



# Student to World A Global Nomads Group Campfire Program

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## Program Evaluation

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COGENT EVALUATION



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cogent Evaluation, an external evaluator, conducted an evaluation of Global Nomads Group's (GNG) Student to World (StW) Program over the Fall and Spring of the 2019/20 academic year. Our evaluation relied on retrospective and post-program student surveys. Student work that resulted from the program was reviewed to further illuminate program impact through anecdotal evidence of outcomes. Such anecdotal evidence has the potential to round out the picture provided by survey results.

Overall, we found that Student to World is successful in building students' global awareness, 21st Century Skill of communication & collaboration, action-orientation, and empathy. Analyses indicated that the effect of the program on these outcomes is statistically significant and practically meaningful. This effect persisted beyond a relatively stable Fall semester through a turbulent Spring semester that presented various COVID-19 pandemic-related disruptions to schooling and program implementation challenges. These trends were true regardless of student gender and region-of-residence. One exception surfaced: Students in MENA (Middle East/North African) countries reported statistically significant positive changes in their intentions to act on behalf of their communities over the course of the program, while students in the U.S. reported no change in their action-orientation over the course the course of the program.

### Student from Morocco:

"Basically, I believe that art can spread our ideas. It would spread joy and positivity. So as a passionate person about bringing people together and create collaborations, I made this drawing. Which speaks exactly what this statement says: 'Divided we fall, United we stand'. My drawing calls everyone to throw his/her selfishness away and be friendly with anyone, no matter his/her nationality, color, race, cultural or social background are. From this drawing I tried to say that when we are gathered we can make significant change whether cultural, economical or social... and when we come together we can achieve outstanding levels and reach our higher potentials."



## BACKGROUND

Student to World is a one-semester course that offers educators a choice of curricular themes to implement for their class or group of students: Art in Action, Ocean Health, Global Hunger, and (new for Spring 2020) Pandemic. Each curriculum is a personalized learning journey that provides students with access to thematic curricular content (images, videos, articles) from around the world. By participating in Student to World, students explore aspects of their everyday lives, compare and contrast their lives with the lives of global peers, expand their understanding of thematic content in global context, and ultimately plan to take actions that benefit their local and global communities.

As of Spring 2020 in response to the global Coronavirus pandemic, GNG also offers a home-based version of Student to World whereby individual students ages 13-18, with parental/guardian consent, can participate in the program in their own homes without being enrolled in a participating class. All participants receive support from staff throughout their program implementation from home.

One thousand, two hundred sixteen (1,216) students participated in the Student to World Program throughout the 2019/20 school year, engaging in at least two of the eight program sessions. Three hundred twenty seven (327) fully completed the program. Students participated from Jordan, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Tunisia, Turkey, and the U.S.












# OVERALL EVALUATION FINDINGS

GNG hired an external evaluator, Cogent Evaluation, to assess the program’s impact on its intended outcomes. We created an online student survey to collect information on participant intentions, behaviors and attitudes retrospectively and following the program. Survey development was informed by pre-existing measures of the outcomes of interest to enhance study reliability and validity.

Each outcome of interest was measured using multiple survey items, and responses to these items were combined to compute overarching impact scores (scale scores). These methodological approaches were taken in order to establish construct validity of the measures and respect the multi-dimensionality of the outcomes of interest.

Cogent Evaluation found statistically significant positive program effects on goals related to improving students’ global awareness and their communication & collaboration. We also found positive program effects on program goals related to improving students’ action-orientation and empathy, though these effects were not statistically significant.

-  The Student to World Program had a positive effect on the group of students as a whole. We're confident that the positive change is due to the StW program (the results are statistically significant).
-  The Student to World Program had a positive effect on a subgroup of students, but not on the group of students as a whole. We're confident that the positive change is due to the StW program (the results for student subgroup analyses are statistically significant).
-  The Student to World Program seems to have had a positive effect on students. However, we're not confident that the positive change is due to the StW program (the results are not statistically significant).

Student to World Program Goals	Findings
<b>Global Awareness Goal 1:</b> Students demonstrate more curiosity about the world or their global peers following StW.	
<b>Global Awareness Goal 2:</b> Students think more analytically about others’ communities and lives following StW.	
<b>Communication &amp; Collaboration Goal:</b> Students develop the capacity to collaborate with others from dissimilar backgrounds.	
<b>Action-Orientation Goal 1:</b> Students indicate a change in their disposition to act on an issue locally or to make positive change to influence others.	
<b>Action-Orientation Goal 2:</b> Students intend to take action that will affect a larger community.	
<b>Empathy Goal:</b> Students express shared feelings and/or understandings of their global peers. They are better able to see similarities and respectfully acknowledge differences between themselves and global peers following the program.	

Analyses indicate that the effect of the program on these outcomes is statistically real and meaningful. However, statistically calculated effect sizes often underestimate the true impact of field-based, educational interventions<sup>1</sup>. These results are therefore very encouraging. While the improvements in students' intentions, behaviors and attitudes are statistically significant and meaningful, it is anticipated that the program is having a larger practical impact than represented with these statistical findings.

More information about the evaluation design can be found at the end of this report.



1] Kraft MA. Interpreting Effect Sizes of Education Interventions. Educational Researcher. 2020;49(4):241-253.

## DETAILED EVALUATION FINDINGS

The following tables indicate the program's effect on students. After each item (or survey question), as well as after each goal (or scale score), we provide both the p-value and Cohen's d value.

The p-value represents the probability that changes in student responses are due to their participation in the program, versus due to chance. A low p-value indicates that the likelihood of the change being a result of chance is low. Researchers commonly use the threshold of  $p < .05$  to assess statistical significance; if the p-value is at or lower than .05, then the change is statistically significant and not likely due to chance. If it is higher than .05, then the change is not statistically significant and may be due to chance.

The Cohen's d value indicates an effect size: essentially the degree to which the program had an effect on the students. Researchers generally rely on the following thresholds to assess the effect size:  $d = 0.2$  is considered a 'small' effect size; one in which a real effect is happening but which can only be seen through careful study,  $d = 0.5$  represents a 'medium' effect size and  $d = 0.8$  a 'large' effect size, an effect that you may be able to see 'with the naked eye'.<sup>2</sup> If the effect size is less than .2, the difference is considered trivial. However, the What Works Clearinghouse, a federally-supported reviewer of education research, characterizes effect sizes of .25 or higher to be "substantively important." In other words, a higher d value indicates a larger effect of the program on students.

Taken together, these two statistics provide us with a clear picture of the extent to which the Student to World program is influencing students' intentions, behaviors, and attitudes.

Goals	p	d
<b>Global Awareness Goal 1:</b> Students demonstrate more curiosity about the world or their global peers following StW.	.011	.289
<b>Global Awareness Goal 2:</b> Students think more analytically about others' communities and lives following StW3.	.000	.432
<b>Communication &amp; Collaboration Goal:</b> Students develop the capacity to collaborate with others from dissimilar backgrounds.	.005	.321
<b>Action-Orientation Goal 1:</b> Students indicate a change in their disposition to act on an issue locally or to make positive change to influence others.	.608	.058
<b>Action-Orientation Goal 2:</b> Students intend to take action that will affect a larger community.	N/A	N/A
<b>Empathy Goal:</b> Students express shared feelings and/or understandings of their global peers. They are better able to see similarities and respectfully acknowledge differences between themselves and global peers following the program.	.082	.195

<sup>2</sup> Sullivan, Gail M, and Richard Feinn. "Using Effect Size-or Why the P Value Is Not Enough." Journal of graduate medical education vol. 4,3 (2012): 279-82. doi:10.4300/JGME-D-12-00156.1 <sup>3</sup> We do not have retrospective survey data related to this goal, so are not able to assess change and statistical significance on this measure.

## Global Awareness

On average, students reported a statistically significant improvement in their curiosity about peers from other countries, and in their attempts to think analytically about global peers. In fact, the effect size on students' global awareness exceeds thresholds associated with the What Works Clearinghouse threshold for being 'substantively important.' Essentially, the Student to World program is having a positive and meaningful impact on students' global awareness.

Student to World Program Goal	Item-Level Findings	Scale/Construct-Level Findings
<b>Goal 1. Global Awareness:</b> Students demonstrate more curiosity about the world or their global peers following StW. (p=.011; d=.289)		
I am interested in understanding others' experiences and emotions. (p=.029; d=.246)	★	★
I try to imagine other people's experiences. (p=.109; d=.179)	★	
<b>Goal 2. Global Awareness:</b> Students think more analytically about others' communities and lives following StW. (p=.000; d=.432)		
I am interested in how people from other countries see the world. (p=.004; d=.313)	★	★
When talking to people from another country I try to see things from their point of view. (p=.001; d=.353)	★	
I like to ask people questions to better understand how they think and what they value. (p=.128; d=.164)	★	



*"My problem is discrimination and in this drawing I want to transmit the important idea, which is the coexistence. Despite the difference of the colors, the religions, languages, etc, people are from the same origin and share the same nature. For this you should coexist and cooperate despite the difference because the wars aren't helpful in thing but they are the cause of losses and destruction. But recently, people become more aware and conscious of the idea of coexistence than before. Finally, people are like a sport team, all players should unite and play for one goal: to win the match."*

- Student from Morocco

## Communication & Collaboration

On average, students reported a statistically significant improvement in their practice of collaborating with others, a measure of communication and collaboration. Again, the effect size on students' communication and collaboration exceeds thresholds associated with the What Works Clearinghouse threshold for being 'substantively important.' Essentially, the Student to World program is having an important impact on students' capacity to communicate and collaborate with students of dissimilar backgrounds.

Student to World Program Goal	Item-Level Findings	Scale/Construct-Level Findings
<b>Goal 3. Global Awareness:</b> Students develop the capacity to collaborate with others from dissimilar backgrounds. (p=.005; d=.321)		
I like to learn about people from other cultures so that we can work together. (p=.007; d=.296)	★	★
I am confident that I can produce work with people from other places around the globe. (p=.023; d=.250)	★	
I am able to adjust to new people, places, and situations. (p=1.00, d=.00)	★	
I can work productively with people whose cultural background is different from mine. (p=.128; d=.166)	★	



"For me, the experience of reading the stories of the others gave me a chance to develop my English, and to [hear] the experience of the others, also to learn some information about their cultures."

- Student from Morocco



# Action-Orientation

On average, students reported improvements in their disposition to act and make positive change to influence others, a measure of action-orientation. This improvement is not statistically significant, meaning it may be due to chance. However, we found statistically significant differences based on students' region of residence. Students in Middle East/North Africa (MENA) countries reported statistically significant positive changes in their intentions to act on behalf of their communities over the course of the program, while students in the U.S. reported no significant change in their action-orientation over the course of the program. Further, 91% of students reported that their participation in the Student to World Program will influence how they contribute to their respective communities<sup>4</sup>.

Student to World Program Goal	Item-Level Findings	Scale/Construct-Level Findings
<b>Goal 4. Action-Orientation:</b> Students indicate a change in their disposition to act on an issue locally or to make positive change to influence others. (p=.100; d=.187)		
I try to make a difference on local issues. (p=1.00, d=.00)	★	
I try to make other people more globally-aware. (p=.434; d=.088)	★	
If I hear someone saying something biased about another country, I respectfully speak up. (p=.101; d=.182)	★	★
If someone uses negative labels when talking about another country, I tell them I disagree. (p=.010; d=.289)	★	
<b>Goal 5. Action-Orientation:</b> Students intend to take action that will affect a larger community.		
My participation in the Student to World Program will influence how I contribute to my community <sup>5</sup> .	★	★

4-5] We do not have retrospective survey data related to this goal, so are not able to assess change and statistical significance on this measure.

## Empathy

Students reported improvements in their ability to see similarities and respect differences in others, a measure of empathy. However, the overall improvement in students' empathy was not statically significant. We did, though, find statistically significant and statistically meaningful improvements in two of the items that make up the outcome of empathy. Specifically, students reported statistically significant improvements in seeing similarities between themselves and others, and respecting differences between themselves and their peers, indicating that the effect of the program on these two aspects of empathy was meaningful.

Student to World Program Goal	Item-Level Findings	Scale/Construct-Level Findings
<p><b>Goal 6. Empathy:</b> Students express shared feelings and/or understandings of their global peers. They are better able to see similarities and respectfully acknowledge differences between themselves and global peers following the program. (p=.082; d=.195)</p>		
<p>I understand the emotions of people who are different from me. (p=.775; d=-.032)</p>	★	
<p>I can see similarities between myself and people who are different from me. (p=.015; d=.273)</p>	★	★
<p>I respect the cultural, ethnic and/or religious differences of my local and global peers. (p=.039; d=.231)</p>	★	



*"I feel a big hope every time I read my global peers' stories. We show that we are really caring about our environment and we love making change. We have different actions, but the goal is one."*

- Student from Jordan



## CONCLUSION

Our findings are very encouraging. This evaluation indicates that the Student to World program is having a positive and meaningful impact on participating students on the majority of the program's outcomes of interest. This is true despite the program implementation shifts that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of implementation fidelity that is expected given the various cultures and organizations within which the program is delivered, and considering the various demographics of the participating students.

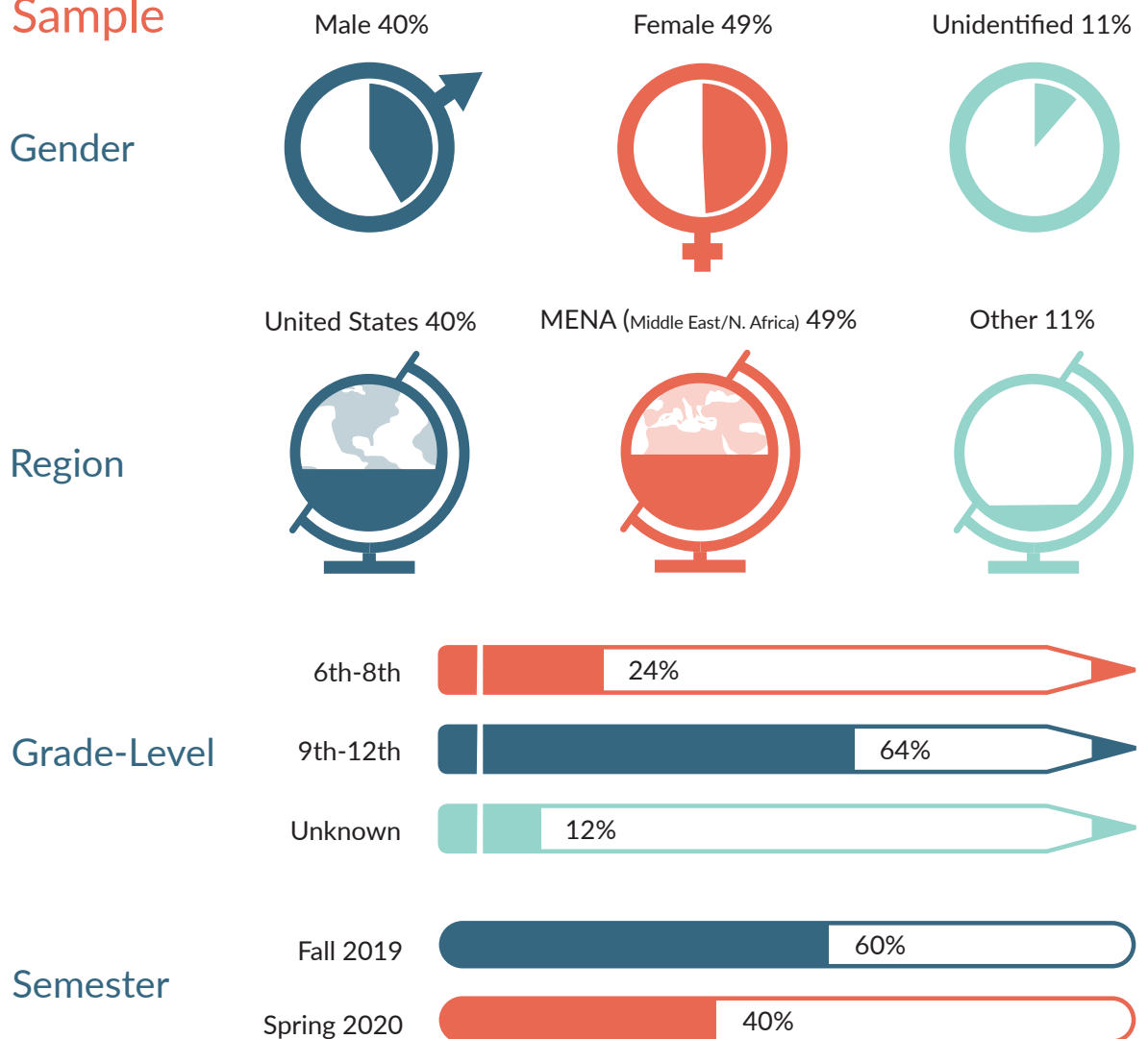


# EVALUATION DESIGN

We designed and administered an online retrospective and post-program student survey to collect information on participant intentions, behaviors and attitudes retrospectively and following the program. To ensure the validity and reliability of the survey, survey items were informed by validated measures of the outcomes of interest and confirmed through a robust and collaborative process with the GNG team. Each outcome of interest was measured using multiple survey items, and responses to these items were combined to compute overarching impact scores (scale scores). Scale scores were tested for reliability and all scales reached or surpassed the generally-accepted cronbach's alpha threshold of .7, which indicates that the combination of items reliably measures the constructs of interest. General linear modeling was used to calculate the effect of the program on each construct. This analytical method was chosen because it was the most rigorous and objective model of analysis that was appropriate for the survey data.

Thirty-four percent (n=110) of students who completed the program also completed this survey<sup>6</sup>.

## Sample



<sup>6</sup> While low, this response rate is adequate as it falls within a wide range of literature-supported minimum response rates.

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## About Cogent Evaluation

Cogent Evaluation is a woman-owned small business that specializes in evaluation of school and community-based prevention, education, health promotion, and social service programs. Our experienced and highly skilled team provides methodological and substantive expertise that positions our clients to apply a wide range of cutting-edge evaluation approaches and analytic methods to answer real world questions and fully surface program impact. We then work with our clients to develop strategic communications plans that disseminate the evaluation findings to the client's audiences.

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