Ages of Globalization

"The Conscious Global Citizen in Action" Workshops

*This 1-day pilot project is an initiative of the **Ages of Globalization** global educational program, and is designed as a participatory, experiential learning environment for young people aged 17-24. This 9-workshop event, hosted by **SDSN Greece** in collaboration with the **Center for Sustainable Development** (CSD), Columbia University, will take place at **Athens University of Economics and Business** (AUEB), 2 Troias Street on Saturday, 28 November 2026.*

Ages of Globalization (AoG) is an innovative online course based on Columbia University Professor **Jeffrey D. Sachs'** seminal book exploring the story of humanity across the world over the 70,000 years of human history, from the Paleolithic era to the Digital Age.

In this course, Prof. Sachs, President of the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN**), explores the history of globalization through seven distinct ages, highlighting how geography, technological advancements, and social institutions have shaped the development of global interconnectedness over time, and how these developments relate to today's shifting global order - from the emergence of a multipolar world to the challenges of climate change, sustainable development, and international cooperation.

The purpose of **Ages of Globalization** is to engage citizens of the world, from youth to educators and beyond, with the understanding of a common humanity; a shared history and culture of humanity that has formed our current world, which can help us to understand how to meet the great challenges of today. By taking practical action for sustainable transformations in the personal, societal and political sphere, we can create more peaceful and just societies.

As conceived by the Center for Sustainable Development, "**The Conscious Global Citizen in Action**" workshops aim to connect the historical perspective of the **Ages of Globalization** framework with contemporary challenges, democratic participation, and youth action within the larger concept of being a '**Conscious Person**'. The core elements of this concept are the attributes of empathy, self-realization, wisdom, peace and spiritual principles of justice and unity which can be applied to care for humanity, human well-being, alongside the conservation of nature and wildlife.

Being responsible for one's actions and creating a world with responsible citizens is the **Global Citizenship** and **Education for Sustainable Development** agenda in **SDG 4.7**, an ethics and value-driven approach to education. It is through this larger perspective that these workshops strive to cultivate empathy, collective responsibility, and to help build ethical leadership and sustainable behavior for current and future generations.

This event, which serves to introduce the concept of **Ages of Globalization** to higher education learners and educators, will be the first in the series of workshops that will originate from Greece. These workshops will connect the interdisciplinary content of this innovative educational program — and its insights on global interconnectedness, development, history, culture, ancient wisdom and religious traditions, pursuit of common good — with the concept of the 'Conscious Person'. The intent is also to establish an **AoG Youth Hub Greece**, and initiate a global presence both virtually and in-person following the Greek model.

Conceived at the **Center for Sustainable Development** (CSD) at Columbia University, the broader objective of this initiative is to develop an innovative education program with international partners, that would establish a hands-on, practical and skills-focused ***Ages of Globalization Workshop Series*** focused on laying the foundations and strengthening a global understanding of the elements of a being a 'Conscious Person'.

THE WORKSHOPS

Each of the nine proposed parallel workshops will last 90 minutes and facilitators will combine reflection, dialogue, collaborative problem-solving with the aim of promoting critical thinking skills, creativity, and the importance of meaningful personal experience. Participants will produce a well-defined final outcome in each workshop, and these will be presented during the Closing Ceremony.

THEMATIC STRUCTURING OF THE WORKSHOPS

The **Ages of Globalization** educational initiative intends to foster 3 key learning outcomes:

- Understand sustainability challenges and their complex interlinkages, explore disruptive ideas and alternative solutions
- Build core values and attitudes for sustainability, cultivate empathy and compassion for other people and the planet, and motivate to lead the change
- Take practical action for sustainable transformations in the personal, societal and political sphere

Thematic clusters include:

- Cultural globalization (migration, religion, identity, heritage)
- Environmental globalization (resource management, climate change, ecosystems)
- Geographical globalization (mobility corridors, maritime routes, spatial connectivity)
- Political and economic globalization (institutions, governance, inequality, development trajectories)

The concluding synthesis phase of the workshops will allow participants to understand the interdependence of these dimensions and cultivate systems thinking competencies. Participants will also have the opportunity to share their thoughts, personal experiences and policy making proposals on how to help shape a just, peaceful, and sustainable future.

In the Closing Ceremony, each group will also present a two-minute proposal on the learning outcomes of their workshop containing details such as:

1. the problem
2. the proposed solution
3. the people or institutions that need to cooperate
4. the global dimension of the issue
5. one concrete action that could begin locally

Basic Outcomes of the workshops:

- Understanding of a common humanity using concrete evidence from Ages of Globalization on humanity's shared history
- Reflection on participants' own histories and journeys in close relationship with peers using AoG timeline as the backdrop
- Showcasing a localized example of Greece's importance and role in the shaping of the Seven Ages of Globalization

Common Learning Skills for all workshops:

By the end of the day, participants will have had opportunities to develop the following skills:

- communication and argumentation
- active listening
- empathy and openness to different perspectives
- critical thinking
- systems thinking
- collaboration
- democratic decision-making
- conflict resolution
- media literacy
- global and intercultural awareness
- civic responsibility
- confidence in taking action

*These '**Conscious Person**'-based workshops therefore approach the creation of the conscious global citizen not as someone who simply **knows about the world**, but as someone who can:*

understand – listen – question – communicate – cooperate – decide – act.