Multicultural university curricula on development are a prime opportunity to foster understanding of globalisation. Education and research regarding unequal development dwells on multidisciplinary understanding of the complex social fabric of regions, states and transnational communities.

Quality assurance poses more requirements than usual when exercised in multiparadigmatic environments where manifold world views, interests and academic disciplines claim their meaning to be decisive. "Inclusion through multiperspectivity" facilitates consensus.

For these targets, a pedagogy of equity may increasingly make use of technology-enhanced, web-supported and managed learning environments, such a distributed collaborative learning in a peer community of students and trainers (who are considered to be learners as well).

Therefore, the present (and third) special issue of METJ on developmental “Global Studies” (GS) provides readers with contributions from several continents (Figure 1) and at the same time from diverse cultures of understanding:

1. The first article by Margarita Schiemer and Michelle Proyer takes Ethiopian and Thai perspectives on inclusive education targeting common welfare. Practical usages of information and communication technologies for pupils with disabilities trigger the intercultural comparison of success criteria.
2. The second article by a large collection of authors provides easily implementable quality improvements for any multicultural or developmental curriculum worldwide from a student perspective, based on the cross-comparison of 20 universities’ educational assets. Web-supported, collaborative, transdisciplinary courses are especially advocated by students.

Notes: Map type: Peters projection, turned upside down to highlight the global South; the yellow “GS” logo geo-references the universities with GS curricula analysed for the second article

Figure 1 Localisation of the contributions towards this special issue
3. Again from a student perspective, the third article inquires about causes and drivers of global poverty while using the viewpoints of four antagonistic societal roles. After having gone through consecutive phases of consensus finding, these four parties extended their perception and “understood former enemies”.

4. As a conceptual manifesto, the fourth article proposes to reframe global social sustainability, which in fact requires new societal order. Using the historical symbol of the wrecked Titanic, and in order to avoid future shipwreck of humanity, the author Herbert Rauch proposes an inclusive social fabric based on deep responsibility for the planetary human community.

5. Specific e-learning strategies and media usage in several developmental and multicultural curricula, empirically analysed by Lena Bader and Marlene Köttsdorfer in the fifth article, explain what hundreds of students really need from e-learning approaches: more collaboration and cooperation. For them, technology is a means to strengthen academic quality and interdisciplinarity in the non-virtual world.

6. Julian Matzenberger uses his sixth article to transpose the concept of resilience from ecology, via energy economics and climate change, to education. In all these domains of life, resilience and the more detailed notions of adaptability and vulnerability are filled with meaning using a systems analysis approach.

7. Six authors from different institutions propose educational technologies for achieving social inclusion by means of collaboration in energy production from wind. In their seventh article, technologies play a double role: to facilitate societal cooperation via learning platforms and GIS tools, and to act as a transmitter in a communication process. Small-scale wind turbines are planned to increase conviviality in rural communities.

8. The eighth article describes how several even conflicting cultures of understanding can contribute to an integral vision of globalisation, which is also suggested as the “sole” solution after multicultural international cooperation projects. Contemplating the history of economics and the history of geography facilitates the integration of conflicting academic paradigms that do have an effect on conflicts in contemporary politics.

The thread of all articles is discursive, peer-oriented pedagogy mediated by educational technologies. Be these concrete cases on pupils’ disabilities, on rural electrification, on cutting edge university curricula on “GS”, the target is always to foster humanity through dialogue in responsibility.

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Guest Editor

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