Why

Global Understanding?
Global Understanding:
An essential Human Condition

In the face of global social and climate change, we must think globally.

But global thinking presupposes global understanding.

IYGU clarifies connections between the local and the global.
Global Sustainability

Socio-Cultural (Contextuality)

Globalization

Acceleration

Bio-Physical (Causality)

Magnitude

Pace

GLOBAL understanding
Garbage

Ex. by Prof. Gordon McBean (President of ICSU & Steering Committee of IYGU)
Smog air pollutants – in atmosphere only some (5 – 10) days
Smog pollution is mainly a regional problem

In 2013, far more than 2 Mio persons died from the effects of air pollution.
Carbon dioxide: in atmosphere about 100 years
In 2 – 4 years: mixes around the globe

Our local garbage becomes GLOBAL GARBAGE!
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The IYGU’s main goal is to promote global understanding in an praxis centered way and change problematic actions. Actions and decisions shall yield sustainable outcomes, every day, all over the world.
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Triple Problematic for Integrative Research

• Absolutely pre-given Natural and/or Spatial Reality (Biology, traditional Geography, Geo Politics)

• Absence of Nature and Corporeality in Social Theory (Sociology, History)

• Ontological Problems in Systems Approaches (General System Research, Sustainability Research)
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Ditches and Walls to Overcome

1. Container Space/Containerization of Life: Regions/Living spaces

1. From Newton → Haeckel → Ratzel → Geo Politics

1. Determinism : Reductionism : Biologism and beyond

1. Exclusion of the construction of meaningful realities: Naturalization
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Threefold Shortcomings so far

1. Lack of appropriate understanding of the social and cultural worlds by natural scientists and engineers;

1. Lack of understanding and integration of bio-physical elements on the part of scholars in the social sciences and the humanities; and

1. Reductionist implications of general system approach.
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Alternative Approach

1. Human agency, social action/praxis as starting point

1. Human body as interface of the Natural and the Social

1. Constitution of spatial realities are action-depending, not absolute

1. Meaningful construction and transformation of the bio-physical world by human action -> cultural differentiation

5. Double social appropriation of nature: scientific and everyday realities.
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Global Understanding implies an action centered bridge building ... 
... between the local and global, 
social and natural, 
science and everyday life.

Focusing on local/regional for global sustainability.
Global Understanding
Global Understanding

Three Interfaces

Local || Global

Social || Natural

Everyday || Sciences
Making visible impacts of local actions for global sustainability.

Empower bottom-up movements.

Moving from knowing about sustainability to living sustainably.
People’s Politics
Everyday decisions depend on lifestyle.

All lifestyles are embedded in regional cultures.
Emphasizing the cultural dimensions of sustainability.

Local, individual choices shape global change.

Change must come from the bottom up.
Science and Everyday Life
Science and Everyday Life

Focus on embodied everyday practices

Core dimensions of everyday geography-making

- Bio-physical
- Socio-cultural
- Local
- Global

Everyday practices
Focus on everyday activities

Eating/Drinking//Surviving

Moving/Staying//Belonging

Working/Housing//Urbanizing
Focus on everyday activities

- Wasting/Recycling//Preserving
- Communicating/Networking//Interacting
- Sports/Entertaining//Recreating
How to do it?
How to do it?

Three Levels

Research
Bringing together the humanities, social and natural scientists

Education
Bringing research results at all levels in classrooms throughout the world

Information
Print media, social networks, internet platforms (www.global-understanding.info) and TV programs.
Organization of IYGU

Network of IYGU Regional Action Centers

IGU Member Countries
- Member
- Observer
- Other

Continental Action Centers
Regional Action Centers
National Centers
In Negotiation
ICSU Regional Offices
Future earth Centers
Thank you!