

Newsletter Autumn 2024

Welcome to the New Academic Year from the Swiss Global Competence Lab

Dear members,

With the beginning of a new academic year, we're excited to share the latest updates from the Swiss Global Competence Lab.

We begin by welcoming two new delegates from our four founding member institutions, who have recently joined our board: Laurent Dutoit and Brigitte Fürsteiner. We look forward to their fresh perspectives on our ongoing and future projects.

Since the beginning of 2024, the Swiss Global Competence Lab and its member institutions have been busy working on numerous projects, representing the SGCL at various conferences and producing valuable outputs.

Thank you for your continued engagement, and we look forward to a productive and inspiring year ahead.

Warm regards,
Swiss Global Competence Lab

If you are interested in collaborating with the Lab or make use of its services, please reach out at: sgcl.linguistik@zhaw.ch If you wish to no longer receive the newsletter or other emails from the SGCL, you can unsubscribe by sending us an email at sgcl.linguistik@zhaw.ch.

Milestones and Collaborations

Aligning Swiss and Vietnamese Perspectives on Global Competences

We're pleased to announce the completion of the project with our partners from Hanoi University. Funding proposals for its continuation have been submitted, and we are now awaiting further decisions.

Developing a Sustainable Global Competence Certificate in Switzerland

The project is nearing its completion. By the end of the year, we plan to release a leaflet on the role of Virtual Exchange in building students' global competences and a framework for institutions interested in implementing a global competence certificate. As part of this project, we've already published a working paper, which outlines graduate attributes as well as strategies for embedding global competences into higher education, from a Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences point of view.

What our partners are doing: BFH secures Access to European Cooperation Project

Together with nine European partner universities, Bern University of Applied Sciences successfully applied for cooperation projects in the field of sustainable development of cities and communities. This initiative benefits local communities and SMEs in the Canton of Bern and the rest of Switzerland. "The fact that BFH can participate in a consortium of universities with exciting projects is invaluable. Unhindered access to the European education and research landscape is vital," stresses Sebastian Wörwag, President of BFH.

Events and Conferences

Bürgenstock conference (19-20 January): The Swiss Global Competence Lab – a Local Response to Internationalization of Higher Education

On behalf of the SGCL, Jacqueline Bürki and Annick Catella contributed to the conference theme, "Internationalization of Higher Education," which aligned closely with the Lab's ongoing projects. Through [an](#)

[informative infographic](#), the evolution of the SGCL was highlighted, including local institutional limitations, requirements, and the steps taken to establish a joint policy and action plan for sustainable internationalization.

Key discussion topics included:

- **Priorities:** Institutional priorities for internationalization in preparation for European Alliances.
- **Definition:** Common understanding / definition of meaning as to internationalization for an institution.
- **Actions:** Identifying key actions to advance internationalization within individual institutions.
- **Support:** How the SGCL is able to support Higher Education Institutions in Switzerland

VALIANT conference (7-9 February): A Sustainable Swiss Global Competence Certificate: defining the potential of virtual exchange

Jacqueline Bürki and Susanne Walheim (SGCL representatives) presented interim results from the project "Developing a Sustainable Global Competence Certificate", sharing insights gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with program heads and VE champions. Key considerations for integrating VE into Swiss higher education institutions concern the following topics:

- Added value for students and teachers
- Enabling and blocking factors
- VE pre-conditions
- Challenges of VE
- VE design
- Learning environment

INUASCOIL Days (June 6-7): Getting Started: The What, How, and Why of Virtual Exchange
Patrick Studer's [keynote](#) addressed the strategic role of Virtual Exchange in the *twin transformation* of higher education. He shared practical insights to face the structural challenges institutions may encounter by looking at the potential of VE as a pedagogical approach in the development of global competences and how VE may be

strategically integrated in higher education curricula.

What our partners are doing: 1st PhD Winter School in Innovation and Entrepreneurship

In recognition of the global community's collective responsibility to sustainable development, the BFH Business School organized its first-ever [Winter School](#), uniting PhD students from Africa and Europe. This exceptional opportunity provided a platform for emerging scholars to address the complex challenges of sustainable development and explore innovative solutions.



Cohort of the 1st PhD Winter School in Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Ongoing and Upcoming Projects

ConnectEurasia

The SGCL is thrilled to support the "ConnectEurasia: Designing Collaborative Online Learning for Sustainability" project. Led by HES-SO/HEG Arc and in partnership with universities in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and China, this initiative focuses on developing global competences and sustainability knowledge through innovative, project-based learning.

Foreign Language Medium of Instruction (FLMI) E-Units

The University of Freiburg recently commissioned the SGCL to develop six e-units for the training of university teaching employees in foreign language medium of instruction, notably instruction through English as a foreign language, French as a foreign language and German as a second language. These e-units offer university employees who teach through a language that is not their first language comprehensive self-study materials with which they can prepare themselves for FLMI scenarios and to which

they can also refer as they are engaged in FLMI. They will also be a resource that sensitizes university employees who have to teach through a language that is not their first language to understand and appreciate the challenges of FLMI and to (further) develop their teaching competence.

Latest Research Publications

Studer, P., Bürki, J., & McGury, S. (2024). Implementing Global Competences in Higher Education in Switzerland: Conceptual Considerations. *Working Papers ZHAW Applied Linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.21256/zhaw-2817>

McGury, S., & Klosinski, R. (2024). Virtual Exchange in Teacher Training and the Foreign Language Classroom: Global Competence Skills and Development in an Interdisciplinary Pilot. In *Encouraging Transnational Learning Through Virtual Exchange in Global Teacher Education* (pp. 216-235). IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-6684-7813-4.ch010>

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Symposium: May 15 & 16, 2025

Concluding our project "Developing a Sustainable Global Competence Certificate in Switzerland", we will organize a symposium in Lugano, Switzerland. Mark your calendars and keep an eye out for updates on our [website](#)!

Swiss Global Training Series: starting in May 2025

Building on the success of the Swiss Global Training Days 2023/24, the SGCL is going to launch their first Swiss Global Training Series in the Spring of 2025 offering various workshops on topics in relation to virtual exchange, global competence development and English as a Medium of Instruction. Updates will be posted on our [website](#).