



Empowering Partnership: Ethics in Context

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Abstract

This article aims to offer a general view of the work and the progress the Partnership and promotions team, placed at the core of Globethics.net activities, has reached so far. Starting with a general view on its tasks and duties, Christine Housel opens the floor for the regional officers of the department to offer a personalized view and opinion on the relevant and pressing matters Globethics.net has to focus, or has focused on, locally. During this exposition, we will hear about the Partnership and promotion team's commitment with students at all levels, its work to foster and nurture ethics in higher education on institutions worldwide, and the diversity and plurality held in itself, a clear embodiment of the pluralistic vocation of Globethics.net

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1. Introduction

This article is a compilation based on short reports from members of the Globethics.net *Partnership and promotions team* (PP Team). The department is headed by Prof. Obiora Ike as its director and operationally led by Christine Housel as team lead. The other members are those who are employed by Globethics.net as regional staff, namely Herbert Makinda, Susan Ackah, Rajula V, Sohini Jana, Cut Vilda Azwar and Maria Eugenia Barroso. We can say that the Partnership and promotion team does not end here but is also complemented by the many representatives of Globethics.net working in yet more regions of the world.

The promotion of Globethics.net resources is done through the team by developing partnerships with individuals and institutions around the world and by nurturing the network and ongoing co-creation of resources for the benefit of its members. The team hopes that the following vignettes will provide some insight on the Globethics.net strategic approach to embedding ethics in higher education –the core Globethics.net mission– as well as its approach to partnership, which is committed to co-creation, contextualisation, inter-cultural learning engagements and establishment of long-term relationships through network building. To do so, Christine Housel will guide us through an introduction into the activities of the team, followed by Herbert Makinda, and his presentation on the relation between Ethics in Higher Education, guidance in publications and its subsequent regional growth outcome; Susan Ackah will offer us her presentation on the EMET project. Then, Rajula V. and Sohini Jana will introduce us to the far-reaching work and progress of Globethics.net regional office in India, which will accompany the exposition of Cut Vilda Azwar and the regional office in Indonesia and Eugenia Barroso, working in the Latin America office. As a closing note, Christine Housel will present the strong commitment of the Partnership and promotion team, and of Globethics.net, with the net of students collaborating with the Foundation.

Our successes in raising the profile of ethics in world academics are a testament to the leadership of the PP Team Director and Globethics.net Executive Director, Prof. Obiora Ike under whose leadership the *Ethics in*

Higher Education mission and vision was launched and given a strong foundation, on which we will continue to build.

2. Introduction to Globethics.net partnership for ethics in higher education

Christine Housel, Globethics.net Team lead donor relations and strategic partnerships

Globethics.net was founded 17 years ago by Christoph Stueckelberger with bold convictions regarding the justice and engagement of ethical knowledge. In a world of rapidly proliferating information, something needed to be done about the very unequal access to knowledge creation and dissemination and the limited ethical engagement about pressing, newly emerging and ongoing critical issues the world is facing.

Globethics.net’s first foundational project was the creation of an open access online library, soon followed by a publication house, which remains a cornerstone of all Globethics.net work. Equal emphasis was put on the establishment of a global network –possibly even a movement– focused on promoting ethics. The network connections and partners spanned the globe, from South Africa to Nigeria and Kenya to China, India, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam to Argentina, Colombia and Brazil to Germany and England to the United States and Canada to Russia to Tunisia and Jordan, only to name a few. Themes were taken up with experts on essential topics such as responsible leadership, business ethics, sustainable development, inter-cultural engagement, ecumenical theology, environmental ethics, cyber ethics and many more –through publications, through library collections and through Ethics Forums.

In 2016 ethics in higher education was named as a strategic priority and the *Consortium on Ethics in Higher Education* was founded in 2017¹. Through Consortium member institutions and other partners, *Ethics in Higher Education* (EHE) conferences and trainings of trainers (ToT) were launched, followed recently by the *Higher Education – Ethics Model of Excellence Tool* (HE-EMET), all designed to open awareness and increased commitment to ethics excellence throughout higher education institutions. The Academy was established and courses were developed, many of them in continuity with priority topics from years and scholarship past. Through these tools and resources, the foundation was laid to engage and embed ethics more effectively and also to contextualise ethics, allowing diverse cultures and nations to explore their own values and traditions in their own ethical frameworks, using the network to share from this richness and diversity. Globethics.net facilitates this knowledge creation and sharing for the uplifting of individuals and institutions and ultimately for humanity, and is unique in its reach and scope. Globethics.net is engaged with partners from Vietnam and China, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States. Where global affairs work to isolate communities and nations, Globethics.net does its best to create space for open conversation, even as it becomes difficult, and in this way hopes to contribute to peace-making. Globethics.net is engaged with partners from faith-based and secular institutions and individuals, recognising and respecting their differing starting points. There is an affirmation of the many values held in common, but also a commitment to looking at differences and even strong disagreement with respect and an intention to learn.

To nurture the network of partners, the strategy of developing regional leadership has been emphasised, and in recent years deepened. Regional programmes were staffed by national contacts wishing to work with and for Globethics.net, some of whom have recently become ongoing staff in the

¹ The Consortium Report (2017) is the founding document describing the mission of the Globethics.net Consortium on Ethics in Higher Education and Globethics.net partnerships with higher education institutions and individuals and others who support the mission of ethics in higher education.

form of national and regional officers. As COVID-19 came along and created a pause in the important EHE – ToT and EMET in-person events, it also created a new opportunity for the strengthening of the worldwide staff team. The national and regional officers were folded into the new Partnership and promotion team and joined online staff team meetings as well as departmental meetings. This regular interaction, peer-to-peer learning and training, mutual support and space for strategic planning enabled the team to work together, locally and globally, to align to the strategic plan while also discerning the different regional priority work areas, implement joint online events and develop new competencies, develop new partnerships and nurture and build upon the partnerships we have.

Through the many Head Office-initiated as well as region-initiated conferences and book launches Globethics.net implemented during COVID-19, we found a concrete way of engaging consortium members and reaching out to new partners as well as being proactive about putting ethics in higher education on the agenda of many higher education institutions. We are relieved to be returning to in-person events, which are also essential for creating the momentum for ethics needed in higher education institutions; at the same time, online events will continue as a very good way to get the message out to a wide audience and keep partners engaged.

Even during this COVID-19 period for university life, the team brought new higher education institutions to join Globethics.net as partners and members of the *Consortium on Ethics in Higher Education* as they were glad to join others working to equip higher education with ethics even more during these tough times. One new consortium member during this period is VNTU, or the Global Federation of Vietnamese Teachers Unions worldwide. Through the consortium membership, VNTU has initiated a project entitled “Putting ethics in context”, focused on Vietnamese teachers. With the support of the President Christoph Stueckelberger and the executive director Obiora Ike, VNTU has published with Globethics.net a first volume, *Vietnam in transition*, published in May 2022. At the launch of this first book, a special page is specially created by Globethics.net Library to store and promote works on Vietnam Ethics Series. A second volume is due to be published by

end October 2022, entitled “Vietnam Integration”. The Partnership and promotions team will work VNTU, which is a network, to use the books as an entry point for engaging Vietnamese higher education institutions in the Globethics.net resources and inviting them to join the consortium for increased activity and participation. Globethics.net is proud that Dr Anh Tho Andres, former programme executive at Globethics.net who actively participated in the design of the *Consortium of Universities on Ethics in Higher Education*, initiated this project to do ethics in the context of Vietnam within the consortium, and looks forward to expanding the partnerships in the region.

Already in the short text above some of the key pillars to Globethics.net approach to partnership development are clearly seen. We value mutuality and co-creation, utilising the network itself as a vast resource full of potential. The resources we offer are themselves the result of partnership and the work of integrating external competencies (and new partnerships) into the work of Globethics.net always continue. The strategic plan that guides Globethics.net is informed by the needs and interests of the partners and then, space is made for contextual priorities to lead the implementation in each respective country or region. The local identity and work is the foundation for contextualisation and continuation of the work and the global identity while also providing a unifying factor to our diversity.

3. Case study, publications and the growth of the region

Herbert Makinda, East Africa regional officer

One of the targets of the United Nations’ Sustainable Developments Goals which speaks to quality education (Goal 4) states that by 2030, all learners should acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural

diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development. As a matter of fact, humanity today is confronted with numerous challenges. There are pressing issues regarding peace, security, respect for human dignity, social justice, climate justice, all sharpened by COVID-19 pandemic. The answer to these and many human and ecological problems is domiciled in the sphere of ETHICS. The importance of ethics in society is clearly pointed out by Prof. Obiora Ike, the executive director of Globethics.net, who contends:

“ It is in ethics, with ethics and through ethics that the rapidly rising expectations for solutions to human and ecological problems that have increased frustrations and tensions that threaten the fabric of global society can find sustainable solutions²

The importance of ethics is also captured very well in the Globethics.net Strategic Plan of 2016 – 2020 which indicates that ethics is a compass for orientation, decisions and actions based on values and virtues. In this regard, ethics strives to provide direction for what should be done and how it should be done. With this in mind, emphasis is given to the critical role that higher education institutions have in promoting students to not only be well educated but also to be values-driven, as leaders but more importantly as citizens in the global society. Consequently, focus on ethics in higher education has a huge ripple effect. The graduates from these institutions have a great influence in the society since they go out as teachers at the lower levels of education, workers in the various sectors of the society and leaders in different spheres. As a matter of fact, ethics in higher education sets the criteria of what is good and what is bad thereby guarding the interests of both teachers and students. Ethics in education are central in the smooth operations of the system.

² Obiora Ike, 2022. Why ethics remains that constant basic need for society. Retrieved on 28th August 2022 from: <https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/3952382>

In the new strategic plan of 2016 – 2020, Globethics.net carved out her niche as a global network on embedding ethics in higher education. This endeavour is aimed at fostering the students to reach their full potential and enter society as responsible and creative citizens. To achieve positive results on this front, Globethics.net organised and facilitated two training of trainers workshops in various universities with the theme of integrating ethics in higher education. One of the training of trainers workshops under the leadership of Prof. Obiora was held at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in March 2018. The first day and official opening ceremony of this workshop was attended by over 450 people including vice chancellors and representatives of vice chancellors of 15 universities in the country, academic and administrative staff of CUEA and other institutions, students, representatives from Arigatou International, representatives of UNESCO, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM), Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) and representatives of catholic universities in the AMECEA countries among others. One hundred and twenty (120) university staff and postgraduate students were trained during this workshop. The topics covered in the workshop included: changing mind-sets, transforming and embedding an ethical culture in CUEA; reasserting the institutional values of the CUEA; “what is ethics? the concept of normative and empirical ethics”; analysing the role of ethics in education and research in today’s world; “being an ethical educational leader: values and virtues”; managing and making ethics effective and secure in an organisation; challenges of staff-students relationship and behaviours; sustaining an ethics model of excellence in education at CUEA; building teacher’s capacity and skills to apply ethics education and finally an exercise of testing teacher’s capacity and understanding of ethics in teaching, research, and supervision.

As a result of the ethics in higher education workshop the university³ developed three documents which all staff are required to be aware of and adhere to. The documents that speak to the conduct of the employees, dress code, conflict of interest, responsibility, use of resources, grievances and

³ The university here refers to the Catholic University of Eastern Africa

appeals among others include the staff code of conduct policy, the code of ethics and Catholic identity policy statement as well as CUEA staff’s core values statement commitment. The statement commitment is signed by each individual staff member and a copy saved in the employee’s file in the human resource office.

As a result of this training, the impetus to publish their research works and articles among the participants in this workshop and those who did not have the opportunity to take part increased. Since then, there has been an annual conference on ethics in higher education organised by the Globethics.net East Africa regional office hosted in the Centre for Social Justice and Ethics (CSJE) at CUEA. The first conference of this nature produced two volumes from CUEA in the *Ethics in Higher Education Collection* which:

“ aim to help students, teachers and higher education administrators to stay well informed on ethical issues affecting university life, and to understand how to advocate for the respective interests of all interested parties, at the institutional, state, regional and international levels.⁴

The two volumes are *Mainstreaming Ethics in Higher Education: Research ethics in administration, finance, education, environment and law* as well as *Mainstreaming Ethics in Higher Education: The teacher: between knowledge transmission and human formation*⁵. More than ten books have been published on this topic and are accessible free of charge on the Globethics.net online library while three more volumes are underway from East Africa. Many potential authors have had an opportunity to publish their

⁴ <https://repository.globethics.net/handle/20.500.12424/75>

⁵ Obiora F. Ike, Justus Mbae and Chidiebere Onyia (Eds.), *Mainstreaming Ethics in Higher Education, Vol. 1: Research Ethics in Administration, Finance, Education, Environment and Law*, 2019, 779pp. ISBN: 978-2-88931-300-6; Obiora Ike, Justus Mbae, Chidiebere Onyia and Herbert Makinda (Eds.), *Mainstreaming Ethics in Higher Education, Vol. 2: The Teacher: Between Knowledge Transmission and Human Formation*, 2021, 420pp. ISBN: 978-2-88931-383-9. See also: <https://www.globethics.net/education-ethics-series>

theses/dissertations through Globethics.net and in this ethics in higher education collection. This publishing opportunity and effort has engaged the Globethics.net consortium members and other partners in knowledge creation and dissemination, from the local context, around ethics in higher education. The impact through conferencing and the following publications on the Globethics.net mission of embedding ethics in higher education in East Africa has been enormous.

4. Case study on 'EMET' and growth of the region – Ghana

Susan Ackah, Globethics.net Ghana national officer

Globethics.net strategic focus has been to integrate ethics in higher education as a basis for nurturing future communities guided by ethical considerations. One way in which this is being realised is by providing easy access to ethical resources and expansion of its representation through regional offices and contacts across the globe⁶. In recent years, this agenda is being pursued in the West Africa sub-region through contacts established in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria, as part of the work of the Globethics.net Partnerships and promotions department headed by the executive director, Prof. Obiora Ike.

In Ghana for instance,⁷ a national contact was appointed in 2017. Since then, the national contact appointment has been made a national director in April 2022, and a national officer was also appointed in the same period to

⁶ Globethics.net Strategy 2019-2022, pp. 4, 11, 13, 21. https://www.globethics.net/documents/4289936/13255613/Strategy_2019-2022.pdf/90ea9e90-ff6a-4f47-a5bb-94bf477a72b7

⁷ Rev. Dr Emmanuel K. Ansah, Executive Director of Kingdom Equip Network; a church governance network appointed following his participation at the 2017 Africa Church Asset Management Project (ACAP) workshop in Nairobi – Kenya.

oversee the activities of Globethics.net with a forward outlook at deepening operations in the country and the West Africa sub-region.

On the “EMET”

Under the direction of the executive committee and the PP team, Ghana pioneered the pilot of a “Higher Education - Ethics Model of Excellence Tool” (EMET) in March 2021, in the framework of supporting the integration of relevant and contextual standards and structures in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The EMET is a self-assessing ethics performance tool for benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation, applicable in the academic environment through capacity-training of institutional representatives as ethical assessors and conducting of in-house assessment of the academic community. It is aimed at strengthening HEIs to improve their ethical performance management systems by adopting ethical mind-sets and reinforcing institutional capacity on issues related to leadership, ethics, governance and sustainability.

The pilot in Ghana was organised in partnership with the local organising partner: Kingdom Equip Network. Of the over 230 HEIs in the country at the time, over 30 HEIs were contacted initially; 21 HEIs, representing public, private, and private church-based institutions across five of the sixteen regions of the country indicated readiness and participated in the initial interactions and conferencing; 13 HEIs represented by 19 officials participated and were trained as ethical assessors in the ensuing 4-day workshop sessions; finally, 10 HEIs (with 15 assessors) conducted on-site assessment visits in collaborative teams for the testing of the tool. From this pilot exercise, the HEIs and assessors reported improvements in their management practices including ethical re-alignment of existing institutional policies, enlightenment of units and officials interviewed during the exercise and development of new management policies.

Through the pilot EMET self-assessment process in Ghana it has been observed that HEIs vary in capacity in terms of personnel, resources, and academic systems. These considerations are being recommended for inclusion in the weighting indicators of the tool.

Following the EMET pilot in 2021, efforts are underway to expand the HEI base on the tool amidst a general HEI outreach in the country. The second phase of the pilot is underway in 2022 with Ghana alongside Rwanda and Bulgaria participating.

Obiora Ike says:

“ Knowledge shared is ethics. Ethics is virtue and the good that benefits everybody. Virtue is character and character is living that which we know, teach and preach i.e., to know what you teach and to practice it ⁸

The introduction of EMET in Ghana has been a powerful and effective way to engage HEIs in a process of intentionally engaging ethics more thoroughly and effectively in their institutional culture and shifting mind-sets for more ethical awareness; it has also been the entry point for reaching out to HEIs with a concrete project and subsequently establishing ongoing partnerships with HEIs and individual professionals and engaging them with other opportunities provided by the Globethics.net network. This is chosen as a strategy because Globethics.net knows that ethically aligned knowledge and education systems produces societal transformation thereby augmenting the development of sustainable societies and cultures.

5. The growth of Globethics.net India

Rajula V, Globethics.net India national officer

I feel greatly honoured to put my pen down to write a few words about the growth of the region especially at this particular time when the organisation is undergoing a leadership change at the top level. Globethics.net is a global organisation and obviously the movement at the top level will reflect at the

⁸ Excerpt from Prof. Obiora Ike’s Thematic Talk on ‘Shaping Knowledge Societies through Higher Education’ as part of the 2022 GEN Conference series on the theme: “Towards Sustainable, Knowledge and Ethical Societies: The Contribution of Higher Education Institutions”; 15th June 2022.

local level too. So, I feel a need to go back to the date I began with Globethics.net and recollect all that had happened to date to do justice to this piece of contribution. In this way I will be able to recognise the factors that have contributed to the growth of the region India. There have been very many positive changes and growth Globethics.net India has witnessed since my joining with GE.

India has always been a potential-rich and hopeful country for any individual or organisation aiming to become successful. However, helping India is not an easy job: it required the hands and mind of a visionary who heads the organisation who can identify the resources and tap these well so the organisation is successful with its vision and mission being fulfilled.

I would like to talk about the word “influence” first, which no doubt goes hand in hand with leadership. An organisation’s *ethos* and values along with the leader’s initiative influence the individual, institutions, professionals and its network members to build the necessary skills and attitude that are required to promote the resources and activities of the organisation. The efficient leader in an organisation influences his team members with his exemplary behaviour and positive work ethic. Naturally, the team members are influenced by their leader’s discipline, which translates into their behaviour. GE India has felt this in all its efforts seamlessly for its extension throughout the country and also for promotion of the resources.

There are several things that I feel have contributed for the effective functioning of the region. I would like to mention a few here. In an organisation, it is very easy to discuss lots of ideas and draw big plans of action, which will be insufficient for the region’s growth. The real essence of effective leadership is the leader’s active presence and active involvement in its discussions and decisions that helped us choose, understand and follow the right idea: what needs to be done and how it needs to be done.

Since our involvement from the region at work is remote, we do need motivation, inspiration and encouragement from our leader, whose words will help us shape our actions, as such actions will ultimately determine the level of growth and attention. For our growth, we felt our leader identified our strength and appreciated them all and there is no doubt that this attitude

has helped us here to create a conducive environment to carry out all our plans into actions with ease. All that I have felt and understood is that they do not have to come to you in the form of a powerful talk or a long letter; sometimes a few words of encouragement are sufficient.

The latest addition to our work is the Partnership and promotion team that has become a team with global representation that builds each region to reach its goals for the region. Of late, it is this team that provides necessary training and retraining where needed, makes the hard but necessary decision of having more online get-togethers to help everyone of us to be fully equipped and trained with the necessary skills and ideas to build the respective regions and also to ensure that the global team is aligned with what the organisation represents.

Globethics.net India is grateful for the leadership at the home office, led by Dr. Obiora Ike, with much for his great contribution to our growth and promotion here. His communication always comes as an encouragement which helps us to see beyond the horizon. As the director of PP team, it is delightful to note how he ensures what needs to be done through us. We are able to ask questions and make clarifications and are provided with sufficient information. The team, though it is online, helps us to be open to share and learn from one another that definitely builds each region. It has also helped us to identify more like-minded partners to work with to share the concern of ethics along with fulfilling our vision and mission. Globethics.net India has also seen an increase in and deepening of official partnerships with higher education institutions because of the more regular presence and participation of head office team members in the online partnership events and relationship building with partners. Though COVID-19 brought some limitations to the work, this has been one of the blessings it brought, together with the team's online work together.

India has witnessed several levels of growth during the last six years, it has reached all the regions and states in India and any organisation's growth for that matter depends solely upon the attitude of feedback structure to know about the opinions of the team members when it is adding new development to the existing structure and culture. The whole world looks for newness,

development and change. Under Dr. Obiora Ike’s leadership, there was ample opportunity to discuss: “What can be added? What can be removed? What can be changed? What can be strengthened?” (India was given special attention for strengthening. “What is the best time of implementation? How best the result can be tracked and measured?”) In one line, the above has been the process and culture in Globethics.net and there is no doubt that the organisation will keep growing with very many successes in its history.

6. Partnership as bridge-building

Sohini Jana, Globethics.net India zonal representative

The word “partnership” brings to my mind the image of a bridge. The bridge has different constituent parts and uses different materials that produce its strength, endurance and purpose, connecting two locations for a conscious relationship of exchange. The choice to build a bridge in a specific location requires two basic conditions: the benefit of establishing such a relationship, and the will to facilitate a partnership while identifying the mutual and respective needs of the locations connected. A bridge thus dignifies and magnifies the commitment of the two locations to engage in a supportive relationship and foster collective growth while catering to individual rights. The enduring qualities of the bridge further determine the longevity of the relationship built, birthing new grounds for many new connections over time.

To be a good bridge builder is quite a task in this respect. One really has to know where to invest time and energy, where to get the perfect material from, and most importantly, how to go about designing a sustainable bridge for long-term benefit, development and growth. When I entered the world of Globethics.net in December 2021 as part of the Partnerships and promotions team, I knew that I was stepping in to be one of the bridge-builders under the guidance of a visionary executive director Dr Obiora Ike, the “Chief Engineer” developing and building this organisation that was bringing the world closer through ethics and values in the field of education. I could sense that I had to learn how to assess the strength and endurance of

potential partners, learn how to negotiate mutually beneficial terms and build on a shared vision. I was however unaware of the ideals that should guide my approach. I was soon confronted with a set of fundamental questions, “What was the basis for the partnering vision? Where was Dr Obiora coming from? How did he evaluate the potential in partnerships that we were seeking to build across the world as his team, with the mission to promote ethics in higher education?” I felt that I needed to know the Chief Engineer better in order to raise the level of my contribution to the team.

The man, Dr Obiora Ike, came across to me on team calls as someone with profound wisdom and a great sense of humour. He has this unique ability to light up the room while somehow also emphasizing the importance and seriousness of the work that we all do together as colleagues. For someone like me who is new to this field, I naturally felt the urge to get to know him more through his lectures on YouTube, documents that were written about him and his career in order to better understand his vision. This reflection note is born out of everything I have learnt in the limited time that I have had the opportunity to spend under his leadership.

Coming back to the introductory metaphor of the bridge, earlier I would look at the bridge as a means to simply connect those who needed to be connected. I was merely a relationship builder focused on being an agent of change through the relationships that I initiated at the grassroots level through my peace-building work. However, while exploring the ideals of Catholic Social Ethics as lived and applied by Dr Obiora Ike in his career, I found myself looking at the idea of “partnerships” and bridge-building in a new way. Inviting someone to be a partner in a world ridden with numerous problems linked to inequality of access, representation and disproportionate sufferings experienced and lived by those who are marginalized (economically, socially and politically), requires us to introspect and reflect on those we deem as equal to us and why. As a girl from the Hindu tradition, I found myself deeply reflecting on the value of human dignity that Christ taught where the idea of humans being created in God’s image should ideally guide the practice of treating others as equal in rights and dignity. In the Hindu tradition, we have a similar expression as we bow to others and greet them with a “Namaste” which can be understood as

acknowledging to the other, “I see the Divine reflected in you and honour you accordingly.” At the same time, I have grown up in a context where socially and economically, I imbibed the idea that there are those who are privileged and who could afford to partner to support those who are not. India after all is famous for the social grouping of the caste system based on occupation, birth and status that defines social hierarchy to this day. This social conditioning often guides the sense of duty for those of us who feel we should work for those who are less privileged than ourselves. When I started reading about the way Dr Obiora Ike represented his roots so powerfully on global platforms while claiming his space as a thought-leader, scholar and catholic priest from the global south, I realized that he was working on shifting the lens toward looking at inviting partnerships with stakeholders in his country for the neediest, while emphasizing the diversity of cultures and offerings of his land from a space of reclaimed dignity. In the process, he was truly redefining equality. I learnt that our Chief Engineer found a reflection of the divine in one and all so his approach to partnerships as equal by virtue of human dignity and human rights was the first step to social justice. The countless ways in which Dr Obiora Ike has supported individuals in their journey of growth and evolution to live up to their best potential through facilitating access to resources and opportunities seem to emanate from a reflection of his faith in the right of every individual to seek and find herself in living her true purpose. This was a powerful lesson for me to understand equality in terms of human dignity before any other consideration. If I may go so far as to suggest, Dr Obiora Ike is a living expression of the same spirit of Karma Yoga as Swami Vivekananda embodied in the 1800s when he took the core values of the Hindu tradition to bridge the East and West, building partnerships, channeling resources, serving millions in colonised India while he stood to reclaim an equal space for his tradition and his land despite our then colonized reality. Every tradition talks about such trailblazers who walk the earth at different times to serve different needs and bring the world into balance by inspiring reformed and elevated thought and action. We are lucky to have found one such reformer and thought leader to guide our bridge-building enterprises and

teach us the important lesson of partnership based on equal human dignity and rights.

7. Indonesia – United in diversity

Cut Vilda Azwar, Indonesia national officer

As reported from indonesia.go.id and CNN Indonesia, Indonesia is a country that consists of 1,340 ethnic groups⁹ and 718 regional languages.¹⁰ Not only varied in ethnicity, Indonesia is also diverse in religion. There are six recognized religions in Indonesia: Islam, Protestant Christianity, Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Indonesia's diversity aspect is strongly related to the official national motto “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” which also means “United in Diversity.”

Nonetheless, in reality, diversity is not an easy task for Indonesians themselves. Living in the same sphere does not guarantee harmony among them. Based on the study done in 2017 by the Center for data and statistics Education and Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture Indonesia,¹¹ Indonesian are low in tolerance concerning the difference in belief and understanding, and this situation arguably happened due to uneven distribution of education. The study found that people with low-quality education are more likely to be intolerant. Another interesting point is

⁹ *Indonesia.go.id - SukuBangsa*. (n.d.). Portal Informasi Indonesia. Retrieved September 16, 2022, from <https://indonesia.go.id/profil/suku-bangsa/kebudayaan/suku-bangsa>

¹⁰ Kardi, D. (2022, June 30). Data Kemdikbud: 11 Bahasa Daerah di Indonesia Punah, Maluku Terbanyak. Retrieved September 19, 2022, from <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20220629134646-20-814988/data-kemdikbud-11-bahasa-daerah-di-indonesia-punah-maluku-terbanyak>

¹¹ Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. (2019, April 11). Home Repository. Retrieved September 19, 2022, from: <https://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/22832/1/ANALISIS%20SIKAP%20TOLERANSI%20DI%20INDONESIA%20DAN%20FAKTOR-FAKTOR%20.pdf>

emphasized in the report that people who live in rural areas and people with low economic income tend to be more discriminatory towards distinction. On the contrary, those who live in the cities and earn more economically are more likely to accept differences between each other.

Therefore, one of the keys that could support Indonesians to be more tolerant of one another is by improving the quality of education that is evenly distributed. Tolerance can also be supported by providing more access to societal norms-related courses that are not only present in the fundamental education system but also higher education and organizations. Through a good quality of education, people are expected to learn how to understand different points of view, cultivate the feeling of empathy and integrity, and learn more about other cultures and religions.

This is precisely where Globethics.net has a huge contribution to make. Globethics.net as a global network may be said to embrace the same concept “Unity in Diversity”. We are united in a common mission to emphasize the necessary role of ethics and values in education and in society and are equally committed to respect for diversity, mutual learning and empathy and respect even in disagreements. With its new National Office in Indonesia, Globethics.net is ready to contribute to this inter-cultural and inter-religious work for the benefit of people and society.

8. Mutuality in partnership unlocking growth for Globethics.net South America

Maria Eugenia Barroso, South America regional officer

Latin America has been a very innovative terrain in developing new pedagogies and educational approaches. It has prestigious and renowned universities, which are potent sources of knowledge and training for a young region, with an average age of 31 years. The right to education is guaranteed in many countries by the State, and in some of them, access to university education is free.

However, it is one of the unequal regions on the planet, with alarming levels of poverty. Moreover, in recent decades, Latin America has been the protagonist of numerous “ethical scandals,” many resulting from government corruption. However, universities have tried to respond to these scandals by training professionals with a high sense of ethics through their curricula and special programs that have received the name of “university social responsibility”.

Since its inception, the Globethics.net South America office has worked to enhance local developments, support national and regional initiatives and internationalise the region’s debates and knowledge production. In addition, it promoted a communal discernment of regional priorities and joint action, which adds value to the partners' activities and invites them to contribute to Globethics.net initiatives.

Since its creation in 2014, the office has been working with leading experts on the subject in the region. In recent years, the effort has been focused on extending the network in the region. To this end, in 2015, our executive director, Prof. Dr. Obiora Ike, visited several institutions in the city of Buenos Aires in Argentina and participated in high-level dialogues on ethics and economics in which representatives of different religious denominations, theologians, economists and development experts from academia and multilateral organizations discussed sustainable finance, decent work and inclusive development. As a result of these discussions, several books have been published that address the issues involved in development from a socially inclusive perspective, taking into account the challenges posed by the advance of technology and automation in the areas of labour, finance, gender relations and environmental sustainability.

Likewise, in 2019, the meeting of the board of directors of Globethics.net was held in Buenos Aires, together with the International Seminar on “Ethics in higher education, a transversal dimension. Challenges for Latin America”.¹² This has contributed to expanding the network with the

¹² See: Deivit Montealegre and María Eugenia Barroso (Eds.), *Ethics in Higher*

participation of panelists from the region in several conferences and the production of new content for the Globethics.net platform. These gestures on the part of the directors of our organisation served as a kick-off to facilitate the activities developed and make the institution known in the academic environment of the region.

Sustainable development and the relationship between ethics and economics have been discussed in numerous regional seminars and activities, including the South America-led conference in the recent Globethics.net one conference series entitled “Toward Sustainable, Knowledge and Ethical Societies – the Contribution of Higher Education Institutions”. Furthermore, the universities of the region have approached the ethical dilemmas produced around these topics in search of answers to the present and future challenges Latin America is going through. In this sense, the regional office of Globethics.net, aware of the need to continue reflecting as a society on these issues, joined its efforts with the QONAKUY Network (Protestant and Evangelical Universities of Latin America) in the development of seminars, conferences and particularly in a postgraduate course in ethics and sustainable development.

Globethics.net South America appreciates that Globethics.net works with an understanding of partnership as true mutuality and recognises that the way this is lived will vary region to region. When exploring the potentialities of association with diverse universities and research centres, the South American office of Globethics.net has looked to harness partner institutions' resources and extend its reach at regional and international levels through its network of universities. This added to the need to provide help in Spanish to the region which-led to pilot experiences that later allowed the incorporation into the Academy the course (in Spanish) “How to Include Ethics in University Education” developed by the Center for Applied Ethics of the

Education, a Transversal Dimension: Challenges for Latin America. Ética en educación superior, una dimensión transversal: Desafíos para América Latina, 2020, 148pp. ISBN: 978-2-88931-359-4

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University of the Andes in Colombia¹³. The pilot experience involved colleagues from the Catholic University of Cordoba in Argentina who were strongly committed to teacher training.

The approach to the development of ethical competencies and the measurement in both qualitative and quantitative terms of the development of these competencies by students is growing stronger in the region. One of the pioneers has been *Universidad de los Andes*. However, many other universities in Colombia and the region have joined and are joining this challenge.

9. Conclusion: Always an eye for the students

In the launching of *Ethics in Higher Education* as the focal point for Globethics.net mission and vision, higher education institutions and their management and teachers became the primary partners for Globethics.net. The learners in our Academy courses are primarily professionals and graduate students and Globethics.net partnership development is focused on higher education institutions and leadership. This being said, the students in higher education are kept at the centre of our thoughts as they are the ones for whom the work is ultimately intended. As higher education institutions are more intentional and skilled at embedding ethics in all they do, the goal is for students to gain ethically critical competencies, but especially: vision and motivation for leading lives that are based in ethics and values. It is with these emerging leaders for all sectors of public and private life that the world can hope for more stability, sustainability and ultimately love.

Prof Obiora Ike never loses sight of this ultimate vision, and never fails to speak of students in the many public addresses he makes in speaking and writing. Even more important, he makes time to spend time with students and has a particular gift in engaging and motivating them to rise to their highest potential and best selves. It is a joy to witness the impact a person

¹³ Juny Montoya Vargas, *Herramientas para la enseñanza de la ética en la virtualidad*, 2021, 69pp. ISBN: 978-2-88931-395-2

can make on the life of another, and we know this is the potential and legacy of all teachers who work to serve the best interest of their students. We in the Partnership and promotion team bless our Director as he goes forth into the next steps of his journey and life’s mission and do hope he always has students gently and lovingly inspired around him.

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