

Introduction to the 9th Global Issues Conference Special Edition

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This special issue comprises the selected articles presented at the 9th Global Issues Conference—an international, student-led forum where students serve as primary authors and their faculty advisers as coauthors. The collection showcases rigorous inquiry across education, culture, technology, health governance, and sustainability, reflecting how emerging scholars are engaged and address global challenges with methodological diversity and contextual sensitivity.

Learning, well-being, and equity in education

We open with five contributions that examine how teaching and learning environments can better support resilience, inclusion, and fairness. “Assessing North Carolina Pre-K Teachers’ Knowledge, Confidence, and Experience on Trauma Informed Care” maps educators’ understanding and confidence in trauma-informed practices, pinpointing training needs to strengthen early childhood settings. “Trauma-Informed Teaching in Lebanon: Teacher Awareness and Preparedness” raises a timely issue of the level of teachers’ readiness to deal with their students’ traumas in the very special circumstances of Lebanon schools. “Investigating the Implementation of Cooperative Learning in Lebanese Private Schools and Its Impact on Students’ Academic Performance and Behavior” evaluates collaborative pedagogy as a lever for motivation, engagement, and achievement. Extending to higher education, “Navigating Anxiety and Uncertainty: International Students’ Challenges and Strategies to Cultural Adjustment” illuminates the adaptive strategies students employ to manage cultural distance and stress. Complementing these perspectives, “Gender Equality in Higher Education: A Comparative Study of Universities in Algeria, Poland, and North Macedonia” analyzes representation and institutional mechanisms, recommending concrete actions to advance Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5 within universities.

Culture, media, and perception

Two articles probe how meaning is made and mobilized across public discourse and sensory experience. “Ghanaian Female Celebrities’ Digital Engagements as Rhetorical Feminism: A Rhetorical Analysis of Celebrity Instagram Rhetoric in Amplifying Unique Literacies” demonstrates how invitational rhetoric and transliteracy can galvanize civic awareness and amplify marginalized voices in social media spaces. In dialogue with cultural cognition, “Individual and Cultural Differences in Sound Perception: An Exploratory Study” broadens sound research beyond Western samples, revealing how culture, neurodivergence, and musical training shape cross-modal associations and therapeutic implications.

Technology and the future of work

In “Technology Industry Employees’ Consciousness and Readiness for AI and Automation in Taiwan,” the authors present mixed-methods evidence on preparedness gaps and training ambitions among tech workers. The findings underscore both the urgency and the opportunity for inclusive upskilling ecosystems that democratize access to AI tools and competencies.

Global health governance and equity

“The Great Drug Regulation Divide: How Resource Imbalance Is Strangling Global Health Equity” interrogates disparities in pharmaceutical regulatory capacity across income levels, arguing that the technical divide is, at root, a justice issue. The study’s policy recommendations—cooperation, capacity building, and digital enablement—offer pragmatic pathways to strengthen safety, quality, and access worldwide.

Energy transitions and climate-smart development

The issue concludes with two perspectives on sustainable growth anchored in regional realities. “The Role of Algeria in African & Global Energy Markets: Challenges & Opportunities for Local Economic Development” assesses hydrocarbon legacies alongside solar potential, framing a just transition that tangibly improves local livelihoods. “Cultivating Aloe Vera: An Economic and Environmental Asset in a Changing Climate” examines supply-chain vulnerabilities and proposes resilient cultivation models—positioning desert agriculture (including Algeria’s) as a strategic response to volatility and demand.

Taken together, these eleven articles exemplify student scholarship from four continents that is empirically grounded, globally aware, and solutions-oriented. They invite educators, policymakers, industry leaders, and civil society to engage with evidence-based practices that advance human well-being and planetary sustainability—while foregrounding the voices of the next generation of researchers who will inherit and reshape these debates.

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