



# **Code of Good Practice for Development Education in Ireland**

2024 Research Report



## Acknowledgements

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# Executive Summary

## About the Code

The Code of Good Practice for Development Education in Ireland (hereafter ‘the Code’) is a unique framework that articulates what quality Development/Global Citizenship Education (DE/GCE) means in the form of twelve shared Principles<sup>1</sup> and related practice indicators. The Code’s main aim is to contribute to DE/GCE practice improvement through several activities. Code membership is open to IDEA members only and both organisations and individual practitioners can join. Being a Code member includes:

- ▶ signing a Code Commitment form annually.
- ▶ carrying out a Self-Assessment process which includes:
  - ▶ completing a Self-Assessment Workbook – Code members must self-assess themselves as ‘Fully’, ‘Substantially’, ‘Partially’ or ‘Minimally’ fulfilling each Principle
  - ▶ developing an Action plan that is shared with IDEA.
  - ▶ contribute to the Code community of practice by sharing learning and attending at least one Code network meeting annually<sup>1</sup>

## Aim of the report

This report aims to develop knowledge of DE/GCE practice in Ireland, by analysing the evidence emerging from the Code members’ activities in 2024. This includes analysing evidence from self-assessment submissions, the self-assessment ratings against each Principle, good practice examples identified by the Code panel, and some qualitative insights.

This report is the third in a series of Code Research Reports which IDEA aims to produce every 2nd year. The first baseline report examined all data relating to the Code’s first year of operation in 2020. A 2nd report was published focusing on Code activity for 2022. And this third report provides an overview of the Code in 2024. This report looks at developments since 2022, examines trends in self-assessment ratings, identifies strengths and challenges in members’ practice, and reflects on the Code’s contribution to DE/GCE in Ireland. The report also compares 2024 findings with those from 2020 and 2022 and offers recommendations for the continued evolution of the Code and its related community of practice.

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 2.1. for Code Principles.

The primary evidence base for this 2024 report comprised 53 submissions from 48 organisations (five organisations submitted twice, as required in their first year of Code membership). Submissions include: self-assessment ratings at the level of each Principle, evidence provided of Code members' practice at the level of the indicators within each Principle, organisational information (type of organisation, target group etc), and Action Plans. Additional data sources included the Code Database<sup>2</sup>, good practice grids, panel meeting notes, the 2024 Lessons Learned Report, interviews with the Code manager (IDEA staff), and a focus group with six members who have been Code members since 2020. Limitations include the relatively small dataset, the absence of comprehensive demographic data on the Code member organisations, and a small number of qualitative informants. Nonetheless, the evidence is considered robust, as long as appropriate caution is applied to interpretation.

## Key findings

### Developments since 2022

The Code has continued to expand and consolidate. Membership grew steadily, reaching 53 organisations by the end of 2024. Growth has been consistent since 2020, with a net increase of eleven members between 2022 and 2024. The membership remains diverse in organisational type, size, and sectoral focus, with many organisations working across multiple educational settings. While Dublin remains the primary base for activity, geographical diversity is gradually increasing.

An independent [Code review](#) took place following three years of Code implementation (2020–2022), and a review report was published in 2023 highlighting recommendations for the Code's future strategic direction.

A significant recommendation from the review was the transition to an [online platform](#) for the self-assessment submissions, which was developed and piloted in 2024. This will enable a more consistent data capture and easier longitudinal analysis, as well as more streamlined record-keeping for the Code members and IDEA.

Another recommendation was to offer alternative self-assessment processes for members who have completed three years of Code membership. An alternative self-assessment process ('Option B') was introduced for members with at least three years' experience as a Code member, allowing a lighter self-assessment focusing on only three principles, combined with an activity which would contribute to the Code community of practice (e.g., workshop delivery or mentoring). Five members opted for this 'option B' in 2024.

### Code Members' Practice in 2024

Members continued to rate their DE/GCE practice as strong. Across both rounds, 76% of ratings were 'strong' (36% 'Fully', 40% 'Substantially'). This is broadly consistent with 2020 and 2022 findings. Principles most frequently self-assessed as strongest are in order of: Principle 5 *Participatory approaches*; Principle 2 *Root causes*; Principle 3 *Ethos of DE*; Principle 4 *Critical thinking*; Principle

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<sup>2</sup> A database bringing together all Code data from 2020–2024 has been established following the move of the Code self-assessment process to an online platform. The online platform will collate data automatically from 2025 onwards.

1 *Contribute to knowledge about development*. IDEA has identified Principles 1-3 as the ‘building blocks’ of quality DE/GCE practice and we can see from the analysis that these are areas where members typically feel most confident. Principles most frequently self-assessed as less strong were: Principle 7 *Build informed action*; Principle 6 *Quality Resources*; Principle 12 *Advocacy*; Principle 10 *DE strategy*; Principle 11 *Key DE organisational values*, though with promising and increasing practice (at organisational level). These reflect areas where organisational capacity, structural constraints, or specialist expertise are required.

The strengths reflect a sector with a strong pedagogical foundation, deep engagement with justice issues, and a commitment to reflective, participatory practice. Challenges include the demanding nature of indicators (especially for Principle 6), limited influence on organisational structures (Principles 10–12), and varying interpretations of ‘action’ (Principle 7) and ‘models of development’ (Principle 1).

### **Code's Influence on DE/GCE Practice**

Members report that the Code continues to strengthen their practice by: providing a structured framework for reflection; supporting clarity and coherence in programme design; encouraging peer learning and shared standards; prompting improvements in monitoring, evaluation, and overall organisational alignment.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

The Code remains a valued and effective mechanism for strengthening DE/GCE practice in Ireland. Membership grew steadily between the end of 2022 and the end of 2024, with strong engagement across the community of practice. Self-assessment data shows consistent strengths in ‘foundational principles’ (Principles 1-3) and persistent challenges in ‘organisational principles’ (Principles 10-12). The Code continues to contribute to sectoral coherence, reflective practice, and shared learning.

The main recommendations emerging from the findings of this report are:

1. Support knowledge exchange on areas where practice is less strong;
2. Develop good practices criteria for both learning and assessment purposes, and
3. Strengthen research and analysis of Code’s activities, and their impact

**Note:** Development Education, Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development and Global Youth Work are all terms used by Code members depending on the nature of their work or their areas of specialisation. For the purposes of the Code and this report, we use both Development Education and Global Citizenship Education (or ‘DE/GCE’) interchangeably to encompass all relevant terms and approaches within the area of education for global citizenship and sustainable development.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. About the Code

The Code of Good Practice for Development Education in Ireland (hereafter ‘the Code’) is a unique framework that articulates what quality Development Education means in the form of twelve shared principles<sup>3</sup> and related practice indicators. Development Education, Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development, and Global Youth Work are all terms used by Code members depending on the nature of their work or their areas of specialisation. For the Code and this report, we use both Development Education and Global Citizenship Education (or ‘DE/GCE’) interchangeably to encompass all relevant terms and approaches within the area of education for global citizenship and sustainable development.

The Code was developed by members of the Irish Development Education Association, IDEA, between 2016 and 2019, a period which included a piloting phase<sup>4</sup>. The Code builds on previous work by IDEA Working Groups and partners in developing Good Practice Guidelines for key areas of Development Education. The Code was launched at the end of 2019 with the first self-assessments received in April 2020. In 2021, the Code was recognised with a Global Education Network Europe (GENE) Quality in Global Education Award<sup>5</sup>. At the end of 2023, IDEA was awarded an Erasmus+ grant to carry out a small-scale partnership project<sup>6</sup> with LAPAS, (the Latvian platform for Development Cooperation), which was implemented in 2025, showing the interest in the Code and the learning opportunities beyond Ireland.

The Code’s main aim is to strengthen Development Education practice through several activities. Code members – organisations or individuals – sign a Code Commitment form annually. They carry out a self-assessment process, which includes completing a self-assessment submission and developing an Action Plan that is shared with IDEA. When completing the self-assessment, Code members must self-assess their practice as ‘Fully’ fulfilling, ‘Substantially’ fulfilling, ‘Partially’ fulfilling or ‘Minimally’ fulfilling each principle and provide examples from their practice as evidence to support these ‘self-assessment ratings’.

IDEA receives the submissions and reviews them with the support of a [Code panel](#) of experts. Code members then receive a feedback letter from IDEA which summarises their submission, identifies good practices, and makes suggestions on how to strengthen future self-assessments. The role of the

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3 Note that the language of some principles and indicators was revised as part of the 2023 Code review. The wording of the principles and indicators in this report reflects the wording used since that review.

4 For more on the development of the Code, see: [Code of Good Practice for Development Education | IDEA](#)

5 For more on the GENE award, see: [IDEA Network receives GENE Quality in Global Education Award](#)

6 For more on the Erasmus+ project with LAPAS, see: [IDEA - Irish Development Education Association](#)

panel is to review the submissions and Action Plans and contribute to IDEA's feedback to the Code members. This panel was appointed in June 2021, new members are recruited as needed, and some panel members occasionally take a break for one or two submissions rounds. In 2024, there were ten panel members.

There are two equally important elements of the Code: the process of self-assessment and the Code community of practice. IDEA facilitates a community of practice among Code members to share experiences and learning using the good practice framework that the Code provides. Importantly, there are two Code network meetings per year, and members commit to attend at least one per year.

Between November 2022 and March 2023, a comprehensive and independent [review of the Code](#) was carried out, which concluded that: *"the Code has supported the Development Education sector to achieve greater clarity and coherence while fostering a culture of reflective practice and peer support"* and that overall, members were engaged and satisfied with the Code activities and feedback mechanisms. However, that review focused more on the operations of the Code, and did not analyse specific evidence gathered through submissions nor self-assessment ratings. This type of analysis of the evidence submitted by members through their submissions took place based on the first year of the Code roll-out in 2020 and there has been a commitment from IDEA to repeat the analysis of the Code workbooks every second year (i.e. 2020, 2022, 2024 etc.) in the form of a 'Code Research Report' of which this report is the third in the series so far.

## 1.2. About this report

The purpose of this report is to contribute to knowledge of Development Education/Global Citizenship Education practice in Ireland, by analysing the valuable evidence emerging from the Code members' activities, including the evidence gathered via the submissions, insights from internal IDEA 'Lessons Learned' reports, and Code network meetings during 2024. This 2024 research report also identifies trends and changes since 2020, comparing 2024 data<sup>7</sup> with that presented in the [2020 Baseline Report](#) and the [2022 Research Report](#).

In this sense, the report also aims to contribute to the continued efforts of IDEA to examine Code data over an extended period to identify trends, shortfalls, and opportunities in DE/GCE practice in Ireland. First, the report looks at developments since 2022 and the membership composition. Second, it identifies overall trends in self-assessment ratings and practice (evidence) in specific areas (principles) including strengths and challenges at a sectoral level<sup>8</sup>. Third, the report compares self-assessment ratings with good practice examples, and 2024 findings with those of the [2020](#) and [2022](#) reports. Fourth, the report considers how the Code contributes to DE/GCE practice improvement of Code members and the sector more widely. Finally, the report identifies and discusses areas of strategic development for the Code and how the data could potentially be used to inform policy and strategy at member, IDEA, and sector levels.

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7 It is likely that data used as the basis for the previous Code research reports in 2020 and 2022 contained some small inaccuracies which have only come to light during the recent consolidation of the Code data into one Code Database. These small inaccuracies do not invalidate any of the analysis and interpretation of data in those reports as they were only slight (for example, a very small number of self-assessment ratings being not recorded or mis-recorded). All such errors have been rectified during the creation of the consolidated IDEA Code Database.

8 See Section 2.1 for Code Principles.

### 1.3. Methodology

The most important source for the analysis presented in this report is the evidence and self-assessment ratings contained in the Code members' self-assessment submissions made in 2024<sup>9</sup> and the good practice examples identified by the Code panel at both self-assessment rounds in 2024. There were 53 self-assessment submissions in 2024 (27 self-assessment workbooks in the February submission round and 26 in the September round). Five organisations submitted in both rounds<sup>10</sup>, so findings are based on data from 48 organisations.

Firstly, each submission (saved in the member's online workbook) contains **evidence** (in the form of examples from the Code member's practice) per Indicator, along with self-assessment ratings per Principle, as well as a section to include additional information such as reflections on gaps, challenges and possible future areas to focus on. Workbooks also include current and, from the second submission onwards, previous Action Plans. These Action Plans consist of a series of actions members decide to work on in the future to better align their DE/GCE practice with the Code principles. Through a template, these actions are organised per Indicator and members describe the planned actions briefly, indicate the resources or support needed, the person/s responsible for each action as well as a timeframe and notes on progress. Members are encouraged to address gaps and prioritise actions on Principles 1-3 as they are considered to be fundamental to quality Development Education/Global Citizenship Education. They are referred to as the 'foundational principles' or the 'building blocks' of quality DE/GCE practice and the Code. Principles 1-9 are intended for all Code Members while Principles 10-12 are only for the use of organisations (i.e. not individual practitioner members) – the latter are referred to as the 'organisational principles'.

Secondly, most of the analysis that follows is based on the **self-assessment ratings** for each round in 2024 (contained in a spreadsheet, exported from the online platform into IDEA's Code Database for analysis), showing how each member rated themselves (Fully' / 'Substantially' / 'Partially' / 'Minimally' fulfilled) against each principle. Given there are 12 Principles and 53 submissions, there were a total of 588 self-assessment ratings submitted (at the level of Principle). Note that there are 45 self-assessment ratings less than expected due to the five members who took Option B and therefore only self-assessed against three principles each, and in addition one member omitted three self-assessment ratings in error. So these 588 ratings are the basis for all the 2024 analyses and charts that follow.

Thirdly, some analysis is also based on the good practice grid (also a spreadsheet, exported from the online platform), which brings together all the **good practice examples** identified by the Code panel in the evidence submitted by Code members in each round in 2024. Good practice examples at the level of Indicator are identified by the Code panel members<sup>11</sup> in reviewing the workbooks. These examples of good practice are included in the feedback letters sent to each member from IDEA. All examples are collated into grids and are used to establish the number of good practices identified

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9 The Code consists of twelve Principles. For each Principle there are between two and five detailed Practice Indicators which set out elements of good practice within each Principle. Code members provide evidence at the level of each indicator, and then rate their practice against each overall Principle ('Fully', 'Substantially', 'Partially' or 'Minimally' fulfilling each Principle).

10 Note it is a requirement of Code membership to submit two self-assessments within the first year of joining the Code (six months apart), and after that the self-assessment is submitted annually.

11 It is important to note that there is not an agreed and systematic way to select good practice examples among panel members, but based on the panel members' experience and expertise, they identify practices which stand out to them. In addition, most workbooks are reviewed by two panel members which also leads to strengthened review of the practices within the workbooks. The good practices are identified to recognise the Code member's efforts in the specific organisational and learning context of each submission. For example, the same practice can be considered regular or routine practice in some settings, while for others, it may represent a significant achievement or innovation.

per Principle and per Indicator as illustrations of good practice. The good practice grids are shared with all Code members in the spirit of learning from each others' practice (though Code members can opt out of inclusion in the good practice grid if they wish).

Finally, additional qualitative evidence was gathered using the following methods:

- ▶ the review of panel meetings notes and recordings;
- ▶ the review of harvest documents (detailed notes) from the Code network meetings;
- ▶ the internal 2024 Lessons Learned Report - a report which IDEA does annually to review Code processes;
- ▶ an in-depth interview with the Head of Membership, Quality and Impact who manages the Code in IDEA;
- ▶ a ninety-minute online focus group with six long-standing Code members, facilitated by one of the authors of this report. It is important to note that the organisations who participated in this focus group all joined at the very start of the Code in April 2020 and therefore have considerable experience of the Code process and how it impacts their practice.

Methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, there is still a limited amount of data in the whole dataset, even less data across just one year (in this case 2024), and especially in individual submissions rounds and any sub-categories, such as a 'submission grouping'<sup>12</sup> - therefore, caution must be applied when interpreting the data and drawing conclusions. Second, no 'demographics' survey of Code members has been conducted<sup>13</sup>. Thus the categorisation of Code Members - in terms of type of organisation or location for example - is completed based on other information gathered by IDEA (e.g. Annual Members Surveys), publicly available data and IDEA's knowledge of its members. Third, the focus group only consisted of six Code members and only one IDEA staff member was interviewed. Fourth, as in the 2020 and 2022 reports, this research assumes that self-assessments of Code members are largely accurate. Though the evidence analysed comes from subjective perceptions, there are two factors that suggest this evidence can be seen as reliable. Firstly, the overall level of commitment of members to the Code activities and descriptive illustrations of the ratings. Secondly, these ratings are confidential and are not published, thus it can be assumed that members aim to offer an honest assessment of their practice.

Despite these limitations, the authors are confident that the data is accurate, and that findings are robust, yet must be interpreted with care, especially when based on smaller datasets.

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12 During analysis of Code data, members are often grouped according to when they joined the Code i.e. Group A joined at the first Code deadline (April 2020), and Group B refers to those who joined at the second Code deadline (October 2020). In addition, members may also be grouped according to how many self-assessments they have submitted i.e. if they are on their 1st, 2nd, 3rd submission and so on.

13 IDEA gathers information on all IDEA members (approx. 110 members) such as the type of organisation (e.g. civil society organisation, social enterprise, etc), location of activities, or number of staff via other IDEA projects each year, but has not carried out one specifically on Code members (53 Code members in 2024).

## 2. The Code in 2024

### 2.1. Developments since last Code research report (2022)

Since 2022, the Code membership has continued to grow. Twenty members joined in 2020, an additional fourteen in 2021 (one left in 2021), nine more joined in 2022, seven more in 2023 (two left in 2023), and six more joined in 2024. This means that there was a total membership of 53 Code members (all organisations) by the end of 2024.

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Joined during year	20	14	9	7	6
Left during year		1		2	
Net joiners/leavers during year	20	13	9	5	6
Members at end of year	20	33	42	47	53

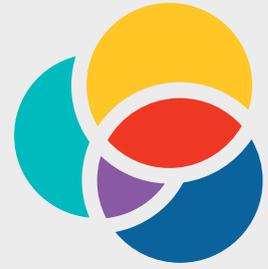
**Figure 1: Code membership (joiners, leavers, and year-end total) by years.**

Two other important developments have been that a) the process of submitting evidence and self-assessment ratings has moved onto an online platform<sup>14</sup>. This process began at the second self-assessment deadline in 2024 and came into use for all submissions from February 2025, and b) an alternative self-assessment process and peer-to-peer learning mechanism has been introduced since the Code review in 2023 called 'Option B'. After three years of Code membership, members can choose 'Option B', which allows them to submit a lighter self-assessment (focusing on just three principles), and an action plan, in addition to designing and delivering an activity to benefit the Code community of practice, such as a workshop, mentoring relationship, etc.

<sup>14</sup> This report refers to 'submissions', meaning the evidence and self-assessment ratings submitted by a member in a particular round. The term used previously, referring to Word and pdf documents was 'workbooks'. The term workbook is still used on the online platform - it is a virtual workbook with three or four submissions in it. The workbook is like a portfolio of activity over three years (members submit twice in their first year and then annually) containing the annual self-assessments. Once the portfolio is 'full', members are asked to start a new workbook, to prevent them from becoming too large and unwieldy. Although the submission deadlines for each round are usually in February and August (since 2022), in 2024 due to the move to the online platform the second deadline was delayed so the 2024 submission rounds are referred to as 'February 2024' and 'September 2024' in this report.

# Code of Good Practice for Development Education

## 12 Core Principles



### Educational Practice



**01** Contribute to **Knowledge** in Ireland about global development



**02** Explore the **Root Causes** of local and global injustices and inequalities in our interdependent world



**03** Be explicit about the **ethos** of Development Education



**04** Encourage **Critical Thinking** in our exploration of local and global justice issues and seeking of solutions



**05** Use **Participatory, Creative** approaches in our educational practice



**06** Produce and use **Quality Resources and Materials**, based on continuous learning



**07** Build **Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes** for informed action that is collective in nature



**08** **Imagine and Explore Solutions** for a better world



**09** Actively and consistently **Reflect and Learn** from our own Development Education practice and participants' feedback

### Organisational Practice



**10** Have a clear **Development Education Strategy and Action Plan**



**11** Reflect the **Key Values** of Development Education



**12** **Advocate for Quality Development Education**

## 2.2. Membership

At the end of 2024 there were 53 members of the Code. There continues to be considerable diversity in the Code membership, both in terms of types of organisation and sectors covered. For newcomers to DE/GCE funded by Irish Aid, Irish Aid strongly promotes the Code and membership of IDEA.

The Code’s Development Education organisational landscape is rich and diverse and no major changes in terms of the types of sectors members work in as illustrated in Figure 2. From Code members’ data<sup>15</sup>, it is clear there are various kinds and sizes of organisations that develop activities in formal, non-formal and informal education settings, and sectors. Some members work in all sectors, and many members in more than one sector.

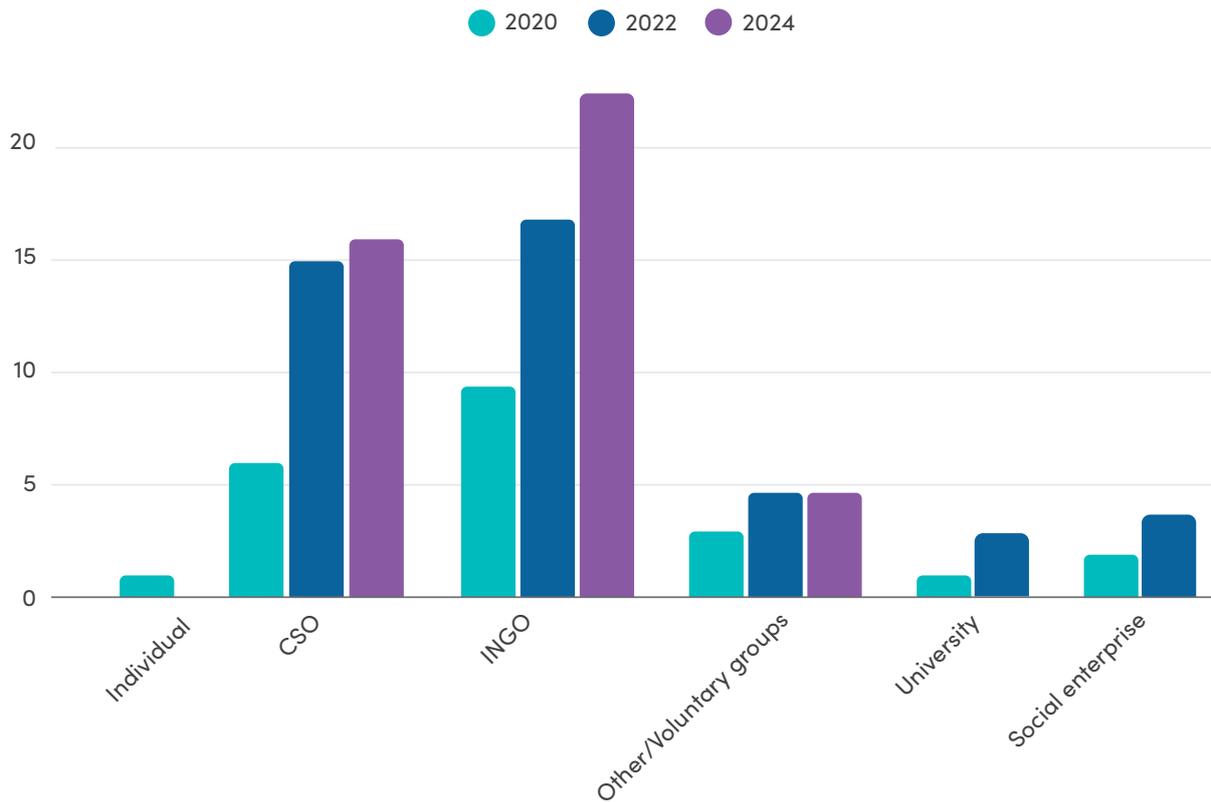
	2020	2022	2024
Early Childhood Education	10%	6%	5%
Primary Education	14%	13%	13%
Post-primary Education	21%	20%	19%
Higher Education	18%	15%	17%
Adult/Community Education	21%	26%	26%
Youth sector	16%	20%	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 2: Percentage of Code Members per sector in 2020, 2022, 2024 (based on all sectors worked in - many members work in more than one sector).**

There continues to be a good spread of location of activities, although most continue to be in Dublin or through organisations based in Dublin but organising activities across the island with other local partners. Representation of Code members based in other locations continues to be limited but seems to be gradually becoming more geographically diverse. For example, out of the 11 new Code members since 2022, seven have offices and activities in other places on the island of Ireland, including cities like Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and rural areas such as Co. Monaghan.

In terms of types of organisations, most Code members are Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and International Development Non-Governmental Organisations working overseas (INGOs) – several of the latter type joining in 2023–2024 as illustrated in Figure 3. However, new types of organisations joined the Code in 2023 and 2024 such as social enterprises, and consortia of higher education institutions and civil society organisations.

<sup>15</sup> The most recent data is from the 2022 Code research report. For the additional 11 members that joined since 2022 and remained members in 2024, this data was added based on other sources of information including publicly available information and IDEA’s surveys and knowledge of its members.



**Figure 3: Number of Code members per type of organisation in 2020, 2022, and 2024.**

### 2.3. Code members' engagement

In 2024 there were two submission rounds for self-assessment, one in February and one in September, with the following number of members submitting in each 'submission grouping'<sup>16</sup> in 2024:

'Submission Grouping'	February Round	September Round	2024 total
1st self-assessment	5	1	6
2nd self-assessment	4	6	10
3rd self-assessment	6	0	6
4th self-assessment	7	7	14
5th self-assessment	5	6	11
6th self-assessment	0	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>53</b>

**Figure 4: Submissions in each submission grouping in 2024.**

<sup>16</sup> A submission grouping means all those members submitting for the first, second, third etc time – they may have joined in the same year or in different years, and they may be on the same or different 'submission tracks' (February or August/September)

The Code continued to operate effectively and efficiently in 2024. Two submission rounds took place in February and September. Across the two rounds, there were a total of 53 submissions from a total of 48 members – five organisations that joined the Code in February 2024 submitted in both rounds, which is a requirement of the first year of Code membership. Across the two rounds, five Code members took up Option B. As explained in Section 1.3, there are 588 self-assessment ratings as the basis for the analysis of 2024 Code submissions.

There were two Code network meetings, one online in May and one in-person in December, which were well attended. Overall, 49 out of the 53 members attended a Code network meeting this year which is 92.5%: 34 members were represented in the May meeting and 27 members in the December one. The meetings served as a space to exchange and discuss DE practice. Some of the key issues discussed in the May meeting were how to address organisational principles (Principles 10–12) when often educators have limited influence over organisational structures and policies. This was the case when indicators 10.1. *Development Education Strategy and Action Plan* and 11.2 *Challenge all forms of discrimination* were discussed specifically. The December meeting discussed three indicators (which were all new indicators introduced following the Code review in 2023): 2.3. *Be responsive to issues of justice and equality in Ireland*; 3.3. *Our engagement with people and communities affected by injustice and inequality is based on equal partnerships*; and 11.5. *Build understanding of and capacity for anti-oppressive, anti-racist and decolonial practice in the organisation*. Issues raised were how to engage better with cultural diversity; actions in a context of polarisation and misinformation; a prevailing mindset of ‘charity’, funding dependency limiting long-term partnership, and more meaningful engagement with those affected by global injustices.

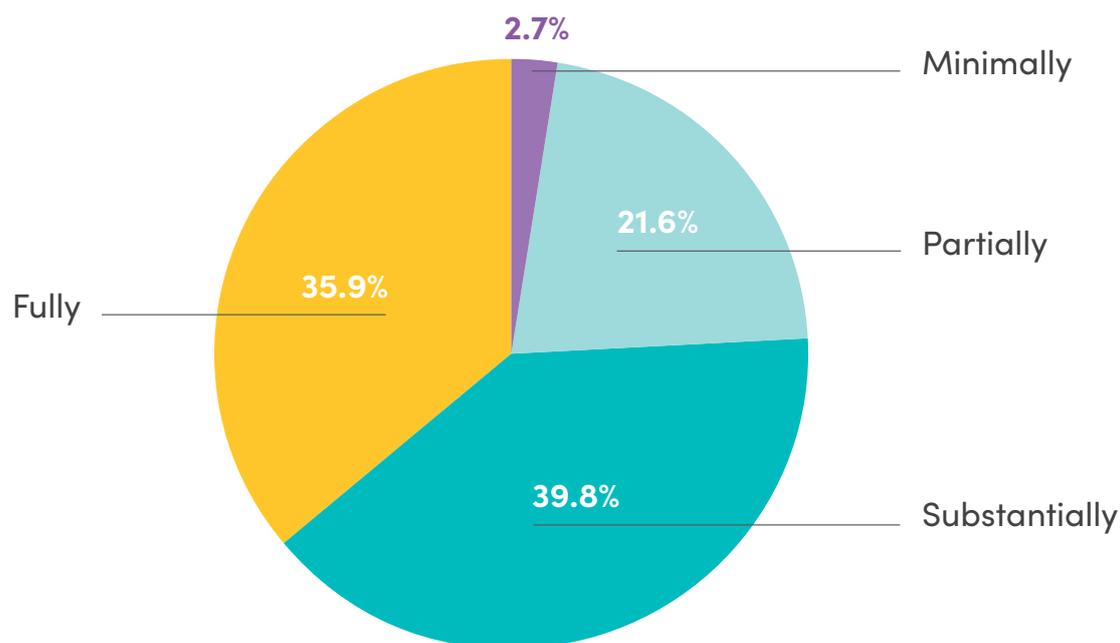
Though there was limited uptake of the offer of mentorship sessions among Code members, those few that did request them, gave very positive feedback on their usefulness. Other options discussed in Code network meetings were individualised support especially for new Code members.

Overall, there continues to be excellent engagement with the Code and the community of practice amongst Code members.

## 3. Code Members' Practice in 2024

### 3.1. Analysis of Code members' self-assessment ratings in 2024

Overall, in 2024, Code members self-assessed their practice as generally strong: 75.7% of self-assessment ratings across the two rounds were 'strong' ('Substantially' = 39.8%; 'Fully' = 35.9%) (see Figure 5). This analysis is done based on self-assessment ratings data (for both submission rounds) from which it is possible to rank<sup>17</sup> principles on the basis of 'Fully' and 'Substantially' ratings combined as 'Stronger practice' and on the basis of 'Minimally' and 'Partially' self-assessment ratings combined as 'Weaker practice'.



**Figure 5: Both 2024 rounds combined, % of ratings at each level (53 submissions, 588 ratings).**

This makes it possible to see the differences in members' self-assessed 'strengths' of practice as follows. Generally speaking, the patterns in the data are broadly similar<sup>18</sup> to 2020 and 2022 as can be seen from the charts below. With the largest proportion of ratings being 'Substantially' followed by

<sup>17</sup> This ranking of principles is based on combining the % of self-assessment ratings at the "Fully" fulfilled and "Substantially" fulfilled levels. Depending on what data is being analysed (i.e. the entire data set or just data for one round or one year), this ranking sometimes produces ties, where the % is the same for two or more principles – so to break ties, the % of ratings at the "Fully" level is used. It should be noted that a ranking based just on "Fully" ratings or on the averages of all four rating levels could produce different results.

<sup>18</sup> This ranking of principles is based on combining the % of self-assessment ratings at the "Fully" fulfilled and "Substantially" fulfilled levels. Depending on what data is being analysed (i.e. the entire data set or just data for one round or one year), this ranking sometimes produces ties, where the % is the same for two or more principles – so to break ties, the % of ratings at the "Fully" level is used. It should be noted that a ranking based just on "Fully" ratings or on the averages of all four rating levels could produce different results.

'Fully' in all three years examined (2020, 2022 and 2024), yet there is a clear increase in 'Fully' ratings in 2024. Additionally, over the years, the ratings 'Minimally' have remained the smallest proportion, and became even smaller in 2024, in a similar proportion to that of 2020. To see the small differences between 2020, 2022, and 2024, compare figures 6 (2020) and 7 (2022) with figure 5 for 2024. Though the Code's practice improvement is not linear, and the Code's membership is diverse and has grown, there are overall similar ratings with slight movement towards higher ratings.

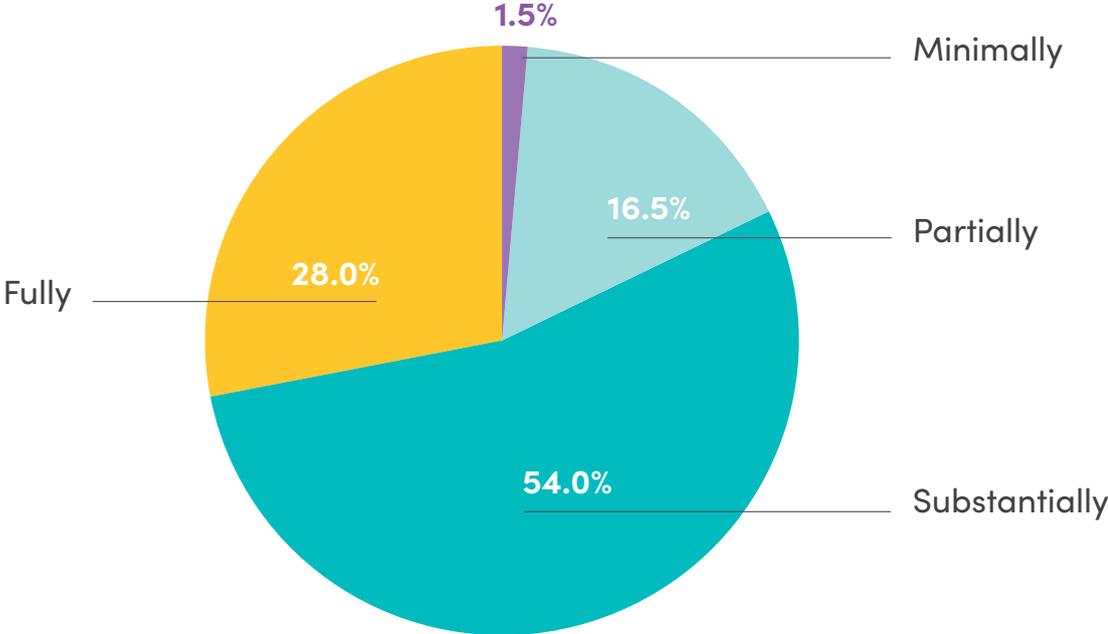


Figure 6: Both 2020 rounds data combined, % of ratings at each level.

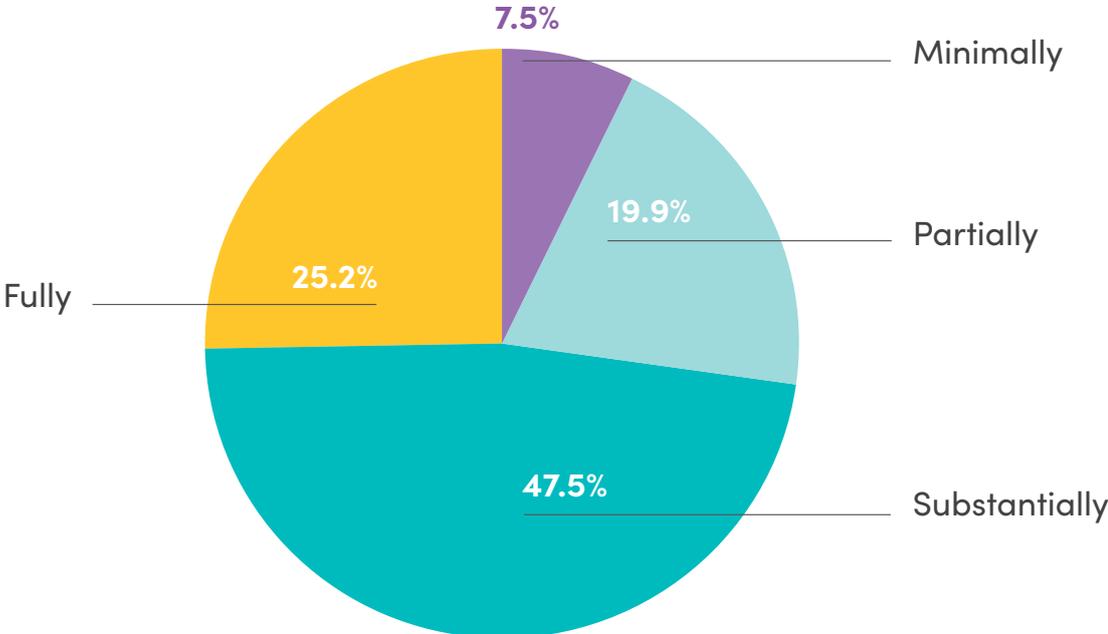


Figure 7: Both 2022 rounds data combined, % of ratings at each level.

### 3.2. Ratings per Principle in 2024

Overall in 2024, Principle 5 *Participatory approaches*, Principle 2 *Root causes* and Principle 3 *DE ethos* were self-assessed as the strongest, and Principle 7 *Build informed action*, Principle 6 *Quality Resources* and Principle 12 *Advocacy* were self-assessed as the least strong as illustrated in Figure 8.

Generally it continues to be the case that Code members feel that their practice is strong in the ‘building blocks’ of the Code (Principle 1 *Contribute to knowledge about development*, Principle 2 *Root causes* and Principle 3 *DE ethos*), with these principles being consistently ranked among the strongest principles, along with Principle 4 *Critical thinking* and Principle 5 *Participatory approaches*. The corollary also continues to be true, namely that Code members feel their practice is less strong in the ‘organisational principles’ (Principle 10 *DE strategy*; Principle 11 *Key DE organisational values*, Principle 12 *Advocacy*). This may be due to the fact that DE/GCE practitioners have less direct influence over organisational policies and practices, so this is not surprising, and advocacy is particularly difficult for smaller organisations given the specialist capacity needed.

Principle 6 *Quality Resources* also continues to be an area where Code members self-assess their practice as relatively weaker. This may be because three of the four indicators can be interpreted as quite demanding in terms of technical expertise and capacity, requiring considerable organisational effort to fulfil (test/pilot new resources, monitor/evaluate resource use, address bias/stereotyping in resources). For organisations that do not actually create their own resources, it may be even more difficult to provide evidence here.

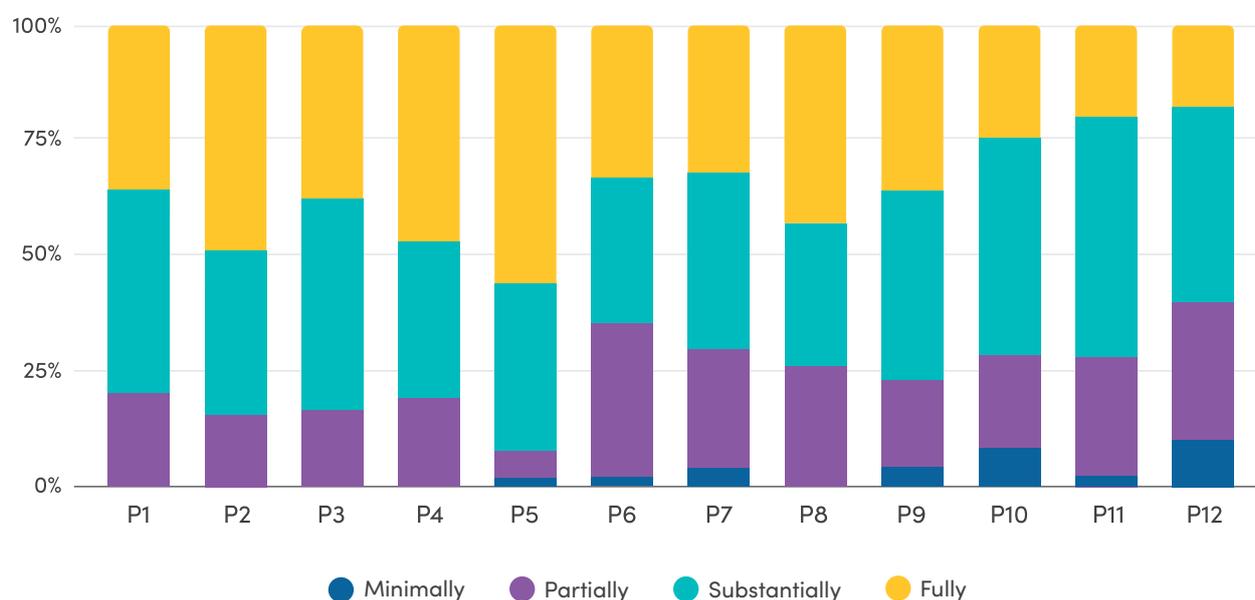
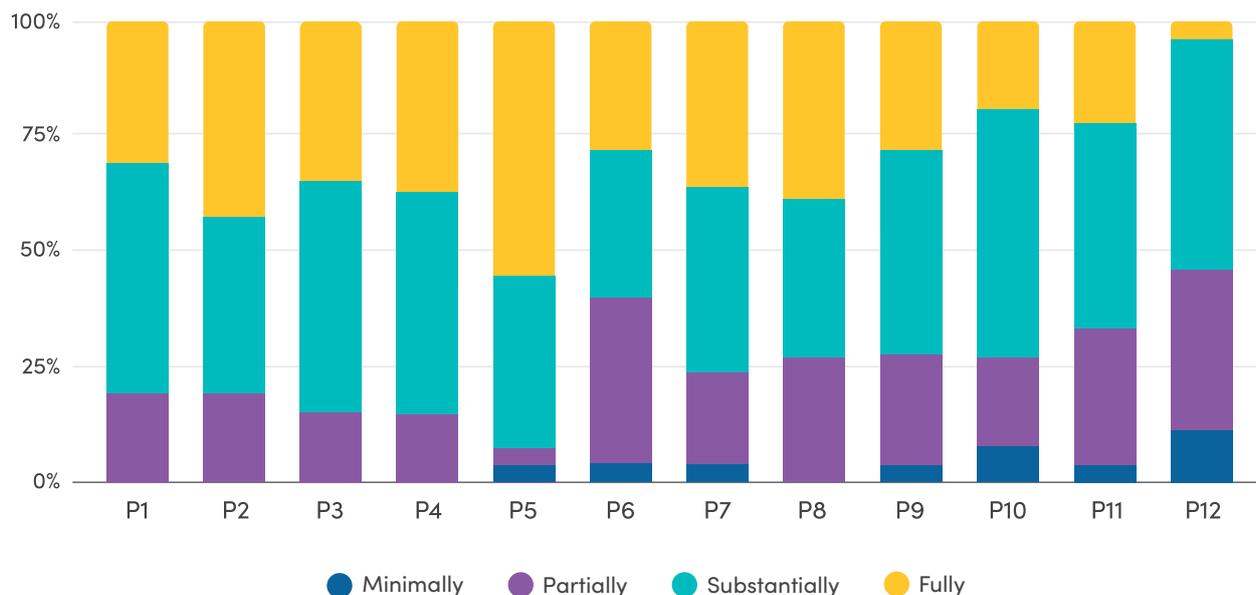
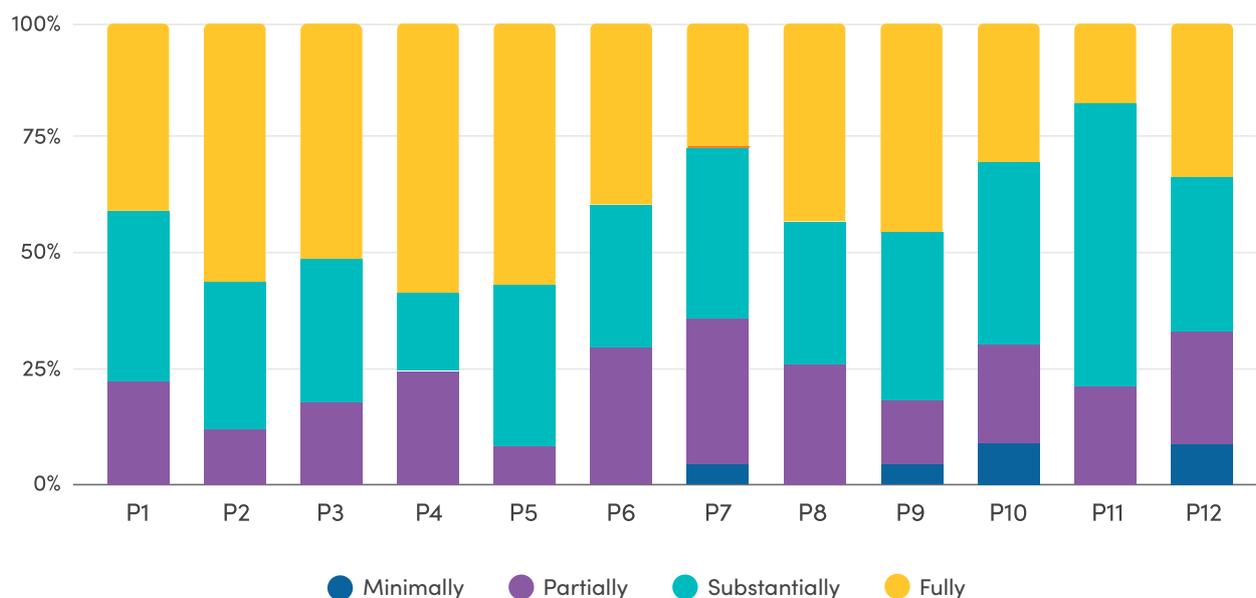


Figure 8: Both 2024 rounds combined, % of ratings at each level for each principle (53 submissions, 588 ratings).



**Figure 9: February 2024 round, % of ratings at each level for each principle (27 submissions, 312 ratings).**



**Figure 10: September 2024 round, % of ratings at each level for each principle (26 submissions, 276 ratings).**

In September 2024, **Principle 7 *Build informed action* was surprisingly self-assessed as the weakest principle in the round. Although this principle has been among the weaker principles before, it has never been the weakest.** Some submissions have reflected that members find this principle challenging. It may be that their interpretation of ‘action’ is too demanding. This may be related to the fact that indicators for Principle 7 were elaborated during the 2023 review of the Code and there are now five indicators for Principle 7, the most for any Principle (along with five indicators under Principle 11). The apparent challenges for Code members in self-assessing practice under both Principles 6 and 7 is something to monitor in future evaluation or research activities.

Though self-assessment ratings have been less strong for organisational principles (10-12), there are growing efforts indicated by a number of good practices identified in Principle 11, showing an increasing interest and relevance of inclusion and sustainability aspects in organisational policies and practices.

If we compare the two rounds in 2024, there seems to be something worth noting. In the 2024 September round a very high proportion (46%) of members submitting were doing so for the fourth, fifth or sixth time. This unusually high proportion may well be the explanation for a striking new pattern which emerged from the analysis of self-assessment ratings for this round within Principle 11 as explained below.

The percentage of members who rated their practice for Principle 11 as 'strong' (i.e. 'Fully' or 'Substantially' fulfilled) was 67% in February 2024 but significantly higher at 78% in September when there was a higher proportion of more experienced members submitting. **This suggests that members with more experience of the Code are starting to get to grips with Principle 11, which has been one of the more challenging Principles, and are self-assessing their practice as stronger in this area the longer they have been a Code member.** This is particularly interesting given that it has been previously noted<sup>19</sup> that the challenges presented by Principle 11 are due, at least in part, to sectoral issues related to diversity among the DE workforce which is one of the indicators used in Principle 11. A possible explanation could be that the Code is encouraging more experienced Code members to address diversity, inclusion, and sustainability issues, together with the fact that these issues have become more prominent in the public agenda. It is worth noting that an additional indicator (11.5 *Build understanding of and capacity for anti-oppressive, anti-racist and decolonial practice*) was proposed by members and added to the Code as part of the review process in 2023, indicating the growing interest and efforts in this area of work.

Members with longer experience of the Code appear to better understand and apply Principle 11. While challenges with this principle remain, increased familiarity with the Code may be encouraging more experienced members to address diversity, inclusion, and sustainability on an annual basis through the self-assessment rounds. This trend also reflects the growing attention on these issues within the Code membership, signaled by the addition of a new indicator (11.5) on anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and decolonial practice to the Code in 2023.

This argument may also apply to Principle 9 *Reflect & learn*, for which the percentage of members who rated their practice as 'strong' (i.e. 'Fully' or 'Substantially' fulfilled) was 72% in February 2024 but significantly higher at 82% in September. Even Principle 12 'Advocacy', which has consistently been ranked as the weakest principle, was self-assessed stronger in September 2024 ('Fully' + 'Substantially' = 67%), when there was a higher proportion of more experienced members submitting, compared to February 2024 ('Fully' + 'Substantially' = 54%). As ever, when comparing percentages across rounds we must be cautious about drawing conclusions as actual numbers are low. However, this pattern will be worth monitoring in future rounds to see whether it can be confirmed.

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19 In the Lessons Learned Report for 2023 and in discussion among Code members and Panel members

### 3.3. Trends in ratings per principle over the years

Comparing 2024 ratings per principle, with those of 2020 and 2022 (Figures 8, 11 and 12), generally there is continuity: 'educational principles' continue to be self-assessed more strongly by Code members. However there are some minor, but at the same time, relevant changes. First, for principles 1-4, there are zero 'Minimally fulfilled' ratings in 2024, indicating that all organisations have strengthened their practice in these four Principles. This may also be aided by Code feedback letters from IDEA which have emphasised the importance of Principles 1-3 in particular, which are considered as foundational principles of quality DE/GCE. A second observable change is the increase of 'Substantially fulfilled' self-assessments ratings for Principle 11, strengthening the trend towards improvement in this area.

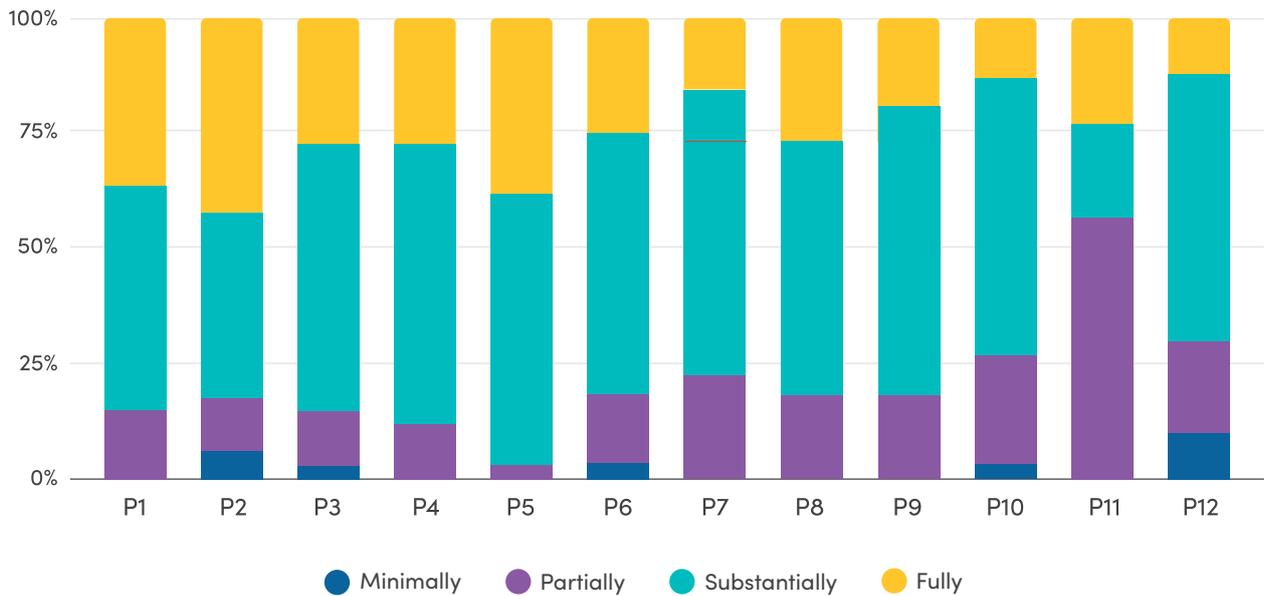


Figure 11: Both 2020 rounds combined, % of ratings at each level for each principle.

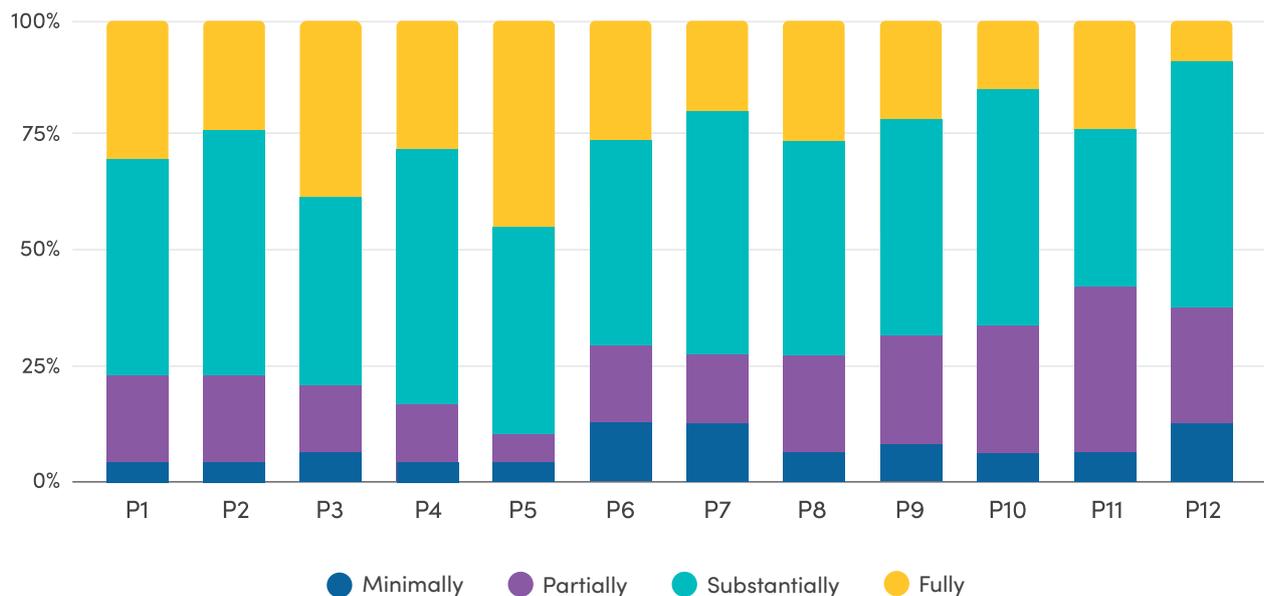


Figure 12: Both 2022 rounds combined, % of ratings at each level for each principle.

### 3.4. Stronger practice per principle in 2024

As above, based on self-assessment ratings data (for both submission rounds in 2024) it is possible to rank<sup>20</sup> principles on the basis of ‘Fully’ and ‘Substantially’ ratings combined. This makes it possible to see the differences in members’ self-assessed ‘strength’ of practice.

2024 rounds combined, ranking of Principles by "stronger" practice (i.e. Fully and Substantially fulfilled)				
Principle	"Stronger" (F+S)	Fully	Substantially	Rank
P5 Participatory approaches	92.00%	56.00%	36.00%	1
P2 Root causes of injustices	84.31%	49.02%	35.29%	2
P3 Ethos of DE	83.33%	37.50%	45.83%	3
P4 Critical thinking	80.39%	47.06%	33.33%	4
P1 Contribute to knowledge about development	79.17%	35.42%	43.75%	5
P9 Reflect & learn (M&E and CPD)	76.60%	36.17%	40.43%	6
P8 Explore solutions	73.47%	40.82%	32.65%	7
P11 Key DE values in organisation	72.00%	20.00%	52.00%	8
P10 DE strategy & plan	71.43%	24.49%	46.94%	9
P7 Build informed action	70.21%	31.91%	38.30%	10
P6 Quality resources & materials	64.58%	33.33%	31.25%	11
P12 Advocacy	60.00%	18.00%	42.00%	12

Figure 13: 2024 combined, principles ranked by “stronger” self-assessment ratings.

Alternatively, it is possible to plot selected principles, to see how they have been self-assessed in each submission (from 1st to 6th submission<sup>21</sup>) for all the Code members submitting in 2024.

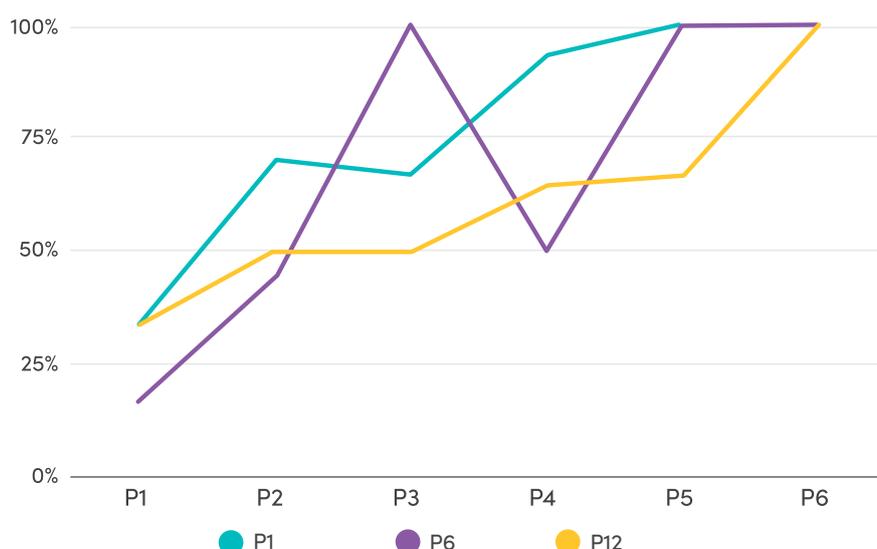


Figure 14: 2024 combined, principles 1, 6, and 12, % of “stronger” ratings by submission.

<sup>20</sup> This ranking of principles is based on combining the % of self-assessment ratings at the “Fully” fulfilled and “Substantially” fulfilled levels. Depending on what data is being analysed (i.e. the entire data set or just data for one round or one year), this ranking sometimes produces ties, where the % is the same for two or more principles – so to break ties, the % of ratings at the “Fully” level is used. It should be noted that a ranking based just on “Fully” ratings or on the averages of all four rating levels could produce different results.

<sup>21</sup> Far fewer members submitting in 2024 will be on their sixth submission than on their fifth, fourth, etc. Caution must be applied as numbers in the ‘higher’ ‘submission groupings’ are small.

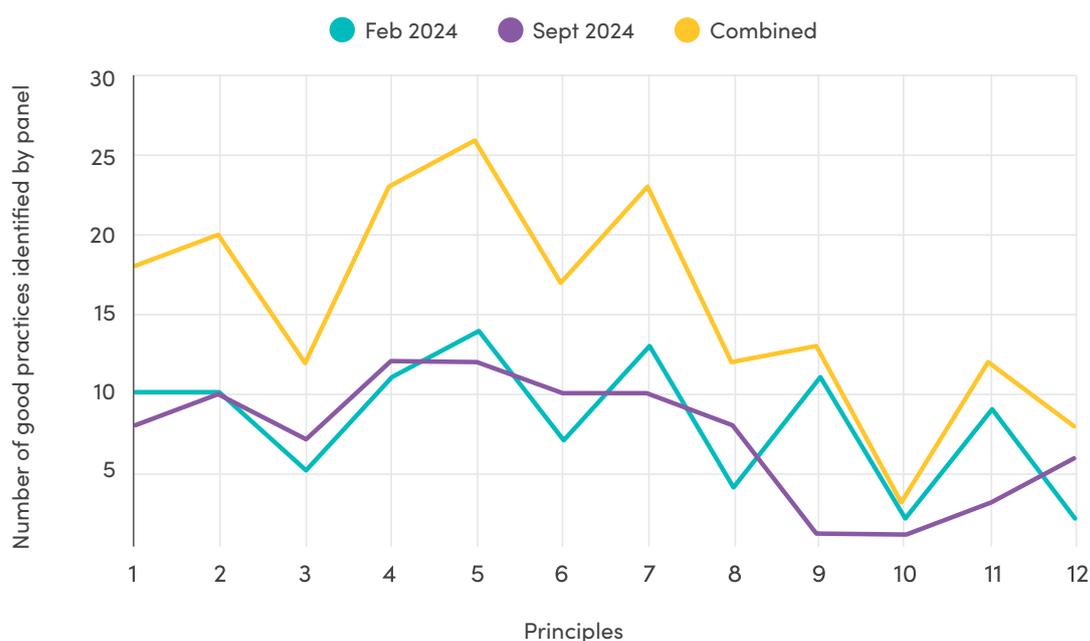
The chart above plots a typically ‘stronger’ principle (Principle 1, Contribute to knowledge about development), a typically ‘weaker’ ‘general’ principle (Principle 6, Quality Resources), and a typically ‘weaker’ ‘organisational’ principle (Principle 12 Advocacy).

### 3.5. Good practice examples compared with self-assessment ratings

As above, the Code panel identifies good practice examples for each Code member from the evidence submitted. These are included in the feedback letters sent to each member from IDEA. The examples also form the basis of a good practice grid ( a spreadsheet, exported from the online platform), which brings together all the good practice examples identified by the Code panel in the evidence submitted by Code members in each round in 2024. The good practice grids are shared with all Code members in the spirit of learning from each others’ practice (though Code members can opt out of inclusion in the good practice grid if they wish).

It is possible to compare Code members’ self-assessment ratings with the good practice examples identified by the expert panel when reviewing the Code self-assessments in relation to a particular principle. **This allows us to combine Code members self-perceptions of good practice (indicated by self-assessment ratings) with those of panel members<sup>22</sup> (indicated by good practice examples identified).**

In the ranking based on self-assessment ratings for 2024 (two submission rounds combined), Principle 7 ranked as 10th out of the 12 Code principles (in other words one of the “weakest” principles in that year) and yet it was the principle for which the panel identified the second highest number (24) of good practice examples (lowest no. of good practice examples = 3, highest = 27, average for all twelve principles = 16 good practice examples per Principle) as illustrated in Figure 13.



**Figure 15: Number of good practices identified by Panel members in 2024.**

<sup>22</sup> Note that there is no agreed criteria among panel members to identify good practices.

This finding triggered a debate among the panel and IDEA staff as to whether Code members' interpretation of Principle 7 and its indicators was too demanding, self-assessing their practice as relatively weak because they could not provide evidence of the actual actions taken by their learners and participants against all five indicators, whereas the panel found multiple examples of good practice in terms of enabling, facilitating, and signposting learners to take action on justice issues.

In any case, educational principles (1-9) are overall perceived as those in which practice is the strongest, as indicated by both self-assessment ratings and the number of good practices identified. In contrast, fewer good practices were identified for organisational principles, reinforcing the analysis of trends in self-assessment ratings, and especially fewer good practices identified for Principles 10 and 12.

### 3.6. Illustrating strengths and challenges in practice

This section illustrates both strong and challenging areas of practice in a selection of principles, highlighting and describing some examples and approaches to interpreting the indicators from evidence provided in the workbooks. Overall, principles self-assessed as Fully or Substantially are interpreted as those in which practice is stronger. Yet this analysis also aims to identify promising trends in what can be viewed as 'weaker' principles as well as what may be identified as challenges in stronger principles, aiming to mitigate research limitations in trying to analyse the rich practice of a diverse Code membership.

Due to the large amounts of evidence and the limitations of this research, this section analyses good practices only, and only for a few selected principles. This implies a bias towards complete and innovative practice as not all practice per Principle was analysed qualitatively, but only those examples chosen by the Code panel in the review process.

Good practices for four principles were analysed: Principles 2, 5, 7, and 11. This choice aimed to balance analysis of principles in which practice is perceived as the strongest - Principle 5 *Participatory Approaches* and Principle 2 *Root causes* (with 26 and 20 good practices examples identified respectively out of a total of 187 examples in 2024); and those in which practice is perceived as less strong according to self-assessment ratings: Principle 7 *Building informed action* and Principle 11 *Key DE values* yet in which a relatively high number of good practices were identified by the panel (23 and 15 good practices identified respectively).

Additionally, this choice of principles allowed a comparison with the analysis in the 2022 report for Principle 5, and new analysis in the case of Principle 2, and represents both conceptual and methodological approaches of the educational practice. This choice of four principles also represents both educational (Principles 1-9) and organisational principles (Principles 10-12). Finally, including analysis for Principles 7 and 11, enabled examination of the new indicators and wording introduced in the 2023 Code Review.



## Principle 2: Explore the root causes of local and global injustices and inequalities in our interdependent world.

### ► Indicator 2.1. Ensure an analysis of the cause and effect of injustices is at the centre of our educational processes, alongside an analysis of what drives global justice.

This indicator had only one good practice example identified in 2024, out of the 20 identified for Principle 2. The practice identified shows how the analysis of causes and effects of injustices as well as what drives global justice is embedded in the organisation's educational activities. For example, the organisation explains (Sept 2024 round, 5th submission): “volunteers examine the effects of injustice as well as the concept of justice itself” and attend a dedicated workshop on social justice. From previous analyses, there seems to be a challenge in focusing on what drives global justice, thus, more attention could be given to positive factors enabling, supporting, and leading global justice, perhaps also connected to Principle 8 *Imagine and explore solutions*.

### ► Indicator 2.2. As practitioners and learners, examine our own roles as global citizens as part of our exploration of the root causes of injustice.

This indicator had five good practice examples identified out of the 20 identified for Principle 2. Evidence provided by Code members under indicator 2.2 clearly converges on the idea that individual and collective reflection appears as a common and valued aspect of practice, as one organisation explains (Sept 2024 round, 6th submission):

*“Twice a year we hold a team residential gathering where we reflect on our work and practice and reflect back upon ourselves the methods and approaches that we bring to the events and workshops that we deliver. The [name of the organisation] team meets weekly in order to perpetuate and normalise a dialectical approach to normalising reflection on how and what our roles are and how they need to evolve to move with the changing understandings and perspectives on the world.” (authors’ emphasis)*

### ► Indicator 2.3. Be responsive to issues of justice and equality in Ireland, and seek to make local global connections.

This indicator had 14 good practice examples identified out of the 20 identified for Principle 2, the most numerous of all indicators. **The issue that most organisations are addressing within these examples is that of anti-immigration attitudes, and related discrimination, and which they approach in the context of global movements of people, either as economic migrants or as refugees.** The second most common issue mentioned in the good practice examples is that of the rise of the far-right and inequalities, both in Ireland and globally. Third, organisations have included educational and advocacy actions related to the genocide in Gaza. Other issues addressed are environmental ones such as extractivism, and gender-based discrimination. The good practices selected illustrate how organisations respond to a variety of issues with a *global lens*.

There is strong practice in Principle 2 with a glocal lens, illustrated by various activities which link justice issues in Ireland, such as anti-immigrants attitudes, inequality, gender-based discrimination and environmental problems to global phenomena.



## Principle 5: Use participatory, creative approaches in our educational practice.

### ► Indicator 5.1 Use participative methodologies and approaches that place the learners at the centre of our education process.

This indicator had eight good practice examples out of the 26 identified for Principle 5. The approaches and activities described in Code members' evidence continue to show solid, learner-centred and diverse methodological approaches as observed in the 2022 report. Art-based approaches continue to be predominant: mural painting, activism, photo and literature were mentioned. Second, gamification continues to be highly used – interactive games and quizzes, including online ones, are used. Other methods commonly used are role plays, discussion and debates aided by videos or presentations, research, and group projects. One example of this continuity, while also introducing innovation and co-creation with partners and learners, is from a Code member submission below (Sept 2024, 6th submission):

*“We have continued to build on our success using games and games-based-learning in our practice. To this end, as well as our usual approach using these methodologies with young people and their educators mentioned in previous workbooks, we embarked on the creation of a new digital game on water injustice, in partnership with the Technological University of the Shannon, and based on the experiences of people we work with in Malawi. This game has been designed, developed and tested with the involvement of people we work with in Malawi, but also young people and educators here in Ireland who have been integral to the development process” (authors emphasis)*

**Despite the general strength of practice, it is worth noting that most of the practices identified focused on the methodological and interactive aspects at activity level (formats, tools) rather than on the more fundamental participatory approaches that lead to genuine and meaningful participation in the design and implementation of activity.** Participatory *approaches* (rather than just methodologies) are central to Principle 5 as explained in the [Background Note on Principle 5](#) and could be an area to strengthen in members' practice overall. For example, one organisation (Sept 2024 round, 5th submission) explained in detail how they engaged participants as co-leaders in a consultative process and created a more reflective space.

### ► 5.2 Continuously and critically reflect on our approach to facilitating learning which reflects our DE ethos.

This indicator had nine good practice examples out of the 26 identified for this Principle in 2024. **Organisations provided details of activities in which educators reflect on their approaches such as individual journals, periodic review sessions, evaluation exercises, and advisory boards. This**

**continues to be an area of strong practice.** One new member in 2024 provides a clear example of how open conversations about approaches that reflect an DE ethos are important, especially when engaging “newcomers” to DE (Feb 2024 round, 1st submission):

*“Our team of facilitators is growing, and while DE underlies everything we do, not everyone we work with is from a DE background. We have addressed this by always facilitating in pairs (one paired with another skill, (...), and we actively bring in DE approaches across all our training.”*

► **5.3 Create a space for learning that is relevant and appropriate for the groups we work with.**

This indicator had nine good practice examples out of the 26 identified for this Principle. There is also continuity with previous practice in this area, yet with three important developments. First, organisations are making important efforts towards making spaces more accessible in broad and specific terms. For example, activities have included sign language interpretation, development of materials for visually impaired persons, and adapting the physical spaces for different needs: quiet spaces for downtime for neurodivergent people or simply those that need it, chill-out spaces for informal interactions in youth centres, and so on. Second, there seems to be a trend to use outdoor spaces, and activities that connect learners to nature through physical activities. And third, use of open spaces, such as photo exhibitions that allow learners to move and explore at their own pace also featured in 2024.

Good practice examples support the members' perception of Principle 5 being one in which their practice is strongest. These examples increasingly show how deeper and more meaningful approaches to learners' participation are being designed and facilitated.



**Principle 7: Build knowledge, skills and attitudes for informed action that is collective in nature.**

The analysis of good practices for all indicators in this Principle is important as **it confirms that after the introduction of changes to the wording of the Principle and indicators as a result of the Code's Review in 2023, complete and relevant evidence was provided by Code members without difficulty**, despite the 'weaker' self-assessment ratings by members themselves.

► **7.1 Encourage informed action based on participants' learning and analysis of how their actions can make a positive difference as well as have risks and limitations.**

This indicator had four good practice examples out of the total 23 identified for this Principle. Good practices identified show how activities encourage action in different ways: integrating post-card and letter writing to decision-makers, informing participants about existing volunteer or campaigning opportunities, and acknowledging action-oriented activities. **Noting that this indicator was reviewed in 2023, including two changes (adding the word “informed” and the analysis of risks and**

limitations), it is promising that there are good practice examples despite the more demanding threshold. One organisation (Sept 2024 round, 4th submission) had a website in which young people could list their actions and find inspiration on opportunities for action. This website was updated and now information uploaded needs to include details on possible impacts and risks.

► **7.2 Draw on the experience of those affected by the issue and learn from it in designing, and where possible co-creating, the action.**

This indicator had eight good practice examples out of the 23 identified for this Principle. Good practice examples explain how actions are developed taking into consideration insights from those directly affected by issues – both in the Global South as well as in Ireland – and in all cases co-creating actions with those most affected. For example, organisations explain:

*“... we endeavour to bring voices from the Global South into all our learning material, in particular from African businesses, African business schools, academics, NGOs. We cocreate teaching materials and lectures with African scholars and other voices here in Ireland” (Feb 2024 round, 5th submission)*

*“(We organised a workshop about Palestine) In this workshop, participants from Palestine, and the wider solidarity movement shared perspectives and analysis, mapping what needed to be understood in terms of root causes in order to take meaningful solidarity action, and avoid common charity-focused pitfalls. Others in the group shared their experiences and insights to build a similar analysis of root causes of the housing crisis” (Sept 2024 round, 4th submission)*

**These examples show how good practices within different principles and indicators are complementing each other.** We can observe while examining practice under Principle 7 above, that participatory approaches (typically the remit of Principle 5) are used with learners in a participatory process of designing actions in a spirit of solidarity, reflecting DE ethos (Indicator 5.2), and how these process helps explore causes and effects of global injustices together as global citizens with partners across divides and borders (Principle 2).

► **7.3 Support participants to develop a range of approaches and skills to target relevant audiences in their actions**

This indicator had four good practice examples out of the 23 identified for this principle. Descriptions were rich in examples of approaches and skills. For example, activities prepare learners for action by building specific organising, civic engagement and communication skills such as writing position papers, communicating with local decision-makers, and explaining complex issues in accessible ways. A new Code member (Feb 2024 round, 1st submission) described how they, a student-led organisation, teach other students how to talk to their friends and family about global issues, building on peer-to-peer and personal exchanges:

*“We also engage in discussion on how to talk with friends and family after the workshop – to help them to move away from a single story of “poverty” and “helplessness” to a more sophisticated understanding of the role Ireland has played in extraction.”*

- ▶ **7.4 Take other initiatives into account: consider collaborating with other networks or collective actions working on the same issues, or identify gaps in the current initiatives that the action could address.**

This indicator had five good practice examples out of the 23 identified for this principle. **Examples illustrate different forms of collaborations, especially involving different kinds of organisations who complement their expertise and strengths.** For example, collaborations between environment-focused organisations and the youth sector and residents associations as well as one between civil society organisations and universities were described.

- ▶ **7.5 Link learners with further opportunities to engage in relevant actions beyond our initiative.**

This indicator had two good practice examples out of the 23 identified for this principle. Examples illustrate how sharing information about opportunities is a common practice during and after educational activities. For example, one explains in detail (Feb 2024, 3rd submission):

*“We always provide additional information about others working in the area/campaigns. [name of programme] participants asked if they would like to join the [initiative] through which they can then continue engaging in collective actions. We have a couple of how-to’s on our website for running their own actions, have case studies that highlight opportunities that could be replicated and provide project planning sheets that can be used for any campaign/event. We use these in our (...) workshops. Our action boards in our exhibits have QR codes with useful links for action. We also direct them towards organisations that might be relevant to their areas of interest [examples mentioned] (...) WhatsApp is an open forum of conversation on topics and opportunities beyond it.”*

Overall practices increasingly encompass and illustrate how different principles and indicators synergise and complement one another. For example, participatory approaches to explore causes and effects of global inequality and injustices towards action in a spirit of solidarity.



## Principle 11: Reflect the key values of Development Education: Equality, diversity, sustainability and human rights, and responsibilities, and challenging unequal and unjust power relations across our work

### ► 11.1 Act out of an awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion when recruiting staff, volunteers and external facilitators.

This indicator had three good practice examples out of the 15 identified for this principle, and out of the 187 identified in 2024. These examples show how different measures are being taken to form diverse teams including people from different national and ethnic backgrounds, gender, migration/citizenship status, coming from rural and urban areas and also in terms of disability. Measures include unwritten rules such as keeping ratios. For example, one organisation (Feb 2024 round, 5th submission) who focuses on issues and projects related to African countries, aims to ensure people of African origin represent 50% of the team. Finally, good practices describe institutional mechanisms such as specific Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committees.

### ► 11.2 Challenge all forms of discrimination within our own organisation and those we work with.

This indicator had three good practice examples out of the 15 identified for this principle. Evidence provided focuses on organisational policies and related training and culture to address any form of discrimination. The following were mentioned: a Strategic framework, Equal Opportunities Policy and Dignity at Work Policy, organisational Code of Conduct as part of staff Handbook, including policies on Whistleblower, Bullying and Harassment, Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Gender Equality, Safeguarding and ethical communication standards. One of the organisations (Sept 2024 round, 6th submission) explains:

*“Whistleblowing policy statements and anti-bullying posters are displayed in departmental work spaces and staff are trained on our policies and procedures on an annual basis. All staff receive staff training on the Dóchas Guide to Ethical Communications. This provides a platform to discuss the tensions and challenges of fundraising messaging in relation to Authentic Representation, Contributor Led Stories – locally led content development, Informed Consent and Upholding Standards and Doing no Harm.”*

### ► 11.3 Include minority perspectives and world views in our institutional decision-making.

This indicator had only one GP example out of the 15 identified for this principle. This example showed some efforts in this direction (for example, involving local actors in decision-making), acknowledging the need for organisational and cultural changes to enable meaningful inclusion, rather than tokenistic approaches (Feb round, 5th submission). **The evidence did not reflect directly on including people with different world views, indicating this part of the indicator may be difficult to pinpoint or operationalise. Including minority perspectives in decision-making is not only a challenge for Code**

members, but also for the whole development/DE sector and for democratic societies in general. However, promising practices can spearhead and inspire change within the sector and in society at large.

► **11.4 Demonstrate a clear commitment to sustainability throughout our organisation's policies and practices.**

This indicator had five good practice examples out of the 15 identified for this principle. Examples for this indicator show growing and comprehensive efforts to improve sustainability. First, there are different policies mentioned, such as Fair trade workplace policies and Green Travel policies - which have been aided by EU funding - as well as institutional mechanisms such as an Environmental Action Committee. **But most interestingly, while different kinds of practices are mentioned (travelling, energy consumption, recycling), these practices challenge the very roots of production, consumption and distribution systems.** For example, practices include applying food sovereignty principles which limit food transport environmental effects, and which also lead to reflection on the economic, ethical and anthropological connections between producers and consumers.

► **11.5 Build understanding of and capacity for anti- oppressive, anti-racist and decolonial practice in the organisation.**

This indicator had three good practice examples out of the 15 identified for this principle. Despite the fact that this indicator was just introduced to the Code in 2023, **examples described show that this has been an area of work for several years in some organisations, thus yielding clear and relevant evidence for this indicator.** The addition of the indicator reflects the growing interest and relevance of decolonial approaches in the sector - despite some reservations expressed during member consultations (during the Code review in 2023 and in the Code Network meeting of May 2024).

As part of the evidence provided, which was considered a good practice by panel members, one organisation (Feb 2024 round, 3rd submission) described its journey at length and here a short excerpt included:

*"... in our teaching and learning approach we work from an anti-oppressive commitment and our colleagues do engage in some of our training offers. In 2020, we began to look at decolonising the work in terms of, a critical look at development education (see video in resources section). This has informed colleagues on the need for a greater insight into the legacy of colonialism in creating stereotypes that feed bias in an ongoing way. This is an ongoing commitment from our team (...) We regularly refer people to the [name of organisation] Racial Justice training, and also the elearning module on social justice (...) In 2024, we are committed to developing two resources to support youth sector understanding of and capacity with anti-oppressive, anti-racist and decolonial practice through two new resources 1. A Controversial Conversations Resource and 2. A Racial Justice Resource."*

Organisational practices are slowly becoming more inclusive and sustainable, despite the fact that it takes time to change organisational cultures and structures which are beyond the direct influence of educators.

### 3.7. Challenges within strong areas of practice: Engaging with models of development and global systems

This section looks at challenging aspects within areas perceived by members as strong in 2024, continuing with the analysis of two gaps identified in the 2022 report:

1. A gap was identified in Indicator 1.2. *Engage with models of development* was identified in the 2022 Code research report. The analysis then showed that less than a quarter of the Code members provided evidence that directly addressed the indicator (10 out of 42 members - 23% - in 47 submissions). Evidence provided tended to focus on the negative effects of global systems, rather than explicitly engaging with models of (economic) development and alternative perspectives; and
2. the analysis of evidence for indicator 4.2. *Exploration of how global systems work* indicated that there was a lack of clarity in the understanding of “global systems” and few submissions included specific examples.

This section looks at all evidence submitted in 2024 for these indicators. Though these aspects continue to be challenging, important progress has been observed:

#### ► **Indicator 1.2. Critically engage with models of development including dominant and alternative perspectives**

For 2024, the quality of evidence on this indicator improved: 23 out of 43<sup>23</sup> organisations (56%) provided relevant evidence for this indicator (compared to only 23% in 2022):

- 16 (37%) did it in a complete and clear way, providing examples and identifying different models of development,
- Eight (19%) did it in a partial way for example, stating they did so in their courses or activities, and listing topics.
- The remaining 19 organisations (44%) did not provide evidence that directly addressed the indicator. Rather, they described their work in general terms, for example, that they adopted a GCE approach or explored topics or effects of models of development such as inequality, voluntarism, climate change etc. Yet, this evidence did not refer to the models of development or explain how Code members engaged with the models in their activities.

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23 Five organisations did not assess Principle 1 as they opted for Option B.

**In short, there is an improvement in the engagement with models of development, both dominant and alternative ones.** Yet, there is still an important number of organisations that face challenges in providing relevant evidence for this indicator, suggesting they may not understand what is meant by models of development. Looking at the organisations in this case, it seems the reason for this may be that they do not focus or work directly in the field of (economic) development studies or development policies. As there are organisations that do have strong practice for this indicator, a key opportunity emerges for exchange and learning among Code members, especially worth sharing will be good practices that are able to unpack complex social, economic and political analyses and facilitate understanding and reflection on these models in an accessible way.

One example of clear evidence is provided by a new member of the Code in 2024 (Feb 2024 round, 1st submission):

*“Our work through our courses brings in indigenous perspectives from around the world. In particular, our sessions on Seed Sovereignty look at the current food systems, extractivist and unsustainable practices in countries around the world, as opposed to agro-ecological. The indigenous perspectives add valuable alternative perspectives to the dominant models of development as they are often rooted culturally and historically in more gentle relationships with the land - in contrast to large-scale approaches to development that have an impact on how we access seeds and food.”*

This evidence identifies elements of dominant models of development (extractivism, large-scale agriculture and modified seeds) and elements of alternative ones (perspectives and knowledge of indigenous peoples, seed sovereignty, agro-ecological production, and approaches that are respectful to the land).

#### ► **Indicator 4.2. Enable critical exploration of how global systems work**

Though there continues to be a challenge, there is important progress in the amount and quality of evidence provided for this indicator in 2024 in comparison with 2022 submissions. 26 out of the 45<sup>24</sup> organisations (58%) included evidence that explained how they enable exploration of global systems, naming them and providing thematic and methodological details. Almost half of all did it in a complete manner (49%) and some partially (9%), for example, referring to discussing fast fashion, not directly explaining how they explore the way global systems work. Among the relevant examples we can highlight the following: several organisations addressed economic systems of food production and consumption, trade, debt and related tax systems in their educational activities. Others explored governance, rule of law, and human rights systems, especially in relation to migration flows and the war in Gaza. One organisation worked in depth on energy production and management systems, related to waste management and biodiversity as well.

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24 Three organisations did not assess Principle 4 as they opted for Option B.

## 4. The Code's influence on DE/GCE practice in Ireland

Though assessing the link between the Code activities and practice improvement in DE/GCE in Ireland is not the main aim of this report, evidence gathered through Code activities (self-assessments, Code network meetings, etc), and through an online focus group conducted in the context of this research in October 2025, provides anecdotal yet relevant evidence to show the multiple ways in which the Code activities have contributed to DE/GCE practice improvement in Ireland.

It is important to note that assessing the link between the Code activities and overall DE/GCE practice impact in Ireland would require a specific impact evaluation and research methodology. In qualitative terms, it would require systematically documenting and analysing organisational processes over time, identifying causality links between activities related to the Code in which organisations engage, and specific improvements in terms of quality and quantity of DE activities as well as other educational and social outcomes in the medium and long term.

**Based on the evidence gathered for this report, it can be concluded that the Code has contributed to practice improvement.** The six participating organisations in the focus group who all joined the Code at the first deadline in April 2020, concurred that their practice has improved and that participating in Code activities was a key factor in enabling and driving these improvements. At the same time, it was noted that organisations use the Code process in various and different ways, given their distinct missions, types of activities, structures, sizes, and contexts. Therefore, interpreting how and to what extent practice improves must be done with care as membership is diverse. Yet, overall Code activities have helped in the following ways:

1. **Facilitating reflection on practice:** Having to identify evidence for Code Principles on a periodic basis has aided, encouraged and facilitated reflection on members practice. Even if evidence is not found for all Principles every year, having to reflect on all of them, helps to set new goals and identify areas that need further work and helps re-define the focus of efforts. It was also reported that Code activities helped to identify and focus on just a few particular areas of practice that need strengthening.
2. **Supporting strategy development and planning:** The self-assessment, together with the exchanges with other organisations as part of the Code community of practice, supported both DE/GCE teams and leadership to develop organisational strategies, and planning, embedding DE/GE i.e. Principle 10 *Have a clear Development Education strategy and action plan.*

3. **Supporting team and organisational 'performance review' and evaluation efforts.** The Code has helped develop reflective practices, tools to assess progress and identify strengths, gaps and good practices.
4. **Championing DE/GCE work:** Participants explained that the Code has helped them report on their work to senior management and make the case internally for DE/GCE.
5. **Progressing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and recruitment:** The Code served as a guidance on key knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a quality DE/GCE practice and helped prioritise professional competences development (Indicator 10.3 *Provide support for professional development and learning for Development Education*).

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Code in 2024 was in good health, with excellent engagement from Code members both in the processes and the community of practice activities. In 2024 Code members practice remains strong with members still feeling that they can demonstrate good practice in the ‘building blocks’ of the Code (Principle 1 *Contribute to knowledge about development*; Principle 2 *Root causes*; Principle 3 *Ethos of DE*), and that practice is ‘less strong’ in the ‘organisational principles’, especially Principle 10 *DE strategy and plan* and Principle 12 *Advocacy*.

**There is overall continuity in terms of strengths of practice in comparison with findings of the 2020 and 2022 reports. Practice related to educational principles (1-9) is overall perceived as the strongest.** There is also plenty of evidence showing that participatory, inclusive, learner-centred, reflective and action-oriented approaches are well-embedded in educational practices in the sector. **Importantly, the practice set out in the Code submissions increasingly illustrates how different principles and indicators complement one another and adopt a *glocal* lens, linking justice issues in Ireland with global ones.** For example, participatory approaches to explore causes and effects of global inequality and injustices (Principle 5) lead towards action in a spirit of solidarity (Principle 7). Improvements in the quality of evidence were observed, especially in indicator 4.2 (exploration of global systems) in comparison with 2022 Report findings.

**Overall evidence shows synergies and collaborations between different kinds of organisations which complements expertise and resources** (environment-youth sector, environment-social enterprises, civil society organisations-academic institutions); and increasing examples of collaborations with partners in other parts of Europe and the Global South. However, engaging with specific indicators, for example, diverse models of (economic) development (indicator 1.2), remains a challenge for some members.

Finally, despite the fact that organisational principles tend to be less strong, **more organisations seem to be starting to strengthen practice in Principle 11 (diversity, inclusion and sustainability)**, and examples of changes in policies, institutional practices and cultural shifts were mentioned in the evidence. It is also note-worthy that the ‘new’ indicator in this Principle (added in 2023), Indicator 11.5 related to anti-oppressive, anti-racist and decolonial practice, yielded relevant evidence by some organisations.

Considering Code members’ meaningful and sustained engagement and exchanges, the voluntary nature of the Code remains strong and it is not seen as a compliance framework, funding requirement or ‘tick box’ initiative. It was important for the members consulted that it remains this way. Members’ engagement also shows trust in and commitment to the self-assessment process.

Based on the analysis presented, the following key recommendations can be derived:

- 1. Support knowledge exchange on areas where practice is less strong:** IDEA and Code members should collaborate to organise dialogue, learning and capacity development activities about Principles and Indicators that appear to be misinterpreted or are found to be challenging, such as specific aspects of foundational Principles (1-3), Principle 7, Principle 8, and organisational Principles. Additionally, special activities could address newly introduced indicators after the 2023 review such as 11.5, about which there is emerging practice, increased interest but which has also led to new questions and a variety of perspectives on it. Peer-to-peer learning and dialogue between organisations that may have different positions and depth of understanding of DE could be facilitated through Option B activities. These activities could also be encouraged between members who are stronger in those areas and those who would like to work further on them.
- 2. Selection criteria for the identification of good practice.** More systematic criteria for identifying good practices by both Code members and Code panel members could be developed and discussed, considering that for some Principles, for example Principle 7, there tends to be lower self-assessment ratings, yet a relatively high number of good practices identified. Such discussion can be taken for further consideration to the Code community of practice - through Code network meetings, webinars, focus groups or mentorship sessions. This recommendation is in line with those of the 2022 Report about facilitating ongoing reflection and knowledge exchange activities as there may be different interpretations of Code Principles and specific indicators. Activities could also contribute to showcase good practice.
- 3. Research and analysis:** IDEA should continue to monitor, research, and analyse Code activities and how members engage and benefit from them, including gathering organisational data and experiences of the Code systematically over time (see variability per type or size of organisation for example). IDEA should continue to monitor self-assessment ratings as well as analyse good practice examples and the Principles (areas/ topics) members focus on in their Action Plans. This can contribute to knowledge-based strategy development and planning, and thus, enhance efficiency, effectiveness and ultimately lead to more impactful efforts. Demonstrating and explaining the diversity and strength of DE practice as well as the Code's impact in members practice and the sector as a whole can help reinforce evidence-based advocacy and policy influence towards stronger and more adequate support for DE in Ireland.

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix I - Documents and Code data reviewed

- ▶ Workbooks, evidence grids, good practice grids, action plans grids, feedback letters for Rounds 9 and 10 in 2024 (obtained from IDEA).
- ▶ Code Network Meetings Slides (May and November 2024) (obtained from IDEA).
- ▶ Code of Good Practice for Development Education, Lessons Learned Report, December 2024.
- ▶ Code of Good Practice for Development Education in Ireland Baseline Report 2020, written by Collins, A. Available [here](#).
- ▶ Code of Good Practice for Development Education in Ireland Report 2022, written by del Felice, C. Available [here](#).
- ▶ Code of Good Practice for Development Education in Ireland Three Year Review Report May 2023, by O'Gorman, Á. and Gorman, J. Available [here](#).
- ▶ Background Notes for all Principles for 2022 (note this document was updated in October 2023 and is available [here](#)).
- ▶ Code members' demographic information for 2024.

### Appendix II - Glossary

**Code principles:** please see list of all twelve code principles in Section 2.1.

**Member groups:** a fixed 'cohort' of members who joined at the same time, but may over time end up on different submission tracks and may or may not have submitted the same number of times.

**Self-assessment submission** (often referred to simply as a submission): evidence, general information, self-assessment ratings and action plan, submitted by a Code member in one submission round.

**Submission round:** the period during which all submissions must be completed, two rounds per year (generally in February and August).

**Submission groupings:** groupings (variable over time) of members who have all submitted the same number of times (but may have joined at different times and may be on the 'February submission track' or the 'August submission track' (in 2024, this was in September).

**Workbook:** a portfolio holding up to four submissions, after which a new workbook is started.

## Appendix III - Interviewees and focus group participants

Focus group participants:

1. Mary Coogan, Trócaire
2. Emma Lynch, Tearfund Ireland
3. Birgit O'Driscoll, An Taisce
4. Seamus O'Gorman, Children in Crossfire
5. Kathryn Moore, APA
6. Ciara Regan, Developmenteducation.ie / 80:20

IDEA staff interviewed:

Elaine Mahon, Head of Membership, Quality and Impact

## Appendix IV About IDEA and about the authors

### About IDEA

The Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) is the national network for Global Citizenship Education in Ireland and a leading voice for the sector. We represent over 100 members involved in the practice, promotion, and advancement of Global Citizenship Education in formal, non-formal and informal settings. Together we work to strengthen Global Citizenship Education on the island of Ireland and to raise awareness of the crucial role it has to play in fostering global citizenship and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

## About the authors

**Alasdhair Collins** is a consultant and evaluator at DP Evaluation and has extensive experience of the Irish Development Education Sector. He conducted the analysis and evidence-gathering to inform this report between August and November 2025. Alasdhair is a member of the Code panel and is currently developing the Code database.

**Celina del Felice**, independent researcher and member of the Code Panel since 2022, and **Elaine Mahon**, IDEA staff with responsibility for the Code, assisted with further analysis on DE/GCE practice and the final editing of the report.



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