



Consultation Process for Development of new Irish Aid Development and Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021- 2024

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1. How can Irish Aid support **life-long learning** and increase public understanding of and engagement with development and global citizenship issues as well as increasing awareness of the Irish Aid programme?

- The WWGS programme plays a key role in a continuum of life-long learning through all of their activities. WWGS strongly believe that Irish Aid needs to continue to **invest/further invest in GCE** at post-primary level to support a continuum of life-long learning, teacher education in particular. The transition from primary to post-primary is important, particularly that they are complementing and consolidating learning. This transition requires continued investment.
- Commentators (Edwards, Stewart, and Strain 2002) have pointed out that a reliance on initial teacher education is no longer sufficient in order to be able to respond to the level of rapid change in society. Hence, lifelong learning has emerged as one policy response to the needs of our changing society.
- Promote the **co-construction of knowledge** in relation to GCE as part of life-long learning. There is a growing interest in ways to build cumulative knowledge, for example by strengthening connections between research and practice and between schools, teacher educators and GCE practitioners by encouraging schools, HEIs and GCE organisations to develop as learning organisations. In the interest of creating a dynamic teacher education programme, knowledge creation needs to be seen as a process of co-construction between a range of partners in teacher education, particularly in the context of reflective practice. Irish Aid should invest in research to be carried out as part of teacher reflective practice in GCE. (<http://eprints.teachingandlearning.ie/3895/1/Dolan%202012.pdf>)
- Job security/time and recognition of expertise in the sector is critical. It is important that the sector has the necessary time and resources for their own up-skilling in the context of life-long learning.

Public engagement and awareness of Irish Aid

- It will be important to contextualise public engagement and aid within GCE and within the context of life-long learning. Public engagement will need to be clearly defined within the new Irish Aid strategy. Clarity is needed on where public engagement should be positioned within the strategy. It should be framed as just one of our many responses to global inequality.
- It is important that Irish Aid/DFA staff have a fundamental understanding of, and engagement with the core concepts and principles underpinning GCE.
- The Irish Aid programme and public awareness is also about highlighting the work happening at home in terms of education e.g. to highlight the work happening in and the investment in schools in terms of GCE.
- It is important to highlight what is really positive in Development Cooperation and the important relationships that have been built in the overseas context; this needs to be amplified through Irish Aid's public awareness.

3. What has changed in the **external environment** since 2017, both in the education sector and broader societal changes nationally and globally, and how should that be reflected in our priorities, our relationships and in our revised strategy?

Domestic/national Context:

- On-going **curriculum reform** offers many opportunities for GCE, for example senior cycle reform and the primary curriculum framework review. WWGS and similar programmes can continue to expand their reach and offer support in these areas to further embed GCE at senior cycle and primary level.
- **Black Lives Matter (BML)** and associated consciousness around racial inequalities in Ireland. Anti-racism movements and greater considerations of one's own privilege when tackling global issues. GCE should continue to play a key role in supporting these movements.
- There is a move away from individual to **collective action**, which is positive, for example what we have seen in terms of student strikes in relation to climate change.
- There is more **critical analysis** of existing systems and structures that lead to inequality and we need to continue to provide more space for visioning new possibilities and futures within this strategy, to **inspire hope** e.g. in relation to economic literacy, climate justice and gender equality.

Global Context:

- There has been a strengthening of the **pedagogical approach** to GCE that has moved GCE into a more critical space to help us better understand the world and interrogate global issues. This needs to be reflected in Irish Aid's understanding of what GCE is and what should be expected from this strategy.
- The climate and ecological crisis is at the fore so all of our work needs to be framed in the **urgency** of these issues and indeed needs to be recognised in the strategy.
- **Remote working and blended learning approaches** are a new space for us to navigate, that can provide opportunities and challenges for our work, e.g. this has created an environment for continued learning that has become more accessible to many due.

4. What do you consider to be the **key areas of progress made since 2017** in the implementation of the Irish Aid Strategic Planning process? Are there any key lessons learnt or gaps in the current response?

Key areas of progress:

- WWGS has been a strong success (pg. 29 of the strategy) in deepening the engagement of post-primary schools in GCE and strengthening the support of the DE sector for schools.
 - Level of integration of GCE at post-primary is much stronger compared to a number of years ago.
 - WWGS is an adaptable template/model for primary level and possibly adult and community.
- Curriculum reform at junior cycle has provided many opportunities for GCE.
- Realising a **whole-school approach to GCE** is becoming increasingly attainable for schools. The work that has been done in relation to building the capacity of school leaders, since 2017, particularly through the WWGS **Symposium for School Management** has been extremely beneficial in supporting schools to adopt a culture of commitment to GCE in their school.
- The newly created **strategic partnerships** are a success. This needs to be further invested in to create a coherent approach to all sectors of formal education and beyond, to support a continuum of life-long learning in GCE, at primary level in particular.

5. With reference to the **five output areas** of the current Irish Aid Development Education Strategic Plan, what do you consider the **key priorities** for 2021- 2024 should be?

(a) **POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND COHERENCE** - An enabling and coherent policy environment for development education at local, national and European level.

- There is a need for targeted strategic research to inform and enhance the effective delivery and practice of high-quality development education in Ireland. There is little research being funded and this is an area of weakness for the sector.
- There is a need for all people working in this area (Irish Aid/DFA) to have the language of GCE and fundamental understanding of how to engage with the public on GCE. How can the public understand cooperation through a GCE lens? The narrative around solidarity is important and the role that GCE plays to support that needs to be clearly articulated in a new strategy.

(b) **CAPACITY BUILDING AND COLLABORATION** - Maximised capacity, collaboration, partnership and coherence of development education partners to enhance the quality delivery, impact and communication of development education.

- It is recommended that the sector continue to work more collaboratively both nationally and globally to ensure we are inline with best practice and informed by academics and expertise working in the area. This strategy should provide opportunities for collective learning and innovation in GCE.
- Genuine opportunities need to be provided to facilitate partnership and collaboration, with time and resources allocated to support this.
- Needs to be a focus on quality for long term embedding of GCE. We need to focus on depth of engagement rather than solely focusing on reach/numbers and to examine how best to measure and track impact.
- A coordinating body or paid positions to facilitate and oversee collaborations would be welcomed, rather than relying on this to happen voluntarily or to leave down to IDEA members. We need to bring more cohesion to the sector and a paid position will allow for this to happen. A focused hub for research e.g. similar to The Education and Research Centre in DCU but for GCE would also be welcomed.
- Increased capacity needs to be linked to increased funding e.g. if we are to engage more unique teachers/learners over the course of the strategy, the capacity of various organisations involved in the delivery of CPD will need to increase also.

(c) **FORMAL EDUCATION** - Further integration and mainstreaming of quality development education in formal education, curricula, programmes and structures.

- Senior Cycle reform continues to provide many new opportunities for GCE at post-primary level.
- There are more opportunities to engage with Youthreach, Leaving Cert Applied/LCVP and these should be more explicitly targeted to integrate GCE further.
- Opportunities for the sector to further support Wellbeing in the formal sector.
- Consider the development of a **short course in development cooperation** and specifically what this looks like with the Irish government and their work

overseas. This should be underpinned by the principles of GCE, such as solidarity.

- There needs to be more understanding of what is happening across sectors e.g. how can the work that is happening at primary level better inform post-primary engagement etc. These **transitions** are extremely important.
- Irish Aid has a role to play to engage further with the Department of Education around key messages in relation to justice and equality. Consideration needs to be given to a '**do no harm principle**' around GCE and school engagement e.g. in terms of fundraising and any other work that happens in schools which may lead to a conflicting narrative and may perpetuate stereotypes and exacerbate injustice.
- Needs to be more work done on formalising or recognising the key role that GCE play in the education sector, to be recognised as the go-to programmes/organisations for GCE e.g. similar to the JCT in terms of capacity building on the Junior cycle, but across all levels of formal education.
- It is recommended that Irish Aid work closely with the Teaching Council or other relevant bodies to investigate accreditation in terms of GCE courses for teachers, lecturers etc.
- Maintenance and further investment in post-primary GCE is necessary, in particular recognising staffing as a key resource.
- WWGS strongly supports the development of a **one-stop-shop at primary level** for GCE and feel that there are many lessons and approaches that can be applied from the WWGS model to make it a success at primary level.
- See point below in relation to outdoor and **place-based learning**. This is equally as important for formal education.

(d) **NON-FORMAL EDUCATION** - Increased integration, quality and spread of development education in non-formal education curricula, programmes and structures.

- **Outdoor learning** has an important role to play in helping learners to understand about our planet and the complex life systems it supports. It is a participatory experience, which helps learners to make real personal connections to the world in which we live providing a sense of place. Outdoor learning can motivate young people to think about and take action at local, national and global levels to live harmoniously and deal effectively with the impact we have on the environment. Furthermore it can act as a rich stimulus for creative thinking and learning, affording opportunities for enquiry, critical thinking and reflection. This experiential approach to learning has strong synergies with a Global Citizenship approach.
- It is important to acknowledge the importance of outdoor learning in this strategy and the value of place based learning for GCE. Both in formal and non-formal education.

6. Irish Aid is considering changing the **name** of the programme and strategy to Global Citizenship Education; do you have any comments or concerns in relation to this suggestion?

- It would be valuable for Irish Aid and partners to develop a **position paper**, preferably identifying GCE as the term, but locating it within the context of other terms. All terms are valid (e.g. ESD, DE) and have a historical significance. Consideration to Global Justice Education as being the recognised term too

- From WWGS experience, in shifting to the use of GCE in 2017-2018, GCE appears to be much clearer for participants, is better understood and has more resonance with schools and with the wider community. This shift in terminology has been of benefit to the WWGS programme.

7. What opportunities have arisen from the COVID-19 experience and how can we learn from it in order to reach a broader audience?

- There are opportunities to reach teachers that wouldn't normally access GCE. It helps facilitate a whole school commitment to GCE by allowing more teachers to attend e.g. subject specific training
- COVID-19 has started conversations and lifted the lid on issues such as global supply-chains, precarious working conditions, equality, access to vaccinations/health care, the various systems and structures that are at play to facilitate inequality, such as patents for health care/vaccinations.
- Globalisation and global citizenship: The role of being an active citizen has been highlighted during the pandemic. The values of being a global citizen have come to the fore. People are seeing themselves more as part of a globalised world. We can build on this through the new strategy. We can see our global connections much clearer now making it easier to have conversations with people around global issues.
- GCE issues have become a lot more tangible. Irish Aid needs to position themselves in these issues, and facilitate a whole-of-government approach to global justice issues. The SDGs can provide an opportunity for this but currently this approach is fragmented.
- It is important for a healthy civil society to be critical of government and that this strategy can create a remit for these critical discussions around policy and government commitment to global issues.

8. How can technology and digital outreach help us?

- We acknowledge that digital outreach does not always mean a more effective means of delivery or that planning can be done much quicker than in-person delivery. A lot of time and preparation needs to be invested in this mode of delivery that needs to be accounted for.
- Some of the **active learning methodologies** for GCE are not always effectively translated or are compatible with online delivery.
- Use of digital can provide many opportunities for GCE but it is a tool that needs an **integrated blended approach** with a continued focus on **face-to-face interventions** for the sector.
- Many teachers/students/participants in GCE have better skills in accessing digital tools but more capacity building is needed here in relation to digital media literacy/digital skills.
- It has however made inputs more accessible to many audiences. Technology and digital outreach means that as a sector we are less constrained by location, and can reach a wider audience.
- It is important that we are cognisant of the digital divide that still exists and we are aware of who gets left behind when we deliver GCE via technology and engage in digital outreach.

- Refer to research carried out by DCU on digital technologies and GCE
https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/chrce/digital_technologies_to_advantage_gce_in_schools.pdf

Additional points:

Funding:

- Funding can enable or hinder long-term collaboration and planning. This needs to be taken into consideration in the development of a new strategy. Funding mechanisms should facilitate and support long-term collaborations across the sector.
- Consideration given to allow WWGS to provide grant funding to NGO/Networks for a full year, rather than the academic year.
- WWGS would welcome the opportunity to consider a move away from annual funding of NGO/Networks and to engage in further dialogue to see what it would look like and how it could work best for all stakeholders. For example WWGS could fund GCE programmes for 2+ years (NGO/Networks only).

Other:

- More critical approaches to GCE e.g. campaigning and advocacy work to be encouraged as part of the new strategy.
- WWGS would welcome a draft strategy (2021-2024) being shared among stakeholders to allow for some further feedback, along with a draft PMF.
- There is a need for a longer-term strategy or a policy-guiding document that contains fundamentals around GCE to inform any future strategies so there is consistency across all Irish Aid documentation/policy in relation to GCE. This document needs to clearly illustrate the values and principles that underpin GCE, that can be communicated and reflected in all of our work across the sector. This would form an intellectual underpinning of any strategy on GCE.
- Skills development for GCE should be encouraged and supported in a new strategy.