

How to Foster Creative Global Human Resources in a UNESCO City of Literature

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## **Abstract**

This paper will discuss how Okayama City, which is registered to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Creative Cities Network (UCCN), fosters creative and global resources, by comparing it to three cities in the UCCN: Liverpool in the United Kingdom (Creative City of Music), Buchon in Korea (Creative City of Literature), and Okayama in Japan (Creative City of Literature).

Humanity faces increasingly complex global challenges. To address these issues, we need creative global citizens with global “competencies” such as critical and creative thinking skills, that enable them to take action both locally and globally. Academic scholars and organizations for Global Citizenship Education (GCED), and the International Baccalaureate (IB) in particular, offer valuable frameworks for understanding and cultivating these competencies.

Literature has the power to develop a wide range of skills, including inquiry, critical thinking, open-mindedness, and empathy. By fostering a sense of global responsibility and commitment to others, literature contributes to building a more just and equitable world, aligned with the core principle of "Leave No One Behind" in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Three UNESCO Creative Cities that were investigated in this thesis have promoted cultural projects in public, private, and educational sectors. Involving multiple stakeholders and local people to establish an intense and resilient cultural network contributes to creating a foundation suitable for nurturing creative global human resources, because it provides opportunities for individuals to encounter cultural experiences in their everyday lives.

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1. Introduction**

This paper will explore how to develop creative and global human resources to revitalize local communities sustainably within the UNESCO Creative City Network. In particular, I will focus on Okayama City, Japan's recently designated Creative City of Literature. I believe that member cities of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), which are working to revitalize their cities through culture, are in a good position to promote the development of creative global human resources.

The objectives of the UCCN do not explicitly mention the development of creative global human resources as part of its mission. However, I believe that cities which engage in city planning through the promotion of culture and creativity, are environments where citizens can nurture the skills, traits and character to (i.e. competencies) elements necessary for more sustainable lives that can have a positive impact locally and globally. This is what I seek to understand in this paper, through case studies of Creative Cities, particularly Okayama.

## **1.2. About the United Nations Creative Cities Network**

The United Nations Creative Cities Network (UCCN) was established in 2004 to enhance economic, social, cultural, and environmental cooperation between cities that identify their creativity as elements for strategic sustainable development. According to UNESCO, the UCCN is based on the assumption that cities serve not only as sites of preservation but also as places wherein creative energies can be harnessed in the generation of socio-economically viable projects. The UCCN is made up of 350 cities in more than 100 countries, representing

seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts, and Music ([UNESCO, 2023](#)).

Each city can share its experiences to stimulate collaborative initiatives and develop partnerships, projects, and opportunities at intercity and international levels through the Network, which encourages cities to directly connect with other cities. The goal of the UCCN is “to bring together public and private partners as well as civil society to help towards the development of creative industries and generate new forms of international cooperation” ([UNESCO, 2007](#)). According to the Division of internal oversight services (IOS) Evaluation of the UCCN (2024), the network’s strategic framework has formally integrated UNESCO’s global priorities and the Culture sector’s specific priorities. The network has high potential to contribute to issues such as youth empowerment, inclusion of vulnerable and minority groups, minorities, and gender equality.

Additionally, according to Rossi, the membership as a classic branding tool is used to attract investors and tourists and build a stronger identity for cities based on effective results through cooperation activities. “Communities and individuals must be able to create and practice their own culture and enjoy that of others free from fear. This requires respect for cultural diversity, safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, fostering cultural institutions, strengthening cultural and creative industries, and promoting cultural tourism.” (Rossi, 2015, p.108). Cities themselves also emphasize the significance of the UNESCO brand and reputation. The Creative City designation brings global visibility and prestige and an improved recognition of the concerned creative sector to local authorities and key stakeholders (Division of IOS of the UCCN, 2024). The UCCN Membership supports cities to create positive, shared identities and promotes community integration and participation of minority or vulnerable groups as well (UK UNESCO Report, 2019).

The Division of Internal Oversight Systems (IOS) Evaluation of the UCCN (2024), points out the weakness of its network towards the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “The design of the UCCN responds to cities’ knowledge needs and enhances the alignment of culture with the SDGs. However, the UCCN strategic framework is very broad and leaves the most important strategic decisions entirely to cities. The breadth of the 2030 Agenda and lack of specific guidance from UCCN results in cities’ differing definitions of development impact. Moreover, for many Creative Cities their endorsement of the SDG agenda is sometimes more of an ex-post or theoretical exercise, rather than a strategic reflection that is likely to influence city policies and programmes” (p. 6).

In addition, the UCCN is not strong enough to address global challenges such as climate change, conflicts, natural disasters, or sustainable development in regions such as Africa or Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Thus the UCCN does have its weak points in terms of its impact consistency from city to city and connection with greater global issues and the SDGs. Still, the potential for UNESCO Creative Cities to contribute to these causes through culture is noteworthy. In the next section, I address how my research on the UCCN is directly linked to at least some of the SDGs.

### **1.3. UCCN Connections to the Sustainable Development Goals**

In 2015, The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States. This agenda provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity of people, by people, and for the people and the planet, now and into the future to transform the world onto a sustainable and resilient path which is urgently needed. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets have been set to strengthen universal peace with all

countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership. It is committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions - economic, social, and environmental - in a balanced and integrated manner (the UN, 2015). Below I describe how the UCCN, and particularly Cities of Literature, can contribute to the fulfillment of SDG 4 in particular.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, consists of 10 targets for a sustainable education agenda. Among them, there are 7 expected outcomes targets, and 3 targets that are a means of achieving these outcomes. Cities of Literature can have a direct impact on: Target 4.6: Youth & Adult Literacy, and Target 4.7: Sustainable Development & Global Citizenship. Target 4.7 touches on the social, humanistic, and moral purposes of education. It has 5 elements: human rights, gender equality, peace culture, nonviolence, and knowledge. It works together with lifelong learning and focuses on both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects so that it is applied to a wide range of ages and education levels.

The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to lead productive lives, make informed decisions and assume active roles locally and globally in facing and resolving global challenges can be acquired through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED), which includes peace and human rights education, as well as intercultural education and education for international understanding. ([UNESCO, n.d.](#))

The Literature Cities of the network have the potential to combine their strategic initiatives into not only SDG 4, but also SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.



## **1.4. Global Citizenship Education (GCED)**

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is described by UNESCO as an educational framework to support learners of all ages to become ethical, empathetic and respectful human beings who can adapt to the world's rapidly transforming, even amidst its most complex challenges and threats (n.d.). In this thesis I will explore the potential for UNESCO Creative Cities, particularly Cities of Literature, to serve as GCED centers, which could bridge the efforts of the UCCN with the SDGs.

## **1.5. Aims/Significance**

This paper will contribute valuable information about Okayama City, which was registered to the UCCN just last October as a Literature City. Okayama is just getting started in its development as a UNESCO Creative City. Thus, the theories and case studies in this thesis should provide valuable information for its successful development as a City of Literature.

In line with the implementation of the Okayama City Culture and Arts Promotion Plan, Okayama City has raised several issues to address. Using global citizenship education as a theoretical framework, This thesis will discuss solutions to the following three:

1. Expanding the base of citizens involved in culture and arts and increasing the number of people interacting through them
2. Promoting cultural and artistic projects and mutual solidarity among the citizens of the city
3. Promoting interaction with cities and audiences inside and outside of Japan and enhancing its city brand

The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development calls on us to imagine more sustainable, more human, more creative cities. Fostering creative and global human resources assists in the fulfillment of the SDGs especially, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals in Okayama.

## **1.6. Why I chose this study**

On 31 October 2023, Okayama was acknowledged as the first Japanese Literature City of the UCCN. I was raised in Okayama. When Okayama City declared its application to the UCCN, I was studying abroad in Liverpool which was also designated as a Creative City of Music in 2017. This city is filled with music, and local people there are involved in music communities and love their music culture. While I was in the City of Music, Liverpool held the Eurovision Song Contest. This city has a successful story of becoming a notable Creative City, and I felt the lively atmosphere within its local communities. This experience made me think about how my home town Okayama sustainably could develop utilizing its own Creative City strengths. I hope that my hometown will become a more creative and enriching city that blends more cultural elements sustainably.

Additionally, as a university student in the English Literature Department of Notre Dame Seishin University, I believe that Literature in particular has the power to enrich people's hearts, and nurture their empathy. It is required to unite local communities and also support Okayama City's Art Initiative to make it happen. Thus, my studying abroad experience brought me this thesis topic.

## 1.7. Research Questions

There are two research questions to explore in this paper:

1. What are the character, traits and skills (i.e. competencies) of creative global human resources?
2. What can industry, government, and academia each do to promote the development of creative global human resources by leveraging UNESCO Creative City status?

To answer Question 1, I will review literature on Global Citizenship Education and the definition of creative competencies. To answer Question 2, I will conduct two investigations. First, case studies of other Creative Cities via documents review of academic articles and public data. I will research Liverpool in the UK, and Bucheon, South Korea as model cities.

Liverpool is notable for its international status as a Creative City of Music and the birthplace of the Beatles. Liverpool used this feature to establish its status. Bucheon, on the other hand, a city located in the suburbs of Seoul, the capital of South Korea, was registered as a Cultural Creative City of Literature in 2019. Bucheon not only focuses on literature education for its citizens, but also holds a wide range of events utilizing public facilities such as libraries. As a city in East Asia, Bucheon is a model city for Okayama City because of the similarities in the environment in which policies are being implemented. Thus, I will investigate how the two cities are addressing nurturing creative and global human resources who will lead the next generation.

Lastly, I will investigate Okayama City through document reviews and interviews with key stakeholders in the UCCN activities of the City.

## **1.8. Conclusion**

In this Chapter, I introduced the UCCN, its the relation to the SDGs, and I described the aims of the research and introduced the research questions. In Chapter 2, it will review literature about GCED. In Chapter 3, I will investigate literature related to Liverpool and Bucheon from the UCCN as case studies. In Chapter 4, I will report on Okayama's actions as a City of Literature from the perspectives of two stakeholders related to Okayama City's UNESCO Creative Cities Bureau. In Chapter 5, it will comprehensively analyse, compare and discuss the data from previous Chapters. Finally, in Chapter 6, it will conclude with a summary and a description of this thesis' implications, limitations and suggestions for further study.

## **Chapter 2: Global Citizenship Education**

This chapter provides a deeper understanding of global citizenship and global citizenship education (GCED), and competencies possessed by creative and global human resources based on perspectives from UNESCO, academia and other educational institutions. Firstly, it will summarize the definition and framework of GCED. Secondly, it describes the differences and similarities of Education for Sustainable development (ESD) and GCED in order to establish GCED as a means for developing global human resources in this paper. Thirdly, it will review academic perspectives by several researchers on Global Citizenship and GCED, as well as educational organizations, such as the International Baccalaureate Organization (known as the IB). Lastly, it will highlight creativity as a global human resource.

### **2.1. Global Citizenship Education Defined**

In 2011, the term GCED was introduced by UNESCO. According to Kobayashi (2016), GCED is rooted in the UN's fundamental philosophies and inherited from previous UNESCO education programs. It was set to remind learners in all generations of the importance of participating in both local and global communities to enhance international solidarity and peace through education.

The concept of Global Citizenship is based on the idea that we connect to a broader global community, not just with one country. We are interdependent economically, environmentally, socially, and politically as never before. We share complicated issues across borders. According to UNESCO, it is time to transform how we work, teach, and learn in line with the expansion of digital technology, the range of movement, and the complexity of issues. Therefore, individuals' daily mindset and actual actions are more significant. GCED

promotes human resources who can recognize things responsibly with global and multiple perspectives and actually take actions (Kitamura and Sato, 2019).

GCED helps learners to understand the world around them and work together to fix the big problems that affect everyone, no matter where they are from ([UNESCO, 2023](#)). This education has four goals.

1. Providing knowledge about the interconnectedness between current issues and threads, adjusting curricula and content of the lessons,
2. Nurturing cognitive, social and other skills to put the knowledge into practice and relevant to learners' realities by thinking critically, understanding other perspectives and opinions, solving conflicts constructively, working as teams, and interacting with people who have various backgrounds, origins, cultures, and perspectives,
3. Instilling values reflects the vision of the world, including respect for diversity, empathy, open-mindedness, justice, and fairness,
4. Adopting actual actions based on own values and beliefs. (2023)

People are now required to understand the world with respect for differences and cooperate with people from other countries. "The qualities required of a 'global citizen' are a sense of ownership of global issues, active and proactive involvement in solving those issues, and creative thinking to find better solutions." (Kobashi, 2016, p. 20 )

In 2014, at the U.N.'s 65th Annual Department of Public Information/ Non-Governmental Organization (DPI/NGO) Conference, Anwarul Chowdhury who was a former UN Under-Secretary-General, said that "Education for global citizenship deserves particular attention and emphasis in this regard as it helps link issues and disciplines, brings together all stakeholders, and fosters shared vision and objectives." (IPS, 2014) He also said, "I believe

that education for global citizenship is for all of us, irrespective of our age, irrespective of whether we are going through a formal education process or not. Global citizenship requires ‘self-transformation’ and can be a ‘pathway to a culture of peace’.” Thus, GCED promotes life-long learning for all people to have behaviors and skills required to solve social issues.

## **2.2 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and GCED**

UNESCO approaches ESD and GCED differently. Both aim to change the learner's awareness and behavior. ESD promotes the transformation of the environment, society, and economy, whereas GCED promotes the transformation of human relationships and consciousness. Their aims and concepts are familiar, however, the goals through the programs are clearly distinguished by human or non-human transformation (Matsui, 2018)

Referring to image 1: The conceptual diagram about ESD made by Matsui based on a UNESCO publication, ESD targets balancing demands of environment, society, and economy. To achieve this goal, it handles climate change, species diversity, disaster risk reduction, sustainable consumption, and poverty eradication.

Referring to image 2: Conceptual diagram about GCED made by Matsui based on the UNESCO publication, GCED objective is to respect universal values including human rights, democracy, non-discrimination, and diversity. It focuses on peace and human rights, intercultural understanding, citizenship education, respective diversity and tolerance, and inclusiveness.

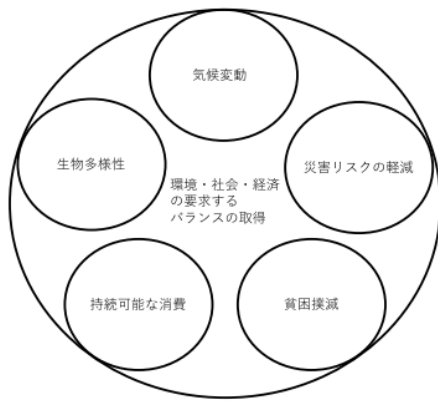


図 2 : ユネスコの ESD の概念図

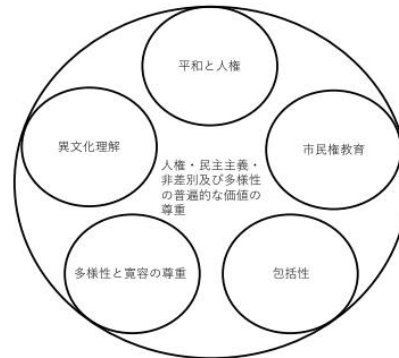


図 3 : ユネスコの GCED の概念図

ESD is for the solution to natural environmental issues, whereas the GCED is the concept for solving the issues of human relationships and consciousness. The core part of GCED learning is how people face themselves (identities, self-esteem), and society (understanding, empathy, dialog, and collaboration) (Kitamura and Sato, 2019).

According to Kobayashi (2019), GCED is recognized as an identity education program. One of the learning themes of the GCED is to cultivate an awareness of various identities and their interconnections, and a sense of belonging. We have individual identity, and society identity such as feelings of belonging and valuing groups to which we belong. In concrete, the levels are at families, schools, workplaces we belong to, moreover, local communities, and nations. Beyond the national level, there are cross-regional identities such as ‘Europe citizens’, ‘Asian citizens’, and furthermore, we can expect we have ‘global citizenship identities’ as inclusive of the entire human society. In the modern society affecting things boardless, we need to develop ‘Global Citizenship Identity’ instead of social identity based on the nation-state. Moreover, it is expected that more and more the society is globalized, the more society will get interested in and demand the ‘Global Citizenship Identity’ (Kobayashi, 2019).



From this point of view, GCED is effective to nurture human resources who contribute to the society as a member of local communities, and of global communities at the same time in this globalized modern society (Matsui,2018).

### **2.3 Academic Perspectives on Global Citizenship and GCED**

According to Kobayashi (2019), as for the definition of human resources who contribute proactively to society, owing citizenship is a prerequisite. He defined ‘citizenship’ as individual behavior, including proactive engagements and responsibility as a member of society. When we think of this proactive involvement in society at a global level, not only at a limited social environment around you, thus making you a ‘global citizen’. Therefore, the definition of ‘Global Citizenship’ is behaviors and skills that recognize themselves as a member of the entire human society, get interested in and engage issues proactively of the entire society (2019, Kobayashi).

This behavior is feasible through ‘collaboration’ with local communities and various social organizations (Otomo and Kiritani, 2016). According to Kitamura and Sato (2019), the places of learning where people acquire these competencies include not only schools but also home, local society, even online society. Hence, partner-networks are important to collaborate policy makers, experts, and practitioners under the common goal, SDGs 4.7, and get multiple communities involved in GCED not simply as a UNESCO’s temporary project, but on a long term and sustainable basis.

Ms. Choi, who served as Director of UNESCO-UNEVOC in 2020, points out that ‘Global Citizenship’ should provide a sense of belonging to a global society and a common humanity, not as an assembly under the law (Sato, 2014). She analyzes the qualities and skills required for GCED, which are knowledge and understanding about global issues and trends,

critical thinking skills, communication skills, proactive engagement behavior, and empathy and attitudes as emotional and social competencies. She presents one of the purposes of GCED as empowering education forms and the learners across the generations, especially the learning communities and youth learners.

There are various statements about the definition and purpose of global citizenship and GCED depending on the researchers and their own cultural and geographical perspectives, however, most of them agree that development of citizenship with views at the entire human society level is required in this global era more than ever (Sato, 2016, Kobayashi, 2019).

From Choi's perspective, there are still some areas in GCED studies that need to be discussed more deeply:

- whether goals of GCED are for the global society or individual learners
- whether GCED is for global solidarity or individual competition
- if GCED can connect the global and the local one or not. (2014)

In practice, UNESCO states clearly that “GCED can be delivered in all modes and at all venues, through formal and informal approaches, curricular and extracurricular interventions and conventional and unconventional pathways to participation.” (UNESCO, 2014, p.25). In concrete, UNESCO present the way of promoting GCED's teaching and learning practices that:

“• nurture a respectful, inclusive and interactive classroom/school ethos (e.g. shared understanding of classroom norms, student voice, seating arrangements, use of wall/visual space, global citizenship imagery);

- infuse learner-centred and culturally responsive independent and interactive teaching and learning approaches that align with learning goals (e.g. independent and collaborative learning structures, deliberative dialogue, media literacy);
- embed authentic performance tasks (e.g. creating displays on children’s rights, creating peace building programmes, creating a student newspaper addressing global issues);
- draw on globally-oriented learning resources that assist students in understanding a ‘larger picture’ of themselves in the world in relation to their local circumstances (e.g. a variety of sources and media, comparative and diverse perspectives);
- make use of assessment and evaluation strategies that align with the learning goals and forms of instruction used to support learning (e.g. reflection and self-assessment, peer feedback, teacher assessment, journals, portfolios);
- offer opportunities for students to experience learning in varied contexts including the classroom, whole school activities, and in one’s communities, from the local to the global (e.g. community participation, international exchanges, virtual communities); and
- foreground the teacher as a role model (e.g. up to date on current events, community involvement, practicing environmental and equity standards).” (2014, p. 25)

## **2.4 The Concept of Global Competencies**

The previous section, focused on GCED, while this one will consider what behaviors and skills, and qualities (i.e. competencies) are needed for global citizens. For the purposes of this study, the IB provides a suitable framework for describing ten competencies of global citizens with its Learner Profile, which lists ten qualities for IB learners:

Inquirers	Open-Minded
Knowledgeable	Caring
Thinkers	Risk-Takers
Communicators	Balanced
Principled	Reflective

“This profile was reviewed by approximately six-thousands educators, parents, students and other stakeholders from sixty-one countries, and is one of the most complete and concise and GCED conceptual frameworks in existence” (Fast, 2022, p.29). Individuals with these attributes are better able to contribute to their local, national and global communities.

## **2.5 Creativity as a Human Resource**

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document recognized the contribution of all cultures to the enrichment of humankind (2015, Rosi), noting particularly that creativity is required for next-generation human resources to solve current complex issues in this society year by year.

According to Wang, a positive attitude toward reading and writing has an impact on creative performance, and the number of hours spent on different reading and writing activities influences creative thinking (2012). Creative thinking is also recognized by the IB as one of its Learner Profile Traits, noted above, and serves as a compliment to critical thinking.

In today’s world, Social Networking Service (SNS) is spreading, which enables people to live in spaces with only the limited information people they prefer. To combat this growing isolation of ideas, learners need the skills to discern between real and fake, and to critically

think about the systemic issues and values that reinforce the oppression and marginalization of others (Choo, 2020). From this perspective,

Fostering creativity through literature can contribute to nurturing Global Citizenship. Literature can cultivate readers' emotional and social competences, and their awareness of various identities and their interconnections. Books and stories contain positive and negative themes, and people who have various personality traits, social positions, different backgrounds, and challenges. We can know a wide range of feelings as if we were actually experiencing them. Choo says that "one crucial contribution of literary texts is that they immerse readers in the world of another who could be from a different culture or an individual who is experiencing the effects of global injustice" (Singteach, 2020).

We can know and grasp what issues and trends there are/were in the world through news articles, or historical documents but just only at a cognitive level. To encourage learners to deepen understanding global issues with ownership it is important to know the background of the incidents. Ms. Choo cited the novel Sold, which centers on a girl trafficked from Nepal to India, to explain how literary works can actually work for global understanding. She said that "some teachers who taught the book found that it broadened students' understanding about the social and psychological effects of human trafficking". Students can learn to reflect on their own value system, in addition to better understanding complexities involved in navigating moral ambiguity through the discussion about ethical issues in literary and real world (2020).

Prof. Yamane also said that literature can move people's hearts and convey timeless and borderless messages because literature works can reflect knowledge and ideas from various fields, going beyond the frame of art but cautioned that

Society devalues adversity and weakness from the perspective of a person working in the literature industry. No matter how much one stresses the importance of creating a society in which ‘no one is left behind’ if it is not accompanied by the people’s warm hearts, it will not be enough to realize that society. Literature is a great way to learn how to be mindful of the vulnerable in society, because it sometimes depicts characters with fragile hearts, and who have suffered setbacks and cannot recover from them. When we are put in the same position as the character in reality, what we learn from the literature works will give us resilience and the thinking needs to stand up again. The mission of literature, which earnestly records the negative elements of people and events from their positions and perspectives, can be activated all over the world.

(Yamane, personal communication, June 26, 2024, translated by author)

Thus, literature is a suitable field for developing learners into thinking, open-minded and caring individuals. “At the end of the day, Literature education should not be about the mere study of fictional texts, but about an exploration of the human condition, about what it means to be a human being and to defend the inherent dignity and worth of others.” (Choo, 2020)

So we can see that it contributes to delivering GCED for all through formal and informal approaches, curricular and extracurricular interventions and conventional and unconventional pathways to participation, as stated by UNESCO in 2014.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This Chapter described what competencies are required to develop creative global human resources, from the perspectives of literature and GCED educators, and organizations, such as the IB. In summary, global citizenship education through literature involves:

- The cultivation of identities, self-esteem (awareness of various identities and their interconnections, and a sense of belonging)
- Understanding, empathy, dialog, and collaboration with others
- knowledge and understanding about global issues and trends, critical thinking skills, communication skills, proactive engagement behavior, and empathy and attitudes as emotional and social competence
- various modes of delivery and at various venues, through formal and informal approaches, curricular and extracurricular interventions and conventional and unconventional pathways to participation

The next Chapter will provide case studies of UNESCO Creative Cities: Liverpool (Music) and Bucheon (Literature) and the work they do to provide creative activities for their citizens.

## Chapter 3: Case Studies of Two Creative Cities

### 3.1. Liverpool

Liverpool is located in the southern-west part of England. Over the centuries, vast numbers of migrants, mostly Irish, and sailors passed through the city as their transit point, making Liverpool a religiously diverse city. It has affected a multicultural legacy and estimated 60 different languages have been spoken there. The city is also famous for its extraordinary musical heritage, known worldwide as the birthplace of The Beatles (the EU Press Service, 2008).

In 2008, Liverpool was elected as the European Capital of Culture. The European Capitals of Culture programme was launched by the European Union in 1985, since then the European Parliament has played a role in deciding the cities, based on the merits of each application and what the city can offer. Cities elected as European Capitals are able to get an international spotlight for one year, giving them the chance to show their cultural life, raise their profile and transform their cultural image (the EU Press Service, 2008). In 2008, Liverpool was evaluated for its economic and cultural renaissance after the decline of traditional industries. In this year, Liverpool held various culture events collaborating with local industries, and communities, to celebrate its own music culture and people (the EU Press Service, 2008).

After this year as the Capital of Culture, Liverpool bid to be a Music City of the UCCN to develop its music offerings at all levels for the benefits of musicians and music lovers by getting a massive boost to the city's international cultural profile through the



network (CABI Digital Library, 2009). The application was led by Liverpool City Council, in partnership with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and finally, in 2015, Liverpool was designated a UNESCO City of Music. “The City also has a thriving, vibrant and varied contemporary music scene, driven by entrepreneurial spirit and a belief in the power of music and culture to effect change, support growth and facilitate engagement”. (UK UNESCO Report 2019, 2019).

### **3.2. Liverpool’s Actions**

In 2015, the UNESCO emphasised the strength, variety and depth of the music community in Liverpool and this has continued to develop since the designation year. Liverpool has a great and varied festival programme including the Liverpool International Music Festival (LIMF), Sound City, Liverpool International Festival of Psychedelia, Africa Oye, Liverpool Music Week, Positive Vibrations Reggae Festival, Baltic Weekender, Future Yard, Milapfest and many more. Liverpool Football clubs have now entered the live music market attracting bigger names to the city, and the success of Liverpool as a festival city has succeeded in attracting other festivals there such as Fusion and Let’s Rock. (UCCN Report, 2019)

In 2017, Liverpool City Council delivered a “Developing a Liverpool City of Music Strategy.” This led to the creation of the Head of UNESCO City of Music post, based in Culture Liverpool. The development of the strategy and the creation of the music board has been positive in ensuring sector priorities (UCCN Report, 2019). Liverpool City Region Music Board set 5 priorities to:

- Ensure the long term development and growth of the Liverpool City Region music industry (including continued support for recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic)
- Support the growth and development of a sustainable music tourism offer across the city region
- Facilitate music and education sectors to come together with a plan to increase engagement in music and investment in and development of talent from all communities across the city region
- Ensure a sustainable and strong network of venues and to work with local authorities across the city region to introduce and implement the Agent of Change principle
- Equality and Diversity

(Liverpool City Region Music Board)

Their plan is based on an inclusive model ensuring that everybody has the opportunity to be involved in music: as a participant, a consumer, in education, through training, as a producer, or through ensuring that people have the right skills to take up employment in the sector. Talent development is a priority as ensuring that music education is better linked to the music industry. Liverpool supports the music sector foundation in order to entice individuals from other areas to relocate here, as they cultivate the city into a renowned music industry hub. “Everyone should have access to music education/talent development/skills training that may equip them for a role in the music sector no matter what part of society they come from or what their gender is. The strategy fits well with such sustainable development goals as Quality Education, Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”. (UCCN Report, 2019, p. 6). Their

strategies demonstrate a clear emphasis on enhancing the city's economic growth and nurturing the upcoming creative individuals across various sectors. Through the integration of music-related policies into the local community, they aim to broaden the opportunities for individuals to cultivate their talents and sensitivities. Here are two of the more notable projects promoted by local communities along the city's initiatives.

### **Workshops with the Philharmonic**

Utilizing its status as a UNESCO Creative City, Liverpool has been promoting community engagement in music fields. The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Everton Children's Orchestras have been working on actions. "The programme has had a huge impact on the children- evident with increased wellbeing and resilience, enhanced aspiration, confidence and motivation and enjoyment." (United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO, 2019, p. 21). Also, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic projected and managed 'Harmony Liverpool'.

The Philharmonic Orchestra uses orchestral music making to improve children's life chances by increasing confidence, wellbeing, skills and resilience, enhanced by opportunities to travel, learn, perform and collaborate with professional musicians, international artists and other young people. This project's vision is a healthier, higher achieving future for North Liverpool. Their target is children and over 40% of those are classed as living in poverty. Every child learns an instrument and creates orchestral music throughout the primary school era, and over 1500 children and young people aged 0-18 are learning music every week with no charge (2019).

By the end of primary school, young musicians have typically taken part in over 140 orchestra rehearsals and 25 performances, with most children playing their instrument at

higher level. 50% of children continue this activity into secondary school, and some of them have moved on to perform in Orchestras at City, National, or Regional levels (UCCN Report, 2019).

These extracurricular programs offer an equal chance for children unable to attend school or from underprivileged backgrounds to enhance their skills in music. Additionally, these programs support sustainable growth within the local community and music industry by expanding children's prospects for the future. It is evident that engaging in music on a daily basis can contribute to children's mental well-being, self-assurance, and communication skills with their members.

The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra has collaborated with the NDR Radio Philharmonie Hannover in Germany for the War Requiem Project in 2018. This project promoted mutual understanding and peace as a centenary event to commemorate the end of the First World War. It is possible that some individuals from the younger generation may be defensive or disinterested when discussing the past wars. Utilizing the soft power of music can effectively expand their curiosity and encourage them to share comprehension of historical occurrences, thereby equipping them with valuable knowledge.

### **The Liverpool International Music Festival**

The Liverpool International Music Festival (LIMF) is a council backed and managed event which takes place over a weekend in a city park and attracts over 50,000 people. It makes high quality music available to a local audience who are unlikely to afford to attend music events. Therefore, all events serve to increase access to cultural life and music opportunities for all Liverpool citizens.

They also use the event to provide an important platform for young Liverpool artists who would not have the opportunity to perform at such a big event, which broadens the opportunities available for creators. One of the stages is named the UNESCO City of Music stage, raising awareness of their designation as a Music City.

In 2019, they facilitated a collaboration between musicians from Hannover in Germany, which is also the City of Music in the UCCN, rather than just providing an opportunity for musicians to perform at the events. The collaboration leads to a deeper and potentially longer relationship between them. They performed the set together at the UNESCO City of Music stage at the LIMF Festival in 2019 (UCCN Report, 2019).

LIMF also has collaborated with the BBC, national Broadcasting, to have the performance opportunity for young artists at LIMF as well as other showcases which give them internationally performing opportunities. This collaboration was made possible thanks to the UCCN network because of the partnership between other Cities of Music. This programme aims to drive objectives such as:

- Improving access to and participation in cultural life
- Strengthening the creative economy
- Broadening opportunities for creators.

(UCCN Report, 2019)

These activities provide more opportunities for both artists and locals to experience the high-quality music fusion to various genres of music. It also contributes to the training of young artists by bringing global opportunities. By organizing international events locally, it is also possible to keep raising awareness both local and global. It also helps to promote understanding of each other's culture and history through music that can be shared by all

humanity. This will also facilitate the development of an open-mindedness that is an attitude of acceptance of the unfamiliar.

### **3.3. Bucheon**

Bucheon is located in the North-West part of South Korea. This city has about eighty-seven thousand people, and is known as a reborn industrial and migrant city. One of the characteristics of this city is having several festivals in the field of street dance, art, movie, animation, cartoon, and literature. In the 1990's, the city was rapidly modernized and industrialized because of the new town development initiatives. At the same time, Bucheon has promoted a Cultural Policy that fosters creative industries, high cultural awareness in its citizens, and social inclusion under the slogans: 'Cultural City Bucheon'. As part of the city's cultural initiatives, libraries networks within the city were strengthened to ensure greater access to books and education while raising awareness among the younger generation (UNESCO, n.d.).

Since then, this city has grown as a cultural city especially famous for films, cartoons and animation. Bucheon is known for its famous international festivals such as Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (IFFF) which is one of the biggest and most famous film festivals in Asia, Bucheon International Animation Festival (BIAF). This city combines film, animation, and comics industries into literature industries because those fields' commonality lies in the use of written word in their artistic expression.

Since Bucheon is famous for its libraries networks and international festivals related to the literature fields, the city applied to the UCCN in the Literature Field in 2016 with a slogan: "The Power of Literature to Change Lives". It means that literature can give people

dreams even under poverty or adversity. In 2017, Bucheon was designated as a Literature City, the first from East Asia.

### **3.4. Bucheon's Actions**

Bucheon has utilized “story” as the foundation for UCCN initiatives and has continued to enhance its capacity as a cultural asset. Since 2018, Bucheon City’s goal is to be a city where citizens are encouraged to freely share their thoughts and emotions, and a city that values and respects the voices of its citizens. Bucheon set cultural initiatives in three areas (people, urban environment, and economics), vowing to:

- Increase the civic cultural rights in order to increase the quality of citizen’s lives
- Establish the groundwork for creating an urban democracy focused on fostering a cultural city through citizen participation
- Develop enduring cultural ecosystems that foster the growth of their own communities.

(Digital Bucheon Culture Festival, n.d.)

The citizens play a central role in advancing the cultural policy and global presence of the city in a community with a varied demographic. Therefore, literature activities are organized by the citizens' committee, which consists of the ‘Olives’, memberships for those who support the cultural city Bucheon. They collect citizens' opinions, and propose and implement cultural policies. Whoever agrees with Buchoen’s cultural visions can participate in this committee. The individuals who served as committee members in 2023 expressed that it provided them with a chance to explore the city's attractions that were previously unfamiliar

to them. Upon coordinating and taking part in the Urban Stories Literature Festival, they remarked that reading the completed works of the participants and listening to their motivations and concepts was a valuable experience. Furthermore, some commented that it was really splendid to see many citizens communicating with each other through the various types of projects (Bucheon Cultural Foundation, 2023).

Encouraging citizen-led activities not only helps to involve more individuals and groups in activities and build networks in the city, but also strengthens citizens' spontaneous attitudes, communication and thinking skills. Also, the age range of the committee members, in order of percentage, is 30's (28.7%), 40's (27.6%), 20's (18.6%), 50's (14.3%), 60's (7.7%), and 10's (2.8%) (Bucheon Cultural Foundation, 2023). It can be said that having people from a wide range of generations on the committee encourages to have events that are appropriate for people of all ages. This will be a necessary environment in promoting GCED which is to empower learners across the generations as noted in the previous chapter.

Stories, which have continued from ancient cultures to the present day, have the power to record and transmit common social and cultural memories as well as empathising with the lives of individual citizens. Culture City based on stories, along with the conservation of historical cultural legacy, enables individuals to constantly dialogue and communicate about the area and establish future city values and identities. The city is also working to let all citizens access the cultural legacy easily by reconstructing archive materials and improving accessibility convenience and sharing (Bucheon Cultural Foundation, 2023).

The city has undertaken many events to promote the literary habits of its citizens. For example:



**Writing Programs:** which enable all residents to write a book based on their own life experiences or other topics of their choice. The city is striving to boost reading habits among local residents by broadening the resources and services available at public libraries, in order to support residents in becoming both creators and consumers of literature. People who have completed the course are serving as teachers in schools, libraries and welfare centers to pass on what they have learned to others. (Cities of Literature, 2024).

**Reading programs** which encourage participants to have their regular and healthy reading habits in a chosen course by steadily reading books, as if they were running a marathon. This program starts in April and finishes in December and has an average 2000 participants every year.

**Emotional Dictionary** project which records the lives of citizens and the diverse emotions of those living today and publishes them in a book. In 2023, 37 citizens from different generations and occupations including children, youth, migrants and adolescents were selected. This project aimed to enliven the emotions of each generation and express and share everyday feelings. This project bridges the generation gap between participants, fostering a deeper mutual understanding of each other's emotions across age groups.

By holding these events for citizens, an environment is created that encourages more people to stimulate their creativity and sensitivity, to reflect on their own feelings, to explore art in the city, to raise their awareness of the local community (spontaneous), and to express their feelings (open-minded). This will strengthen the qualities necessary for creative global human resources.

Furthermore, the most remarkable characteristic of Literature City Bucheon is its well-organized library network comprising 128 libraries in total, including public and private ones. Even in the markets, in the subways, and offices, there are mini libraries. Bucheon introduced

a well-resourced municipal delivery system for disadvantaged groups to have access to literature. At the same time, two libraries have been established for immigrants and foreign workers (UNESCO, n.d). In terms of the university libraries, most of them are open to the public (Cities of Literature, 2024). Some libraries have immersive experience rooms which create the world of famous literature works, as well as spaces for creative activities in other fields, such as T-shirt printing and coffee roasting.

Additionally, there are libraries that have English-specific programmes that nurture children's dreams in English, which can be attended by parents and children, and those where support the dreams of youth by setting up private rooms for interviews, or open creative studios in the library (Bucheon Cultural Foundation, 2023). Libraries serve the public by being more than just a facility where books are checked out, but also a place where people can develop their creativity, multicultural awareness and have dreams through stories. It can be assumed that these initiatives could have been implemented in more libraries because of the network for information sharing between libraries within the city.

After the designation as Literature City of the UCCN in 2017, Bucheon enhanced literature initiatives more than ever before, and in 2019, Bucheon was selected as a court cultural city by the Government of Korea. As a Creative City of Literature, Bucheon also envisages implementing the GCED programme which helps participants to achieve a broader understanding of global citizenship through literature (UNESCO, n.d.). Bucheon City received 10 billion won in support from the government from 2022 to 2024, enabling it to establish and execute various initiatives (Digital Bucheon Culture Festival, 2022).

More information should be written in this chapter, however, Korea restricts access to the homepage from overseas. They publish the reflections and achievements of literature events in Korean. Based on this, it can be assumed that they target their own citizens. Those

who possess a strong cultural awareness tend to have increased exposure to various cultural aspects in their everyday routines, which in turn contributes to their elevated levels of literacy skills.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In this Chapter, it was researched about Liverpool and Bucheon, both are designated as UNESCO Creative Cities. Both cities implemented cultural strategies into their initiatives. They have been implementing cultural policies long before the applications.

In Liverpool, this city enriched musical resources and was registered as an European Cultural Capital City before the application to the UCCN. UCCN encourages the expansion of the music network throughout residences. Establishing a network with various related parties in the city enables music to be integrated into the daily lives of citizens, including those who typically have limited access to musical experiences. Furthermore, fostering international collaborations within the UCCN can help in the development of human resources through long-term projects. Additionally, having connections with other cities can offer local citizens the chance to broaden their global outlook. Through the music programs to the children, we can presume culture has the power to nurture children's mind, talents, and attitudes as well.

Since joining the UCCN, Bucheon has been organising events that develop citizens who support the sustainable and creative development of the city through all the arts with focus on storytelling, and literature. By ensuring that public spaces are open to children, youth, and their families, the city is transforming into a hub for human resource development through cultural activities.

## **Chapter 4: Investigating Okayama City's Potential via UCCN**

This Chapter investigates Okayama City's current development efforts since joining the UCCN. The information below was collected via research of available documents online, including the official application to the UCCN submitted in 2023, as well as interviews with key organizers of the project.

### **4.1. Okayama City of Literature**

Okayama City, which has a population of 717,000, is located in the west of Japan. This city faces the Seto Inland Sea, surrounded by nature including the Asahi River, which has given inspiration to poets and writers since the 8th century. This City is currently attempting to “use literature resources to activate the region through public-private partnerships, involving various generations” (Okayama City, 2022) by becoming a UNESCO Creative City of Literature.

Okayama is famous as the birthplace of “Momotaro,” which is one of Japan's most beloved folktales. This story promotes the spirit of supporting others and affinity for animals in children. Okayama has utilized this folktale as a symbol and important cultural resource in various situations for decades if not longer (Okayama City, 2022).

Also, in 2021, the Okayama Prefectural Library had the highest numbers in prefectural libraries in Japan, which had over 700,000 visitors, and over 1.1 million individual books checked out. “According to a statistical survey published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the number of establishments per 100,000 people in both the book and magazine retailing and used book

retailing sectors is the second highest among the 20 designated cities in Japan”. (Application Form, 2024). Okayama also organizes the Joji Tsubota Literature Award for 40 years. “By promoting literature, we aim to realize mentally rich civic lives with peace of mind to make an attractive and creative society.” (Application Form, 2023, p.6).

‘Declining birthrate and aging population society’ are concerns nationally and locally in Japan. Okayama City expects to have around 690,000 people in 2045, which will be a decrease of about 29,000 compared to 2015 (Okayama City Hall, 2022). It also released data on the decreasing ratio of the population of productive age (15~64 years) and youth age (0~14 years). Okayama is concerned with impacts on local communities socially and economically.

Meanwhile, information and communication technology (ICT) has been developed and disseminated through the COVID-19 pandemic. It has enabled societies to interact and dialog over physical distances. Utilizing ICT, the Okayama City is attempting to expand the accessibility of culture and art information and diverse interactions and activities (Okayama City Hall, 2022).

In 2012, Okayama City formulated, *The Okayama City Vision for Culture and Arts Promotion*. In 2022, Okayama City formulated, *The Okayama City Culture and Art Promoting Plan* and enacted *The Okayama City Basic Ordinance for Culture and Arts* to promote culture and art projects sustainably, comprehensively and systematically. The City aims to realize a mentally rich civic lifestyle with peace of mind to make an attractive and creative society (Okayama City Application Form, 2023).

According to this plan (2022), there are seven themes: Fascinate, Intimate, Gather, Support, Create, Nurture, and Connect.” Okayama City’s application to the United Nations Creative City Network (UCCN), particularly with the goal of “gathering” in mind. In October 2023 Okayama City was officially registered to the UCCN as the Literature City.

## 4.2. Literature Initiatives

Okayama City has been aging, globalizing, and diversifying. *The Okayama City Culture and Art Promoting Plan* is expected to address current concerns by integrating culture and art into citizens' lives (Application Form, 2023). Okayama City's prior policies to promote literature include the 2022 "Proposal for Further Promotion of Cultivation of Minds for Community Development through Literature to the City" and the creation of "The Okayama Creative City of Literature Promotion Council", which includes writers, literary researchers, librarians, community center directors, bookstore owners, directors of literary centers, chambers of commerce and industry, representatives of civic groups, local media, educational and research institutions, and various other groups involved in literature, which was established to update and implement the action plan.

Okayama City is "characterised by its literary resources, particularly children's literature, which are rooted in history, and by its attempts to use these resources to activate the region through public-private partnerships, involving various generations" (Application Form, 2023, p.5). Okayama City officials believe UCCN membership will foster the development of creative human resources, such as writers and editors, and have a positive impact on the industries. "We aim to strengthen the creation and dissemination of cultural activities, and exchange knowledge and experiences with member cities of the UCCN. We aim to foster civic pride and deepen attachment to our city by encouraging citizens to reevaluate it through literature." (Application Form, 2023).

Okayama City set the purposes and goals as the Literature City since 2024, referring to the fundamental philosophy of the UCCN as:

1. Promoting the realization of social inclusion centered on literature, and initiatives through literature for the socially vulnerable, such as the disabled and the elderly, and children to provide opportunities expanding their relationships through literature activities;
  - a. by considering various methods, including print media, digital content, and virtual reality to make literature accessible to diverse generations,
  - b. in collaboration with university professors and students to create environments in which children and staff from orphanages can interact with each other and experience how to interact with others and express their feelings,
2. Developing new programs which foster creative human resources to improve local creators' creativity utilizing Okayama City's literary basement, which has produced prominent writers such as Joji Tsubota and Yoko Ogawa, and to expand the creativity of literature into other artistic fields, such as theater by;
  - a. expanding creative workshops in relation to creative encouragement initiatives collaborating with literature departments of universities in Okayama City,
  - b. promoting training programs for playwrights utilizing the new Okayama Performing Arts Theatre as a culture and art basement,
3. Organizing competitions for students and youth on the subject of literature to promote the participation of young people and support writers and performers in the creation of their work by;
  - a. producing digital illustrations and videos in cooperation to Okayama City and high school students,
  - b. holding exhibitions in conjunction with the "Okayama Art Summit" and "Setouchi Triennale" to bring opportunities for lots of people from inside and

outside of Japan see works (i.e. works created by high school students, inspired by Japanese authors, or that combine literature and calligraphy),

Okayama City also set goals to play a significant international role as the Literature Cities for the achievement mission of the UCCN by:

4. *Hosting* International Okayama Writers-in-Residence in order to promote intercultural creative activities through exchanges with writers from around the world (since 2024) by setting up opportunities for various visits to cultural and historical facilities, as well as providing support for artists to conduct fieldwork in the region and deepen their experiential understanding of the area;
  - a. to provide learning opportunities about literature and the local community related to Okayama through the interactions with citizens for domestic and international authors staying in Okayama City for several months,
  - b. to empower local creative talents through interaction and collaborative activities,
5. Developing an International Book Delivery Project as a citizen-participatory project (since 2024) which sends translated picture books to children in countries where picture books are not widely available with an international public interest organization, students, and children;
  - a. to enhance the quality of education in areas lacking books and education,
  - b. to deepen participants' understanding of various social and environmental situations, which develop prerequisite knowledge to address achievement of multiple SDGs Indicators,
6. Hosting an international conference on the sustainable development of cities through creative activities, specifically in the field of Literature organized by UCCN cities



around the world, focusing mainly on the East Asia region from 2025, based on the close relationship of neighbouring cities including Bucheon;

- a. to promote the distribution of literary works from other member cities to Japan,
- b. to provide translations of literature from Okayama City to other member cities utilizing UCCN,
- c. to raise and train local volunteers, students, and international student translators,
- d. To make it possible for coordinating a similar conference to be held every other year in the East Asian region.

(2024, Okayama City Hall as translated and formatted by the author)

From these initiatives it can be seen that the final goal of the city is having civic pride and deepening attachment to the city, which may in turn help locals form deeper identities as citizens of Okayama, a City of Literature. Additionally, while these initiatives are not directly linked to GCED, global competency development outcomes, e.g. citizens with increased global knowledge, creativity, communication skills and sense of caring for others, both locally and abroad.

In an interview with Mr. Nagareo, on June 21th 2024, one of the key members of City Hall responsible for Okayama's City of Literature application process, he provided information on several projects which explain how these initiatives are already impacting the local community:

1. Collaboration with the welfare industry, for example, storytelling programs for children in orphanages (noted above).

2. Collaboration with Okayama Shrine's biannual Flea Market. This spring, the Literature Promotion Council collaborated with the organizers and sold books at mobile vending and pop-up used books stores. A wide range of visitors, including parents and children, young people in their 20s and 30s, and people in their 50s and elderly were interested in this attempt.
3. Literature Tours planned by the Okayama Visitors & Convention Association: An official staff in the Okayama Visitors & Convention Association is also a member of the Okayama Creative City of Literature Promotion Council to contribute to increasing the number of people who visit Okayama City. According to her, when they organized a literature bus tour for citizens, they had enough applications and quickly reached their target number of applicants. What made participants decide to apply for the tour was that they would be able to learn new aspects of Okayama that they didn't know about, and it would be a good learning experience for the child etc. In the future, Okayama City will also promote its literature resources for tourism.
4. Okayama Literature Festivals: One festival, which started in 2022, as the Setouchi Book Cruise, lasted for almost three weeks and was attended by almost five thousand people each year (The Okayama Creative City of Literature Promotion Council, 2024, p.6). This year, an event called Okayama ZINE Stadium was also held. Creators from inside and outside of the city made self-produced booklets and sold their works at the stadium. At first, they set the maximum number of applications as 60. However, they accepted around 80 entries in the end. Some of them were high school and university students who were in literature clubs or departments. Mr. Nagareo was surprised that there are a number of people who have creative urges, and want to produce literature works and share them in this area. The success of this event supports substantiating the hypothesis that Okayama City is suitable for growing talents.

5. Exchanges with other UCCN Literature Cities: In November 2023, Okayama City staff including Mr. Nagareo. in the Cultural Promotion Division were invited to the Bucheon Diaspora Literary Awards Ceremony in Korea. At the ceremony venue, he met and exchanged opinions with official staff from other designated Literature Cities. Also, in July 2024, the UCCN Annual Conference was held in Braga, Portugal. He participated in the conference with the Mayor of Okayama City. Through these opportunities, First of all, they work on sending staff from Okayama City Hall to such international conferences to exchange with those from other designated cities. Eventually, they would like to encourage the members of the Promotion Council to participate in these opportunities.

Through these events, and collaborations, Okayama City indexes what kind of activities attract citizens, and makes comparisons with other Literature City activities. So far, Okayama City has collaborated with stakeholders who may not initially be perceived as having a connection to the literature field to involve individuals who might develop a future interest in literature.

### **4.3. Interviews with Okayama City of Literature Organizers**

In this section, It will report on an interview of two people who are the members of the Okayama Creative City of Literature Promotion Council, established in May 2022, to present the current situation after joining the network, and find out their future plans for the Literature City of Okayama, particularly with regard to fostering creative global human resources.

These semi structured qualitative interviews were conducted face to fact and lasted about 1.5 hours each. At each interview, I shared brief explanations, personal ideas about this thesis theme, and questions ahead of time.

The first person is Mr. Nagareo, the Supervisor of the Cultural Promotion Division, Citizens Community Bureau, Okayama City Hall. Some of his contributions to this paper are already mentioned in this chapter. He serves as the main communication contact with the UCCN. The second person is Prof. Yamane, a professor of Japanese Literature Department at Notre Dame Seishin University. She too was noted in Chapter 2. She has also been a member of the Joji Tsubota Literary Award Committee since 2000. To familiarize the Literature Award to citizens, she started studying and promoting information about Joji Tsubota.

I asked them both to consider how the UCCN framework impacts Okayama and how literature contributes to local learners.

#### **4.3.1. Mr. Nagareo on the Current and Future Literary Initiatives of Okayama City**

According to Mr. Nagareo, the Okayama Creative City of Literature Promotion Council defines ‘Literature’ as “artistic activities and works with letters.” In addition to books, they include plays, calligraphy, and more. Okayama City has the challenge of not having a high level of recognition as the Literature City in the UCCN. Thus, the city is now in a stage of creating a framework to increase the number of stakeholders.

The UNESCO Creative City status plays a role as a bond for the members and organizations in Okayama with different positions and experiences to get together and build a network to enhance Okayama Creative City of Literature. They ask local community members to get on board with the projects that the city prepares. Additionally, they sponsor projects that communities may already be working on. In concrete, to the Non-Profit Organizations (NPO), Okayama City Hall announces their storytelling events at the city's

official home page. The merit of NPOs increases in credits and a sense of security to the participants and related parties, so that they can progress the events smoothly.

It is most crucial to make the status, Okayama Creative City of Literature, more visible to all citizens. Then, they will gradually shift to interactive approaches to enhance the literature promotion network within the city. In terms of the international exchange, they are still figuring out ways to do this, but still proceeding to take action. For example, in the month of August 2024, they held a bilingual talk with the noted Irish Author, Lucy Caldwell, at Okayama University.

In the future, he hopes more media will join the Promotion Council to make more citizens aware of the Okayama Creative City of Literature. At present, Okayama City is the only Japanese literary city in the UCCN among the prominent literature cities in Japan. They are proud to be the first city in the network. They would like to utilize their literary resources and promote cooperation with any literature cities of the UCCN.

In this context, Okayama City needs to solidify the content of their projects and initiatives within the city in order to better promote Okayama Creative City of Literature to outsiders. The city is going to promote mainly the Residency Programme. What is needed to be intense Creative Cities projects including the residency programme is to connect with people in the network, understand the resources they have, and then coordinate with them.

### **4.3.2. Professor Yamane on the Benefits and Challenges of Literature**

#### **Education**

Professor Yamane spoke primarily of the preciousness of the Joji Tsubota Literature Award, because it is accepted by citizens and Okayama City Hall is willing to continue

promoting it, whereas more and more literature awards organized by administrations are being dismissed these days. To her, this situation is precious and we have to keep promoting this 40 years-continued award. In addition she described other examples of literature projects that developed students' literary (and global) competencies.

In 2009 radio play programs about Joji Tsubota's literature works were created by students at Notre Dame Seishin University. These sixty-minute programs continued for one year, and were broadcast every Friday evening at Radio Momo of Okayama City FM. Her students organized every part of the program, including writing play scripts, playing voice actors, making sound effects, directing plays, practicing schedules, and recording at the studio.

Students improved their reading comprehension, and a wide range of knowledge related to the themes of the works. For this project, they had to read meticulously and summarize the work to write scripts. Writing scripts require writers to summarize the whole works into the program length, think deeply about the characters' minds and whether the perspective was balanced or not, and reflect the contents. Additionally, students had worked as a group so that they could cultivate their collaborative skills in the process of making plays.

Through this activity, Yamane gained confidence that student-led activities can spread literature into citizens' lives and cultivate students' abilities at the same time. She also felt that literature has the power to communicate with modern youth enthusiastically across the eras, even with one hundred year old texts. She recognized that a literature legacy can be utilized to realize sustainable development of culture and arts in the city with students.

In April 2017, Okayama City Hall launched the Joji Tsubota World Explorers project as a challenge for university students. For the next five years, students primarily from Prof.

Yamane's classes volunteered to promote the project. Recognizing the project's success, the university formalized it as a university course from 2022-2024.

To revitalize Okayama City through Joji Tsubota's legacy, students created a promotional brochure highlighting his literary works. While working on this project, Prof. Yamane discovered her students' diverse talents. One student produced comics to simplify Joji Tsubota's life story for a wide audience, from children to seniors. Another student composed a theme song to increase public awareness of the project. This student's musical abilities, developed since elementary school, were evident in the song's creation. Through this experience, Prof. Yamane realized that literary activities not only cultivate reading skills but also foster a range of artistic (creative) talents.

Regarding the challenges faced by literature educators, she said that high school students have less opportunities to read literature works because practical writing dominates in high school classes, with a sharp decline in literary works read due to new curriculum guidelines implemented from 2022 (Mainichi Newspaper, 2021).

When Prof. Yamane asked a professor in the English department of the Notre Dame Seishin University, who is from Zimbabwe, to translate Joji Tsubota's literature into English, the professor told her that she felt a nostalgia from this literature, even though the setting of the novel was Okayama in Meiji era. From her impression, Prof. Yamane noticed the universality of literature. At a time when society is increasingly moving literature away from learning opportunities at a national level. It is necessary to assert to society that literature is in fact necessary for people, especially for students, to keep enriching their emotions and providing chances they can develop their abilities.

Professor Yamane noted a lack of recognition of Okayama as a City of Literature among local citizens, or its significance. Sometimes it seems to be hard for them to understand the connection between literature and their expertise industries. Ms B. thinks that it is not necessary for the citizens attending City of Literature events to understand the relationship in their minds. However, she believes that it is important for community leaders to understand and promote the significance of the UCCN and Okayama City's literature activities in order to promote them.

Finally, from the perspective of a university professor, this new initiative, joining the UCCN, for Okayama City, needs the engagement of youth. Local people will be inspired and energised by the youth activities as well. Therefore, we need to create opportunities for young people to develop themselves and for local people to be inspired by youth.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

We can see that Okayama City possesses abundant resources, including people, places, and historical assets, that can contribute to a vibrant and creative community fostering mental well-being and peace of mind. The city is actively identifying and developing these resources to integrate them into a cohesive literature project network. Efforts are underway to increase public awareness, aiming to enhance citizen appreciation for the city's literary resources and initiatives. This approach supports the Promotion Council's work in establishing internal literary frameworks and networks. However, a significant challenge lies in the low public awareness of both the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) and Okayama's status as a Literature City. This hinders efforts to expand literary programs and engage a wider audience.



From Professor Yamane's perspective, literature activities can develop learners' literary competencies: ownership, spontaneity, balance, reflection, caring, thinking, knowledge, curiosity, respect, cooperation, resilience, and recognition of self-identity, thanks to literature's ability to convey knowledge across regions, cultures and generations.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter will discuss answers to the two thesis questions presented in Chapter 1, based on the data collected and presented in previous chapters.

### 5.1. What are the competencies of creative global human resources?

While GCED scholars may have varying definitions and requirements for global citizens, the research that has gone into this paper has highlighted a number of commonly noted competencies. If we compare those outlined in the International Baccalaureate's Learner Profile with those that most often appear in the context of UNESCO Creative Cities, particularly those focusing on Literature, we can an emphasis on the following global competencies:

**Knowledgeable:** As it was said in Chapter 2, literature conveys a wide range of occurrences and emotions that we have never encountered. It navigates us to understand complexities in real society and people's minds. It is required to consider global issues with ownerships. The

International Book Delivery

Project in Okayama helps Okayama citizens to know what happens in counties in which children have insufficient education resources. This opportunity encourages people to expand their horizons widely and globally.



**Thinkers:** When we face unprecedented and complex issues in globalized society, it is helpful to have creative thinking. Literature contributes to developing creative thinking. Bucheon has writing programs which enable all residents to write a book based on their own life experiences or other topics of their choice. This program encourages people to think creatively about how they put their experiences into the stories. At Okayama's literature festival, people had chances to make self-produced booklets and sell their works at the stadium. This program enables people to express their mind and emotion creatively. Referring to Chapter 2.5, creative thinking skill is a base of other emotional and social competences.

**Inquires** refers to people who have curiosity. Encounters with foreign cultures stimulate people's curiosity which sparks their desire to explore new worlds. In Liverpool, they hold international music festivals collaborating with other countries' musicians. In Bucheon, they have writing programs in which participants explore parks in the city to determine the subject of their works. Through these cultural activities including literature, people can cultivate their curiosity locally and globally. Curiosity makes people move forward outside of their comfort zone, which leads them to possess challenging skills as well.

**Open-mindedness** is important to show respect to others regardless of their various backgrounds, origins, cultures, and perspectives. Literature can contribute to accepting people's diversity. Bucheon's emotional dictionary program aims to let people share and understand their feelings, backgrounds, across the generations. It assists in connecting the divide between one another across the era and area as Prof. Yamane said.

**Balanced:** This competence is important for people to balance their global and local perspectives, their own opinions with those of others. From the case of the radio play programs created by the Notre Dame Seishin University students, we can find that literature provides us balanced perspectives by comparing author's thoughts and ours. In the interview,

Mr. Nagareo said that when they hold international literature conferences and festivals in the future, they will have to balance local perspectives and global ones. To have international events in local cities, it is ideal that citizens have balanced skills.

**Caring:** Citizens with this competency actually take action to help others and the environment. As global human resources, it is desirable to be inclusive and respectful to others by possessing the mind 'No one left behind'. As Prof. Yamane said, literature portrays a wide range of emotions in characters, so it helps readers become more careful of others' situations and feelings. Literature activities can have a positive impact on people's caring competences. Last year, a class in Notre Dame Seishin university did storytelling to children in an Orphanage. According to a student who participated in the storytelling project, she realized that the storytelling gave listeners:

- An opportunity to encounter new values, worlds, and perspectives
- A chance to open their minds to actively explore new worlds
- Helped orphaned children realize that they are not alone, since storytelling involves more than one person, and they can also see their own life in other people's stories

**Communicators:** In globalized society, we need people who communicate internationally. When the three cities hold international festivals such as Liverpool International Music Festival, and Bucheon International Comic Festival, they need communicators who can connect people across the national boundaries and cultures. Therefore, the communicators have to be open-mindedness (work flexibility), and have translation/interpretation skills. As with open-mindedness, literature empowers people's communication competence. Also, reading books written in another language eradicates barriers to different languages.

**Reflective:** This thesis highlights the significance of developing one's own identity and self-esteem. This element is crucial for individuals to possess in order to cultivate understanding, empathy, dialogue, and collaboration with society and others, who can effectively navigate the rapidly evolving world. In Bucheon, they promote creative human resources in the local communities through the civic-led programs. In the annual reports, most of participants said that thanks to this experience, they could reevaluate their literature resources, and attractions of the city. Reflection process brings people to take a look back at their identities. Fostering a sense of civic pride and attachment to the city encourages the acknowledgement of their identities as local citizenship.

In addition to the competencies that were in common with the IB, there were some other interesting competencies that appeared in the research, which could also be classified as 'global.' As Prof. Yamane said, literature conveys how to be mindful of the vulnerable in society and how to stand up from setbacks. Many would call this resilience. We can nurture our resilience by reflecting on the actions of characters in stories and comparing them with our own reality. In addition, Literature is a great way to learn how to be mindful, because it sometimes depicts characters with fragile hearts, and who have suffered setbacks and cannot recover from them. When we are put in the same position as the character in reality, what we learn from literature will give us resilience and the ability to stand up again.

## **5.2. What UNESCO Creative Cities do to Nurture Creative Global Human Resources**

Many examples of particular actions to nurture creative global human resources have already been noted above and in previous chapters. Firstly, it should be noted that according to the examples of the three cities, achieving the title of a Creative City in the UCCN does not automatically change a city into a creative city. Within the UCCN framework, UNESCO does not provide specific funding to individual cities, and it is up to each city to determine how to integrate the shared goals of the UCCN into their own policies by developing detailed initiatives and strategies.

Rather, these cities' stakeholders have a commitment to nurture creative human resources. The main advantage for cities joining the UCCN is that it will be easier for citizens to recognise the art elements and have opportunities to experience the art in their daily lives in their cities. The designation delivers opportunities for literary activities to a wider base, not only to artists, but also to citizens and visitors.

Bucheon and Okayama provide chances for citizens, not necessarily writers, to produce their own literature pieces and provide them with a platform to present them to the public, which can foster global competencies such as creativity, communication skills and a spirit of challenge. An example of this is the case of Okayama, which has been engaged in university student literature extension programs (e.g. radio dramas) in the community. Hopefully activities like this can become more common now that Okayama is recognized as a City of Literature

In addition, using Liverpool as a model, Okayama, through its UNESCO membership, should focus not only on economic development, but also on welfare aspects in the city to

deliver cultural experiences to all people, which in turn will develop lifelong learner competences. It is good to see this is already happening in Okayama's first year, through its literature programs for the elderly and disadvantaged youth. Using creative programming to partner literature with non-traditional traditional fields will help in achieving the goal of reaching a wider learner community.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

This answered the questions of how global competencies are defined, and how they overlap with competencies in the field of literature, as well as what UNESCO Creative Cities can do to foster global competencies in their citizens. With regard to question 1, the discussion was framed in terms of the timeless impact literature can have on people and the impact GCED can have on all generations of learners. For question 2, the case studies of the three cities provide insight into the role of each sector in the development of creative global talent, despite some of the limitations within the UCCN itself (e.g. lack of funding and clear definition of a 'Creative City'). The next and final chapter of this thesis will address the potential implications of UCCN member cities.

## **Chapter 6: Concluding Thoughts**

In this chapter, I will summarize the research, provide implications, and describe the limitations. Lastly, I will add suggestions for further research.

### **6.1. Summary of the Research**

Through this research, it was found that cities do not transform into an ideal hub fostering creative global human resources just by joining the UCCN. Cities in the network have enrichment cultural legacies before the designation. Getting membership of the UCCN is an opportunity to strengthen the network of stakeholders within the city and make these cultural resources visible to citizens. Exploring the cultural resources and delivering the benefits from these cultural resources to entire citizens to expand maximum for the cities' sustainable and creative developments are the merits of the UNESCO Creative Cities.

Cities promote Creative Cities Projects collaborating with multiple individuals, and groups including, libraries, local cultural groups, media companies, communities centers, retail stores, educational institutions and so on. Enhancing the collaboration between those within a city can maximise the impact of cultural influence on people. Then, with long-term perspectives, it is effective to bring a global point of view via exchanging programs with other Creative Cities. Therefore, it can be said that it is feasible to develop human resources with global citizenship competencies in the Creative Cities. However, insufficient acknowledgement of the UCCN among citizens and potential stakeholders (e.g. librarians, professors, business professionals) of creative cities can impede the city's advancement in promoting Creative City initiatives.



## 6.2. Implications

This research has provided three noteworthy implications with regard to global competency development and UNESCO Creative Cities. Firstly, In terms of thinking skills, it was found that literature contributes to developing creative thinking. However, it should be noted that ‘critical’ thinking skills were not mentioned in the studies of Liverpool, Bucheon or Okayama. Chapter 2 described how we can nurture our critical thinking through rigorous study of literature. It is common recognition that reading is effective for critical thinking skills, thus we can assume that citizens of Creative Cities of Literature should be able to develop their critical thinking skills as well.

In addition, given the international nature of the UCCN, it can also be implied that a significant effort may be required by cities like Okayama, to put time, effort and resources into foreign language communication (i.e. communicative competence) This will be particularly true for Cities of Literature in non-English speaking countries, if they want their stories to be read beyond their borders or if they are planning to host international events.

It can also be said that focusing on human resource development through culture also contributes to the sustainable and creative development of the city itself. In 2023, Liverpool was a host city on behalf of the Ukraine of Eurovision, the biggest music festival in Europe. It turned out to be one of the most successful Eurovisions ever. It would not have happened without the years of work by the city’s local and combined authorities that have done much to support and grow their cultural and creative sector. “The past investment helped to nurture artists and creatives living in and moving to the city” (Liverpool City Council, 2023).

Statistically, Eurovision boosted the Liverpool City Region economy by £54.8million, 473,000 people attended Eurovision events in the city and an additional 306,000 visitors

headed to Liverpool to be part of the celebrations (Liverpool City Council, 2023). Director of Culture Liverpool, Claire McColagan said that “As a UNESCO City of Music we are always looking both inwardly at what we can do to support and boost this valued sector, but equally at how our reputation as a music city is communicated to those outside of the city – nationally and internationally.” (Culture Liverpool, 2023)

As we know from this case, cities can enhance their global reputation through cultural diplomacy with the help of the network established by the UCCN and the cultivated human resources. It is possible to reproduce it in Okayama City as well.

### **6.3. Limitations**

The scope of this thesis was limited to only three UCCN cities, and two were Literature Cities in East Asia.. Regarding UCCN cities in the other regions, they may have quite different initiatives. In addition, in Liverpool, Bucheon, and Okayama, the City Hall serves the UCCN administrative offices within the cities. However, in some cities, Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) lead the UCCN administrative offices of the cities. In this case, their goals, purposes joining the UCCN may be different. These three cities set their own goals for sustainable and creative development including developing human resources. Thus, the results of this thesis are limited by the Creative Cities’ conditions such as region, administrative compositions, size of the cities, initiatives, and so on.

In addition, this study focused on the potential for developing global competencies in Creative Cities, but relied on documents and interviews with organizers that primarily outlined proposals and goals, not actual results in terms of global competency development. To measure actual evidence of global competency development would require further study beyond the scope of this paper.

## **6.4. Suggestions for Further Research**

This thesis was researched mainly through literature review and qualitative interviews. In the future, researchers may wish to do follow up studies by collecting information from related parties' or people's perspectives, i.e. the citizens themselves who participate in literature events, or by the author actually going to the events.

Moreover, in future studies, researchers could organise storytelling events targeting local children in libraries and community centres to examine how the literature affects their minds, especially the GCED abilities. Before and after the events, researchers could ask participants, including parents, to answer the questions and compare both to find to what extent literature develops children's competencies.

## **6.5. Conclusion**

This thesis discussed development of creative global human resources in Creative Cities in the UCCN. Hopefully, this thesis will contribute to the promotion of creative human resource development in cities, even if only in a small way by making the reader aware of and interested in the existence of those UNESCO networks. And, finally, I'd like to show appreciation to all those who helped with this study.

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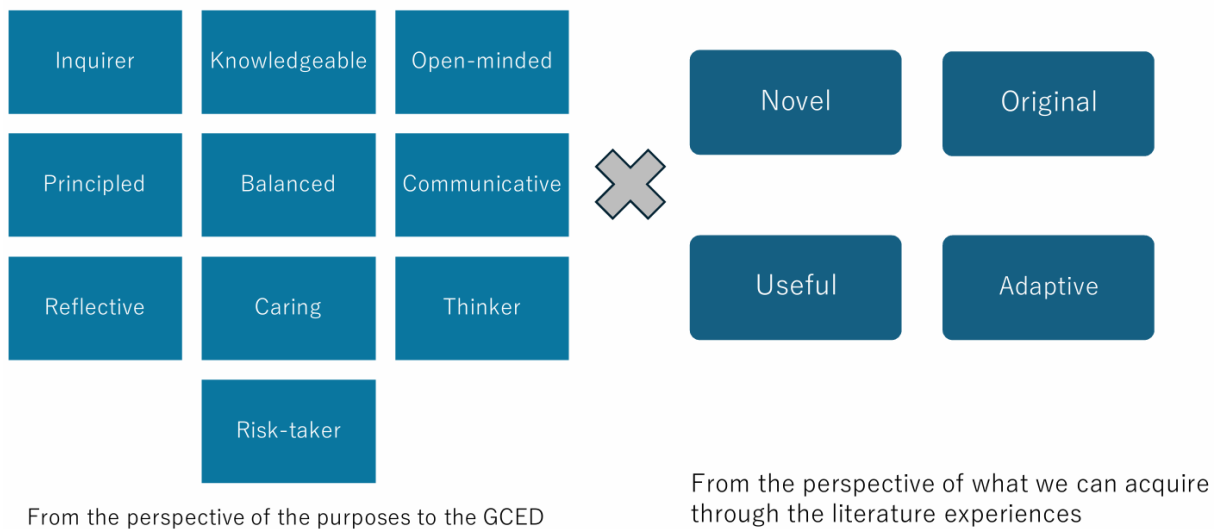
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## **Appendix**

For readers seeking additional information, contained here are some additional materials used in the thesis writing process regarding global human resources and notes on the Creative Cities mentioned in this study.

## Elements possessed by Creative Global Human Resources



- Image: elements possessed by Creative Global Human Resources.

- Liverpool Music Detailed Information

Not only the Beatles but also Liverpool has a rich and diverse music history since the 18th century, and has developed into one of the world's leading ports. Liverpool music has linked with American, African, and Asian music, which created a cultural and ethnic traditional melting pot that shaped a unique character of the city. The port brought a cultural wealth evident in Liverpool's grand concert halls and large number of music pubs and clubs, societies and associations. We can also feel cultural diversity from a number of festivals that take place in the City, and from the diversity of artistic output since the 1960s. This diversity can also be seen in the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra which is the UK's oldest continuing professional symphony orchestra, founded in 1840 (UCCN Report, 2019).

Okayama City writes their statement on how literature contributes to cope with these three changes of the City.

- To aging: Promoting participation in arts festivals, writer-in-residence programs, and other cultural activities to reduce the isolation of the elderly and promote their health through community interactions.
- To globalization: Creating opportunities to become familiar with literary works from foreign countries, deepen understanding of history and culture, and enhance the ability of the young generation in particular to respond to rapid changes in society, such as the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), by acquiring an updated framework of thinking.
- To diversify values: Creating opportunities for diverse generations to participate and share values and expressions through literature. Utilizing libraries and community centers with library functions to promote understanding of diverse values by encouraging the participation of a wide range of citizens, from students to the elderly.