

**UNDERSTANDING THE RELEVANCE OF DAISAKU IKEDA'S PRAXIS OF GLOBAL
CITIZENSHIP TO LEADERSHIP PRACTICES: PEACEBUILDING ACTORS' VOICES**

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Introduction

Daisaku Ikeda (1928-2023), founder of Soka University, the Soka Schools and several international institutions promoting peace, culture and education, encountered numerous educators, philosophers and global peace leaders to hold dialogues, having more than 70 of them published in 48 languagesⁱ. In many of these encounters, Ikeda and his dialogue partners explored the meanings and purposes of *global citizenship* virtues and their implications in peacebuilding activities.

Multiple definitions of the term *global citizenship* (GC) have grown in academia, adding complementary, and sometimes, opposing ideas to the GC scholarship. Throughout theory and action, Ikeda offered an alternative understanding of what this looks like. His definition of GC is rooted in his convictions of the human potential which does not demand the acquisition of any degree of certain professional or academic skills as he recommends, in his well-known 1996 speech, that a global citizen would be best defined as anyone who applies the virtues of *wisdom*, *courage* and *compassion* into their beliefs and practices (Ikeda, 1996). This particular GC framework reached scholars and leaders related to peacebuilding and GC from various ethnicities, beliefs, and backgrounds worldwide, and factual examples of such GC virtues playing an important role in Ikeda's leadership cannot go unnoticed as this paper draws upon. Hence, the central question here arises: how do peacebuilding leaders understand the relevance of Ikeda's GC praxis to *their* activities?

This paper presents some of the key findings of my research, conducted between 2021 and 2022, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in International Peace Studies at Soka University, Japan. This study provided answers to the

above inquiry through an analysis of the literature on Ikeda's GC praxis and the data collected through interviews. Participants consisted of thirteen peacebuilding actors – leaders and researchers on Peacebuilding and GC topics – who were exposed to Ikeda's work and praxis of GC whether by having discussed such matters directly with him in face-to-face dialogues or exclusively via academia.

First, this paper introduces the methods implemented to conduct the research as well as my positionality. Second, it briefly presents Ikeda's definition of GC, exploring its meanings and purposes. Then, an analysis of how Ikeda applied the virtues of GC to his leadership activities will be outlined. It is followed by a discussion on how the peacebuilding leaders, interviewed in the scope of this study, understand the relevance of Ikeda's GC praxis to their activities, the main question that this research seeks to answer. Thus, the section named "The Relevance of Ikeda's Praxis of Global Citizenship to Peacebuilding Leadership" presents the core research findings, looking at examples of the implementations of Ikeda's GC praxis, as well as leadership skills developed thoroughly. The last section examines the potentialities of Ikeda's GC praxis as an asset for peacebuilding leadership practices as well as for scholarships on GC, Peace Studies, and Leadership.

Positionality and Methodology

Being a global citizen means being happy while studying

To introduce my positionality, this section locates my relationship to the central themes of this research as they have significantly influenced my academic, professional and personal journey: Daisaku Ikeda and global citizenship. Born to a family of practitioners of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI)'s Nichiren Buddhism, which was led by Ikeda, I was raised around the core values promoted by the movement. Thus, I was first exposed to the virtues put forth by Ikeda, notably the GC-related ones, in my childhood. This early contact with Ikeda was not only through the religious faith, which is also part of my current reality, but through my primary years in education since it took place at the Soka Schools in Brazil. I enrolled as a student of the first batch of the elementary and junior high schools which Ikeda, as the founder, named "Primeira Turma da Vitória" (First Batch of Victory). Growing up in this space of value-creating education (VCE) fostered within the Soka schools, I was exposed to Ikeda's GC virtues and constantly encouraged by my teachers to incorporate them to *become* a global

citizen. "Being happy while studying" was the motto Ikeda attributed to the Soka schools in Brazil, at that time, as a pathway to embracing GC. Even though I did not know the meaning of all that as a child - especially what a 'global citizen' looks like or does - those encouragements have always resonated with the person I was determined to be as I was growing up. Twenty years later, once again in a Soka educational setting, I embarked on deepening my understanding of GC as defined and put into practice by Ikeda, which led me to explore its relevance to various contexts including the one of peacebuilding leadership.

The peacebuilding actors who share their impressions about Ikeda's Global Citizenship

This study used a qualitative approach to look at participants' understanding and experiences related to the themes covered in the research. It preserves interviewees' voices and analyses based on their detailed perspectives. Interviewees include seven students and six global leaders who have held dialogues with Ikeda: Dr. Lawrence Carter, Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Dr. Jim Garrison, Dr. Lou Marinoff, Dr. Stuart Rees, and Dr. Sarah Wider. They are educators, leaders, and founders of international NGOs, social movements and institutions promoting peace; one of them is a High Representative of the United Nations. It is important to note that, at the time this research took place, none of the 13 participants was a member of the SGI (that was under Ikeda's leadership), and none of them was employed by one of the institutions founded by him (such as Soka schools and universities, research centers, museums or peace institutions)ⁱⁱ.

Ikeda's Global Citizenship: Understanding its Definition, Meanings and Purposes

In 1996, in his lecture at Teachers College, Columbia University, USA, titled *Thoughts on Education for Global Citizenship*, Ikeda introduced three core virtues - **wisdom**, **courage** and **compassion** (Ikeda, 1996) - adding an alternative dimension to our understanding of GC that opposes its mainstream definitions rooted in contemporary colonial and neo-liberal capitalism. This lecture became the main source for understanding Ikeda's visions of GC. In many of his published dialogues, Ikeda and his dialogue partners explore the meanings and purposes of these three virtues. Therefore, this section will explore the meanings and purposes

of the three virtues based on the reflections of different peacebuilding leaders who participated in my research.

Wisdom, courage and compassion

“The three virtues that Ikeda places as the core description of a global citizen are crucial” (Harding in Harding & Ikeda, 2013) and “can be understood everywhere” (Garrison in Garrison, Hickman, & Ikeda, 2014). The description of the three virtues attributed to GC was quoted multiple times in the GC literature as it seeks to deepen the understanding and the purposes behind these definitions (For the graphic listing the leaders who cite Ikeda's GC virtues and GC actions in their publications, see figure 1). Goulah (2020), for example, observes that in Ikeda's GC framework, the three virtues are “mutually informing and supportive”, meaning that “cultivating one, begets the others”. Then, Ikeda, himself, and his dialogue partners also referred to the main parts of this lecture to advance the discussions on GC and its relation to one's endeavors based on these virtues. In the Harding-Ikeda published dialogue, Ikeda explains the kinds of “life missions” that should relate to these virtues. He claims:

The global citizens that we hope to nurture are eternal seekers engaged in a search for truths about human existence, life, and the universe. They are eternal advocates for justice, battling to triumph over injustice. They are eternal activists whose goal is to rid the world of human misery and enable all people to enjoy their right to happiness. (Ikeda in Harding & Ikeda, 2013, p. 227)

Schattle (2008) argues that Ikeda's GC model is a more holistic one since it suggests the emergence of a “moral vision applicable to individual sentiments and behaviors rather than as a specific call for the development of global governing institutions”. This statement invites us to think that if we happen to see the world as “determined by structures that prevent authentic change or relationships from developing” (Schultz, 2007, p. 257), it tells us that we are not yet substantially questioning how contemporary societies still reinforce colonialist and Westernized imaginaries, even when trying to fight these very oppressive social forces, armed with GC discourses.

In sum, Ikeda's GC virtues can be *developed* from within an individual's life (moral vision) rather than *acquired* through participation in global political, social, and economic systems (rational vision). In the Veloso Abueva-Ikeda dialogue, Ikeda exemplifies the manifestation of this *moral vision* in "individual sentiments and behaviors". He states that wisdom, courage and compassion are manifested in gratitude for one's family and relations, for example, and thus "vital when caring for our family, neighbors and fellow citizens, [and are] elemental to our aspirations for a peaceful and stable local community, native province and homeland" (Ikeda in Abueva & Ikeda, 2016, p. 253).

Digging deeper into each virtue: Peacebuilding leaders' voices on wisdom, courage and compassion

The following lines will offer a closer look into each of the three virtues described in Ikeda's GC model through the voices of the peacebuilding leaders captured in the interviews. Thus, the statements and analyses below present some findings of this study.

Wisdom. *We are all interconnected* – what does this idea entail? Sharing insights about this first virtue in Ikeda's GC praxis, participants in my research focused on the "interconnectedness of all life and living" and how they understand this concept. Dr. Rees asserted that the realization of this *interconnectedness* leads people to understand that it is crucial "to learn to live together". He says that a global citizen awakened to that realization is "somebody who is across their country's cultures, politics, religion, in a way that it transcends them all". Dr. Carter, positioning himself as an African American citizen emphasized:

Dr. Ikeda's definition starts with the wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living. [I was] born in the age of segregation, where separatism was everywhere in my environment. [...] Even the churches were segregated, even though they were preaching the love of Christ. Dr. Ikeda's definition of global citizenship points out the heresy of this notion that we can be separate. [He emphasized] global citizenship as a way of becoming aware of the interconnectedness and the interrelatedness of everything. (L. E. Carter, personal communication, October 26, 2022)

Courage. Does *courage* mean be endowed with a particular strength or determination? Dr. Wider and Dr. Rees explain how the *courage* in Ikeda's GC model is not about developing fortitude, a daring spirit, or about being a "mere bravado" as Dr. Garrison also notices in the Garrison-Hickman-Ikeda dialogue (2014, p. 147), but how incorporating this virtue in one's life can serve to embrace diversity. It is about inclusion and, on a broader scale, the achievement of social justice. Dr. Wider argued: "I really liked the way that he focuses on not denying difference, because [we] see that move a lot of times, 'Oh!, we are all the same'", underpinning a false idea of equality. Dr. Rees suggested that this *courage* means "breaking boundaries" to go beyond the norm. He explains: "It was not so long ago that everybody who was not white, in terms of their skin color, was a slave; that Indigenous people were not regarded as citizens; that women were not entitled to vote. And it is still [like this] in many parts of the world". He also suggested that Ikeda's definition of this second virtue in his praxis reminds us of History and leads humanity to "say: 'never again!'". Dr. Carter concluded that by encouraging this type of *courage*, Ikeda "is teaching us how to respect and how we ought to strive to grow from our encounters, rather than trying to convert people to our position [or] trying to dismiss them, to vilify, to castigate..."

Compassion. How to cultivate this "imaginative empathy" that reaches beyond our immediate surroundings? Interviewees articulated how this idea is related to collective accountability for what happens simultaneously in the world. Dr. Marinoff argues that humanity fails to talk about imagination and imaginative empathy. He said: "If we cultivate our imagination, [...] empathy grows. And this will indeed touch other people, and it will extend in ways that we sometimes do not even know". For him, Ikeda "radiates all of those qualities, and influences others to manifest them as well". He then points out that this virtue makes us realize that "distant places are not really that distant anymore. Even the most distant place on earth is next door to us because we can feel the effects of what happens there", he said. Likewise, Dr. Carter adds:

Dr. Ikeda is trying to make us responsible and accountable for the pain being suffered by our geographical neighbors around the globe. He inspired me to realize that the only way human beings are going to be able to take responsibility [...] is that we have to enlarge our addresses beyond our street addresses. (L. E. Carter, personal communication, October 26, 2022)

In this way, Ikeda's praxis of compassion as a virtue for GC is more about the development of an active attitude of empathy towards all people - including those in very different circumstances from one's reality - based on *imagination* rather than *rationality*. In other words, this idea goes beyond calls for "mutual understanding" because, sometimes, can we really understand what others feel? Do we *need* to understand to show up with compassion? Dr. Wider questions: "Even if the person maybe has great facility with language, are they really in a good frame of mind to be able to understand where they are or how to be where they are?"

Ikeda and Global Citizenship: The Courage of Application

Expanding the virtues of wisdom, courage and compassion (theory) to a broader level, these leaders shared how they think Ikeda, as a global leader concerned by all kinds of people in diverse places, had a concrete impact on international structures and movements (action). In his publication, Carter (2018) recognizes that Ikeda "models what it means to be a cosmic citizen (Carter, 2018, xi) and highlights the importance of *action* as a crucial component for the practice of GC in leadership, noting that: "Practice is more powerful than preaching, and example is more powerful than words" (p. 122).

Goulah (2020) claims that for Ikeda, GC ethics are not seen as "mere platitudes or passive, wishful hope", but rather it should "be consciously and volitionally cultivated through engaged value creation (*soka*) in one's local community". He notes that Ikeda's GC virtues must be embodied, referring to what Makiguchi called the "courage of application" (Goulah, 2020).

In his book, Carter (2018) also declared: "The more I came to know about Ikeda, the more I was inspired by his accomplishments as a religious leader as well - as a cosmic citizen-scholar, a peace activist, and a pioneering educator engaged throughout the world in dialogical friendships" (p. 18). He concludes one of his chapters by saying: "Ikeda has captured my heart, my mind, and my spirit in a way that I find difficult to describe - except to say that at last, after many years, I have found another mentor" (p. 129).

The Relevance of Ikeda's Praxis of Global Citizenship to Peacebuilding Leadership

The definitions, meanings and purposes of Ikeda's GC praxis described in the section above tell us that every individual, everywhere, can be a global citizen. From an action-based perspective, participants in the research demonstrate how they interpret the relevance of Ikeda's GC praxis when applied to their endeavors, as they each strive to *build* peace, as leaders in diverse fields. Evidence of this is outlined in the different thematic sections below and it is understood through peacebuilding leaders' voices.

How is this relevant to peacebuilding leadership?

One of the questions addressed with the interviewees was about the relevance and implementation of the three virtues into their activities. Findings show that all of them demonstrate alignment with this praxis with some examples of how they incorporate it.

One of those examples is illustrated by Dr. Marinoff: "I have not only related to [Ikeda's GC praxis], but I've learned a lot from it. [...] I actually have incorporated very much of his leadership models into my own work with leaders. It's been extremely effective", he said. Dr. Marinoff elucidates that he got inspiration from Ikeda's teachings, verbally and through writings, on the Buddhist concept of the Bodhisattva Never Disparagingⁱⁱⁱ. He explains: "This is a brilliant and necessary way to work with people. I began to implement it as a teacher, encouraging students to build their self-confidence". He then mentions that he received the College's Outstanding Teaching Award for his achievements in education and acknowledged: "I think the award is a reflection of incorporating important lessons I learned from Mr. Ikeda into being an educator". Beyond the classroom, Dr. Marinoff revealed that he has been implementing takeaways from Ikeda's GC praxis in other activities such as in the NGO he founded, but also with his colleagues, in his writings, and with the stakeholders to whom he serves as faculty at the City College of New York.

Dr. Wider recognizes that implementing Ikeda's GC virtues in her pedagogy as an educator was beneficial. "I think it connects very closely with President Ikeda's understanding of global citizenship [...] of how we always think about what our actions are contributing to wherever we are now". She testified:

It enabled me to really understand my pedagogy as something that was going to be centered on. What I am doing is trying to create peace cultures in the classroom; rather than this model [in which] students feel like they are in competition with each other, [...] like if there is only room for a couple of people [...] and they are not all going to make it through. I just always wanted to say: "Wait a minute, no, we are not in that kind of a course, we are in a course where we are all working together". [...] We are actually building each other up, challenging each other and asking each other questions; [...] It's not about "there is only one; a survivor!" - that horrible show [in which] only one person is going to end up on an island, successful; It's not elimination. We are all in it together. So, certainly, the meeting with President Ikeda and Mrs. Ikeda, and [our] dialogue enabled me to keep that focus of my teaching, [as something that was] growing stronger, as it did. (S. Wider, personal communication, September 5, 2022)

Similarly, Dr. Carter shared that he gained inspiration from Ikeda's GC praxis which contributed to his activities as a leader. Being the founding dean of the world's largest religious memorial honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Carter states that Ikeda's definition of GC has helped him to re-examine the "value-clues" (according to him, a metaphor for virtues) grounded in the university^{iv}, affirming that:

Dr. Ikeda would say, that "every individual has the capacity to achieve". [...] I tell [the students in Morehouse] that the chapel is an "affirmatorium", from the word "affirmative". It is a place where you are going to be told that there is nothing you can't achieve. (L. E. Carter, personal communication, October 26, 2022)

Ambassador Chowdhury and Dr. Rees, who have been activists serving peacebuilding leadership positions for several years, recognized similarities with Ikeda's GC when looking at their endeavors. Connecting Ikeda's GC to his work at the UN for the creation of a culture of peace, Ambassador Chowdhury acknowledges the relevance of this fusion when he says: "I think that [Ikeda's ideas on GC] were very helpful in terms of my work regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", making it easier to integrate them to the conversations within the UN. Dr. Rees noted that Ikeda talks about the sanctity of life and the respect for universal human rights as philosophical cultural concepts more than legal ones. He

affirms: "That is the kind of theoretical and political platform that inspires me. [...] I suppose that every action I've taken in the campaigns that I am involved in takes its cue from Ikeda and his mentors' ideas about ending human misery".

What leadership skills are gained from this praxis?

Dialogue Strategies. One of the skills identified in Ikeda's GC praxis is the ability to conduct meaningful dialogues. In the literature, Obelleiro (2013) argues that "in seeking to establish a personal connection at the outset of a dialogue, Ikeda strives to embody the virtues of the global citizen" (p. 39). That was confirmed by Wider (October 23, 2010) when she witnessed in a documented interview how Ikeda applies dialogical strategies in his meetings when speaking to the human, not to "the title or the perceived place in society that person holds".

Remembering his two-hour dialogue with Ikeda on various topics, Dr. Garrison also noted, in our communication, that what struck him the most was Ikeda's deep listening. "Ikeda is one of the few people that really picks up on how important listening is. [...] He wants to get value creation out of that dialogue". Dr. Wider also mentioned that Ikeda's commitment to dialogue is part of his GC put into practice. She describes it as a "willingness just to let things expand" through communication.

Sense of humor. Dr. Garrison acknowledged that one important element of leadership is humor. "If you want to lift heavy things, you need levity. You need laughter, and playfulness", he said. Through the meeting with Ikeda, Dr. Garrison and Dr. Rees recognized Ikeda's sense of humor when interacting with people. Dr. Garrison testified: "he is playful. [...] He has an amazing ability to walk into a room and feel the presence of people", he added.

Empowerment. Another aspect that can be related to leadership is empowerment or uplifting others. This was captured from Dr. Marinoff's remarks when he praised Ikeda's leadership model by saying:

I'd met all these world leaders, and many of them were very impressive. But Mr. Ikeda was more than that, he was like a leader among world leaders. [...] What inspired me the most was his vision, his conviction and his mission to improve the world by working incessantly to awaken people, to awaken minds, to illuminate ways forward, and to elevate people's life conditions. (L. Marinoff, personal communication, September 13, 2022)

Multidimensional activism. Dr. Wider highlights that meeting Ikeda provided an affirmative understanding of herself as an English and Women's Studies professor but able to expand what she covers in her classes. She claims:

People in the United States would look at me and say: "Well, you are not in peace and conflict studies, you do not have that expertise" and "How can you be someone involved in the peace movement?... you do not have the credentials" [...] That meeting was really galvanizing for me. Certainly, it really helped me to continue the work I had been doing and the work I wanted to do." (S. Wider, personal communication, September 5, 2022)

Ambassador Chowdhury illustrates how Ikeda embraces a large range of humanitarian concerns as a practice of GC for peacebuilding. He claimed:

He has been the most consistent global leader in both individual and collective sense. What impressed me most is that he is equally connected with the areas that need attention, not in just one area; many peace leaders are very focused on their specific areas, but President Ikeda has a broader perspective, and comprehensive ideas about how peace can be achieved. (A. K. Chowdhury, personal communication, October 26, 2022)

Transcend differences. Dr. Marinoff pointed out that for peacebuilding leadership to happen, we need to *build* bridges between people who think in different ways. He argues that a leader cannot influence those who stand for different positions by "hammering their contexts on their heads". According to him, Ikeda masters how to connect different people by

introducing ideas in ways that speak to everyone. Dr. Carter also commented on this aspect when comparing his oratory and writing styles to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s. He praised: "Neither Dr. King nor Dr. Ikeda use big words. They wrote [in ways] that everybody can understand". For Dr. Marinoff, this is an ability for peacebuilding which he calls "the art of building bridges of peace and cultures of peace". He concluded by saying that "[this] is another art I think Mr. Ikeda has excelled at teaching people how to practice".

Dr. Carter categorizes this ability as being "a subterranean river of wisdom running beneath all those boxes". According to him, Ikeda has "tapped into this subterranean river" to think and act beyond all those patterns and find common ground with diverse personalities with whom he had dialogues.

In the interviews, participants described how they make use of the influence they received from Ikeda's GC praxis in their respective work as epitomized in the sections above. These testimonies give us an overall understanding of how these leaders see the relevance of Ikeda's GC praxis to their leadership practices, and what kind of skills they perceive as results of the application of such praxis.

Ikeda's Praxis of Global Citizenship and Daisaku Ikeda, the Leader: The Impact Beyond the Personhood and Future Perspectives

Certainly, meeting Ikeda and holding a dialogue with him was impactful to these leaders due to his openness, humanistic ideas and global peacebuilding leadership examples, as the interviewees explained. Although the sections above answer the main question of this research, we can now ask how one can understand such relevance without these physical interactions. Ikeda was a leader until the last day of his life. Seeing how he applies GC in leadership or simply having a dialogue with him on such matters becomes now an impossible task. How, then, can his vision of GC, through theory and actions, impact leaders who never met or who will never meet him in person? In our communication, Dr. Rees argued: "Although Ikeda and I have met as individuals, I think we both know that we cannot achieve very much by ourselves. [There is a need for] cooperation with other people". Then, he added: "You can see [Ikeda's GC virtues] in his photography, in his poetry, and certainly, in all the amazing dialogues that he has had with world leaders".

In addition to the peacebuilding leaders above, university students researching GC shared how they interpret this. This next part will help us to understand how any person committed to peacebuilding leadership can benefit from Ikeda's GC praxis when incorporated and put into practice.

Ikeda speaks to everyone, beyond physical encounters

Five out of seven students interviewed said that before being exposed to Ikeda's GC praxis, they were not familiar with any other GC theory. Among students' answers, "human revolution" and "dialogue" appear to be the main takeaways from the new knowledge they gained when deepening Ikeda's three GC virtues.

All of the students interviewed revealed that after deepening their understanding of Ikeda's GC praxis, they strive to implement the three virtues in their respective areas and/or in future careers. A student in International Studies and Modern Languages stated that they would like to apply them to benefit education in his home country, Haiti. "All the efforts that I am putting into understanding [Ikeda's GC] are to be used in the creation of a network of schools, and I believe that this will transform education in Haiti".

A graduate student in Political Theory, argues that Ikeda's GC virtues can be more than "academic tools", but also "tools for life". They explain: "I think it is amazing how it can be replicable in a lot of reflections, in disciplinary domains like the environment, peace, etc.". Likewise, another graduate student in International Studies elucidates how operationalizing the virtue of *courage* [not to deny difference] would be beneficial to integrate migrant children into local communities. Based on the experience she had of arriving in another country as a young child, she asserts:

I had to explain to my fellow classmates that I came from another country, but I still understood everything they were doing [...] I just had a different culture at home. If they implemented that philosophy [GC virtues] in those classes way earlier, maybe I could have had friends earlier. [...] [Being exposed to such virtues would] make them more together and less divided. (T. Popovic, personal communication, November 25, 2022)

Through the students' voices, we can understand that the impact of Ikeda on GC scholarship and as a praxis is beyond the scope of personhood, regardless of in-person meetings or direct discussions with him, which was the case for the leaders interviewed.

Impacting future generations?

For the advancement of research on GC, Dr. Garrison and Dr. Marinoff suggest that Peace academics appraise Ikeda's annual peace proposals^{vi}. Ambassador Chowdhury recommends that universities around the world create a "Global Citizenship Corner", in which students can have access to Ikeda's as well as other peacebuilders' work for GC.

Thinking about his student life and research in the 1980s, Dr. Marinoff noted that although he had access to prestigious book libraries such as the one at the University of Bradford, in the UK, that owns an ample collection of Peace Studies work, including literature on Gandhi's, he did not encounter any of Ikeda's writings. He claims:

Every Peace Studies Institute in the world needs to have his collected works on hand - not only his *Annual Peace Proposals* [...] that is foundational as a study, but also his many other writings on humanism and related topics. Mr. Ikeda's [work] has to occupy a whole section of [Peace Studies] literature because of his contributions. (L. Marinoff, personal communication, September 13, 2022)

Having deepened Ikeda's GC praxis through research, Mr. Alex Saint-Amant, a student in International Studies and Modern Languages, affirms: "It is no surprise to see how fast this philosophy spreads into the world". Commending Ikeda's commitment to education as a means to form global citizens, Dr. Carter upholds:

Ikeda is going to impact the universal curriculum. [...] I think that he will go down in history as one of the great educators of the world. I do not see anybody else who has come anywhere near achieving that. [...] He has no competition except the non-compassionate capitalists. (L. E. Carter, personal communication, October 26, 2022)

From these affirmations, we can capture Ikeda's solid influence in terms of GC literature and actions alike, potentially contributing to GC-related research, as well as to Peace and Leadership Studies. Based on these findings, it is relevant to consider an enhancement of research on Ikeda's GC praxis applied to diverse social arenas involving peacebuilding and leadership as it appears to be a reliable reference in these domains.

Can Ikeda become a symbol of Global Citizenship?

Mahatma Gandhi is considered the symbol of nonviolence, Martin Luther Jr. is the symbol of the civil rights movement, Henry David Thoreau is the symbol of civil disobedience, and Nelson Mandela is a symbol of anti-apartheid. Although all these personalities can be considered symbols of peace, and Johan Galtung, more specifically, the symbol of Peace Studies, it was evident through this study that there are still no models for GC itself.

Dr. Marinoff further discusses: "Global citizenship has to have role models. People do not become global citizens unless they see their leaders acting, behaving, and emulating the values of it". Aligned to this, Ambassador Chowdhury recognized that there is no existent model for GC when he argues: "President Ikeda's main focus came on those three wonderful words: wisdom, courage and compassion. It summarizes wonderfully [what GC entails], so I would hesitate to call that there are other models". It leads to the question: Can Ikeda become a symbol of GC so we can seek information in his praxis as a reference in this domain? Without addressing a direct question of the interview on these specific terms, another participant, Mx. Sarah Belyk, a graduate in Psychology, also mentioned that Ikeda represents a model or a symbol of GC:

It is totally possible that he is going to become like Gandhi, someone that people can look back on and think "Oh, how amazing! That was great!" Ikeda's [GC] praxis has the ability to create a change that can be evolving. [...] Maybe he will become a model. I feel that "wisdom", "courage", "compassion" can endure [even in a] changing environment, continue to promote global peace actions and create global thinking people [who will] take that knowledge and create more global thinking people. [Embodying these virtues] they will take action to fix what they feel is broken. (S. Belyk, personal communication, September 28, 2022)

Dr. Carter, like in his book, compares Ikeda's work to Gandhi's and Martin Luther King Jr.'s. In the interview, he argued that Ikeda's philosophical practice brings beneficial social and political change. "I cannot see any way that this could fail to grow as we move into the future.", he argues.

Although the question of becoming a symbol of GC was never asked during the interviews, this suggestion came as a complement to some of the responses explaining why and how Ikeda walked the talk of GC to the participants. The acknowledgments do not seem to be only for the sake of admiring his achievements or praising him as an individual but consider his GC praxis as a model to be critically studied and purposefully applied in peacebuilding activities, including leadership.

Conclusion

This paper explored the relevance of Ikeda's GC praxis to peacebuilding leadership through exemplified testimonies of leaders and researchers on GC who participated in the research presented. With personal interpretations and practical examples, it points out further understanding of the objectives and implications of Ikeda's GC virtues of wisdom, courage and compassion in practice. Referring to their experience with Ikeda as a leader of a global organization, the participants shared that they see leadership skills that can be developed through the embodiment of this GC praxis.

The research findings provide substantial evidence explaining the relevance of Ikeda's GC praxis on people involved in GC studies or peacebuilding leadership whether they discussed it directly with Ikeda in person or not. Not only Ikeda's dialogue partners, but the seven students interviewed expressed how they were impacted and how the expertise that they developed through deepening Ikeda's GC praxis contributed to their activities. We can understand that such an impact on the participants was not dependent on the transmission of values only through in-person contact.

The findings also indicate that, beyond the personal experiences of the participants in this study, Ikeda's GC praxis can benefit academia and activism in domains such as GC itself as well as Peace and Leadership Studies. Furthermore, it was recognized that GC lacks human

models, thus projecting Ikeda as such, for the relevance proved to be not only accurate but somehow impactful according to the participants.

Therefore, this research shows that it is relevant to promote Ikeda's GC praxis as a reliable reference for studies on GC, Peace, and Leadership; and as a tool for peacebuilding leadership, as the research findings expound. Based on the relevance of Ikeda's GC praxis to the participants of this study, and on the potential impact to benefit related literature and peacebuilding leadership on a broader scale, this research suggested recognizing Ikeda as a symbol of GC, considering him and his GC praxis as a reference in this field.

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Figures:

Figure 1: Garcia, L. (2023). Graphic of authors who cited Ikeda's GC virtues and GC actions in the literature

Figure 1: Ikeda's praxis of global citizenship: what do peacebuilding leaders talk about the three virtues? (2023)

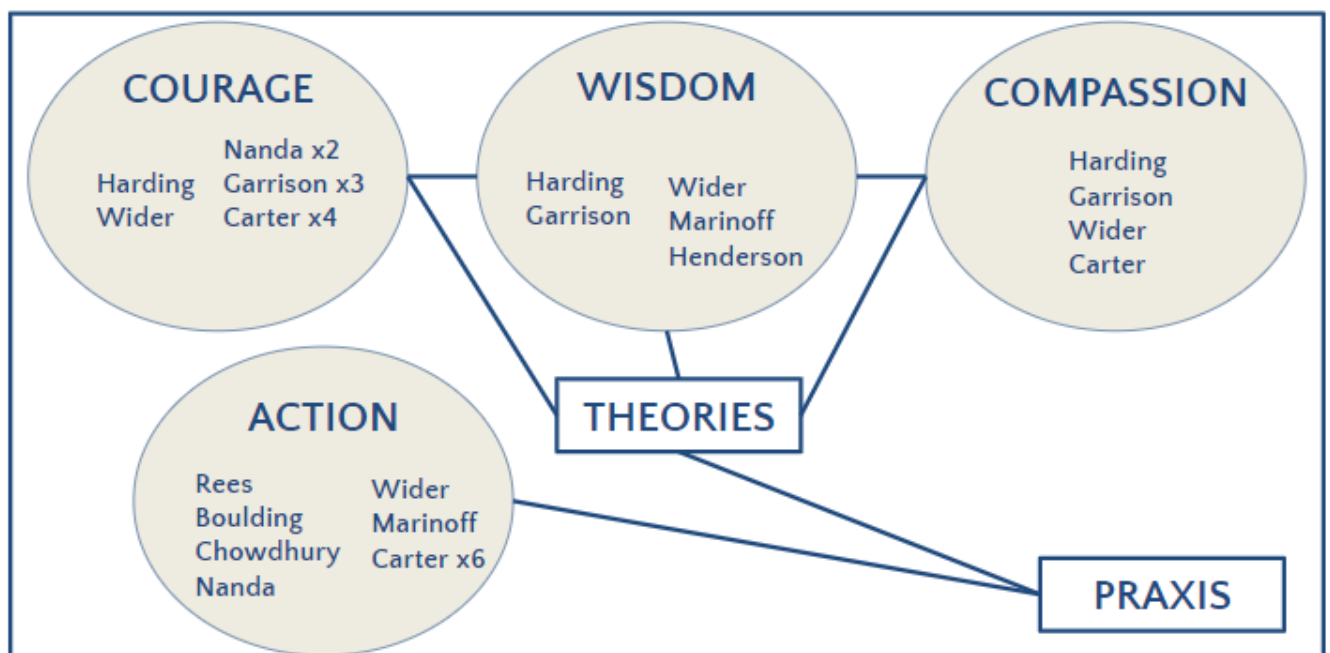


Figure 1: Ikeda's praxis of global citizenship: what do peacebuilding leaders talk about the three virtues? (2023) It is a graphic created by the author that lists the names of leaders citing Ikeda's GC virtues and GC actions in their publications. The data analyzed include nine of Daisaku Ikeda's published dialogues with global peacebuilding leaders, five paper presentations for international symposiums on GC, two academic articles, and two published interviews on *Daisaku Ikeda's Website*.

ⁱ As reported on *Daisaku Ikeda Website*. (<https://www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/books/full-list-of-published-dialogues.html>).

ⁱⁱ It can be assumed that SGI members understand Ikeda's praxis of peace and GC through religious faith, practice and study, which would not meet the objectives of this research. It would not be about the impact of Ikeda's words and actions, but about the impact of an entire religious practice, and the organization of which Ikeda is the spiritual leader.

ⁱⁱⁱ According to Buddhist teachings, *Bodhisattva Never Disparaging* is "a previous incarnation of Shakyamuni who appears as a bodhisattva in the "Never Disparaging" chapter of the Lotus Sutra. After the death of the Buddha Awesome Sound King in the remote past, he showed respect toward all people for their innate Buddha nature. People ridiculed and attacked him with staves and stones, but he continued his practice. Those who slandered him fell into hell but, after expiating their offenses, were reborn with him and were saved by practicing the Lotus Sutra. Nichiren Daishonin often cites the story of Bodhisattva Never Disparaging to illustrate the principle of attaining enlightenment through reverse relationship, or connection that one forms with the Law by opposing or slandering it. Daishonin also refers to the practice carried out by Bodhisattva Never Disparaging, who was cursed and attacked with staves and stones but thereby expiated his past offenses". Retrieved from *Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhism Library Website* (<https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/dic/Content/B/42>).

^{iv} Morehouse is, in fact, a historically Black men's liberal arts college in Atlanta, USA, and is the alma mater of many prestigious African-Americans, including Martin Luther King Jr. himself. Today, the rate of Black students at Morehouse accounts for 73, 93% according to Morehouse College Student demographics in 2022, published at CollegeEvaluators (<https://www.collegeevaluator.com/institute/morehouse-college/enrollment/>).

^v By "boxes", Dr. Carter refers to one's identity labels such as academic, class, culture, diet, ethnic, gender, ideology, language, nationality, race, religion, and sexual orientation, as explained on pages 124 & 191 of his book (2018).

^{vi} The *Annual Peace Proposals* is a paper touching on diverse issues related to peace that Daisaku Ikeda sends to the Member Ambassadors of the General Assembly of the United Nations each January 26th. (<https://www.daisakuikeda.org/sub/resources/works/props/>).