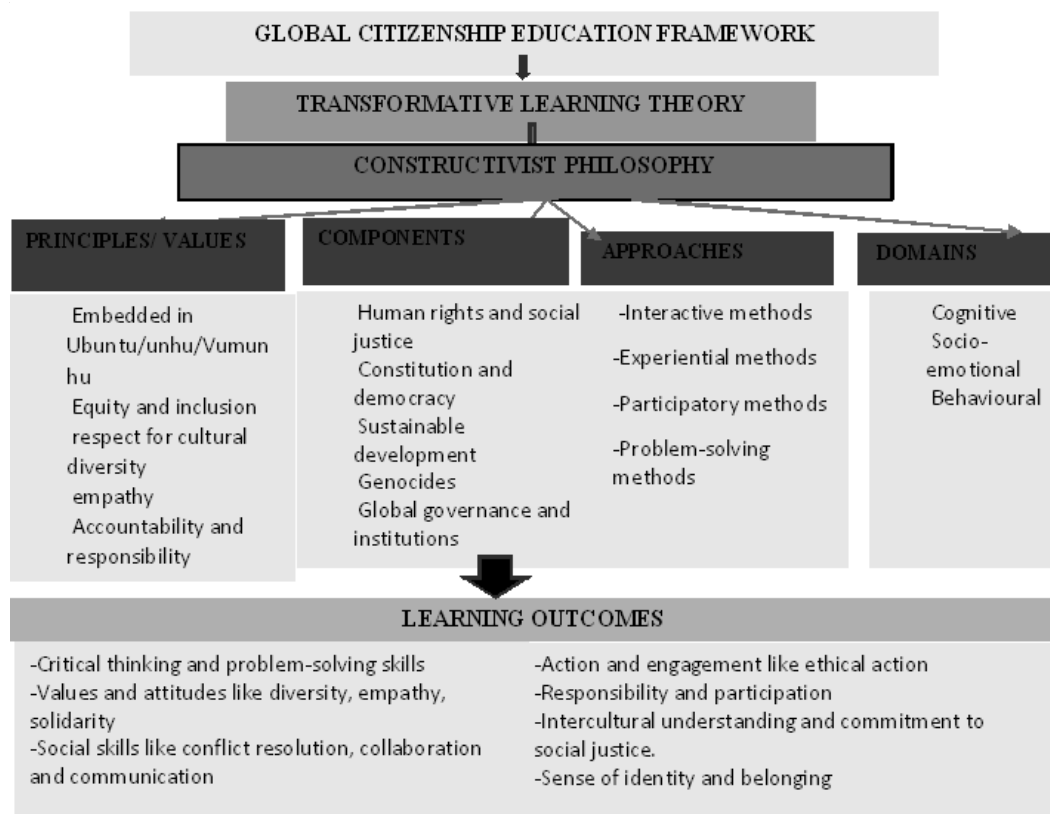


Fig.1. The proposed GCED framework

sises learning that is transformative, as it focuses primarily on shifting a learner's perspective, beliefs, assumptions, and sense of agency. In addition, TLT is also a theory that emphasises meaningful learning through giving learners learning experiences that help them undergo critical reflection. Furthermore, this proposed framework is also underpinned by constructive philosophy, a philosophy that also underpins this study. Constructivist philosophy is based on the premise that knowledge is not passively received but actively built. Thus, this proposed framework aims to help a learner in gaining knowledge through taking an active role in constructing their understanding of the worldview through interactions and experiences. This philosophy plays a central role as it aims at promoting learner-centred approaches, which is the emphasis on the Zimbabwean education system, particularly the heritage-based curriculum of 2024 to 2030.

Core Values/Principles

This proposed framework is also embedded in the philosophy of ubuntu/unhu/Vumunhu as one of its principles or values. This framework aims to develop a responsible global citizen who is rooted in Zimbabwean values and ethos, grounded in the African philosophical concept of Ubuntu/Unhu/Vumunhu, which holds that a person is a person through other persons. Centring this framework on the principle of Ubuntu plays a critical role in developing a framework that aligns with the Zimbabwean cultural values, ethos, and identity, which has always been the bedrock of Zimbabwe's education system. The framework also aims at addressing local context and needs while it remains globally relevant.

Pedagogical Approaches

The proposed framework suggests that the teaching pedagogical approaches used should be learner-centred, where learners are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. These pedagogical approaches are in sync with the suggested methodologies by teachers Amna et al. 2022. The framework suggests that teachers use different types of interactive methods that include dialogue, debates, role-plays, and

discussions, encouraging critical exchange and perspective-taking. This type of teaching strategy is critical in the teaching and learning of history as it puts learners at the centre stage of learning and encourages them to be actively involved, which in turn helps them develop important skills that are in tandem with the expected learning outcomes of this framework.

In addition, the proposed framework suggests that history teachers also use experiential teaching methods such as community-based projects, simulations, service-learning, learning by doing and reflecting on real-world contexts. This type of learning exposes history learners to real-world problems and helps them take part in suggesting solutions to the problem, which is one of the central aims of this framework. Furthermore, the proposed framework also suggests that history teachers employ participatory methods in their teaching and learning process. This teaching methodology is a learner-centred activity where students co-create knowledge, engage in decision-making, and lead initiatives, fostering ownership and agency. Lastly, this proposed framework suggests that history teachers adopt a problem-solving teaching approach. This approach can be used to tackle authentic local and global challenges collaboratively, applying critical thinking and social skills to develop solutions, which are important skills aimed to be achieved in this framework.

Learning Domains

The proposed framework aims to develop a wholesome individual, and therefore, it proposes education that is holistic and transformative through appealing to cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural domains. The cognitive domain aims to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and the acquisition of knowledge, and this will be achieved through teaching topics like democracy, constitutions, and human rights. In addition, the socio-emotional domain aims at cultivating empathy, solidarity, respect for cultural diversity, a sense of identity and belonging (local, national, global), commitment to social justice, and conflict resolution capacities. This domain is deeply infused with Ubuntu values, fostering emotional intelligence and interconnectedness. Lastly, the behavioural domain

aims at developing social skills that are essential in making the world a better place through conflict resolution skills, collaboration, and good communication skills. This translates knowledge and attitudes into tangible contributions aligned with collective well-being.

CONCLUSION

The paper examined the strategies that could be used to ensure the GCED framework is adopted in schools. The study collected data through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and lesson observations where ten high school history teachers, drawn from five high schools in High Glen District, Harare, Zimbabwe, were interviewed, several documents were analysed, and several lessons were observed. The findings revealed several ways that should be done to ensure the GCED framework is adopted in schools. For instance, the study found that there is a need for the government and all key stakeholders to provide resources, provide and guarantee academic freedom, provide clarity and standardisation of the framework, and undergo curriculum reform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussions above, this study recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe, through responsible ministries and stakeholders, add more resources, particularly towards the adoption of the GCED, which would be used to provide up-to-date textbooks and funding, to conduct workshops and teacher exchange programs aimed at providing clarity on the framework. This study also recommends that the Government of Zimbabwe, UNESCO, and all key stakeholder organisations across the globe continue to provide document guides that aim to help teachers with clarity and standardisation of GCED across the globe. Moreover, this study recommends that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe, together with other responsible ministries, implement a binding instrument that grants schools full autonomy and protects teachers in their discussions of syllabus content. Furthermore, this study recommends that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe

and global policy makers of the GCED framework provide a clear change management policy that includes a clear communication strategy, involving key stakeholders like parents and community leaders and politicians to reduce the effects of resistance, provide adequate training to teachers, come up with a clear plan on monitoring and evaluation.

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