

# "Hong Kong Today" Module

## Global Citizens

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The concept of global citizens was first put forward by Stoicism philosophers in ancient Greece. The Stoics suggested that every individual belongs to two social communities, *the first being the place an individual grows up, the second being the human community in the most general terms*. In the context of Greece at that time, it meant that every Greek person was a citizen of his or her city-state, as well as a global citizen.

With the global development in the 1990s, countries have developed closer relationships among one another. Events happening anywhere in the world, *whether in politics, the economy or the environment, would eventually come to affect everyone around the world*. As members of such a global community, we should be concerned about the future of the world as much as we are about the development of our own country. Modern technology allows us to be responsible global citizens by connecting with people around the world that share the same beliefs, and hence promoting worldwide actions with global concerns.



Personal identification as a global citizen (i.e. saying that "I am a global citizen") does not make a true global citizen. An individual needs to *acquire certain qualities, emotions and values, as well as knowledge and skills, to contribute as a global citizen*. Oxfam suggests that the following qualities are necessary to become a global citizen:

Emotions and Values	Respect different cultures and values, experience the meaning of poverty and injustice, reflect on the relationship between individuals and the world, and contemplate the responsibilities an individual has to the world.
Knowledge and Ability	Understand global interdependence and the relationship between global and local development. Comprehend the causes of poverty and injustice and learn about the importance of sustainable development. Be able to discuss effectively, think critically, appreciate differences, mediate disagreements and disputes and choose suitable action plans.
Actions	Walk the talk and be responsible for the impact of personal actions on the world. Be willing to take actions at community and world levels, and contribute to a more equal and sustainable world.

The actions of global citizens can be divided into two categories:

“Think globally, act locally”:

This means **creating a better world through simple local actions**, such as turning off unused appliances, reducing packaging, recycling and reusing materials, reducing pollution, as well as purchasing more Fair Trade products. **These actions can become more political, to urge and drive the Government and local corporations to respond proactively towards events of global concerns**, such as climate change and sustainable development, as well as valuing and protecting human rights.



“Think globally, act globally”:

This is when groups around the world **consider issues at a global level and implement different practices to improve them**. As globalization expands, these actions are becoming more common, **with NGOs the key leaders**. They are proactive in working to alleviate poverty and improve healthcare, culture, education, environment and human rights to create a better world and fulfil our duties as global citizens.

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On the other hand, the identity as a global citizen is subjective on a personal level, and not an identity recognised by law because there does not exist a so-called “global government” to maintain such identity as global citizens. The identity as a global citizen is represented by the voluntary actions an individual takes towards global issues. To promote the concept of global citizenship, many countries have now incorporated this concept into their school curricula to educate students to know about the world, encourage them in civic responsibilities, and equip them with knowledge, abilities and values via different learning experiences. In Hong Kong, a research study indicated that awareness of global citizenship among Hong Kong's youth was unsatisfactory. The study suggested that they cared little about global events and knew little about their civic duties and roles within a globalised society. They also appeared to be more self-involved and showed a lack of action in promoting the development of society and influencing others. The study called for enhanced education on global citizenship in Hong Kong.

In conclusion, the self-awareness needed to be a global citizen should be a personal, moral commitment to make a difference in the world and build a better future for the global community.

