

Global Education in Ireland

The European Global Education
Peer Review Process
National Report on Ireland





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National Report on Global Education in Ireland

GLOBAL EDUCATION NETWORK EUROPE

www.gene.eu



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Editors: Jo McAuley, Liam Wegimont

Research support: Hadjer Taibi

Typesetting: Rumi Gumus Mattiussi

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACE	Adult and Community Education
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMLÉ	National Student Union of Ireland (formerly Union of Students in Ireland brand)
ATU	Atlantic Technological University
BICS	Business in the Community Ireland
CADA	Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education
DA	Development Assistance
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCDE	Department of Children, Disability and Equality
DE	Development Education
DEAR	Development Education and Awareness Raising
DCEE	Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DICE	Development and Intercultural Education Project
DoEY	Department of Education and Youth
EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
ECO-UNESCO	Environmental Education Organisation affiliated to UNESCO
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ETB	Education and Training Board
EU	European Union
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
GE	Global Education
GENE	Global Education Network Europe
GEM	Global Education Movement
GNI	Gross National Income
GYW	Global Youth Work
HEA	Higher Education Authority

HEI	Higher Education Institution
IA	Irish Aid
ISL	Irish Sign Language
ICSP	Ireland's Civil Society Partnership
IDEA	Irish Development Education Association
IDCD	Inter-Departmental Committee on Development
ICF	Innovation Challenge Fund
ICE	Intercultural Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MLI	Media Literacy Ireland
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MU	Maynooth University
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organisation
NI	Northern Ireland
NSETS	National Standards for Education and Training
NUI	National University of Ireland
NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
PMF	Performance Measurement Framework
PPN	Public Participation Network
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
ROI	Republic of Ireland
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOG	Senior Officials' Group
SoS	Statement of Strategy
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
T-REX	Teachers' Research Exchange
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN	United Nations
USI	Union of Students in Ireland
WWGS	WorldWide Global Schools

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The Peer Review of Global Education (GE) in Ireland took place at the invitation of the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), which is responsible for the management of Ireland's development cooperation programme, known as Irish Aid. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, herein referred to as Irish Aid, acted as core partner for the process, providing liaison with the GENE Secretariat and facilitating access to information and contacts of relevance to the review. As editors and on behalf of GENE, we would like to thank Irish Aid for the excellent cooperation throughout the peer review process. Our thanks go to the core partner and to the members of the Reference Group for the review:

1. Mr. Niall Tierney, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
2. Ms. Oonagh O'Connor, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
3. Ms. Emer Carney, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
4. Ms. Keelin O'Sullivan, Civil Society Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
5. Mr. Frank McManus, Policy Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
6. Ms. Leona deKhors, Department of Education and Youth
7. Ms. Leigh Brady, IDEA
8. Mr. Aidan Clifford, IDEA Formal Education representative (individual member)
9. Ms. Valerie Duffy, IDEA Non-Formal Education representative (National Youth Council of Ireland/Youth 2030)

A new team of Education Officers joined Irish Aid during 2025, and GENE wishes to thank Mr. Ruairi Finan who took over from Ms. Emer Carney as GENE liaison.

The Secretariat also wishes to acknowledge the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and its members. IDEA played an important role in bringing together civil society organisations (CSOs) in the context of the review, which offered opportunities for rich exchange. We would like to thank IDEA for convening strategic partners and members and we thank all those involved for their time and contribution of expertise and information.

GENE sincerely thanks the two peer experts who took part in the international team visit, Ms. Virginie Gilbert, Environment and Climate Advisor at the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg and Mr. Sérgio Guimarães, Head of the Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Citizenship Division at Camões/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal. The GENE Secretariat was represented by Mr. Liam Wegimont and Ms. Jo McAuley, with support from Dr. Hadjer Taibi in her role as National Researcher for the review.

During the visit to Ireland, the International Team met with committed individuals and organisations active in Global Education. Public servants, representatives from civil society and the youth sector all shared their knowledge and perspectives on Global Education in Ireland, and

we are grateful to each person who took the time to be involved in the process. We also appreciate the time and thought that went into the many written submissions received, that have contributed to and enriched this report.

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Jo McAuley
Head of Peer Review and Policy Research

Liam Wegimont
Executive Director

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the European Global Education Peer Review Process and examines Global Education in Ireland with a specific focus on Irish Aid's Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Strategy 2021–2025. It considers policy, strategy, funding, partnerships, and impact across formal, non-formal, and lifelong learning sectors.

The review takes place at a moment of global challenges — threats to multilateralism, democracy, peace and human rights, the climate crisis, inequality and the spread of disinformation, and when ODA has been reduced by some major donors globally. Against this backdrop, the report emphasises that Ireland's principled, long-standing commitment to international solidarity, human rights and global justice is needed now more than ever and that the current global and national contexts reinforce the necessity of sustained investment in GCE as a tool to strengthen democratic values, multilateralism and human rights.

The peer review identifies Ireland as a leading example of effective and innovative policy and good practice in Global Citizenship Education, with strong contributions from both government and a vibrant, well-coordinated civil society. Ireland's policy and funding commitment to GCE — especially in today's climate — alongside its multi-sectoral approach and mainstreaming of GCE across formal and non-formal education, is exemplary from a European comparative perspective.

The report contains several inspiring examples of Irish policy and practice, including:

- **Irish Aid's Strategic Partnership Model**, through which Irish Aid works with sectoral partners to anchor delivery across education sectors, combining multi-annual funding and collaboration.
- **IDEA and the Code of Good Practice**, providing specialised civil society coordination of the GCE sector — a model of infrastructure support that exists in very few countries — alongside a shared quality framework that aligns the work of diverse organisations for mutual support, learning and coordination.
- **The Irish Secondment Model for Education Officers**, in which serving teachers from primary, post-primary and further education are seconded to Irish Aid for fixed terms. This bridges policy and classroom practice, strengthens coherence between education and development policy, and enables a two-way exchange of expertise.

The report also makes several observations and recommendations for Irish Aid to consider, including suggestions to:

- **Sustain and reframe GCE for a changed world.** The next strategy should build on success while "focusing on its core values in ways that respond to today's challenges — building resilience, deepening democracy and intercultural understanding, providing antidotes to mis- and disinformation", grounded in a deeper narrative that connects Irish identity with global

justice and solidarity.

- **Institutionalise structured strategic dialogue** – more formalised and sustained multi-stakeholder dialogue should be established to support shared strategic direction. The review recommends a regular, formalised roundtable between Irish Aid and key GCE actors from civil society, alongside closer engagement with other government department.
- Strengthen cross-government coordination and leadership to **develop Global Citizenship Education further as a cross-cutting policy priority**, with Irish Aid playing the leading, coordinating role — paving the way towards an interministerial, and eventually a whole-of-government approach.

The report includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 explains the peer review process, its aims and learning principles, GENE's framing of Global Education, and the design of the Ireland review.
- Chapter 2 describes the Irish context, including the evolution from Development Education to GCE, the development cooperation setting, and the public opinion environment.
- Chapter 3 maps the main terms used in Ireland and reflects on conceptual clarity and complementarity.
- Chapter 4 identifies the principal government and civil-society actors, describes coordination mechanisms, and highlights opportunities for stronger strategic dialogue.
- Chapter 5 traces the evolution of Irish Aid strategy, reviews the 2021-2025 framework, funding and implementation evidence, and sets out strategic opportunities for the next cycle.
- Chapter 6 contains the report's main observations and recommendations.

Through this report, its launch on the eve of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2026, and through follow-up processes, we hope to inspire further increase and improvement of quality Global Education, among GE policymakers and stakeholders, in Ireland and in Europe, at a crucial time in our shared history.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The European Global Education Peer Review Process

This national report on Global Education in Ireland is part of the European Global Education Peer Review Process, initiated at the Maastricht Congress on Global Education in 2002 and founded as part of the Maastricht Declaration.¹ The Maastricht Declaration outlined a number of ways in which Global Education could be improved and increased throughout Europe, including through a Global Education Peer Review process. A study was carried out to test the feasibility of developing a European Global Education Peer Review Process, which began with a reflection on international country review processes in related or comparable fields.² A pilot review process then took place with Cyprus in 2003, leading to the first Global Education Peer Review National Report. The feasibility report and the experience from the pilot process suggested that the setting up of a Europe-wide Global Education Peer Review Process could be an effective mechanism for the further improvement and increase of Global Education in Europe. This has proven to be the case over the past two decades.

GENE provides the International Secretariat for the Peer Review process and facilitates the process throughout. While the process has been refined and improved through learning and reflective practice over the last 23 years, the key aim remains the same – the increase and improvement of quality Global Education in European countries. Peer Review processes have, according to those involved in national reviews and other stakeholders, led to the development, strengthening or growth of national structures, strategies, collaboration and co-ordination in the countries reviewed. Independent researchers and thought leaders in the field of Global Education and learning credit the Peer Review reports with providing a solid base for a stronger data set and developing literature in the field across Europe.³

Commitment to the European Global Education Peer Review Process as a mechanism for improving the quality of Global Education has been reaffirmed at a number of multilateral meetings and conferences and in numerous international documents, including the Espoo Finland Conclusions (2011 and 2014), the Lisbon 2nd European Congress (2012), the Hague Symposium (2012), the Paris Conference (2016) and the Lisbon Conference (2018).⁴ Most recently, continued support for the process was reiterated in the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050⁵, adopted on 4 Nov 2022 at the Dublin Congress.

¹ Access the full text of the declaration here: <http://gene.eu/s/Maastricht-Congress.pdf>

² These included Peer Review processes facilitated by other international organisations such as the OECD DAC peer review of development assistance and the Council of Europe country review mechanisms, such as that of the Committee on the Prevention of Torture, and national policy reviews in the fields of education and youth. It also considered independent consultant and NGDO reviews such as The Reality of Aid review mechanism.

³ See for example Bourn, D. Developing a Research Culture for Global Learning, chapter in Hartmeyer, H. & Wegimont, L. eds., (2016) *Global Education in Europe Revisited*. Waxmann: Münster and New York.

As indicated, the key aim of the process is to increase and improve support for, access to, and the impact of quality Global Education in European countries. National reports, and the Peer Review processes leading to them, act as a mechanism to enhance quality and impact nationally, provide international comparative analysis and a tool for policymaking.

To date, Peer Review processes and follow-up review visits have taken place with the following countries:

1. Cyprus 2004
2. Finland 2004
3. Netherlands 2005
4. Austria 2006
5. Czech Republic 2008
6. Poland 2010
7. Norway 2010
8. Finland (follow-up visit) 2011
9. Slovakia 2014
10. Portugal 2014
11. Ireland 2015-2016
12. Belgium 2016-2017
13. Cyprus 2017
14. Estonia 2019
15. Cyprus (follow-up visit) 2020
16. Latvia 2023-2024
17. Ireland 2025-2026
18. Germany 2025-2026

Further Peer Review national processes are planned for the 2027-2028 period. National reports from the full review processes are available on the GENE website www.gene.eu

Funding for the Peer Review process is provided by basket funding from a number of European ministries and agencies as well as by the European Commission as part of its programme of support to GENE. Those countries being reviewed do not directly contribute financially to their own review. The GENE network of ministries and national agencies, and in some cases, their partner organisations provide and support the availability of expertise to International Peer Review teams.

1.2 Aims and Policy Learning Principles

The overall aim of the Peer Review process is to improve and increase Global Education in European countries. The immediate purpose of each national process is to provide international peer review, support and comparative learning, resulting in national reports developed in partnership with key national actors. Each national report provides an overview of the state of Global Education in the country and highlights good practice for national and international learning. It also reflects critically, in a comparative context, on the issues and challenges faced by national actors as they work to increase and improve Global Education policy, support and provision. Each Peer Review aims to:

⁴ For example, in The Hague Conclusions, the key output from the Hague Symposium 2012 on Global Education, which brought ministries and agencies from across Europe together, participants wished to commit to: "Continued development of the GENE peer review process, including new country reviews."
<https://www.gene.eu/s/Hague-Conclusions-2012.pdf>

⁵ Access the full text of the declaration at <https://www.gene.eu/s/GE2050-declaration.pdf>

- Collect and provide accurate and useful information on Global Education in the country.
- Recognise, appreciate and affirm what has been achieved.
- Strengthen Global Education and raise the profile among policymakers, decision-makers and stakeholders.
- Support a universalist, rights-based approach – i.e. working towards access for all people in the jurisdiction to quality Global Education, life-long and life-wide, as a right.
- Promote co-ordination, co-operation and coherence.
- Contribute to national policy and strategy development, review and renewal.
- Create a basis for discussions about how to improve the quality of Global Education nationally.
- Contribute to knowledge and capacity building.
- Contribute to international research.

National reports, and the peer review processes preceding them, act as tools for national actors to enhance quality and impact nationally. They also provide a source for international learning, comparative analysis, benchmarking, policymaking and improvement.⁶

While the peer review process is different in each country, it is also comparative between countries, being guided by three peer-learning principles:

- The process starts with the existing Global Education situation in each country and seeks to provide a national overview of the Global Education landscape, while affirming good practice and supporting new learning for improving and increasing Global Education.
- The process involves bringing international experts in the field of Global Education to act as “critical friends”⁷ to the national situation. Bringing comparative experience from other contexts enhances the policy learning possibilities.
- The process seeks to highlight and give visibility to examples of quality in practice, strategy, policy and structure; and to make evaluative observations and recommendations for improvement.

⁶ The European Global Education Peer Review process is different in scope, focus, geographical spread, and methodology to the OECD DAC Peer Review process. Nevertheless, it is intended that the GE Peer Review can, in DAC member states, be significantly complementary to the DAC reports (which are primarily focused on development assistance rather than Development Education or Global Education).

⁷ GENE uses the term “critical friends” informed by the literature of action research; in sum, bringing to the national context those from other relevant national contexts with deep expertise in the field of Global Education. For more on the notion of “critical friends” within the literature of action research, see, for example Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. Falmer Press, Basingstoke; Zuber-Skerrit, O. (2009) *Action Learning and Action Research*, Sense, Rotterdam.; Bertles, K. and Wittmayer, J. (2018) *Action Research in Policy Analysis*. Taylor and Francis.

1.3 Global Education

GENE uses Global Education as an umbrella term, defined as follows in the 2022 Dublin Declaration:

Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future.

Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education.

While using the term Global Education, GENE recognises and is respectful of the diversity of terms used according to national circumstances in European countries, and also of the fact that the use of specific terms changes over time. One of the key ideas of the GENE network is to bring actors together who use different, but related concepts and operate in different, but related areas of policy and practice, to promote coherence, facilitate policy learning, avoid working in silos and ensure greater combined effect.

Nevertheless, there is a clear central core to Global Education and learning, a sine qua non. GENE proposes that the following core elements must be present in Global Education in all its forms, in line with the Dublin Declaration:

- Core values of global and local social justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, inclusion, human rights, the embracing of diversity, and international understanding.
- A focus on the interconnection between local and global dimensions of issues affecting people, other living beings and the planet; between generations; between cultures and between past, present and future; a transversal approach.
- A common commitment to pedagogical practices that are inclusive, participatory, inspire hope, enable critical thinking, and do justice to the primacy of the learners; while building competences and skills for informed, self-reflective, meaningful action, individual and collective.

1.4 The Peer Review Process with Ireland

In early 2025, GENE and colleagues from Irish Aid at the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade agreed to undertake the peer review process with a specific focus on Irish Aid's Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Strategy work. The process was requested by Irish Aid for the purpose of informing future planning and strategy, considering the current national and international contexts, changes and challenges. It was agreed that the review would take as its starting point Irish Aid's support for Global Education in Ireland and its Global Citizenship Education Strategy. It would draw on the mid-term review of the strategy and would primarily engage with the sectors and actors involved in Global Education where Irish Aid is a partner.

The process commenced in March 2025 with the elaboration of Terms of Reference and a Memorandum of Understanding. A research phase then ensued until mid-May. Meanwhile, international peer experts from Portugal and Luxembourg were invited to join the review team for the international team visit to Dublin in June 2025.

Irish Aid acted as core partner for the process and brought together a Reference Group involving the Department of Education, the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and two of IDEA's members (for details, see above). GENE hired a national researcher, Dr. Hadjer Taibi, to assist with background research and analysis of the national Global Education landscape, with a specific focus on Irish Aid's GCE past and current strategy.

The methodology combined desk research, analysis of the strategy's mid-term review, stakeholder submissions, and a programme of interviews and meetings with government actors, civil society, and education stakeholders during an international peer review visit to Dublin in June 2025. The visit involved the experts from Luxembourg and Portugal - Ms. Virginie Gilbert, Environment and Climate Advisor at the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg and Mr. Sérgio Guimarães, Head of the Humanitarian Action, Civil Society and Citizenship Division at Camões, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal - alongside the GENE Secretariat and a national researcher, supported by a Reference Group including Irish Aid, the Department of Education and Youth, IDEA, and civil-society representatives. The research phase prior to the international team visit benefited from a significant amount of data and consultation feedback collected as part of Irish Aid's mid-term review of its ongoing GCE Strategy and shared with the Secretariat as the peer review built on the review findings.

During the spring of 2025, the research was used to develop guiding questions for further exploration with the core partner, reference group and GCE stakeholders during the international peer review team visit. The visit took place in June 2025, and the team comprised experts from Luxembourg and Portugal along with the GENE Secretariat and the National Researcher. It involved meetings with several government departments and agencies, and with non-governmental partners, in a joint meeting convened by IDEA. At the end of the visit, the team presented draft observations and recommendations to the core partner, followed by members of the reference group.

The objectives of the Global Education Peer Review of Ireland were:

- To gain an understanding of the Global Education landscape in Ireland and the current state of affairs; taking account of shifting geo-political and development cooperation realities.
- To consider the state of Global Education and in terms of policies, provision, support and funding structures, strategies and results, with a focus on Irish Aid's Global Citizenship Education Strategy, funding and partnerships.
- To highlight examples of good practice of Global Education.
- To provide an international comparative perspective on the strengths, weaknesses, and areas of potential strategic development of Global Education in Ireland.
- To highlight key achievements of the sector partners on the objectives of the Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy and in meeting the objectives GCE partners set themselves in their Irish Aid funded programming.
- To make strategic recommendations for the further improvement of Global Education, particularly as regards reach and effects.

At the time of the review, the policy landscape both nationally and internationally had changed significantly from the time during which Irish Aid had elaborated its most recent Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Strategy (2021-2025). It was therefore a particularly timely opportunity to reflect, through the Peer Review, on the possible future directions and opportunities for Global Citizenship Education in the country.

Chapter 2

The Context for Global Education in Ireland

Chapter 2

The Context for Global Education in Ireland

2.1 Introduction

Global Education (GE) in Ireland takes place within a national landscape that is influenced by an interconnected global economy and growing cultural and ethnic diversity. In recent decades, Ireland has experienced significant demographic changes, emerging as a more culturally and ethnically diverse society. As a result, the topics, challenges and opportunities for Global Education are also changing. This chapter provides a brief historical review of the emergence of Development Education in Ireland, an overview of some of the key features of the education system in the context of the review, some insights into the development cooperation context and some information on public opinion in Ireland as regards global and development topics.

2.2 The Emergence of Development Education

Ireland's commitment to Development Education (DE) can be traced back to the 1970s, primarily through the work of missionary organisations, NGOs, and educators who sought to raise awareness of poverty, injustice, and inequality in developing countries. In the early days, Development Education was closely linked to charity and awareness-raising, often aimed at generating support for overseas development work. Organisations such as Trócaire and Concern Worldwide played a formative role in shaping DE in Ireland. Over time, there was a shift towards more critical, values-based education, influenced by thinkers like Paulo Freire, whose work emphasised critical thinking, social justice, and the importance of education in challenging structural inequalities. This perspective helped DE evolve into a more transformative educational approach, focusing not just on knowledge about global issues, but also on critical thinking, solidarity, and action.

In the late 1970s, the Irish government introduced a dedicated budget line for DE, administered through a structure for the disbursement of grants, and another for the development of support and resources for DE.⁸ This initiative, inspired by the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation on Education for Peace, international understanding, human rights, etc. and spurred on by NGO lobbying of parliamentary mechanisms, led to government structures and budgets emerging that were under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and were later integrated into what would become Irish Aid. Irish Aid has since continued to play a key role in developing policy frameworks and funding programmes across formal, non-formal and informal education contexts.

⁸ Dillon, E. (2018) *Critical History Matters: Understanding Development Education in Ireland today through the lens of the past in Policy & Practice 27:2018* and Dillon, E., Gaynor, N., McCann, G., & McCloskey, S. (Ed.). (2024). *Global Education in Ireland: Critical Histories and Future Directions*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Through the 1980s and 1990s, DE remained largely situated in the non-formal sector, driven by development NGOs and other civil society organisations, religious groups, and voluntary educators. In the 1990s, the Irish government increased and formalised support for the budding DE sector, including the formalisation and expansion of government funding for DE projects and some consolidation of institutional arrangements around DE practice. Around the same time, (1990s to the mid-2000s), other strands of transformative education also emerged in Ireland, including Human Rights Education (HRE), Antiracism Education (ARE) and Intercultural Education (ICE). This coincided with a growing emphasis on mainstreaming DE in formal education. The creation of the Development and Intercultural Education (DICE) Project in 2003 marked a major step forward, seeking to mainstream DE and Intercultural Education (ICE) within primary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. Similarly, the Ubuntu Network was established in 2006 to support DE in post-primary ITE. By the early 2000s, civil society and wider education institutional engagement in DE was becoming more formalised and structured with the establishment of IDEA, the national Development Education umbrella body. This also represented a move away from DE as a component of the development field and towards a broadening of activity into other related educations.

Following the financial crash of 2008, the DE sector went through significant change brought about by funding cuts and a consolidation of government support, including a shift to strategic partnerships on the basis of reaching different sectors of education and learning. The strategic partnership model lasts until today and has expanded to reach an increasing proportion of learners in Ireland. Since the 2010s, policy documents have continued to reference values aligned with DE, (later using term Global Citizenship Education), including critical themes like human rights, sustainability, and social justice, with universities playing key roles in research alongside civil society as partners and advocates. The adoption of the SDGs (and particularly target 4.7) in 2015 further expanded the focus to include climate justice, gender equality, and ethical consumption.

More recently some key developments are continuing to shape GE in Ireland:

- The revised primary curriculum framework (NCCA, 2020) explicitly included “Being an Active Citizen” as a key competency. The 2025 curriculum framework review further strengthened GCE provisions thanks to involvement of GCE stakeholders in the process.
- The Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education (Teaching Council, 2020) formally required the inclusion of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in ITE programmes in order for those programmes to receive accreditation by the national accrediting body.
- IDEA Code of Good Practice (2019): A quality framework developed by the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) that sets principles and guidelines for good practices in Development Education, including governance, pedagogy, inclusion, and monitoring.⁹
- Whole-of-government ESD to 2030 strategy (2022): jointly led by the Departments of Education and Youth, the Department of Further and Higher Education, and the Department

⁹ IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education <https://www.ideaonline.ie/Code-of-good-practice-development-education>

of Children, Disability and Equality, embedding ESD targets in curricula, teacher training, and lifelong learning. It includes an inter-departmental steering group and ring-fenced funding, with regular reporting across the civil service.

- Dublin Declaration on GE to 2050 (2022): Signed by European ministers and led by Ireland and co-chaired by Luxembourg, the declaration elevates GE to a diplomatic priority, committing the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Education, and others to long-term targets and peer review.
- The National Conversation on Education (2026) will offer broad engagement opportunities and the input will be used to inform the agenda for the Convention on Education planned for late 2026. The Convention in turn, will inform a new long-term strategy for the future of education in Ireland.

Box 1. From DE to GCE: Ireland's Timeline

- 1970s: NGO/missionary roots; shift from charity to critical, justice-oriented DE.
- 1978: Dedicated DE budget line; DFAT structures established → later Irish Aid.
- 2003: DICE mainstreams DE/Intercultural Education in primary ITE.
- 2003: Irish Aid Development Education Strategy Plan 2003-2005
- 2004: Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) established.
- 2006: Ubuntu Network (post-primary ITE) established.
- 2007: Irish Aid Development Education Strategy Plan 2007-2011
- 2010s: Broadening from DE to GCE; stronger human rights/sustainability focus.
- 2013: WorldWise Global Schools (GE for post-primary schools) established.
- 2015: SDGs adopted → SDG 4.7 anchors policy and practice.
- 2017: Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017-2023
- 2019: A Better World (Irish Aid policy) elevates gender, climate, governance.
- 2020: Céim standards require GCE in all ITE programmes. Saolta (adult and community sector strategic partnership for GCE) established.
- 2021: Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025.
- 2022: ESD to 2030 (whole-of-government); Dublin Declaration on GE to 2050.
- 2023: Global Village (GCE for primary education strategic partnership).
- 2025: Updated GCE/DE resource guidelines; GENE peer review focus on Irish Aid's GCE Strategy.
- 2026: Launch of National Conversation on Education

Source: Lewis, V. (2025) Opportunities and challenges of implementing global citizenship education policies in Ireland. Global Education Time.

2.3 Global Education in the Irish Education System

The education system in Ireland is quite centralised: the Department of Education sets policy and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) designs curricula. There are approximately 3,100 primary schools and 733 post-primary schools, with 550,000 pupils enrolled at primary level and 417,000 at post-primary.¹⁰ Schooling is compulsory from age 6 to age 16, and progression into publicly funded higher education is strong, with around 76% of students making the transition.¹¹

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are embedded at several key points within the education system (see below). Parallel inclusion work (revised guidance, Irish Sign Language curriculum, enhanced language resources) ensures all learners, including special schools, encounter the same global-learning themes.

Early Childhood Education

Aistear¹² is the national framework for education from birth to age six. It was revised in 2024, and the version regards young learners as “agentic global citizens,” linking play, stories and routines to fairness, democracy, human rights and care for the planet. Irish-Aid-funded bodies (including WorldWise Global Schools, Global Village, IDEA, DICE and others) contributed to the public and expert consultations, aligning Aistear’s language with Global Citizenship Education and SDG 4.7.

Primary Education

The Primary Curriculum Framework¹³ was published in 2023 and the redeveloped curriculum incorporates Global Citizenship throughout. All development groups involved in the elaboration of the framework worked in the context of SDG target 4.7 and Ireland’s ESD-to-2030 plan. One of seven cross-curricular competencies is “Being an Active Citizen,” encouraging pupils to question injustice, think critically about sustainability and act. History and geography were combined as Social and Environmental Education, framed by human rights, equity and climate justice. Older classes may study a Modern Foreign Language with an intercultural strand.

Junior Cycle (lower secondary)

At ages 12–15, CSPE and the 400-hour Wellbeing programme cover human rights, media literacy and climate action through inquiry projects and community-based learning. A 2024 longitudinal evaluation of CSPE/Wellbeing will inform NCCA actions to strengthen practice and keep GCE prominent.

¹⁰ Department of Education (2024). Statistical Bulletin – Enrolments in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, September 2024. Government of Ireland. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/education-statistics>

¹¹ The Irish Times (2024). Feeder Schools Map: School progression rates to third-level education. Retrieved from <https://www.irishtimes.com/feeder-schools/>

¹² NCCA, Aistear: The Early-Childhood Curriculum Framework (2024) <https://ncca.ie/en/early-childhood>

¹³ NCCA, Primary Curriculum Framework (2023) <https://ncca.ie/en/primary>

Senior Cycle (upper secondary)

At ages 15–18, reform introduces the competence “Participating in Society,” foregrounding democratic engagement, social justice and “rights of nature.” Some Leaving Certificate subjects carry a 40% non-exam component, creating space for project-based global citizenship engagement. Politics & Society remains the flagship subject; with Climate Action & Sustainable Development piloting in 42 schools from 2025, integrating science, economics and ethics through action-oriented projects. Geography’s updated specification includes geopolitics.

Teacher Education and In-Service Training

The national teacher preparation and professional learning standards, Céim (Teaching Council, 2020) makes GCE a core element of all Initial Teacher Education programmes (primary, post-primary, FET), integrating sustainable development, social justice, wellbeing and interculturalism in coursework and school placement. Irish-Aid-funded DICE (primary) and the Ubuntu Network (post-primary) support content, pedagogy, compliance and quality; all programmes accredited between 2021–2024 met Céim requirements.

Oide, Ireland’s national professional learning support service, an amalgamation of previous smaller and more sector-specific institutions, leads nationwide Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers and school leaders (e.g., professional learning for Social and Environmental Education¹⁴). Oide delivers targeted CPD for the redeveloped primary curriculum through in-school support, regional professional learning events and webinars, and accredited summer courses and online modules (via Oide Technology in Education and the Education Support Centres network), providing scalable channels to embed practice and to embed GE/ESD across subjects. In addition, teachers can access research-informed professional learning and communities of practice via T-REX¹⁵ (Teachers’ Research Exchange), which complements system-wide CPD.

Non-formal Education

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in Ireland’s non-formal education sector (youth work, adult and community education) is characterised by participatory, learner-centred approaches focused on developing critical awareness of global justice, sustainability, human rights, and inequality, using experiential methods such as workshops, dialogue, campaigns, and creative activities. Delivery is led largely by civil society organisations and strategic partnership consortia.

In youth work, GCE is integrated into programmes and activities across Ireland, often supported and coordinated by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) which also coordinates the Youth 2030 consortium. In adult and community education, NGOs work with community groups, adult learners and networks, with coordination and support offered by the strategic partnership programme Saolta and linked with Education and Training Boards (ETBs).

GCE is well embedded in the Irish non-formal education sectors and functions as a flexible and

¹⁴ <https://oide.ie/primary/home/>

¹⁵ <https://www.t-rex.ie/>

innovative complement to the formal system, with NGOs acting as bridges between national policy and youth and community-driven local practice. This model allows GCE to reach diverse audiences—including marginalised groups—and to link global issues with local experiences, supporting meaningful engagement and action on global challenges.

2.4 Development Co-operation Setting

Development Co-operation is situated in the context of Ireland’s whole-of-government strategy “Global Ireland – Ireland’s Global Footprint to 2025” which, in part, refers to citizen engagement and partnering with the education sector at primary, second and third levels, with the objective of engaging students in the general debate regarding Ireland’s place in the world and its approach to international affairs. Irish Aid’s policy “A Better World” (2019) emphasises commitments such as gender equality, climate action, reduced humanitarian need, and stronger governance. To back these priorities, Ireland has pledged to raise Official Development Assistance (ODA) in pursuit of the international target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI). In 2023, ODA reached a record €2.6 billion, representing 0.67% of GNI, including eligible costs for Ukrainian refugees.¹⁶ Excluding these refugee-related costs, ODA amounted to €1.47 billion or 0.38% of GNI.¹⁷ In 2024, ODA amounted to €2.35 billion, with a significantly lower allocation to in-country refugee costs, which meant that while overall ODA was reduced, there was a small increase in ODA excluding refugee costs (from 0.38% of GNI to 0.41% of GNI).¹⁸

Ireland works with partners around the world to tackle poverty, hunger and humanitarian need in over 130 countries, with a strong focus on Sub-Saharan Africa. This support is delivered by working bilaterally with Governments as well as with multilateral partners such as the UN, EU, and World Bank, as well as through a vibrant network of over 400 NGO partners. Ireland prioritises humanitarian support for sudden emergencies and ongoing protracted crises, while also focusing on underfunded and less visible emergencies. Across all channels, human rights, disability inclusion, and the principle of “Leaving No One Behind” are integrated as cross-cutting themes. International reviews frequently highlight Ireland’s principled stance on hunger, nutrition, and gender equality, as well as consistently high levels of public support for aid.¹⁹

Global Citizenship Education is the responsibility of Irish Aid within the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. GCE is recognised as a core element of Ireland’s international development policy²⁰ and as a complementary component to the national strategy as regards Education for

¹⁶ Total ODA in 2023: Ireland’s total ODA expenditure in 2023 was €2.6 billion, representing 0.67% of Gross National Income (GNI). This figure includes eligible first-year costs associated with hosting Ukrainian refugees in Ireland [\[LINK\]](#)

¹⁷ <https://diplomat.ie/index.php/2024/10/02/irish-aid-report-shows-highest-investment-to-date-in-oda-programme>

¹⁸ DFAT/Irish Aid (2024) Annual Report 2024 <https://www.ireland.ie/en/irish-aid/news-and-publications/annual-reports/annual-report-archive/annual-report-2024/>

¹⁹ For instance, the OECD has commended Ireland’s aid programme for its strong focus on tackling hunger and poverty, and for being a trusted and long-term partner in global development. The OECD noted that Ireland “punches above its weight on global development issues” <https://www.irishexaminer.com/opinion/commentanalysis/arid-20300575>

Sustainable Development. The overarching goal of GCE is to engage the public and learners across the island of Ireland, create opportunities for learning and for critical debate as well as promoting domestic ownership of Ireland's commitments to international development co-operation and partnerships. In its 2021-2025 Global Citizenship Education Strategy, Irish Aid states that GCE is understood *as a lifelong educational process, which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, inter-dependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, GCE helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives and how they can act to build a better world. This is particularly important in an increasingly globalised world faced with immense challenges, such as the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, climate change, entrenched poverty and growing inequality, as well as misinformation-fuelled radicalisation.*

Irish Aid's 2021-25 GCE Strategy promises multi-annual funding, common quality standards (such as the IDEA Code of Good Practice) and systematic work with other ministries so that global-justice themes surface in every strand of learning.

Operationally, Global Citizenship Education is implemented by the Global Programmes Unit, which is part of the Development Co-operation and Africa Division. The Unit coordinates GCE strategy and partnerships, administers the dedicated GCE budget line and coordinates policy with the Department of Education and Youth and other Irish Government departments aligning GCE with relevant policies and strategies (such as ESD). Its staffing model includes a small cadre of teachers seconded from the Department of Education and Youth – at Primary, Post-Primary and Further Education level on rolling three-year terms – who serve as Education Officers to bridge classroom experience with policy and programme design. These secondees support the delivery and oversight of GCE initiatives, including grant-funded partnerships focused on different sectors of Irish society and education. Their responsibilities include contributing to curriculum development when requested, supporting professional development, and coordinating with schools, NGOs, and in general with the Department of Education and Youth as regards Global Citizenship Education and the coordination with the national ESD strategy.

2.5 Public Opinion Context

2.5.1 Development Co-operation and Partnerships

Public attitudes in Ireland toward overseas aid and global citizenship themes are generally positive and have remained so for more than a decade. According to Dóchas' fifth annual tracker survey²¹ in 2024, 73% of Irish adults believe it is important for the Government to provide overseas aid

²⁰ A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development. (2019). <https://assets.ireland.ie/documents/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf>

²¹ Dóchas, Worldview 2024: Public Attitudes Towards Development, <https://www.dochas.ie/resources/worldview/quantitative-findings/survey-5/>

(down from 76% in 2023). In addition, 75% of respondents believe such aid can make a positive difference. However, concern about global poverty has slipped to 67% – the lowest level since the survey began. People are motivated mainly by themes such as human rights, shared humanity and humanitarianism, while they attribute poverty abroad to corruption, conflict and government inefficiency.

Box 2. Worldview Public Engagement Research Project

Dóchas, the Irish national platform for relief and development NGOs, runs an annual, nationally representative survey of approximately 1,200 adults via phone and online in partnership with Irish Aid. The survey has been organised since 2020 and is jointly funded on an equal basis by Irish Aid and Dóchas members. It tracks support for overseas aid and also delves into motives and barriers, with audiences profiled into six primary segments:

1. **Global Citizens** - highly informed and strongly supportive.
2. **Concerned Engagers** – positive toward aid, follow global news, occasionally take action.
3. **Sympathetic Bystanders** – see aid as “a good thing” but have limited knowledge and rarely act.
4. **Concerned but Passive** – worried about global problems yet sceptical that aid is effective.
5. **Doubters** – question the value of aid and distrust NGOs and government spending, but are not firmly opposed
6. **Rejecters** – believe Ireland should not spend money on overseas aid.

Worldview offers timely, segmented data and analysis on whether support for ODA is rising or falling in Ireland. This can be used by NGOs, media and government departments to better understand how different groups relate to global issues and development cooperation and to tailor information and communication accordingly. The public opinion data gathered through the poll also shows year-on-year trends and shows the shifts in public support that are driven by global and domestic crises, such as the recent pandemic, Ukraine, Gaza or economic or societal challenges at home such as housing pressures or economic downturns or upturns. Data on opinion shifts caused by specific drivers can also be useful in understanding and countering simplistic narratives and disinformation.

Traditional media – TV, newspapers and radio – remain the primary sources for news on global issues. When asked about the government’s role, a majority still support maintaining or increasing Ireland’s ODA budget, even during times of domestic fiscal tightening.

Data from the Eurobarometer Surveys underscore these sentiments, with Irish respondents emerging as some of the strongest supporters of global development aid within the EU. In the 2023 Eurobarometer²² (537), 86% of people in Ireland say EU investment in partner countries is important (EU average 75%), and 76% agree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the EU's main priorities. Moreover, 93% in Ireland said partnering with countries outside the EU to reduce global poverty is important, and 64% said poverty reduction should be a priority for the Irish government.

Younger cohorts, especially those under 35, continue to show the strongest enthusiasm for global citizenship themes. People under 35, particularly those living in Dublin or with international backgrounds, tend to be the most engaged in global issues like climate justice and international aid. This mirrors findings across OECD and globally.²³ This engagement in youth is possibly strengthened by curriculum exposure in primary and second-level schools, particularly through programmes like CSPE (Civic, Social & Political Education) and Transition Year modules, alongside popular campaigns like Trócaire's Lenten appeal, the Concern Debates and work done in the non-formal youth sector.

Ireland's growing demographic diversity also influences public perceptions of global issues. According to the 2022 census, 20% of Ireland's residents were born outside the country, with many of these communities advocating for humanitarian relief, refugee protection, and anti-racism education. Research indicates that familiarity with newcomers correlates with stronger support for aid and global solidarity, highlighting the positive influence of intercultural interactions on public attitudes.

2.5.2 Immigration and Minorities

While overall attitudes to immigration in Ireland²⁴ are positive, there have been incidents of violence against immigrants in recent times, as well as orchestrated anti-immigrant protests (2023-24),

²² European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (2023). Special Eurobarometer 537: EU citizens and development cooperation. Brussels. DOI: 10.2841/746402. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/134b2c4a-aab5-11ee-b164-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

²³ Foley et. al., Global citizenship education and public support in OECD countries, in OECD (2024), Development Co-operation Report 2024: Tackling Poverty and Inequalities through the Green Transition, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/357b63f7-en>.

²⁴ A majority of people in Ireland support welcoming immigrants, survey suggests,' RTÉ News, August 29, 2024, <https://www.rte.ie/news/2024/0829/1467168-migrant-rights-survey/> and Laurence, J., McGinnity, F., & Murphy, K. (2024). Attitudes Towards Immigration and Refugees in Ireland: Understanding Recent Trends and Drivers. Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Retrieved from https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/JR5_0.pdf.

²⁵ RTE (2024) Anti-migrant protests in Dublin more than doubled in 2023, <https://www.rte.ie/news/2024/0305/1436151-arson-arrests/>

²⁶ European Commission Representation in Ireland News Item on Spring 2024 Eurobarometer: https://ireland.representation.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/irish-people-continue-be-most-optimistic-about-future-eu-spring-2024-eurobarometer-2024-05-23_en & DCEDIY/Ipsos (2023) Attitudes to diversity. Gov.ie press release <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/ba395-new-survey-examines-people-in-irelands-attitudes-to-diversity/>

indicating that the salience of the issue, as well as polarisation in society appear to have increased.²⁵ While support for welcoming people fleeing the war in Ukraine remains high (around 85% in 2024), and many view immigrants as contributing positively to Ireland²⁶ recent opinion surveys show that with immigration higher on the public agenda,²⁷ even people who endorse humanitarian support favour more restrictive policy on immigration. Less positive attitudes to immigration tend to be more prevalent outside major cities and among those experiencing financial strain.²⁸ Overall, polling data shows that the Irish public is broadly comfortable with diversity, although gaps persist for groups such as Travellers (the indigenous minority ethnic community) and Roma.²⁹

2.5.3 Climate Change

Public opinion surveys in Ireland indicate that while people broadly support climate action (with most in the ‘Alarmed’ or ‘Concerned’ segments), many are not yet taking costlier personal steps—such as home retrofits, switching to heat pumps or EVs, or flying less—highlighting an intention–action gap³⁰. Some surveys suggest many do not yet perceive climate impacts as immediate for Ireland, indicating potential benefits from messaging that emphasizes fairness, local co-benefits (health, bills, jobs), and practical steps.³¹

2.5.4 Human Rights, LGBTQI+ Rights

Public support for equal rights remains broadly strong in principle, while lived-experience indicators point to ongoing challenges. In the 2023 FRA LGBTIQ survey, respondents in Ireland reported relatively high levels of harassment over the previous year, persistent school-based bullying, and a perceived rise in violence, alongside a decline since 2019 in the share who view government efforts as effective³². At the same time, many respondents report being fairly/very open about their identity, suggesting progress in social acceptance coexists with very real safety concerns.

²⁷ Irish Times/Ipsos B&A poll (Feb 10, 2024) – majority favour a “more closed” immigration policy: <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/social-affairs/2024/02/10/majority-favour-more-closed-immigration-policy-to-reduce-number-of-people-coming-to-ireland/>

²⁸ ESRI 2024 (positive by EU standards; rising salience late 2023; some indicators softened; correlates incl. education/financial strain). ESRI news summary (Mar 22, 2024): <https://www.esri.ie/news/new-esri-research-finds-that-attitudes-towards-immigration-and-refugees-remain-largely>

²⁹ ESRI (Dec 17, 2024) – higher prejudice towards Travellers and Roma: <https://www.esri.ie/news/new-esri-research-finds-high-levels-of-prejudice-against-travellers-and-roma-in-ireland>

³⁰ EPA–Yale: Climate Change’s Four Irelands (segmentation with Alarmed/Concerned/Cautious/Doubtful) PDF: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/EPA-Climate-Changes-Four-Irelands-Report-Wave-2-Report-2.pdf>

³¹ Irish Times media summary of the DCEE findings on perceived harm in Ireland <https://www.irishtimes.com/environment/climate-crisis/2024/07/04/climate-change-people-do-not-want-to-take-actions-amid-belief-ireland-not-being-harmed-survey-finds/>

³² FRA main report (based on the 2023 LGBTIQ Survey; published May 14, 2024): <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2024/lgbtiq-crossroads-progress-and-challenges>

2.6 Peer Review Reflections

Ireland's curriculum (Aistear 2024; Primary "Being an Active Citizen"; Junior Cycle CSPE/ Wellbeing; Senior Cycle reforms) provides the backbone for ESD and increasingly GCE in formal education, sequencing knowledge, skills and action in age-appropriate ways, across school subjects and disciplines. This is a strong foundation where Irish Aid and GCE stakeholders in Ireland complement the overall formal education approach, emphasising and adding crucial components of ESD from GCE. Irish Aid's strategic support, investment and intelligent use of policy leverage, over decades, shows that this strategic investment works, and, indeed, how it can be done!

A strong example of this is practitioner support in Ireland, which works through shared standards and structures such as Céim (ITE standards) and opportunities to broaden experience. Whole-school approaches embed global themes in everyday practice - policies, projects and student voice - so engagement becomes routine rather than one-off. The specific approaches supported by Irish Aid to strengthening coherence across teacher education and at school level, including through DICE, Ubuntu and WorldWise Global Schools (covered in more detail in later chapters) are already well known and admired across European countries. This peer review report wishes to further underline the importance of this approach of cooperation and strategic, leveraged investment across ministries and educational institutions. Further opportunities exist in the realm of formal education, including as regards involving school leadership and increasing the focus on working with school leaders as part of Irish Aid's work to promote whole-school approaches (in cooperation with institutions such as Oide, school leaders' associations and strategic partners).

Global Citizenship Education forms an integral part of Irish development cooperation policy, which in turn reflects a whole-of-government strategy. The peer review suggests that, in this context, GCE could also be understood as a cross-cutting issue across ministries. This would require Irish Aid to take on a coordinating role with other public bodies and policies, to promote policy coherence in light of challenges facing societies and development, and to foster links with different policy areas. Opportunities should be created for greater integration of GCE into other public policies, and efforts should be made to clarify how they are interconnected.

Furthermore, given the context of a significant overall reduction in ODA in 2024, the peer review notes the importance of strengthening the role of GCE in relation to development policy; as aid and development cooperation face a number of challenges, it is necessary to strengthen critical public support for and critical engagement with development cooperation policy. Global events, including conflicts, climate change and AI-driven misinformation intersect with local pressures in Ireland (housing, attitudes to immigration), further heightening the need for timely GCE.

Box 3. The Irish Secondment Model for Education Officers

Irish Aid recruits experienced educators to work as Education Officers on temporary secondment from their teaching roles. These positions are open to serving primary, post-primary and further education teachers, as well as adult and community educators and youth workers, who remain within the education system while contributing to Irish Aid's work. Secondments are typically for a fixed period (of at least one school year, with the possibility of renewal up to 5 years) and operate through a national scheme that enables teachers to take up roles in external organisations where the work benefits both the education system and the wider public interest.

Education Officers support Irish Aid's work in GCE, including policy development, partnerships and implementation while promoting GCE across formal and non-formal education sectors. They act as a bridge between policy and practice, bringing classroom experience and ensuring initiatives are aligned with educational contexts. This model strengthens coherence between education and development policy and enhances the quality and credibility of programmes by grounding them in real educational experience. At the same time, secondments enable a two-way exchange: teachers gain expertise in policy, global issues and programme development, which they bring back to the education system when they return. The approach also helps bridge sectors—linking government, schools and civil society—which is particularly important in areas like GCE where inter-ministerial co-operation is key.

Chapter 3

Terminology and Definitions

Chapter 3

Terminology and Definitions

3.1 Introduction

In the Irish policy context, Global Education entails learning that connects the local with the global and invites critical action for a fairer, more sustainable world. Four overlapping concepts sit alongside one another – Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Development Education and Intercultural Education. While the learning outcomes overlap, each strand has its own history, lead actors and preferred language. While ESD is the overall term used in the Irish national strategy (ESD to 2030)³³, Development Education and Global Citizenship Education are used across the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and civil society, as well as in formal and non-formal education. This chapter explores the main concepts in use in Ireland, the definitions employed and how the different terms overlap and are used in policy, funding and practice.

3.2 Development Education (DE)

Development Education is the longest-standing term in Ireland; Irish Aid has funded it since the 1970s. It highlights the structural causes of poverty and inequality between the Global North and South, often foregrounding colonial legacies, trade rules and debt. The term remains common among NGOs - not least the national umbrella organisation IDEA (the Irish Development Education Association) - as well as in teacher-education consortia such as DICE (primary ITE) and the Ubuntu Network (post-primary ITE), and in Irish Aid funding streams—although language is increasingly shifting from DE to Global Citizenship Education to align with SDG 4.7 and the 2021-2025 Irish Aid GCE Strategy. This shift is evident among NGO usage of terminology as well, with IDEA and its members gradually having switched to GCE.

3.3 Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

GCE emerged from Development Education but places stronger emphasis on shared global challenges, citizens as agents of change and moving away from the “development abroad” perspective towards a shared global responsibility. Learners are encouraged to regard themselves as citizens with responsibilities beyond national borders—questioning injustice, challenging misinformation and taking collective action. In Ireland, GCE threads run through Junior-Cycle Wellbeing, Leaving-Certificate Politics & Society and the global youth work programme Youth 2030.

³³ Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD to 2030) <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/national-strategy-on-education-for-sustainable-development-in-ireland>

As stated above, the umbrella organisation IDEA and many NGOs have shifted from Development Education to GCE in recent years, although Development Education is still in use. GCE is sometimes also used as an umbrella term by IDEA, for example in its Theory of Impact for GCE.³⁴

3.4 Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

ESD, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, integrates environmental stewardship, social justice and economic viability. Ireland's whole-of-government strategy "ESD to 2030" tasks every education sector - from early years through further and higher education to non-formal education - with embedding sustainability competences. Flagship initiatives include Green Schools, the new Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development subject and sustainability-focused research funding from the Higher Education Authority.

3.5 Intercultural Education (ICE)

ICE focuses on diversity within Ireland, promoting anti-racism, inclusion and equal opportunities for newcomers and minority ethnic groups. It is anchored in the Department of Education's Intercultural Education Guidelines (2005, 2007), Intercultural Education Strategy (2010-2015), initial teacher education and whole-school inclusion policies. Schools working on Traveller inclusion, newcomer language support or anti-bullying often use the ICE vocabulary, though many now frame this work within broader GCE projects on migration and globalisation.

3.6 Definitions Guiding Irish Practice

Definitions of GE have evolved over the years. In the context of the Maastricht Declaration in 2002³⁵ to the Dublin Declaration adopted in 2022³⁶, Irish Aid's own definition³⁷ has shifted from

³⁴ IDEA (2025) Theory of Impact for Global Citizenship Education Overview <https://irp.cdn-website.com/9e15ba29/files/uploaded/Theory+of+Impact+Overview.pdf>

³⁵ The Maastricht Declaration defines GE as: Global Education opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all... encompassing Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Peace Education and Intercultural Education.

³⁶ The Dublin Declaration on Ge to 2050 defines it thus: Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future.

³⁷ Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025 <https://www.ireland.ie/569/IA-Global-Citizenship-Education-Strategy.pdf>

DE towards a GCE approach in its current strategy, putting more emphasis on action in an era of a global pandemic, climate change and misinformation, defining GCE as:

“A lifelong educational process, which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, inter-dependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, GCE helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives and how they can act to build a better world.”

As Ireland’s national network for Development Education, IDEA uses Development Education and Global Citizenship Education as interchangeable terms, defining DE as follows:

“Development Education is at the core of our work. It enables people to understand the world around them and to act to transform it. It works to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality, globally and locally to create a more just and sustainable future for everyone.”

Several IDEA members use this definition and definitions of GCE aligned with it. For example, WorldWise Global Schools³⁸ defines GCE as *“an approach to teaching and learning that links global and local justice issues. GCE explores the root causes of these issues and equips learners and educators to think critically, build empathy, challenge unjust global systems and take meaningful action towards a kinder, fairer and more sustainable world. Youth-friendly definition of Global Citizenship Education: Learning about global justice issues so that we can act to build a kinder, fairer and more sustainable world”* while Children in Crossfire defines GCE as *enabling us to explore key issues such as equality, climate justice, racism and human rights, through creative, innovative and interactive approaches. It gives us the opportunity to examine the impact of these issues globally and locally, including how our own lives are affected. It also supports us in considering how our values, choices and actions can contribute to or mitigate an issue and in exploring what action we can take to create positive change.”*³⁹

DevelopmentEducation.ie, Ireland’s national online hub dedicated to DE, GCE, and ESD, published the “Guidelines for Producing Development Education and Global Citizenship Education Resources: 2nd Edition” in 2025, outlining Development Education as:

“Directly concerned with the educational policies, strategies and processes around issues of human development, human rights and sustainability (and immediately related areas).”

Through its whole-of-government national strategy, “Education for Sustainable Development to 2030” (ESD to 2030), the coordinating departments (Department of Education and Youth, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality) anchor the sustainability strand of Global Education, defining it as an education that:

³⁸ WWGS (2025) Educating for a Wise World https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Teacher-Handbook-2025_web.pdf?x53374

³⁹ <https://www.childrenincrossfire.org/what-we-do/global-citizenship-education/>

“Empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity.”

Dóchas Working Group states that Development Education is:

“... about increasing people’s awareness and understanding of global issues. Irish NGOs undertake Development Education work to build understanding of the factors that cause the poor and marginalised to suffer. By inviting people to examine the causes of poverty, Irish NGOs help them identify the changes that need to happen to bring about lasting solutions to the problems of global poverty and inequality.”

Viewed collectively, these concepts, definitions and policy moves confirm that Ireland’s interpretation of Global Education is both outward-looking - drawing on global frameworks and European declarations - and locally grounded, responding to Ireland’s own diversity, development priorities and climate commitments. The multiplicity of terms is a sign of a vibrant sector able to tailor its language to meet specific demands and needs while advancing a shared vision: learners of all ages engaging critically with global challenges and acting for justice, sustainability and human rights.

Actors in this field in Ireland have a practical tool for aligning their work – the Code of Good Practice for DE⁴⁰ published in 2019. The code is designed as a shared framework across diverse practice, based on an articulation of what organisations share in common both in terms of principles and practice. This enables actors to align their work, regardless of the terminology they use, in the context of a quality framework for educational practice.

3.7 Peer Review Reflections

ESD and GCE

Throughout the peer review team visit, it was clear that the two predominant terms in use in Ireland today are ESD and GCE (although DE still features strongly). Several actors from government departments and non-governmental organisations brought up the fact that ESD is the national approach in the education sector, and that GCE is Irish Aid funded work that feeds into that approach, but also goes beyond it in terms of sectors and actors, and that it brings unique aspects to ESD that would otherwise be missing or unacceptably weak.

The pragmatic approach by Irish Aid and by the CSO sector as regards GCE is noted by the peer review as an essential component in ensuring there is a strong emphasis on working across concepts

⁴⁰ (IDEA) (2019), Code of Good Practice for Development Education. <https://www.ideaonline.ie/Code-of-good-practice-development-education>

and terminology, and to bringing actors together from ESD and GCE. It is clear that CSOs move between ESD and GCE with ease and the peer review heard from several organisations that they consider their work part of one agenda, regardless of the terminology used, and that in order to achieve their necessary objectives, they make the work fit within the relevant terminology.

Clarity of Concepts and Terminology

A few years ago, a switch in terminology took place where Irish Aid went from using the term Development Education to instead using Global Citizenship Education. This switch has seemingly worked well with stakeholders and fits with international trends in terminology use, particularly Agenda 2030 and UNESCO frameworks. However, while the change in terminology was outlined in the 2021-2025 Irish Aid GCE Strategy, the peer review could not find information regarding how this switch came about – e.g. a policy rationale, a dialogue with stakeholders or partners resulting in this change, or an exploration of what the change in terminology meant in terms of ethical and pedagogical underpinnings. This might be an interesting topic to explore, perhaps in connection with future strategy development.

As indicated above, the diversity of concepts reflects the great richness of thought and practice in Ireland in the field of Global Education. The fact that several concepts are in use at the same time is not a problem in any way; this is the case in most countries. In Ireland, different stakeholders navigate the terminology nimbly, not least because they have a strong focal point in IDEA and quality frameworks such as the Code of Good Practice for DE. However, in connection with a new or next strategy for GCE, it may be useful to (briefly!) revisit the concept(s) in order to arrive at a shared understanding among the various stakeholders, drawing on existing work and the rich reservoirs of Irish research in this regard. This could help to promote a unifying vision of the various understandings of GCE, in particular as regards shared values, as well as providing an opportunity to explore in greater depth how they interrelate and complement one another. This could also strengthen recognition of Irish Aid's leadership in this field and provide an opportunity to better establish links with development cooperation and humanitarian action.

Chapter 4

Key Actors

Chapter 4

Key Actors

4.1 Overview – Government and Civil Society

This chapter looks at the government ministries and agencies that lead in the area of Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development, as well as how civil society organisations (CSOs) in the field are coordinated. In Ireland, GE is primarily led by Irish Aid, part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (GCE) and the Departments of Education and Youth as well as Higher Education (ESD). However, GCE efforts are also supported by further government departments and CSOs. There are key actors associated with most main educational sectors of society – adult and community education, formal education (from primary to tertiary, including teacher education) and non-formal education (youth work, adult education and community development).

4.1.1 Government Leads

Irish Aid is the main policy lead for GCE. It manages the Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021–2025 and provides approximately €10 million annually to support GCE work and initiatives. This funding is delivered through multi-year Strategic Partner grants, Ireland’s Civil Society Partnership (ICSP) funding scheme, and competitive funding calls. In addition, the Department of Education and Youth (DoEY) co-sponsors - alongside the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and the Department of Children, Disability, and Equality (DCDE) - the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to 2030.⁴¹ This strategy is intended to embed ESD across the education system - for example, in the revised Primary Curriculum (roll-out beginning in 2025) and in the new Leaving Certificate subject called “Climate Action & Sustainable Development.”

DFHERIS, through the Higher Education Authority (HEA) supports ESD in the higher education sector through for example, the SATLE fund and the Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. DoEY anchors youth-sector initiatives. While Irish Aid leads on funding and policy for GCE, DoEY plays an important enabling role by funding the broader youth-work infrastructure through which GCE is delivered. Youth organisations under the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) umbrella receive core funding from DoEY to support staffing, governance and youth-engagement structures. This foundation allows the youth sector to implement GCE initiatives funded by Irish Aid, such as the Youth 2030 programme and other initiatives. In addition, under DoEY, the *Opportunities for Youth – National Strategy for Youth Work*

⁴¹ ESD to 2030 Implementation Plan (DoE, 2022). <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/esd-to-2030-implementation-plan-20222026.pdf>

*and Related Services 2024–2028*⁴² commits to strengthening young people’s civic engagement and active participation and aligns youth-work policy with Ireland’s broader obligations under the SDGs.

Other departments also play important roles. The Department of the Taoiseach chairs a high-level Senior Officials’ Group (SOG) consisting of Assistant Secretaries from all government departments that ensures cross-departmental coordination and reports to the Cabinet on SDG progress.⁴³ In terms of administrative responsibility and policy development, this lies with the SDG unit within the Department of the Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE) which coordinates Ireland’s National SDG Implementation Plan 2022-2024 and public-awareness campaigns that intersect with GCE.

4.1.2 Civil Society Leads

Civil society also plays a central role in shaping and delivering GCE, giving it its reach, creativity and community roots. IDEA is Ireland’s umbrella network exclusively for organisations in the field of Global Citizenship Education and Development Education policy and practice and is the one of very few such national networks in Europe and the world. Founded two decades ago when educators felt the need for a specialised space beyond the broader Dóchas (national NGDO umbrella) arena, IDEA has grown into a network of 100-plus members (about 80 organisations and 20 individuals), who provide and/or promote GCE in formal, non-formal and informal learning spaces across the island of Ireland. With a small secretariat, IDEA facilitates four permanent working groups (formal education, adult and community education, Quality and Impact and Palestine) that exchange resources, co-draft policy submissions and co-create projects.⁴⁴ It also facilitates other spaces for member-led dialogue, exchange and advocacy, such as the Youth Task Force and Higher Education GCE Forum. IDEA also stewards the sector’s Code of Good Practice⁴⁵ (which won a 2021 GENE Award); and delivers continuous capacity-building workshops.

⁴² Minister O’Gorman launches Opportunities for Youth: National Strategy for Youth Work and Related Services 2024-2028 <https://www.gov.ie/ga/an-roinn-leana%c3%ad-m%c3%adchumais-agus-comhionannais/preaseisiuinti/minister-ogorman-launches-opportunities-for-youth-national-strategy-for-youth-work-and-related-services-2024-2028/>

⁴³ National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024 <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/national-implementation-plan-for-the-sustainable-development-goals-2022-2024/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.ideaonline.ie/IDEAWorkinggroups>

⁴⁵ <https://www.ideaonline.ie/Code-of-good-practice-development-education>

Box 4. Irish Development Education Association (IDEA)

The Irish Development Education Association convenes a wide and diverse civil society community — NGOs, educators, teacher unions, networks and practitioners— and provides a focused, professionalised hub for learning, exchange, co-ordination and advocacy. Funded by Irish Aid, it is one of very few GCE-specialised platforms in Europe and has been particularly effective in fostering coherence and shared standards across the sector, and in influencing policy and strategy nationally.

A key strength of IDEA lies in its strong co-ordination of the civil society sector in GCE. Through regular networking, capacity-building initiatives, and policy engagement, it ensures that member organisations contribute to a collective voice while maintaining diverse approaches and expertise. This approach has supported the visibility and credibility of DE and GCE in Ireland and offers an example of structured CSO collaboration that is less common in many other European countries and an inspiring example for other countries to potentially learn from.

IDEA has also made significant contributions to quality assurance and reflective practice in the field. Its Code of Good Practice for Development Education is widely recognised as a benchmark for ethical, effective, and learner-centred approaches, promoting shared values and standards across organisations. Complementing this, IDEA's recent work with members on a Theory of Impact for Global Citizenship Education has strengthened the sector's ability to articulate outcomes and demonstrate the transformative potential of GCE.

Recently, IDEA has led a process to develop a Theory of Impact for GCE framework, data collection tool and data visualisation platform⁴⁶ for the purpose of providing a consistent approach to measuring impact within the sector. IDEA also provides a coherent policy voice on the nuts-and-bolts of GCE: its Vision 2025 paper⁴⁷ (2021, updated in 2022) and ongoing member consultations shaped Irish Aid's current GCE Strategy, while the IDEA Vision 2030 policy document⁴⁸ will likely feed into future strategy development. IDEA representatives/members sit on the national ESD-to-2030 steering group and the three advisory groups (children, schools and further and higher education). About 90% of IDEA's core income comes from Irish Aid, supplemented by project grants from agencies such as Concern Worldwide, Trócaire and Erasmus+.

Dóchas is Ireland's umbrella network for development and humanitarian NGOs, currently bringing together 56 that range from large, well-known charities to smaller specialised campaign

⁴⁶ <https://www.ideaonline.ie/theory-of-impact-for-gce>

⁴⁷ <https://www.ideaonline.ie/vision-2025>

⁴⁸ <https://www.ideaonline.ie/vision-2030>

groups. As a national platform it occupies the “helicopter” space: facilitating at least nine thematic working groups addressing issues like climate, safeguarding, institutional funding—and a specific working group on Development Education. Through these groups Dóchas helps members craft joint policy positions, prepares collective submissions to government, and runs the annual Worldview survey that tracks Irish public attitudes to aid and global justice. It also experiments with shared public-outreach models—such as the Global Solidarity Hub at the National Ploughing Championships—and leads the Shared-Island GCE Forum (with IDEA and CADA) to strengthen cross-border collaboration. Dóchas is governed by a board elected by the member NGOs. Staff from IDEA (Irish Development Education Association) sit on the Dóchas DE group and the two organisations have multiple members in common. The two organisations submit separate - but co-ordinated - papers to relevant government consultations.

One aspect of Dóchas work that is of considerable value to GE in Ireland, and across Europe, is the public opinion research work carried out under the Worldview project – and which informed an earlier chapter of this report. This work, which is cutting edge, provides a beacon and exemplar to others.

Dóchas offers the broad strategic umbrella for Ireland’s development community, whereas IDEA zooms in on day-to-day quality, standards, policy and practitioner collaboration within the GCE field. The two bodies work in tandem: IDEA staff participate in the Dóchas DE Working Group, Policy Working Group and Worldview Research Working Group, the organisations issue co-ordinated policy submissions on GCE, and they co-chair initiatives like the Shared-Island project⁴⁹, ensuring that Ireland’s global-education ecosystem remains both coherent and responsive from grassroots practice to national advocacy.

The CSO sector in Ireland involved in GCE is varied and well-co-ordinated (see IDEA’s list of GCE member organisations), with a significant breadth and long-standing expertise.⁵⁰ While the peer review report cannot do justice to the wealth of organisations and their work, the report does go into more detail in the next chapter as regards the CSOs that work in strategic partnership with Irish Aid to implement the Global Citizenship Education Strategy and elaborates on some of the leading organisations working in different sectors of society and education.

4.2 Co-ordination and Co-operation

Coordination at government level occurs through formal structures such as the SDG Senior Officials’ Group, and through the SDG Unit convened by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (DCEE), addresses cross-cutting issues before they reach Cabinet. Chaired by DCEE, it oversees cross-government implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. At ministry level, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD), chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade since 2007 to promote policy coherence. Coordination of GCE/ESD between Irish Aid and DoEY is aligned under SDG 4.7. and takes place through

⁴⁹ <https://www.ideaonline.ie/tender-project-coordination-facilitation>

⁵⁰ <https://www.ideaonline.ie/our-members>

regular meetings of the ESD-to-2030 Steering Committee, in line with the ESD to 2030 implementation plan, which called for the establishment of an SDG 4.7 Working Group. The DoEY, DFHERIS and DCDE are co-sponsors of the national ESD strategy and chair the National Steering Group for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD to 2030) on a rotating basis, with broad participation by other government departments, education and civil society actors.⁵¹ At implementation level, co-ordination of GCE takes place on a sectoral basis, where delivery is supported by programmes and organisations such as WorldWise Global Schools (post-primary), Global Village (primary), Saolta (adult and community education), Youth 2030 (youth sector), STAND (higher education) and DICE and Ubuntu (teacher education). Civil society engagement is co-ordinated through the national platform for DE and GCE, IDEA, and to some extent also by the NGDO platform Dóchas.

Meanwhile, the DoEY and its agencies lead on ESD curriculum design and implementation, teacher CPD, and inspection, with regular input from different sectors as appropriate. Organisations developing curriculum or teacher-training proposals typically engage with the Department of Education and Youth or with Oide, Ireland's national support service for teachers. For initiatives involving Global Citizenship Education, collaboration with Irish Aid's GCE unit is common as is co-ordination through IDEA.

Taken together, these arrangements create a lattice in which Irish Aid sets the justice-and-citizenship vision, the ESD-to-2030 plan provides the framework and content as regards ESD, and actors come together to ensure complementarity and balance, with a strong CSO sector reaching across the formal and non-formal sectors and influencing policy. Shared quality codes knit the system together, and a well-targeted, strategic funding base keeps it moving. In short, Global Education in Ireland now lives at the crossroads of aid policy, school system, and whole-of-government SDG work.

4.3 Peer Review Reflections

The peer review team acknowledges the individual actors involved in GCE and ESD and the important roles they play, as well as the various strategies and policies that relate to both GCE and ESD within the system.

Civil society is highly organised and well supported, with specialised co-ordination of the GCE sector through IDEA. This model of infrastructure support exists in very few countries, and the peer review wishes to highlight the way this leverages the strengths of the sector to reach far and wide across the island of Ireland and also enables active and continuous engagement by GCE actors in government consultations, with co-ordination support from IDEA. This model provides a win-win for CSOs devoted to GCE, and for policymakers alike. As national development NGO co-ordination platforms in some European countries are, understandably, grappling with issues

⁵¹ ESD to 2030 Implementation Plan 2022-26, Action 1.4a (establishment of a cross-departmental SDG 4.7 working group) <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/esd-to-2030-implementation-plan-20222026.pdf>.

such as budget cuts, the role of CSOs, and even the nature of development co-operation into the future, their co-ordinating role in GCE, at national and European level is sometimes neglected. Not so with the IDEA model; and other countries in Europe could do well to consider the benefits of such a model for GCE into the future.

The peer review notes the potential for more formalised sustained, strategic dialogue between Irish Aid and GCE stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental) that considers GCE from a macro perspective. To achieve this, Irish Aid would need to take a leading role in bringing together public and civil society stakeholders, in order to promote/enhance collaborative and inclusive approaches that foster learning, co-operation and co-ordinated strategies and actions. Irish Aid is in a unique position to facilitate a multi-stakeholder, strategic dialogue and, as such, to facilitate a more regular, structured dialogue on GCE issues. The aim would be to establish a consensus-base and shared working agenda.

In order to anchor the core aims of informed, critical engagement with global issues and global-local interconnections more broadly across government departments, the peer review notes that there are opportunities to create closer, regular dialogue around this topic between departments, in addition to (as an occasional part of, or in preparation for) the proposed multi-stakeholder strategic dialogue. Another alternative would be to engage with other departments on this specific topic by identifying opportunities among existing co-ordination committees and mechanisms, for example by introducing a standing, dedicated agenda item to explore the topic.

Chapter 5

Irish Aid Strategies – Increasing Reach and Quality

Chapter 5

Irish Aid Strategies – Increasing Reach and Quality

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the evolution of Irish strategies for Development Education and Global Citizenship Education since the early 2000s. It looks at previous strategies and offers a snapshot comparative overview of strategies to date, as well as delving into more detail regarding the strategy that officially ran until the end of 2025. The chapter gives an overview of the partnership approach taken by Irish Aid and the main funding mechanisms connected with the strategy, as well as offering peer review reflections.

5.2 The Evolution of Irish Aid’s Strategies

Irish Aid has been playing a key role in initiating and supporting Development Education in Ireland since the late 1970s. It has been providing funding for initiatives and leading the development of policy and strategies, beginning with the development of Ireland’s first Development Education Strategy in 2003–2005. This strategy focused on awareness-raising and supporting the work of civil society. It was followed by the 2007–2011 strategy, which took a more structured approach, formalising partnerships with education providers, NGOs, and development networks. By the mid-2010s, Irish Aid had aligned more explicitly with international agendas, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In 2015, Irish Aid invited GENE to conduct Ireland’s first Peer Review, aimed at assessing existing policies, structures, and practices in Global Education and identifying areas for improvement. The resulting National Report on Global Education in Ireland⁵² provided a comprehensive analysis of the national landscape, acknowledging Ireland’s longstanding commitment to Development Education while making targeted recommendations for future enhancement. The peer review paid particular attention to Irish Aid’s first two Development Education strategies: Deepening Public Understanding of International Development (2003–2005) and Promoting Public Engagement for Development (2007–2011). These strategies laid the groundwork for Ireland’s efforts to raise public awareness and promote global learning.

The 2015 Peer Review made several key observations and recommendations, many of which informed the subsequent Development Education Strategy 2017–2023, and ultimately the current

⁵² Global Education Network Europe. (2015). Global education in Ireland: The European Global Education Peer Review Process—National report on Ireland. GENE. <https://www.gene.eu/s/Ireland.pdf>

Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021–2025. Among its recommendations were calls for a more cohesive and integrated approach to GCE, and for expanded efforts to broaden public engagement. It also recommended better alignment of GCE with the SDGs, involving higher education institutions more actively, ensuring sustainable funding, and improving evaluation and impact measurement of GCE programmes.

Following the 2015 GENE Peer Review, Irish Aid launched the third Development Education Strategy 2017–2023 in December 2016. It represented the continued maturation of Ireland’s approach to DE and was launched in a context of global transformation. The adoption of the SDGs had increased public discourse around climate action and migration, and rising populist sentiments all shaped the context in which it was developed. At the national level, the strategy emerged as Ireland was increasing its focus on policy coherence for development, and when the Irish education system, across both formal and non-formal sectors, had begun integrating more diverse perspectives, including those of global justice, equality, and sustainability.

In these international and national contexts, the 2017–2023 strategy was positioned as a direct response to the growing need for deeper critical engagement by the Irish public with global development issues. It recognised that, in an interconnected world, Development Education plays a key role in nurturing informed, engaged, and active global citizens. The strategy outlined a clear vision focused on ensuring universal access to quality Development Education and ensuring that the people in Ireland:

“...are empowered to analyse and challenge the root causes and consequences of global hunger, poverty, inequality, injustice and climate change, inspiring and enabling them to become active global citizens in the creation of a fairer and more sustainable future for all.”⁵³

Its strategic goal was framed within a Global Citizenship Education paradigm and focused on increasing awareness, understanding, and action; thereby encouraging people in Ireland to contribute to the creation of a more just, sustainable, and equal world.

The strategy outlined five core objectives to achieve:

- An enabling and coherent policy environment for Development Education at local, national and European levels.
- Maximised capacity, collaboration, partnership and coherence of Development Education partners to enhance the quality, delivery, impact and communication of Development Education.
- Further integration and mainstreaming of quality Development Education in formal education curricula, programmes and structures.
- Increased integration, quality and spread of Development Education in non-formal education curricula, programmes and structures.

⁵³ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2017). Strengthening Ireland’s contribution to a sustainable and just world through development education: Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017–2023. Government of Ireland. <https://developmenteducation.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Development-Education-Strategy-2017-2023.pdf>

- Increased awareness within the education sector of Ireland’s development co-operation programme and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Given its development following a thorough consultation process, informed by the strategic recommendations of the 2015 GENE Peer Review and shaped by evolving global and national contexts, the 2017–2023 strategy had many notable features that distinguished it from previous strategies:

- It emphasised a more integrated whole-of-system approach, encouraging DE across formal and non-formal learning environments, and reaching out to communities historically underserved by DE.
- The continuation and deepening of strategic partnerships with IDEA, WWGS, DICE, DevelopmentEducation.ie, and STAND was central. These partners were tasked not only with implementation but also with contributing to the policy discourse, knowledge sharing, and evaluation of DE in Ireland.
- The creation of new strategic partnerships with the youth sector and with the adult and community sectors (Youth 2030 and Saolta).
- The development of a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) marked a more systematic attempt to measure the reach, quality, and effectiveness of DE initiatives. This addressed long-standing sectoral calls for clearer metrics and indicators of impact.
- The strategy underscored the importance of sharing learnings across the sector and contributing to Ireland’s international commitments under the SDGs, particularly SDG 4.7.
- There was an explicit commitment to ensuring DE was inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the diversity of learners in Ireland, including marginalised groups and ethnic minorities.

Reviews of the 2017–2023 strategy identified many achievements, as well as several ongoing challenges and gaps. Visibility around Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and GCE was believed to have grown because of the strategy, cross-government communication to have improved, and collaboration between Irish Aid and its strategic partners to have strengthened. The sector had also seen increased capacity building, with new partnerships emerging, particularly in the Youth, and Adult and Community Education (ACE) sectors. At the same time, several challenges and gaps were noted. These included a lack of longer-term, qualitative research on the impact of GCE; limited structures to support partnerships with the Global South; and the absence of a designated strategic partner for both primary and higher education. Early Years education remained largely unexplored in terms of GCE, and concerns about rising inequality and the digital divide, exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19, continued to affect access and participation.

During this period, a series of broader external factors were also emerging and steering change across the Global Education landscape. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed and deepened existing inequalities and underscored the importance of solidarity and global co-operation. At the same time, technological advancements, and growing public awareness around the climate emergency and racial injustice all called for renewed thinking around how education could respond to

complex, interconnected global challenges. These shifting dynamics, both within Ireland and internationally, set the stage for the next phase of the strategy. In 2021, Irish Aid launched the Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021–2025, replacing the strategy in place at the time (the 2017-2023 Development Education Strategy). The new strategy built on the previous strategy but broadened its ambition and reach and introduced a shift in terminology from Development Education to Global Citizenship Education.

The table below summarises the focus, approach, strengths, and challenges of three successive Irish Aid strategies.

Table 1: Evolution of Ireland’s Development Education Strategies (2003 – 2023)

Strategy	2003–2005: Deepening Public Understanding	2007–2011: Promoting Public Engagement	2017–2023: Development Education Strategy
Context	Emerged after structural reforms in DE support; aligned with growing Irish ODA.	Post-White Paper (2006); increased government recognition of DE.	Aligned with SDGs (especially 4.7); reflects globalisation and growing diversity.
Core Vision	“Access for all” to understand rights and responsibilities as global citizens	Reach a wide audience with quality DE through partnerships	Develop a critically engaged, globally conscious citizenry; embed DE systemically
Main aim	Raise public awareness of international development issues; build understanding of global justice	Expand engagement and deepen understanding; align practice with policy	Enhance quality, coherence, and effectiveness; shift to Global Citizenship Education (GCE)
Approach	Supporting civil society organisations; initiating pilot projects like DICE; establishing advisory committees.	Formalising partnerships with education providers and NGOs; promoting high-quality programmes; increased funding, results orientation	Whole-of-government approach; focus on capacity-building; systems change; cross-sector engagement
Strengths	Pioneering national strategy on DE; bold vision; clear objectives; stakeholder engagement	Stronger coherence; high-impact partnerships (e.g. WWGS, DICE, IDEA); measurable outcomes	Strategic alignment with SDGs; increased cross-sector participation; focus on quality and results (developing the Performance Measurement Framework)
Challenges	Underrepresentation of adult and further education sectors; Lack of support for professional development; Integration of ethnic minorities in DE; Crowded curriculum at various levels.	Need for more resources for DE activities; need for more funding; need for mainstreaming DE across all sectors of education, including youth, adult and community; Challenges in sustaining DE initiatives with reduced funding.	Gaps in early education, funding challenges, measuring transformative learning outcomes.

5.3 Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025

The *Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Strategy 2021–2025* was launched by Irish Aid in the context of major global and societal shifts. It emerged at a time of heightened global interconnection and uncertainty, shaped by the impact of COVID-19, increasing global inequality, the climate emergency, and renewed calls for racial and social justice. Domestically, it reflected a growing demand for education that equips individuals and communities with the knowledge, skills, and values to understand and address complex global challenges.

One of the key shifts in this strategy is the change in terminology and emphasis, moving from *Development Education to Global Citizenship Education*. As mentioned previously, there are few details around the reasons for the switch, but the peer review understands that the transition happened following consultations, and with feedback supporting the shift to the GCE term. Like Development Education, GCE places a strong focus on critical thinking, solidarity, and meaningful engagement with the systemic causes of global challenges, encouraging individuals to actively address the root causes of inequality, injustice, climate change, and human rights violations and the trend in terms of terminology since 2015 has been a shift towards GCE.

Within this context, the 2021–2025 strategy outlined an overarching aim and vision that aims to ensure that people in Ireland: “... have access to quality, lifelong Global Citizenship Education, enabling them to become active global citizens committed to a fairer and more sustainable future for all.”

The 2021–2025 strategy identified five core outcomes:

1. Engaging people from the broadest possible range of backgrounds, including those marginalised from mainstream education.
2. Strengthened policy coherence and integration of Global Citizenship Education into key policies and curricula.
3. Strengthened institutions and organisations working to deliver quality Global Citizenship Education and strategic and collaborative approaches supported.
4. Increased capacity among educators and practitioners to deliver quality Global Citizenship Education.
5. Strengthened public engagement and understanding of development co-operation, the work of Irish Aid and the SDGs.

It was designed to target a diverse range of audiences, including “teachers, trainers, and educators; pupils and students in early years, primary, post-primary, youth and community work, further education and third level; volunteers; young people and youth workers; migrants; the travelling community; early schools leavers; business; trade unions; adult and community education practitioners and the communities and groups with which they work; educational institutions and NGOs.”

5.3.1 Strategic Partnerships

Irish Aid’s GCE Strategy 2021–2025 adopts a whole-of-society, lifelong-learning lens and commits to working “throughout the island of Ireland” with learners and educators across primary, post-primary, further and higher education, youth work, and adult and community education. This inclusive framing emphasises critical thinking, solidarity and action on the systemic causes of global challenges and explicitly seeks to reach audiences often marginalised from mainstream provision. The strategy also promotes whole-of-institution practice (e.g., whole-school approaches), supporting policy and curriculum linkages alongside practitioner capacity-building and access to quality resources. To ensure coverage across key systems and avoid duplication or gaps, strategic partners are positioned to “anchor” priority sectors and system functions.

As with previous strategies, the 2021–2025 plan emphasised partnership and systemic support. However, since the last strategy, coverage of GCE has widened and deepened across many sectors of society. Primary education now benefits from a dedicated national programme rather than ad-hoc resources and awards. GCE in Adult and community education has consolidated into a structured programme with broader partnerships, mapping and research, Adult and Community initial teacher education frameworks and a scaled advocates model. Initial teacher education more consistently embeds GCE across curricula and placements, strengthening graduate readiness. At post-primary, an externally audited whole-school framework has scaled, shifting practice from one-off activities to sustained, school-wide engagement. Youth and higher-education engagement have diversified—qualifications, incubators, national festivals and campus partnerships—linking learning to action at scale. Sector coordination and quality assurance have been reinforced through a shared Code of Good Practice⁵⁴ and a central resource hub, improving consistency and reducing duplication. Grant rounds continue to support a diverse mix of organisations nationwide, and an explicit whole-of-island emphasis has encouraged appropriate cross-border collaboration. Against this backdrop, the current strategic partners are:

Primary Education

Global Village⁵⁵ is the national primary-level programme for GCE. It supports schools through classroom workshops, teacher professional learning (summer courses, webinars and in-school CPD) and whole-school development aligned with the redeveloped Primary Curriculum (including the “Being an Active Citizen” competency) and SDG Target 4.7. It runs a weekly teacher Community of Practice and large sharing events (Leadership Symposium, TeachMeet) to spread practical approaches. A strong inclusion focus ensures special schools and learners using ISL can access resources, and that global-learning themes become part of everyday school policy, teaching and student voice.

⁵⁴ IDEA (2019) Code of Good Practice <https://www.ideaonline.ie/Code-of-good-practice-development-education>

⁵⁵ Global Village Schools — About and consortium details: <https://globalvillageschools.ie/about/>

Post-primary Education

WorldWide Global Schools⁵⁶ (WWGS) is Ireland's national post-primary GCE programme (established 2013). It provides grants, teacher CPD and classroom resources, anchored by the Global Passport—an externally audited whole-school quality framework and award covering ethos, curriculum, student leadership and community links. WWGS curates case studies and exemplars to show what good practice looks like in context. To deepen consistency, WWGS is expanding support to Northern Ireland, and, from 2025, all WWGS-grant schools will be auto-enrolled in the Global Passport process.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

DICE⁵⁷ (primary ITE) and the Ubuntu Network⁵⁸ (post-primary ITE) directly work to integrate GCE across ITE. DICE embeds development and intercultural education across primary ITE curricula and placements, so that all undergraduate student teachers in participating colleges encounter critical literacy, social justice and sustainability within their professional formation. It also supports lecturer CPD and anti-racism workshops and produces practical resources see (e.g., Curious Teachers, Critical Classrooms⁵⁹). The Ubuntu Network works across post-primary ITE in 15 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), integrating GCE/ESD in modules and school placement. It develops Artefacts of Learning and Exemplars of Practice, and leads capacity-building events (Research Showcase, Assembly Day on teaching controversial issues, Dialogue Day on educator self-awareness) alongside a substantial research strand (conceptualisations of GCE, educator self-awareness CoP, ED-TED equity/diversity). Both consortia align to Céim standards, where GCE is now mandatory across ITE.

Youth Work

Youth 2030⁶⁰ (NYCI with partners Trócaire, Concern Worldwide, and Maynooth University) is the national platform for Global Youth Work, adopting a whole-of-youth sector approach. It enables youth workers, volunteers and young people to connect learning with action through the NUI Level-8 Certificate in Global Youth Work & Development Education, trainings, and CPD, Seed/Innovation Funds for projects, One World Week, practitioner guidelines and Global Youth Work Learners' Network, and a Young People's Committee. It also works on an all-Ireland basis with Higher Education Institutions responsible for Youth and Community Work education at third level. It supports research and mapping of GYW provision. Between 2022–2024 it worked with 97 youth organisations and 1,276 youth workers and engaged ~800 young people directly (15,891 indirectly), with the number of Irish Aid-funded youth organisations growing from 3 to 11 since

⁵⁶ WorldWide Global Schools — About: <https://www.worldwiseschools.ie/about/>

⁵⁷ DICE Project — About us: <https://thediceproject.ie/about-us/>

⁵⁸ Ubuntu Network — About us: <https://ubuntu.ie/about-us/>

⁵⁹ <https://www.thediceproject.ie/documents/Global%20Citizenship%20Education%20-%20Curious%20Teachers%20Critical%20Classrooms.pdf>

⁶⁰ NYCI — Global Youth Work & Development Education (Youth 2030): <https://www.youth.ie/programmes/global-youth-work-and-development-education/>

2021. The programme prioritises youth engagement through the UN Youth Delegate Programme and Climate Youth Delegate Programme as well as inclusion, working with Traveller and migrant communities through targeted CPD, additional support, and celebratory events.

Box 5. Youth 2030

The National Youth Council of Ireland has a strong focus on Global Youth Work (GYW) and Development Education (DE) and leads a consortium programme titled Youth 2030 in partnership with Concern Worldwide, Trócaire, and Maynooth University.

Global Youth Work explores global issues with young people (poverty, inequality, hunger, injustice, and climate change, among others) through acknowledgment of their role in the local community, as well as their connection to the broader, globalised world.

The Youth 2030 Programme is funded by Irish Aid and strives to increase the integration, quality, and spread of GYW and DE in non-formal youth work education, organisations, and projects.

Source: <https://www.youth.ie/programmes/global-youth-work-and-development-education/>

Higher education (non-formal)

STAND⁶¹ mobilises students and recent graduates around global justice, equality and sustainability through short courses, the Ideas Collective incubator, STAND News/workshops and its flagship Student Festival. In 2024 it reached around 40,000 students across 19 campuses/14 Higher Education Institutions, with the festival touring 17 Irish campuses and a Kigali edition co-created with the African Leadership University - an equitable North-South partnership. STAND works with AMLÉ (USI) and BICS to embed GCE in student leadership structures (e.g., Global Solidarity Award, digital badges for societies).

Adult and Community Education (ACE)

Saolta⁶² (Development Perspectives with AONTAS, Concern, Irish Rural Link, Maynooth University; Cork ETB joined in 2024) is the national ACE programme embedding the SDGs and GCE across adult and community learning. It delivers SDG Advocate training, Training-of-Trainers and practitioner development; supports research and mapping of ACE provision; and partners with Local Authorities/PPNs to connect local projects to SDG 4.7. It has

⁶¹ STAND: <https://stand.ie/>

⁶² Saolta — About us: <https://saolta.com/about-us/>

developed QQI-compliant modules⁶³ (e.g., Migration; communications for GCE) and is advancing whole-institution approaches in Further Education (Global Compass), while strengthening links to ACE initial-teacher education providers nationwide.

Sector Capacity and Resources

IDEA and DevelopmentEducation.ie⁶⁴ (partly-funded by Irish Aid) are the main partners in this strategic area. IDEA is the sector network for GCE/DE, focusing on quality, co-ordination and collective advocacy. It facilitates spaces for dialogue, exchange and planning among members, such as working groups (formal education, ACE, Quality & Impact, Development Education on Palestine), a Youth taskforce and a Higher Education GCE Forum. It also runs training and clinics and stewards the Code of Good Practice (with most member organisations signed up), recognised with a GENE award. IDEA supports shared policy positions (Vision 2030) and is piloting a light, shared MEL approach (collective Theory of Impact for GCE, outcome harvesting, case studies) to evidence impact.

DevelopmentEducation.ie, led by 80:20 and partly funded by Irish Aid, is Ireland's main open resource hub for DE/GCE/ESD. It curates high-quality teaching materials, produces updated guidelines for resource development (2nd edition, 2025), conducts periodic national audits to lift standards and avoid duplication, and offers tools for ethical communications and critical literacy to support educators across sectors.

5.3.2 Building on Lessons Learned

Overall, Irish Aid's 2021-2025 strategy reaffirmed Irish Aid's commitment to global solidarity, grounded in the principles of justice, equality, and sustainability. It built on past experiences but represented a clear paradigmatic shift, acknowledging that education must now prepare learners not only to understand the world but to change it. Building on previous lessons learnt from past strategies, this strategy aimed to introduce a number of key improvements and commitments, including:

- Increasing funding to €10 million annually over the strategy's duration.
- New primary school programme launched in 2021; exploring expansion into early education.
- New Community Initiative to engage marginalised groups.
- Stronger engagement with businesses and trade unions.
- Increased collaboration with Local Government via Public Participation Networks.
- New strategic partnership for third-level and post-primary teacher education, building on DICE, SUAS, and Ubuntu.

⁶³ QQI stands for Quality and Qualifications Ireland, the national body overseeing qualifications and quality assurance in Irish education.

⁶⁴ DevelopmentEducation.ie — About: <https://developmenteducation.ie/about>

- Innovation Challenge Fund to support fresh approaches to GCE.
- More funding for research and digital learning to reach new audiences and connect with the Global South.
- Reimagined Irish Aid Centre to raise awareness of Irish Aid’s work.
- Review of funding processes to improve efficiency.

5.3.3 Funding

The Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025 committed to increasing funding for GCE to €10 million per annum by 2025.⁶⁵ Funding allocations for 2021-2025 were as shown in the table.

As outlined in the previous section, the allocation of funds is distributed through a number of mechanisms⁶⁶ to support a wide range of projects and partnerships that support the implementation of the GCE Strategy, including:

Year	Global Education volume
2021	€6.3 million
2022	€7.7 million
2023	€9.8 million
2024	€9.8 million
2025	€9.8 million

Table 2: Irish Aid GCE funding in Ireland 2021-2025

Grants

An annual grant scheme, with calls for proposals typically opening in October. Organisations, including NGOs, educational institutions, youth organisations, and community development groups, can apply for grants ranging from €10,000 to €180,000. These grants support projects lasting one to three years, on themes such as Climate Action & Sustainability, Social Justice & Human Rights, Global Interdependence, Active Citizenship & Advocacy, Economic Justice & Ethical Trade, and Education for Sustainable Development. The application process involves assessment by Irish Aid officials and external consultants, evaluating organisational capacity and the potential impact of proposed initiatives. The scheme includes the Innovation Challenge Fund (ICF), which supports pioneering approaches to GCE, such as the use of new technologies or creative arts to engage diverse audiences. In the last three years, the annual grant scheme has maintained a broadly similar scale. In 2023, €2.1 million was awarded to 33 organisations. Funding rose modestly in 2024⁶⁷ to €2.2 million, supporting 36 organisations—20 of them continuing grantees—with awards ranging from €19,000 to €160,000. In the 2025 round, €1.97 million was distributed to 34 organisations, 19 of which had been funded previously; grant sizes spanned €11,220 to €160,000.

Eligible applicants are Irish-registered or Northern Irish charities and other not-for-profit bodies (social enterprises, co-ops, education, youth or community groups) that have at least two years of published accounts, solid governance, audited statements of income exceeding €100,000 and

⁶⁵ DFAT/Irish Aid (2021) Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy <https://assets.ireland.ie/documents/IA-Global-Citizenship-Education-Strategy.pdf>

⁶⁶ Irish Aid. (n.d.). Global citizenship education grants. Retrieved from <https://www.ireland.ie/en/irish-aid/what-we-do/global-citizenship-education/funding/#partners>

receiving less than 90% of their income from Irish Aid. Proposals are ranked on six factors—project quality/value for money, strength of the GCE pedagogy and SDG linkage, strategic fit with the 2021-25 strategy, robustness of the results framework, governance/financial controls, and, for Innovation Challenge bids, originality and reach to new audiences—and only the top-scoring applications are forwarded by the Grants Committee to the Minister for final approval.

Strategic Partnerships

In 2024, €4.03 million was allocated to the Strategic Partnership Programme. This funding was directed towards long-term, multi-annual projects with nine key strategic partners who are working on Global Citizenship Education across Ireland:

1. Global Village – Primary education programme
2. WorldWise Global Schools (WWGS) – Post-primary education programme
3. DICE (Development and Intercultural Education Project) – Primary ITE
4. Ubuntu Network – Post-primary initial teacher education
5. Youth 2030 – Youth work
6. Saolta – Adult and community education
7. STAND – Higher education engagement
8. IDEA (Irish Development Education Association) – Sector co-ordination and advocacy
9. DevelopmentEducation.ie – National resource and knowledge hub

Civil Society Partnership

Another partnership model is Ireland's Civil Society Partnership (ICSP) for A Better World. It provides multi-annual funding scheme for high-capacity Irish INGOs.⁶⁷ Launched in 2023 and running to 2027, ICSP has an annual budget of €100 million and funds 10 organisations with a trusted track record with Irish Aid. The scheme operates in over 40 countries, with over 75% of programme funding directed to Africa. It also pre-positions funding so partners can respond rapidly to unforeseen crises (e.g., Sudan and Gaza). The overall budget for ICSP is distributed to partners as follows: Concern Worldwide (31%), Trócaire (29%), GOAL (14%), Christian Aid Ireland (5%), Self Help Africa (5%), Oxfam Republic of Ireland (5%), World Vision International (4%), Plan International Ireland (4%), Sightsavers Ireland (2%) and ActionAid Ireland (1%). Overall, the model reflects OECD-DAC good practice – predictability, harmonised reporting, learning and accountability – while preserving space for innovation and partnership across the broader civil-society ecosystem. The ICSP includes a dedicated climate finance allocation and has a dedicated Global Citizenship Education funding stream of €2.5 million for nine of the ten partners working in Ireland.

⁶⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2024). Minister Fleming announces funding in support of Global Citizenship Education. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-foreign-affairs/press-releases/minister-fleming-announces-funding-in-support-of-global-citizenship-education-2>

⁶⁸ <https://www.ireland.ie/en/irish-aid/how-we-work/partnering-with-civil-society/>

EU Commission DEAR Scheme

Some funding was also allocated by Irish Aid as co-funding for project applications under the EU Commission’s Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) Scheme, with €51,246 allocated in 2024.

Allocations under the GCE Strategy

The table below summarises Irish Aid’s grant recipients under the 2021-2025 strategy grouped by their organisational focus. For each year (2023, 2024 and 2025) Irish Aid’s published grant-award lists were consulted. Every organisation that received a grant in a given year was recorded once, regardless of the number of projects. Organisations were then grouped into nine broad thematic categories based on their publicly stated mission (e.g., website descriptions). For example, an NGO whose website headline is “promoting climate action and biodiversity” was tagged “Environment NGO”. Because many NGOs work across multiple themes, each organisation has been assigned to the category that best captures its primary mission. These themes describe each organisation’s overall focus, not the specific project that received Irish Aid funding; individual projects and applications were not reviewed. The counts in each row therefore reflect the number of organisations of that type that received at least one grant in that year—note that the same organisation can appear in two or three successive years if it received funding more than once.

The table shows that around 70% of all awards went to four broad categories - Development NGOs, Youth NGOs, Community NGOs, and Environment NGOs. Development NGOs alone accounted for one-quarter of the total, followed by Youth NGOs (20%) and then Community and Environment NGOs (13% each). Justice and Advocacy organisations received around 11% of grants, while Education NGOs, Higher-Education Institutions and Women/Gender NGOs each received 5–6%. Health and Disability NGOs represented the smallest share at 2%.

Table 3: Irish Aid grant recipients by organisational focus

Focus	2023	2024	2025	Total
Community NGO (local Irish community support)	4	5	4	13
Development NGO (overseas aid, global justice)	9	9	8	26
Education NGO (supports schools, learning resources)	1	2	2	5
Environment NGO (climate, conservation, sustainability)	5	4	4	13
Health/Disability NGO (health, disability support)		1	1	2
Higher Education Institution (universities, research centres)	2	2	2	6
Justice/Advocacy NGO (human rights, legal/economic justice)	3	4	4	11
Women/Gender NGO (gender equality, women’s rights)	2	2	2	6
Youth NGO (youth work, youth-led action)	7	7	7	21
Total	33	36	34	103

Looking at the cash value of grants tells a slightly different story, with Youth NGOs edging ahead of Development NGOs in total funding received (see table below). Although Development NGOs constituted the largest group of recipients, Youth NGOs actually received the highest share of funding (23%), narrowly surpassing Development NGOs (19%). Environment and Community NGOs together absorbed a further 27% of the funding pot. Justice and Advocacy bodies received about 12%, while Higher-Education Institutions accounted for 11%. Women and Gender NGOs drew roughly 5%. Education-focused NGOs and Health and Disability organisations received the smallest allocations, around 2% and 1% respectively

Table 4: Cash value of Irish Aid grants by organisational focus (€)

Focus	2023	2024	2025	Total	% of Total
Community NGO (local Irish community support)	208,940	255,934	206,683	671,557	11%
Development NGO (overseas aid, global justice)	401,209	434,036	358,950	1,194,195	19%
Education NGO (supports schools, learning resources)	21,544	49,000	55,500	126,044	2%
Environment NGO (climate, conservation, sustainability)	375,504.5	360,000	320,000	1,055,505	17%
Health/Disability NGO (health, disability support)		20,000	23,350	43,350	1%
Higher Education Institution (universities, research centres)	233,623	220,000	210,000	663,623	11%
Justice/Advocacy NGO (human rights, legal/economic justice)	227,276	256,965	262,954	747,195	12%
Women/Gender NGO (gender equality, women's rights)	110,000	110,000	110,000	330,000	5%
Youth NGO (youth work, youth-led action)	530,390	488,013	425,518	1,443,921	23%
Total	2,108,486.5	2,193,948	1,972,955	6,275,390	100%

The peer review heard that the value and range of funding instruments are generally appreciated by CSOs, and particularly those who act as strategic partners. Predictability is a key factor, as is the long-term nature of these programmatic funds. Several smaller organisations expressed a desire for moving towards more long-term support.

The peer review also received a number of submissions from Irish CSOs, and all of them addressed funding in some way. The overall messages centred around quality and stability. For example, ECO-UNESCO calls for inflation-aware, multi-annual funding and reduced administrative burdens; DICE recommends streamlined application/reporting for cross-institution collaborations and

dedicated evaluation funding (including longitudinal work); STAND highlights the importance of coherent, long funding terms to retain qualified educators; while Development Perspectives argues for a step change in investment to meet the scale of disinformation and polarisation challenges.

5.3.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact

Originally, it was foreseen that the Global Citizenship Education Strategy would be monitored through a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF), first developed for the 2017–2023 Development Education Strategy. The PMF incorporated indicators to track progress toward achieving strategic goals, supporting data-driven decision-making, and included both quantitative indicators and qualitative measures to capture broader and more transformative effects. However, during the international team visit, the PMF was described by GCE stakeholders as “too data-heavy for NGOs and of limited use to Irish Aid” in terms of how the data was put to use. In practice, it now serves as an internal reference rather than the monitoring tool for the current strategy. The Peer Review notes this to be a sign of learning and policy maturity; moving away from evaluation mechanisms that have been deemed to be less useful in pursuit of more appropriate models.

Evaluation of the strategy is now grounded primarily in project-level results-based management led by Irish Aid. Partners receiving multi-annual grants submit an End-of-Year 1 Report within 13 months of the project start date. This report includes a Results Framework documenting progress against agreed targets, and a Financial Report detailing expenditure versus budget. Partners then submit updated frameworks and budgets for Years 2 and 3 to reflect ongoing monitoring and emerging challenges. Upon completion, an End-of-Project Report is required, consolidating outcomes over the entire grant period and containing:

- A final Results Framework
- A final Financial Report
- A summary of lessons learned

For grants of €50,000 or more, partners must also provide a case study illustrating project impact in a specific context (e.g., a school or community group), incorporating qualitative data such as participant feedback and visual documentation.

For the strategy itself, a Mid-Term Review (MTR) was embarked upon in 2024 (the penultimate year of the strategy) to assess progress against overall objectives and to inform timely refinements for future strategy focus and direction. Throughout implementation, Irish Aid works closely with partners to align the work of partners with the overall strategy and annual stakeholder meetings are held to promote co-ordination among all actors involved in Global Citizenship Education.

5.4 Evidence of Implementation

Overall, Mid-Term Review (MTR) data collected by Irish Aid, as well as partner submissions reflect positive progress towards meeting the objectives of the Strategy. Evidence of successful implementation across the five outputs of the strategy shows how sector partners have contributed to achieving the objectives laid out in the Strategy and are meeting the objectives they set for themselves in their workplans.

Objective 1: Engaging people from the broadest possible range of backgrounds, including those marginalised from mainstream education

There are many examples of successful outreach to marginalised groups, and efforts to engage DEIS schools, ethnic minorities, and communities in more rural or disadvantaged areas. WWGS and Global Village reached 1,819 schools island-wide in 2024 (1,293 primary; and 526 post-primary, up 7% on 2021). Partners reported seeing growing interest and participation, 207,008 primary and 71,090 post-primary students engaged in 2024 (+28% on the 2021 baseline), bringing cumulative four-year reach to about 1.04 million students in total. Although some note the work remains ongoing.

“We encouraged youth from various backgrounds... DEIS schools, organising the Global Platform event... students shared diverse perspectives.”

“We are engaging young people from ethnic-minority backgrounds in our youth project; parents from ethnic-minority backgrounds are engaging in our showcase events.”

There are also examples of youth engagement and youth-led campaigns addressing global issues such as climate change and gender equality. Partners note that youth competitions, school engagement, and community-based events are important for introducing students from diverse backgrounds to global issues like climate change, poverty, and gender inequality. In some instances, youth are involved in co-creating campaigns or awareness-raising actions.

“Irish Aid’s support to ActionTalks speech write competition has provided valuable opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to engage with pressing global issues. In 2024, we received 112 entries from 20 schools (among these, 23 students from two Deis schools).”

“Our motto is ‘Change is a journey’... Young people are more responsive to action-taking calls; youth workers are involved in learner communities.”

Furthermore, in its submission to the Peer Review, Youth 2030 (NYCI) details inclusive work with Traveller and migrant communities (e.g., CPD “There is nothing normal about inequality”, Traveller Pride), and ECO-UNESCO reports green employability programmes with 50+ International Protection Applicants.

Many examples of cross-organisational collaborations and partnerships among NGOs and local/community organisations were reported, including cross-departmental or cross-border linking (e.g., adult and community education networks, shared events). Strategic partnerships such as the EU-DEAR project or multi-organisation collaborations have allowed for broader reach, resource sharing, and knowledge exchange.

“WorldWise Global Schools was extended to schools and NGOs in the north of Ireland ... strengthening co-operation and partnerships between schools across the island of Ireland.”

“We encouraged collaboration between Dóchas, CADA and IDEA in submitting a proposal ‘Shared Island, Shared Future’ ... to work together and improve engagement on common GCE challenges

“The programme delivered by the Centre for Global Education... 150,000 visits per annum from educators across the world... author contributions from the Global South.”

“Strategic partnership for the Adult & Community Education sector... re-visiting Theories of Change could be very positive.”

Objective 2: Strengthened policy coherence and integration of Global Citizenship Education into key policies and curricula.

There is evidence from partners’ submissions of GCE being woven into formal school programmes (e.g., teacher training, local or national curriculum links) and adult learning criteria and frameworks.⁶⁹ Mention of “Whole School Approach” and teacher involvement is seen as a crucial route to sustaining GCE impacts. Partners submitted formal input to the new Primary Curriculum Framework and to the draft Senior-Cycle specifications on Climate Action, Business and SPHE, all of which now contain explicit GCE elements (e.g., the “Being an Active Citizen” competency). In parallel, the DICE and Ubuntu programmes are mapping Céim teacher-education standards to GCE, and Irish Aid staff, IDEA and IDEA members such as NYCI, Saolta and STAND now sit on cross-departmental ESD steering and advisory groups to keep this policy alignment on track.

“Whole-School Approach in Northern Ireland... findings confirm significant improvements in knowledge, skills, attitudes/values and action.”

Examples of curriculum expansions, such as the Politics and Society course at Leaving Cert level and the introduction of new primary and junior-cycle climate action content, demonstrate that GCE is becoming more embedded within formal education. NGO-created GCE resources are also appearing in mainstream textbooks, widening their visibility and impact.

“Politics & Society now a full Leaving Cert subject... root causes of poverty embedded in materials.”

⁶⁹ See <https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NSETS-Criteria-and-Procedures.pdf>

“GCE present in new primary curriculum framework; junior-cycle climate-action course will promote GCE.”

“Our resources focus on the structural issues underpinning poverty... contributes to policy coherence for development.”

There are also positive signs of bridging GCE with national learning frameworks (e.g., referencing the Céim Standards, or increased mention of GCE in departmental policy documents).

“Highlighting GCE in the Céim standards gives added legitimacy to our work.”

Objective 3: Strengthened institutions and organisations working to deliver quality Global Citizenship Education and strategic and collaborative approaches supported

In their submissions to the Peer Review, strategic partners (WWGS, DICE, Ubuntu, Saolta, STAND, IDEA, DevelopmentEducation.ie and Youth 2030) show stronger collaboration, shared standards and resource hubs lifting sector quality. Partners’ submissions to the MTR also show that objective three is well on track. They credit the strategic-partnership model, multi-annual funding that helps plan longer programmes, retain staff and co-create resources, and the shared quality standards and peer learning have taken root and are professionalising the sector and deepening collaboration. Youth-sector participation has expanded from 6 organisations in 2020 to 23 in 2023, with the number of young people reached rising from 3,773 to 10,947. All WWGS grant schools will be auto-enrolled in the Global Passport from 2025, and Saolta’s new “Global Compass” gives Further-Education colleges a whole-institution roadmap.

“The strategic partnership approach has strengthened GCE delivery... supported organisations to collaborate and opened up additional spaces to reach participants.”

“A new Strategic Partnerships Group has been formed... to assist with collaboration, cooperation, cohesion.”

“Multi-annual funding is now available to youth organisations... supports longer-term, deeper programmes of work.”

“The Code of Good Practice... provides a structured, peer-led framework from which to build good, impactful practice... IDEA’s webinars and trainings have made the sector more visible.”

There is clear evidence of effective resource-sharing and joint initiatives. Collaborative platforms—inter-organisation networks, youth groups and local-authority forums—power sector-wide training, link youth and community projects to the SDGs and take GCE well beyond the classroom into youth and community groups, adult-education centres and NGO networks. This non-formal, youth and community-focused approach deepens local ownership and reaches people who might never engage through traditional schooling.

“We have strong collaborations, in particular with Youth Work Ireland Galway, sharing expertise, knowledge and resources.”

“Youth 2030 has provided information, training, capacity development and financial support, raising the profile of global youth work in Ireland.”

“Saolta’s Training-of-Trainer’s programme is building GCE capacity across Further-Education tutors and ACE practitioners nationwide.”

“Global Village has built a network of educators sharing good practice in the primary sector.”

“Substantial networking and learning opportunities spearheaded by IDEA has made the GCE sector more visible.”

Overall, submissions show that Objective 3 is being met through stronger partnerships, shared quality standards, predictable funding, and active networking. A common recommendation for further improvement is to make stronger link between local issues (community development, inclusion, etc.) to wider global frameworks such as climate justice and the SDGs, helping learners understand how local actions contribute to global change.

Objective 4: Increased capacity among educators and practitioners to deliver quality Global Citizenship Education

In their submissions to the Peer Review, Saolta, DICE, Ubuntu and Youth 2030 evidence capacity gains through projects that have been contributing to more and better training opportunities and developing enhanced collaborative networks, forums, working groups, and skill-sharing events, as well as access to CPD and shared resources through initiatives like IDEA and Dóchas forums. Similarly, MTR data shows that the spaces created and supported like sector journals, podcasts and toolkits (e.g., Policy & Practice, DEFY, E-TICK) also broadened the pool of high-quality content. Some participants highlight the greater visibility GCE gains when multiple organisations or educators convene for co-ordinated campaigns and strategic planning. Accredited, curriculum-linked CPD uptake has doubled from 1,370 educators in 2021 to 2,767 in 2024, driven by Global Village, WWGS, Youth 2030 and Saolta. NYCI has mapped GCE across all accredited youth and community work ITE programmes on the island of Ireland and is working with educators to further GCE in this area. ITE programmes, and Saolta now works with all eight ACE ITE providers. Community-level activity has also expanded: Saolta and partners delivered 8,210 workshops/events in 2024, almost tripling the 2,910 recorded in 2021.

“Webinars, workshops and trainings spearheaded by IDEA have made the GCE sector substantially more visible.”

“The SDG Advocate training is a wonderful capacity-building course and has made a significant contribution to the GCE sector for years.”

“Online courses delivered by Comhlámh have been valuable and enriching experiences for many educators and delivered in an accessible format.”

There is also evidence of growing professional networks and peer learning. National hubs such as Youth 2030’s Global Youth Work Learners’ Network and Global Village’s primary-school community provide forums to share learning, co-ordinate responses, swap resources and avoid duplication.

“Workshops, trainings and ongoing input with practitioner’s progress... One World Week model benefits both young people and practitioners.”

Many partners have noted that integrating GCE into educator training (both pre-service and in-service) has enhanced teaching quality. Yet, gaps in structured CPD and teacher readiness to address complex global issues (e.g., xenophobia, climate change) highlight a need for more targeted training and support. Overall, Objective 4 is advancing through a richer menu of CPD, stronger peer-learning structures and a growing library of SDG-aligned resources. To support progress, partners suggested subsidising substitute cover and travel so educators can attend CPD, which some partners are already doing to enable CPD participation. They also suggest expanding accredited and in-depth courses (QQI, Level 8/9) across formal and non-formal sectors and providing regional or online delivery to balance the rural–urban divide.

Objective 5: Strengthened public engagement and understanding of development co-operation, the work of Irish Aid and the SDGs.

Funded partners continue to expand public outreach—especially to young people—via school programmes such as the annual Our World Awards, youth-led campaigns and community events. In their submissions to the Peer Review, STAND, ECO-UNESCO and Development Perspectives report strong public engagement via festivals, awards and community outreach. MTR data also show that they reported steady growth in festivals, exhibitions and social-media initiatives that explain global issues and highlight Irish Aid’s role. STAND continues to deliver workshops on global development in the Irish Aid Centre with a wide reach across sectors, including schools, using a blended mix of in-person and online sessions, while programmes such as ActionAid’s “World View” campaign and STAND’s student festival sustain high levels of SDG awareness and Irish Aid visibility. As outlined in STAND’s submission to the Peer Review, STAND reached ~40,000 students across 19 campuses/14 HEIs in 2024 and co-created a North–South festival partnership with the African Leadership University (touring 17 Irish campuses plus a Kigali edition).

“World View social-media campaign helped analyse audience engagement on GBV and climate action.”

“Dóchas’s Global Solidarity Hub at the Ploughing Championships engaged people who might otherwise not encounter GCE.”

“Through events and the World View social-media campaign, ActionAid has effectively raised public awareness... visuals and videos on gender-based violence and climate action reached a wide audience.”

Most programmes brand themselves as Irish-Aid funded, and many invite Irish Aid staff to speak or share stands, reinforcing the connection.

“Teachers are reporting awareness of Irish Aid for the first time: I had no idea they were supporting this kind of work in our schools.”

Partners note that knowledge of the SDGs is now “rarely new” to post-primary students. Platforms such as Youth 2030, ECO-UNESCO’s Earth Gala and the STAND Festival present the Goals in accessible formats and encourage action.

“STAND Festival reached 20,000+ students; 89% of participants are taking informed action.”

Moreover, ECO-UNESCO reports in its submission to the peer review that the Young Environmentalist Awards⁷⁰ engaged 5,500+ young people in 271 SDG-aligned projects across 30 counties in 2024, including a dedicated “Local to Global” award.

New or expanded alliances—north-south links, diaspora networks and partnerships with local authorities—are broadening GCE’s reach across both formal and non-formal sectors, creating a more holistic approach. The MTR notes that closer alignment with national policies (anti-racism, climate action, etc.) would further cement GCE’s relevance to pressing domestic issues.

Across all five objectives, there are clear achievements of the strategy—higher SDG awareness in schools, stronger organisational networks and a richer CPD for educators. Yet partners also flagged challenges and gaps that, if tackled together, would raise the strategy’s impact. Despite existing outreach, contributors mentioned that some groups—like the Traveller community, refugees, ethnic minorities, or those in rural settings—remain underrepresented. There is a call for continued robust inclusivity measures (sometimes including language translations or digital access).

“Further outreach to refugees, ethnic minorities... resources in multiple languages and digital inclusivity.”

While collaboration is a positive factor, participants still see shortcomings—particularly in cross-department or cross-agency synergy.

“Need to strengthen links with Finance and Enterprise departments; their decisions affect the Global South.”

⁷⁰ ECO-UNESCO (2024) YEA Report 2024 <https://ecounesco.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/YEA-Report-2023-2024.pdf>

Educators need additional training opportunities—especially for addressing controversial or sensitive issues (e.g., xenophobia, racism, digital misinformation). Limited resources or schedules might prevent them from capitalising on GCE-based materials.

“Teacher confidence is low; lack of understanding between local actions and global problems.”

“Not enough CPD is offered to youth workers or volunteers... possible connection with Saolta could be welcomed.”

Several references mention challenges as regards GCE coverage in Northern Ireland (NI) due to different funding structures, governance, or lack of official strategies that hamper cross-border co-operation. Some feel that the potential of GCE could be amplified if funding streams were scaled to match the strategy’s ambitions.

“Budget for WWGS was not increased... pot spread over wider applicants; stifles cross-border collaboration.”

“Sub-sector hindered by repetitive cycles of multiple applications and reports; stable funding would reduce the burden.”

“Development educators need security of tenure beyond three-year funding cycles.”

“Very difficult to assess this [impact]... programmes are specific to certain groupings; funding remains short-term.”

In a related vein, some organisations mention staff retention challenges or limited institutional memory, preventing continuity of GCE delivery. A few note that volunteer-led teams cannot always sustain intensive GCE engagement without more consistent support.

“...substantial networking ... spearheaded by IDEA has made the sector more visible. Of occasional concern is what appears to be a fairly high turnover of GCE staff... high turnover can impact on the retention of institutional learning and memory.”

While some synergy is noted with local or national policies (e.g., ESD, climate action plans), others argue that GCE remains sidelined in the face of pressing national crises (housing, cost of living, racism) that also deserve attention under a global-lens approach.

“There are 14,000 homeless people in Ireland and ... 230,000 children in material deprivation, and racism is on the rise... these indicators show we are losing sight of poverty at a local level, and they need to be tackled by development educators.”

While the strategy references misinformation-fuelled radicalisation, participants find minimal

clarity on execution—who determines “misinformation,” and how GCE specifically addresses radicalisation. The rising far-right and anti-migrant sentiment in Ireland is repeatedly flagged as an urgent cross-cutting theme needing more explicit GCE guidance.

“It is unclear where in the Irish Aid strategy ... the aim to address ‘misinformation-fuelled radicalisation’. Who determines what is misinformation-fuelled? Unclear why this is a question.”

“A better coordination response from all sectors toward misinformation-fuelled radicalisation is needed.”

Partners welcome the improvements in evaluation and monitoring processes but stress the need for a consistent, sector-wide framework to show impact. Shared indicators and practical guidance—ideally co-ordinated by IDEA or Dóchas—would let organisations compare results and learn from each other. To this end, IDEA and its members have created a Theory of Impact for GCE to enable a sector-wide approach to monitoring and impact measurement.⁷¹

“A greater focus on Qualitative reporting to Irish Aid has meant increased case studies and stories available about the work and its impact.”

“ActionAid ... collects digital-engagement data and participant surveys ... Internally, we do self-assessment (IDEA Code of Good Practice).”

“Irish Aid could invest more support in qualitative tools ... foster collaboration between organisations so there are opportunities for co-designing impact assessments.”

“Long-term evaluation should be considered ... using institutions to identify action of change.”

5.5 Strategic Opportunities

Looking at the final year of the 2021–2025 GCE Strategy and the next cycle, this section outlines some of the current opportunities for Global Citizenship Education in Ireland in terms of future strategy based on findings from the peer review and the mid-term review, linked with current societal and contextual challenges that will be of key concern to education and learning.

This includes how a future strategy might relate to current international and societal challenges (war against Ukraine and in Gaza, radically decreased development aid by donors globally, racism and xenophobia in Ireland, refugee reception), the whole-of-island approach as well as some of the strategic themes that have emerged from the peer review research, interviews and submissions and from the MTR that offer Irish Aid and its partners some possibilities to consider for the future.

⁷¹ IDEA (2025) Theory of Impact for GCE <https://www.ideaonline.ie/theory-of-impact-for-gce>

5.5.1 Current International and Societal Challenges

Since 2021, the international and domestic context has shifted significantly. Wars against Ukraine and Gaza have reshaped public discourse on international solidarity and humanitarian action; multilateralism has come under strain; and some major donors have reduced or re-profiled ODA. At home, Ireland continues to navigate migration and refugee reception alongside heightened debate on immigration and diversity, all against the backdrop of housing and cost-of-living pressures. Climate urgency and rapid digital transformation further complicate the landscape. In this complex context, Irish Aid and its partners have to find a balance between responding to changes, countering negative or false narratives, and also leading the way with the narrative that corresponds to the Irish approach to international partnerships – a long-standing commitment to solidarity and empowerment, to mitigating poverty and suffering and to shining a spotlight on injustice, local and global. As such, GCE, hand in hand with communications, can be a vehicle for sustaining broad public engagement and deepening critical, dialogue-based learning that actively counters polarisation and misinformation. The tradition of connecting learning spaces and communities and linking outreach efforts to creative, community-based formats provide a solid foundation in the search for ways to engage society in dialogue, including beyond the usual suspects.

5.5.2 Whole-of-Island Approach

There appears to be a clear appetite—north and south— to continue ongoing efforts towards a structured, all-island approach that offers opportunities for joint working towards quality Global Citizenship Education across the whole island. This has become more important since funding for GCE across the United Kingdom from the FCDO has largely ceased, affecting civil society organisations and GCE work in Northern Ireland, but also presents a challenge for Irish Aid as it is limited in how much of this funding gap it can address.

There is clear understanding and respect for the policy contexts and jurisdictions in the different parts of Ireland on the part of Irish Aid and civil society organisations, as well as for the necessary dialogue in this regard between the actors in each jurisdiction. Clarity around mandates, strategy and resourcing will help actors across the island to better plan, as will building on existing links (such as the WorldWise Global Schools expansion to Northern Ireland and ongoing cross-border NGO collaborations). In their submissions to the Peer Review, CADA and partners call for a future strategy that resources cross-border, blended consortia in schools, youth and ACE with shared resources and peer learning; pilots aligned whole-institution models that can be used and badged on both sides of the border; establishing a small flexible fund for innovation and knowledge exchange with light reporting; and convening an annual all-island forum (policy and practice) to share evidence and align indicators.

Future-facing insights from submissions and the MTR partners emphasised inclusion (targeted support for Travellers and Roma, refugees, rural communities and learners with disabilities;

accessible, translated, low-bandwidth materials), suggesting that links with other government work in these regards may be useful. Partners also proposed a focus on evidence (a light shared MEL toolkit combining a small set of common outcomes with standard qualitative methods such as case studies and outcome harvesting, and, where feasible, longitudinal tracking), climate (moving from awareness to local action projects aligned with Just Transition priorities), digital resilience (practical guidance on mis-/disinformation and online harms embedded in classroom and youth-work practice), and capacity/funding (multi-annual grants where remit expands; travel/substitute cover to unlock CPD participation where not already available, including place-based learning offers and training on controversial issues).

These directions align with Ireland's strengths: a mature partnership model; sector quality standards (e.g., IDEA's Code of Good Practice); and a track record of working with and through expert partners in GCE. Building on this foundation, future grants could go further on co-production—encouraging co-designed modules and resources, Southern co-led research (building on models such as the Oxfam Ireland Global Education Movement) and reciprocal partnerships so global learning speaks with, rather than about, the majority world.

5.5.3 Responding to AI Opportunities and Challenges

Digital transformation is reshaping what, where, and how people learn. The OECD's trends analysis of education in 2025⁷² and 2026⁷³ highlight how AI, virtual reality, and adaptive learning systems are driving this shift, while raising fresh worries about data privacy, equity, and algorithmic bias. Deep-fake technology and echo-chamber algorithms are set to amplify mis-/disinformation (the World Economic Forum lists misinformation among the top global risks⁷⁴), and UNESCO warns that the digital divide⁷⁵ could widen inequality even further.

While some partners funded under the 2021–2025 GCE strategy are already working in this area (e.g. Comhlámh's updated E-TICK course that trains volunteers to spot bias before sharing content, or STAND's media-literacy workshops that help students analyse sources critically) bringing these initiatives together, linking educators, youth workers, civil-society groups, and journalists could provide clearer, sector-wide guidance on tackling mis-/disinformation and preventing radicalisation. There is also potential to make links with initiatives such as Media Literacy Ireland as well as government programmes such as Ireland Against Racism Fund and 117 projects to be funded under the 2025 Integration Fund.

⁷² OECD (2025) Trends Shaping Education 2025 https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/trends-shaping-education-2025_ee6587fd-en.html

⁷³ OECD (2026) Digital Education Outlook 2026 https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-digital-education-outlook-2026_062a7394-en.html

⁷⁴ World Economic Forum, "Global Risks Report," 2024, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024>

⁷⁵ UNESCO. "Global Education Monitoring Report 2023, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385723>

5.5.4 GCE and Climate Action

Climate urgency is an everyday reality, making climate education a necessity, a challenge and an opportunity. While the strategy rightly treats climate as a cross-cutting theme, events since 2021—record heatwaves, energy-price shocks, and loss-and-damage negotiations—have heightened public concern. COP28 underscored the need to move from climate awareness to action-focused curricula that enable learners to lead mitigation and adaptation projects in their own communities.⁷⁶

Momentum is already building: Youth 2030's Youth Climate Justice project, as well as Ireland's Climate Youth Delegate Programme are working to engage young people within non-formal education to take informed action; ActionAid's ActionTalks; the new Climate Action & Sustainable Development Leaving-Certificate subject and whole-school projects such as Green-Schools' Climate Action Programme are moving climate learning from the margins to the core. Transforming and scaling this classroom knowledge into local, learner-driven climate action—through initiatives that create real community impact and feed into national Just Transition priorities like clean energy and biodiversity, with clearer SDG linkages (especially SDG 4.7)—could inform the next strategy. However, across Europe, there is also a certain fatigue among the broader public as regards sustainability and climate, especially in light of other societal and international pressures and priorities. Balancing funding for necessary work in this area with a realistic estimation of where GCE projects can do the greatest amount of good given the spread of topics, themes and challenges will be crucial in formulating future strategy.

5.5.5 Co-producing Knowledge

Building on Ireland's strong track record of working in partnership and drawing on the expertise of GCE partners, there is potential for the next phase of the strategy to deepen co-production, with local and global partners and marginalised communities. This could both strengthen the already existing bottom-up approach and would be in line with European trends among some countries to increasingly weave together their GCE work at home and with partner countries. Power dynamics between what used to be considered the Global North and South are shifting, along with a recognition that efforts to decolonise education work are about more than content; it also encompasses who controls funding, research and narrative-setting.⁷⁷ Submissions to the peer review from various partners point to encouraging collaborations in this regard – such as ActionAid's Global Platform dialogues and the Centre for Global Education's growing roster of Southern contributors. Future grants could encourage co-designed modules and resources, Southern co-led research and reciprocal partnerships so global learning speaks with and from the majority world, while grounded in Irish reality.

⁷⁶ UNESCO, "UNESCO at COP28: Making education the long-term solution to the climate crisis," 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-cop28-making-education-long-term-solution-climate-crisis>

⁷⁷ UNESCO, "Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education," 2021. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707.locale=en>

5.5.6 Youth Leadership

Generation Z—and the rising Generation Alpha—expect to shape decisions, not just be consulted; their involvement must go beyond ticking a box⁷⁸. The 2024 EU Youth Survey⁷⁹ of 25,000 respondents (aged 16–30) shows that while 39% cast a ballot, nearly as many signed petitions (26%), volunteered for a cause (20%), posted political views online (19%), or boycotted/bought products for ethical reasons (19%). Instagram (47%) and TikTok (39%) have overtaken Facebook as their principal sources of political news, and youth-run campaigns such as together.eu helped boost under-25 turnout in the 2019 European elections by 50% versus 2014⁸⁰. AI is also increasingly becoming a news source for youth people. Europe’s younger generations are therefore politically awake, digitally driven, and action-oriented—not just to participate, but to lead. For Irish Aid, a stronger youth focus could pay dividends, building on initiatives such as the UN Youth Delegate Programme. In its submission to the Peer Review, Development Perspectives also proposes engaging sports bodies, while STAND highlights embedding GCE within student leadership structures.

⁷⁸ As youth-engagement specialist Bruno António notes <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/eesc-info/eesc-info-march-2025/articles/128372>

⁷⁹ European Commission (2024). Results of the 2024 EU Youth Survey. eu-for-children.europa.eu

⁸⁰ European Parliament (2019). The 2019 European elections: A pro-European and young electorate with clear expectations. pubaffairsbruxelles.eu

5.6 Peer Review Reflections

Record the Process

Irish Aid has extensive experience in developing strategies in GCE. In future strategy development, Irish Aid may wish to document the development process itself, in order to create an institutional memory. This would enable Irish Aid to show that the process itself is a learning process, aligned with GCE principles. Doing this both documents the process and allows for participation of the key stakeholders; placing importance on the process as well as the content of the strategy; strategy development itself has a pedagogical dimension and also serves to lend greater legitimacy to the strategy, especially when there is a record of the level of participation by the various stakeholders. It can also be an inspiration to other Irish public policy processes or even internationally, to countries that are initiating or revising their own strategies, to gain insight into the process of strategy development.

Strategic Dialogue

Irish Aid ensures ongoing and open communication with partners. The peer review notes the potential for creating regularised strategic dialogue among key public and civil society stakeholders. The Peer Review heard from a number of stakeholders and from Irish Aid that the dialogue between Irish Aid and its strategic partners and funded projects is primarily focused on implementation and practical questions (which are of course necessary). The peer review team heard strong support among Irish Aid's partners for convening a regular roundtable involving Irish Aid, IDEA, Dóchas, strategic partners and other implementers. This would allow for policy dialogue and strategic engagement but can also be very useful for exploring shared definitions, resourcing, indicators and M&E provisions, to name but a few. Such a space should be formalised/regularised and should not be dependent on external factors or individuals. It of course requires leadership and facilitation, guided by a strategic approach.

Strategic Joint Activities

Irish Aid could explore opportunities to collaborate strategically with public and civil society actors with a focus on further developing priorities that have been collectively identified as key to advancing work in the field of GCE. Collaborative and collective work also serve to create ownership, facilitate joint learning, political recognition and knowledge, amongst many other things. To this end, consideration could be given to the possibility of Irish Aid promoting activities to be carried out in collaboration with key partners deemed strategically important for advancing the GCE agenda, from the governmental and civil society sectors.

Focus or Breadth?

In the current climate, and with several possible directions to pursue, Irish Aid and its partners have important choices to make. During the international team visit, this was highlighted several times: should limited funds keep casting a wide net to reach further across the population to new

audiences, or be channelled into fewer, longer-term programmes that can deliver robust evidence of deeper impact? How Ireland answers that question will significantly shape the future direction of its GCE strategy.

Irish Aid is already reaching a significant amount of the Irish public through its Global Citizenship Education programmes and projects; the mid-term review of Irish Aid’s GCE strategy showed that an estimated 1.5 million people had been reached so far. Attempting to plug the gaps identified as part of the current strategy could be one way to go in terms of reaching further. However, there are also specific pressures in Irish society posing urgent challenges currently. The Peer Review notes the need for innovation and flexibility as regards how to address these, in partnership with CSOs and education actors, and notes the potential for partnerships with media and social media, employers and cultural institutions. Countries such as Belgium, Estonia, Luxembourg and Portugal have developed a mixed-basket approach that might offer inspiring examples.

Measuring Impact

Measuring impact and capturing effects in terms of shifts in attitudes and behaviours remains a key-challenge in Global Education across Europe, not just in Ireland (and not just in Global Education!). Irish Aid has accumulated large volumes of raw data over time, but the task ahead is to analyse and communicate this compelling and credible evidence of impact and results in a strategic way that feeds Irish Aid’s desired narrative around the vision for GCE in Ireland and demonstrates good use of public funds.

A future strategy should be clear regarding how monitoring and evaluation will be carried out and how impact and effects will be communicated. M&E should reflect GCE principles and practices in their methodologies (M&E should “be GCE”). It is as important to establish participatory and inclusive monitoring and evaluation processes, as it is to develop methodologies that highlight successes and the lessons that need to be learnt. Irish Aid has many years of expertise to build on in this regard, as well as a plethora of methodologies and frameworks.

Encouragingly, several partners have begun to develop approaches, for example the "pockets of practice" illustrated through narrative case studies—an element of the original PMF that is considered by some partners as worth reviving. In submissions to the Peer Review, IDEA and partners propose a shared light MEL toolkit – common outcomes plus qualitative methods (case studies, outcome harvesting, longitudinal tracking) – and using Worldview’s longitudinal data to evidence the impact of GCE and public engagement work. To advance this work, IDEA launched a sector-wide Theory of Impact in 2025 and is piloting a results-focused data collection tool with a cross-section of partners in 2026. The nine Irish Aid GCE strategic partners also commissioned a short “impact snapshot” to inform the next round of strategy discussions.

However, an even broader, deeper and more courageous position might be to question the very assumptions on which the notions of evidence, impact and “proving that it works” in Global Education are based.

Reaching around 1.5 million people⁸¹ out of a population of 5.46 million (2025 estimate from Ireland's Central Statistics Office) shows how well GE strategies have worked; maintaining and deepening national public engagement with global solidarity and sticking to the values Irish Aid espouses requires political and policymaker leadership. In the current climate, where the very values on which Irish Aid, and GCE, are based, are being called into question – perhaps it is time to realise that no amount of log-frame matrix, theory of change or impact measurement will satisfy those who do not share the values of international solidarity, human rights, equality and sustainability. Instead, the peer review suggests grounding GCE in the broader context of Ireland's role in the world, and the DFAT's Global Ireland Strategy, and considering how to evolve the narrative.

Perhaps a deeper narrative is required. A story which can draw on the rich history of Development Education and more recently Global Citizenship Education in Ireland. One which states clearly that to be Irish is to be concerned with global justice and solidarity; hence to be learned in what it is to be Irish, is also and at the same time to be globally educated.

⁸¹ Irish Aid (Department of Foreign Affairs), Making Progress on Global Citizenship Education across Ireland (Annual Reports 2021–2022, 2022–2023, 2023–2024, 2024–2025) <https://www.ireland.ie/en/irish-aid/what-we-do/global-citizenship-education/funding/>

Chapter 6

Observations and Recommendations

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This peer review process with Ireland is focused primarily on the strategic work of Irish Aid in Global Citizenship Education. The process is taking place at a moment in history when the geopolitical context is changing rapidly, previous assumptions are being challenged. Some of the core tenets of multilateralism, international solidarity, democracy, peace and human rights are under threat.

Against this backdrop, the peer review notes that there is clear understanding and vision among stakeholders and policymakers alike – that Irish history, Irish identity, and Irish “being in the world” calls for a mature and considered defence of the values on which Global Citizenship Education is based.

It is heartening to note in this context that Ireland will be deciding on the future direction of its Global Citizenship Education work, led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, at the time when Ireland takes up the Presidency of the Council of EU, with full awareness of what is at stake and of the challenges faced both domestically and internationally.

Observations

1. The peer review recognises the commitment of the actors involved in Global Citizenship Education – governmental and non-governmental – to building on strong traditions, reinforcing commitment, doubling down, amplifying, and communicating ever more clearly the core values of GCE in difficult times. There is a common recognition that while there can be no “business as usual”; there is also a clear commitment that the values of Global Education are required “now more than ever”.
2. The peer review acknowledges the necessary leadership role played by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Global Citizenship Education in Ireland. This is as it should be, because of DFAT’s policy mandate and expertise as regards global development themes and global social justice, and also because DFAT is the ministry who promulgates core Irish identity, culture and values, influenced by history and politics, both at home and vis-à-vis the world. This clarity and consensus among CSO stakeholders about the necessary role of DFAT provides a strong basis for future strategy leadership and development.
3. The peer review recognises the quality of the existing Global Citizenship Education Strategy, as well as the partnerships established. Irish Aid has chosen to work with a broad spectrum

of partners that include stakeholders across the formal, non-formal and informal education landscape. This presents excellent opportunities to further align efforts and enable inclusive, strategic dialogue. This inclusive approach, and the trust established between DFAT/Irish Aid and partners, has been and remains a key to success in the elaboration and implementation of the current strategy, and will undoubtedly be crucial in formulating future strategies and plans.

4. The peer review notes with admiration how the civil society actors working in GCE, organised through the infrastructure support and co-ordination provided by IDEA, are aligned in their vision and efforts towards ensuring that all people in Ireland have access to quality Global Citizenship Education. They demonstrate clear ownership of the Irish Aid GCE Strategy, and strong backing for continued strong partnership with, and leadership by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
5. Ireland recently celebrated 50 years as an actor in development co-operation, with a similarly long tradition of supporting first Development Education, and then Global Citizenship Education. The peer review recognises that these strong traditions and solid foundation have meant that Irish Aid and its partners have achieved significant successes, including in mainstreaming GCE in formal education, in youth work, adult and community education, and ensuring universal access to GCE in teacher education. This is exemplary from a European comparative perspective and serves as a real source of inspiration and of policy and strategy learning for other countries.
6. The peer review notes that the GCE sector in Ireland is both rich and diverse in terms of actors, large and small and that these actors are flexible and proactive in their approach to promoting their own work and the sector's work as a whole. The level of collaboration and co-operation, and a culture of partnership, led by IDEA, and supported by Irish Aid and by some of the larger NGOs, is remarkable and should be nurtured and capitalised on.
7. The complementarity between the National ESD Strategy and the GCE Strategy is broadly acknowledged, with the work in GCE particularly adding emphasis to the necessary dimensions of social and economic justice, of local and global analysis, of human rights and solidarity.
8. The peer review commends the progress made to mainstream GCE and ESD in formal education through partnership working across departments and sectors. Civil society actors, supported by Irish Aid, have had significant influence on formal education in Ireland; their strategic input in connection with education reforms have led to the incorporation of GCE in different ways across the primary and second-level curriculum and in teacher education.
9. The peer review acknowledges the process that led to the current and previous DFAT/Irish Aid GCE Strategy. The consultative nature and co-production of the strategy with CSOs resulted in a jointly owned strategy that is widely acknowledged, extensively used and held in high regard by all actors involved. Learning from this process – and other international strategy development processes in this and related fields – will undoubtedly contribute to future success.

10. DFAT/Irish Aid and GCE actors in Ireland have significant experience of different models of monitoring and evaluation, both in policy and practice terms. Ireland has been at the forefront of testing a variety of models of evaluation. Nonetheless, the peer review notes that a gap may have emerged in systematising learning from these different models and initiatives; and that an opportunity arises for more useful, less onerous, more appropriate models of evaluation. More detail regarding some of the issues involved and proposals for moving forward are contained in the body of the report.
11. The peer review acknowledges the significant funding commitment to GCE from DFAT/Irish Aid, reaching almost €10 million in recent years. The increases in spending in GE must be accurately acknowledged and are a very useful beacon to other countries. It is clear that these monies have been very fruitfully employed and their effect multiplied in manifold ways by a sectoral and strategic partnership approach.
12. The peer review acknowledges the availability of different financing modalities, including longer-term programme and shorter-term project funding, enabling organisations of different sizes and capacities to apply. The existence of multi-annual programme funding is particularly appreciated by partners, who emphasise the transformative change to their own planning and programming as a result.

Recommendations

1. The peer review notes that there is a continued urgent need for the work done under DFAT/Irish Aid leadership in Global Citizenship Education to continue. This work has had real effects on how teachers, educators and learners all over Ireland learn about global issues, solidarity and justice. This work not only offers knowledge and skills but also inspires critical debate and engages people to be active participants in their democratic society.
2. The next Global Citizenship Education strategy will be formulated in an utterly changed and continuously changing world. Standing up for core values in this context requires courage, as well as a commitment to ensuring that efforts are tailored and relevant to emerging challenges. The peer review recommends that DFAT/Irish Aid works with partners and the broader GCE community to build on success and to formulate an approach to how GCE can continue to focus on its core values in ways that respond to today's challenges – building resilience, deepening democracy and intercultural understanding, providing antidotes to mis- and disinformation etc.
3. The peer review notes the opportunities to expand the reach of GCE by linking a future GCE strategy to other governmental strategies that are currently being implemented or will be up for renewal in the coming years (e.g. Global Ireland, Diaspora, etc.). This could be extended, in line with the previous strategy aspirations, to consider how GCE values could feature in

relevant policies and strategies under the auspices of other government departments, to create broader synergies and mutuality, and, if desired, also paving the way towards an inter-ministerial, whole-of-government approach. One way to start this could be to identify and highlight how Irish Aid's work on GCE and its core values are already reflected in the policies, strategies and priorities of other departments.

4. The peer review recommends the deepening and institutionalisation of regular and structured dialogue between DFAT/Irish Aid and its partners in the first instance, and to also create spaces for engaging with the broader GCE sector. A regular space for strategic dialogue and exchange means Irish Aid and partners can stay informed of developments and formulate joint approaches as circumstances develop and change.
5. As seen with previous DE and GCE Strategies, Irish Aid's work in this area provides an overall framework and direction for GCE in Ireland. The peer review suggests that flexibility to respond to challenges as they arise will be essential in the future. This could entail combining long-term priorities with a flexible, shorter-term operational approach where challenges and drivers are identified through ongoing strategic dialogue.
6. The peer review recognises the potential for considering broader partnerships and alliances that connect education, public information and communications efforts to align with the core values and messages of GCE. This could include engagement with for example the audio-visual field, strategic use of digital platforms and social media, engaging with journalism schools and media outlets.
7. There is, around the 50th anniversary of Irish Aid's support for DE/GCE/GE, and during the Irish Presidency of the Council of the EU, an opportunity to draw on the way DFAT/Irish Aid uses its institutional memory and learning as regards GCE strategy development and implementation. The peer review recommends that Irish Aid works to preserve institutional memory in its work in GCE, and particularly as regarding its strategy work, in order to ensure that knowledge and learning is not lost. This kind of continuity could not only inform an emerging new strategy creation process, but the learning could also be reflected in the strategy itself as part of the narrative.
8. The peer review notes that there is an opportunity for Irish Aid and its partners in monitoring and evaluation. The review recommends that DFAT/Irish Aid, jointly with partners, undertake a reflection on how monitoring and evaluation processes can be made less onerous, and more relevant, useful and appropriate, and how data gained can be utilised to understand results and also, to define and communicate real and obvious success. In this regard DFAT/Irish Aid could benefit from the development of an additional, more operational document, adaptable to the evolving circumstances, to accompany a future strategy highlighting results, targets, milestones and other important criteria that facilitate the monitoring and evaluation process.

9. The peer review recommends building on the strengths of the existing funding modalities, including the commitment to multiannual funding and strategic partners and potential new priority sectors. There is also a need to give due consideration to the degree of uncertainty in the coming years that will necessarily lead to new priorities. By building flexibility into existing modalities, funding can both be applied towards the results Irish Aid wishes to see, and be responsive to emerging challenges.

10. DFAT/Irish Aid has played a leadership role in Global Education at the European level for some time, exemplified in its leadership of the process of creating a European Declaration on Global Education to 2050, the Dublin Declaration. The peer review recommends that future GCE strategy continues to align with the vision contained in the Dublin Declaration; and that Ireland continue to play a leadership role in GE at European level, including through GENE.

Annexes

ANNEX I *Peer Review Meetings*

Irish Aid/Core partner

1. Mr. Niall Tierney, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
2. Ms. Oonagh O'Connor, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
3. Ms. Emer Carney, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT

Reference group

1. Ms. Oonagh O'Connor, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
2. Ms. Emer Carney, Global Programmes Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
3. Ms. Keelin O'Sullivan, Civil Society Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
4. Mr. Frank McManus, Policy Unit, Irish Aid/DFAT
5. Ms. Leona deKhors, Department of Education and Youth
6. Ms. Leigh Brady, IDEA overarching sectoral representative
7. Mr. Aidan Clifford, IDEA Formal Education representative
8. Ms. Valerie Duffy, IDEA Non-Formal Education representative

Education Ministries and Agencies

1. Ms. Leona deKhors, Department of Education and Youth
2. Ms. Sandra Irwin-Gowran, Department of Further and Higher Education
3. Mr. Colin Lowry, Higher Education Authority
4. Mr. Mella Cusack, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
5. Mr. Derek Grant, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Civil Society Organisations

1. Ms. Patricia Acom, AkiDwA
2. Ms. Katie Martin, Afri
3. Mr. Séamus O'Gorman, Children in Crossfire and chair of CADA GCE Working Group
4. Ms. Dervla King, Comhlámh
5. Ms. Georgina Eastaugh, Concern WorldWide
6. Mr. Tony Daly, www.DevelopmentEducation.ie
7. Ms. Jenny Gannon, DICE
8. Ms. Gillian Ivory, Dóchas
9. Ms. Claudia Lynch, Dóchas
10. Ms. Mary Coogan, Global Village
11. Ms. Leigh Brady, IDEA
12. Mr. Ruairí McKiernan, IDEA
13. Mr. Nick Doran, Saolta
14. Ms. Nina Sachau, STAND
15. Ms. Katie Chapple, WorldWide Global Schools
16. Ms. Valerie Duffy, Youth 2030 (NYCI)
17. Ms. Joanne O'Flaherty, UBUNTU

ANNEX II *Summary of Submissions to the Peer Review*

Title of submission	Summary	Submitted by
CADA Submission to GENE: Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland — Guiding questions for IDEA and CSO partners	Introduces CADA NI (coalition of 21 organisations) and supports Irish Aid’s all-island GCE approach. Requests the next GCE strategy to deepen all-island support with specific attention to Northern Ireland’s context (no UK GCE strategy/ funding, research gaps, sectoral differences). Points to building on the Shared Island project (Dóchas/CADA/ IDEA), CADA’s NI policy work, and NI contributions such as peacebuilding and UK links.	CADA NI (Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies in Northern Ireland)
Shared Island, Shared World, Shared Future initiative — building cross-border GCE partnerships	Invitation to a six-session programme (four online, two in-person) to build cross-border GCE partnerships. Aims include frameworks for collaboration, shared approaches to implementation challenges, a common-ground declaration, dialogue outputs and recommendations. Delegates should be senior/decision-making and commit to all sessions; registration requested by 14 Apr 2025 via consultants (Eventbrite link).	Dóchas, CADA and IDEA
Youth 2030 Global Youth Work Programme	Whole-of-youth-sector programme (ROI and NI) engaging 97 organisations, 1,276 youth workers and ~800 young people directly (15,891 indirectly). Demonstrates systems impact (NSETS recognition; NUI Level 8 Certificate; sector guidelines/tools), growth in Irish Aid-funded organisations (3→11) and learners (1,599→10,947), working with youth and community work educators in six HEIs, and inclusive practice with Traveller and other minority groups.	National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) — Youth 2030
Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland — A response from WorldWise Global Schools	WWGS advances GCE in post-primary settings via the Global Passport framework (self-assessment with external audit) and documented case studies (e.g., Santa Sabina solidarity projects; Castletroy fair/ethical trade initiatives). Expanding into Northern Ireland; promotes coherence as an Irish Aid Strategic Partner; aligns with GCE Strategy 2021–2025 outcomes. Recommends next-strategy priorities on critical, inclusive, resilient GCE; notes phase funding supports planning, but NI expansion adds pressure; suggests pilot funds and larger collaboration incentives.	WorldWise Global Schools (WWGS)

<p>GENE Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland 2025 — IDEA submission</p>	<p>Overarching submission consolidating inputs from IDEA staff and members (incl. Irish Aid strategic partners) and draft Vision 2030. Calls for GCE as a bulwark to disinformation/polarisation, stronger Global South engagement, greater inclusivity and geographic spread, structured multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, whole-of-government co-ordination (incl. ESD–GCE alignment), and increased all-island/North funding. Recommends expanding GCE across sectors (primary–HE, ITE/CPD, youth/ACE), enhanced research and communications. Notes funding delays/reporting burdens and inflation pressures; supports multi-annual partnerships with more flexibility for innovation and depth work.</p>	<p>IDEA (Irish Development Education Association)</p>
<p>GENE Review — Submission by Development Perspectives</p>	<p>Highlights Saolta in adult/community education (EERA-noted), SDG Advocate Training with documented impact, innovative outreach via the SDG Roadshow, private-sector/community partnerships (EirGrid community forums with SDG-linked funding), and institutional embedding (DkIT integrating sustainability across all programmes). Inclusive projects with migrants/refugees (Amplifying Voices, Bridges, Momentum, Freedom Football). Urges stronger cross-government policy coherence; next strategy to tackle disinformation; proposes engaging sports bodies and strengthening impact research; values strategic partnerships but stresses delivery on commitments; calls to double the GCE budget.</p>	<p>Development Perspectives</p>
<p>Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland — DICE Project Responses</p>	<p>DICE highlights sector-wide embedding of GCE in Initial Teacher Education via Céim Standards, universal reach to primary teacher education, and CPD/communities of practice that deepen critical, anti-racist and inclusive pedagogy. Notes strong alignment with Irish Aid strategy and cross-agency collaboration, while urging inclusion of smaller CSO voices and more open spaces for critique/innovation. Priorities include safeguarding GCE in formal education, expanded CPD, media-literacy/AI-ethics and digital criticality; funding is stabilising (multi-annual) but calls for streamlined processes and dedicated evaluation/longitudinal research funding.</p>	<p>DICE Project</p>

Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland — ECO-UNESCO Submission	Youth-focused GCE/ESD programmes: Youth for Sustainable Development (after-school clubs, peer educators, Level 5 QQI), Youth Climate Justice Advocate (annual survey >1,000 youth, Earth Gala), Learning2Change (school workshops, student council and teacher training), and Young Environmentalist Awards (2024: 5,500+ youth, 271 projects, 30 counties; SDG-aligned). QQI-accredited courses (Levels 3–6) and educator training (200+ in 2024). Emphasises inclusion via Youthreach, DEIS, Traveller/migrant groups and green employability for IPAs. Calls for stronger policy coherence (ESD–GCE), focus on ecological sustainability and climate justice, expanded multi-annual strategic partnerships incl. cross-sectoral orgs, and more flexible, inflation-aware funding.	ECO-UNESCO
The Professional Formation of a Global Youth Worker — Mapping Global Youth Work in NSETS-endorsed HEIs	Mapping study of GYW across six NSETS-endorsed HEIs (ATU, DKIT, MU, TUD, UCC, UU) using interviews with lecturers. Finds programmes are structurally distinct, with GYW often embedded pedagogically (justice, equality, anti-racism, climate justice) even if not always explicitly named; recommends scaffolding GYW through placement prep and later-stage modules. Proposes NYCI–HEI actions: educator workshops and forums, agreed annual trainings, input before NSETS reviews, graduate impact research, and international mapping of GYW pedagogy.	National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) — Youth 2030 Global Youth Work Programme
Global Youth Work (GYW) Resources 2021–2025 (selected)	Compilation of Global Youth Work resources (2017–2025 with emphasis on 2021–2025): manuals/toolkits (e.g., From the Ground Up; Stop! Wait A Minute!; Navigating the Noise), online modules, interactive maps, podcasts, videos, conference reports and policy documents. Includes NYCI outputs alongside external publications (GENE, Bloomsbury, Youth Partnership) and links to NYCI channels and flagship programmes (UN Youth Delegates, One World Week, Climate Justice, Equality & Intercultural).	National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) — Youth 2030
About STAND — Higher Education GCE Strategic Partner (GENE Peer Review input)	Irish charity mobilising third-level students for global justice, sustainability and equality. In 2024 reached ~40,000 students across 19 campuses/14 HEIs via STAND Festival, Global Issues courses, Changemakers Academy (GENE-awarded 2024) and Ideas Collective. Works with AMLÉ (USI), BICS, University of Sanctuary, and 48+ partners; co-designed North–South festival with African Leadership University (touring 17 Irish campuses; Kigali edition). Embeds GCE in student leadership and since 2025 into teaching/learning (digital badges with the National Forum). Centres critical thinking (New Foundations with Dr Brigid Golden) and affective pedagogies (E+ DEFY). Calls for policy coherence ESD–GCE, cross-department forum, HEI mapping and research funding; emphasises inclusive participation and student governance input.	STAND (Suas Educational Development)

<p>Ubuntu Network Draft Strategic Priorities 2025–2030 — Background Document (June 2025)</p>	<p>Supports integration of GCE/ESD in post-primary ITE across 12 HEIs (2024/25 reach: ~3,653 student teachers, ~75 teacher educators, ~65 modules, ~30 programmes). Updates include curriculum projects/partnerships (9 projects, 2 partnerships, AoLs/EoPs), capacity-building events (Research Showcase '24, Assembly Day '25 on teaching controversial issues, 'Challenging Racial Bias' '25 with WWGS, Dialogue Day '25 on educator self-awareness), and multi-strand research (GCE conceptualisations; educator self-awareness CoP; ED-TED; social-justice systematic review; GCE in alternative settings). Lessons: shift to sustained partnerships; holistic curriculum embedding; stronger pedagogical framing for AoLs; iterative CPD; centrality of educator self-awareness; embed research; evolve outreach; funding risk. Priorities 2025–2030: institutional integration; deeper curriculum; transformative/reflective pedagogies; capacity-building; research & impact; outreach/advocacy; formalised partnerships; national/ international collaboration; policy & funding support.</p>	<p>Ubuntu Network</p>
<p>Worldview Public Engagement Research Project</p>	<p>Longitudinal study (since 2020) tracking Irish public attitudes to international development and ODA. Provides nationally representative evidence on awareness, support, motivations/barriers and audience segments to inform NGO, media and government engagement. Rationale: fill evidence gaps amid global and domestic 'permacrisis' (pandemic, Ukraine, Gaza, climate; cost-of-living, housing, inequality, far-right). Impact: equips sector to anticipate trends, counter misinformation, and protect civil society space.</p>	<p>Dóchas</p>

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The European Declaration on Global Education to 2050

The Dublin Declaration

A European Strategy Framework for Improving and Increasing Global Education in Europe to the Year 2050

Working towards the day when all people in Europe – in solidarity with peoples globally – will have access to quality Global Education.

Final version adopted 4 Nov 2022

Preamble

We, the participating delegations at the European Congress on Global Education, meeting in Dublin Castle on 3rd and 4th of November 2022, convened by GENE - Global Education Network Europe - and hosted by Ireland, with Luxembourg as co-chair, representing participating Member States, having consulted with a broad range of stakeholders from youth organisations, civil society, local and regional governments, academia and peers and colleagues from other regions; and in close co-operation with the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the OECD, UNECE, and UNESCO; set out our vision and commitments for Global Education to 2050.

Conscious of

- The range and complexity of crises and challenges facing people, other living beings and the planet.
- People's right to learn, to critically reflect on their place in the world, to respond and to act in solidarity, as global citizens with planetary responsibility.
- The important contribution of education – and Global Education in particular - to empowering people, individually and collectively, to learn and to contribute to changing the world.

Our Vision is of

- A world of greater social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, international understanding, respect for diversity, inclusion, and the realisation of all human rights for all peoples and a decent life for all, particularly the most vulnerable and excluded, locally and globally. Quality Global Education for all can play an important role in the realisation of such a world.

- A Europe where all people have access to quality Global Education, as a right; and in which there is a shared understanding of quality education, including Global Education, as a human right, a global public good and a transformative learning process.
- Education that promotes and values the perspectives and the knowledge of differing cultures, including diaspora communities and minorities, and makes the most of this richness to support inclusive responses to local and global challenges.
- A Europe where Global Education, life-long and life-wide, is adequately resourced and informed by critical dialogue with local and global partners.
- Greater critical public understanding of historical and geo-political relationships, including the legacies of colonialism, conflict, wars and oppression, and greater critical public engagement with global challenges and power dynamics.
- A shared perspective regarding the transversal, intersectional nature of Global Education which gathers a variety of related national and international definitions and concepts, all of which share a common core.⁸²
- Building and strengthening – country by country, region by region, community by community, and sector by sector – policies, strategies, support mechanisms and capacity-building platforms for the achievement of universal, life-long and life-wide access to quality Global Education.
- Involving and including all relevant stakeholders in dialogue, networking and cooperation around Global Education; including new publics, marginalised communities, and those less-engaged previously, in order to reach all people in Europe.
- Inspiring people, individually and collectively, to take action and get involved in social and environmental movements and organisations locally, nationally and globally in the fields related to Global Education.

The Definition: our understanding of Global Education

Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future.

Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education.⁸³

In this spirit, we declare our determination to further advance Global Education in Europe.

⁸² See Appendix 1 for further details of the renewed definition and umbrella term

⁸³ See Appendix 1 for details of the broad range of educational provision which includes a Global Education perspective

We Build on Existing International Agreements and Commitments

- The 2002 Maastricht Declaration on Global Education and other European commitments to learning for sustainable development, human rights, gender equity, peace and social justice, local and global, which recognise the importance of Global Education and public engagement.
- International commitments, global agendas and goals in regard to Education for Sustainable Development, Education for Global Citizenship, Human Rights Education, etc. including, inter alia, Agenda 2030, SDG 4 (including particularly target 4.7), and the UNESCO 1974 Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace, which recognise the role of Global Education as a necessary core to the learning of 21st century global citizens.⁸⁴

We recognise the growth and development of Global Education in Europe over 20 years

- Strong and clear results in Global Education since the Maastricht Declaration.
- Enhanced policy frameworks at national and European levels.
- The increased recognition and educational impetus that place Global Education at the heart of quality education; formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide.
- The increased acknowledgement of the need for a “universalist, rights-based approach to Global Education”, exemplified in national strategies and policies which are explicitly designed for all people in countries in Europe, in solidarity with peoples globally.
- Increased and improved whole-sector coordinated approaches in, inter alia, the formal education sectors within school curriculum reform, teacher education, student assessment, whole-school-approaches, school leadership and self-evaluation processes and school inspectorate training, early childhood education and care and in non-formal education across various sectors.
- Greater structured involvement of civil society sectors, including in consultation processes and in national and European strategy development, implementation, review, and re-design.
- Better coordination among specific stakeholder sectors in the field, particularly among local and regional authorities, youth organisations and Global Education-focused CSOs at national and international levels. We recognise the importance of youth engagement through youth organisations and platforms.
- Greater reflection on and more critical approaches to Global Education, with due attention to questions of historical legacy and global power dynamics, including the decolonisation of curricula.
- Strengthened research capacity in the field as an essential enabler of better, research-informed policymaking.
- The development, revision, and growth in aggregated totals of national funding levels and of European funding mechanisms, including instruments such as EU DEAR.

⁸⁴ With specific reference, inter alia, to agreements outlined in Appendix 3.

- Increased international networking and policy learning between policymakers, and greater quality assurance including, inter-alia, through GENE Roundtables and through the European GE Peer Review process.

We acknowledge the context, challenges and opportunities for Global Education in Europe and globally

Global Education in Europe to 2050 will be forged in the context of

- Changing planetary realities; geo-political alignments; multilateral, national, regional, and local political contexts.
- Increasingly complex and inter-related global and local challenges including, inter alia, climate change; loss of biodiversity; pollution; inequality; poverty; food, water, and energy insecurity; pandemics; wars and the threat of wars.
- Continuing threats to democracy, peace and security, international understanding, human rights and sustainability; these include inequality, intolerance, all forms of discrimination and human rights violations, as well as polarisation, misinformation, and manipulation of and through social media.
- The engagement of global and local peoples' movements in response to global challenges; coupled with growing recognition of the need for solidarity, in care for the planet and for a world of peace, understanding, equity and equality and human rights for all.
- An understanding of the need for Global Education at the heart of these movements, and for strengthening the role of civil society, in contexts of shrinking/closing civic space.
- The importance of valuing the perspectives and knowledge of all cultures, particularly indigenous cultures, to co-create just and sustainable solutions in the face of global challenges.
- Growing recognition of the need to ensure that all education – formal, non-formal, informal, life-long and life-wide, from early childhood education and care to adult education – should include learning for social justice, at local and global levels, as well as human rights, gender equality, diversity, sustainability, and peace.
- The potential for technology to play a central role in offering user-oriented and inclusive educational solutions, building global connectivity, and increasing solidarity, while also acknowledging the potential for technology and social media to divide people and undermine democracy. We also recognise the potential environmental impact of technology and the challenge of the digital divide.

We also recognise the importance of Global Education to

- Enable the acquisition of necessary learning, critical thinking, skills and competencies, attitudes, and values, to deal with complexity in an increasingly uncertain world; to the understanding and appreciation of the richness of our diverse heritage and of differing cultures, and to respond to crises and threats to peace.
- Empower us to deal with the existential challenge posed by the climate crisis, loss of biodi-

versity, growing inequality, persistent poverty, racism and xenophobia, lack of access to basic human rights, wars and the threat of wars.

- Empower people to take action for social, economic, and ecological transformation.
- Provide democratic, participatory learning processes that can promote global citizenship, sustainability, intercultural understanding, inclusion, a culture of peace and non-violence and gender equality in education and in society.
- Encourage public awareness and ensure public understanding of and critical engagement with local and global issues, recognising the relevance of these issues to their own lives and the well-being of society.
- Enhance policy coherence between Global Education and other policy fields such as foreign and development policy, environment, agriculture, trade, finance and investment, migration, justice and health.
- Respond to the growing educational impetus and the increasing necessity to place global and local justice, solidarity, and other issues dealt with by Global Education, at the heart of education system reform, curricula, and learning.
- Ensure an informed understanding of historical context, including the legacies of colonialism, conflict, wars and oppression, of global power dynamics, of geo-political and economic structures and relations.

We make the following commitments, based on our respective mandates

At national level, to

- Increase emphasis on Global Education within relevant national policy and strategy across government departments, including education policy, strategy and provision – formal, non-formal and informal and from early childhood through adult education; in foreign, international and development cooperation policy, partnership and cooperation programmes and in coherence with local and regional policies.
- Strive to develop or, where they already exist, strengthen, national, regional, local and sectoral strategies for increasing and improving Global Education, to achieve access to quality Global Education for all people.
- Enhance policy coherence in Global Education and related fields and to strengthen inter-ministerial co-operation and coordination in the development of national strategies, policies and initiatives in Global Education
- Support efforts to strengthen the work in this field of, inter alia, youth organisations, civil society organisations, adult education and community organisations, people's movements, local and regional governments, diaspora communities, peers and colleagues from other regions, and researchers, recognising their expertise in the field of Global Education.
- Develop adequate structures of support for educators in Global Education, in order to incrementally bridge the gap between the willingness to integrate Global Education, and the confidence, skills, competencies and support to do so.
- Support the development of appropriate standard-setting, quality assurance, monitoring

and evaluation mechanisms, based on models of good practice that are both relevant and appropriate to Global Education in particular sectors.

- Seek to ensure adequate, accessible and, where possible, predictable resourcing for Global Education commensurate with the ambitions of this Declaration.
- Support and where possible resource the further development of research in Global Education to enable research-informed policy.
- Seek to ensure the inclusion of and support for marginalised communities and groups in the process of Global Education.
- Support innovation in Global Education.
- Reach out to new sectors and publics, including the private sector.
- Provide support for international networking between policymakers, to ensure continuing improvement in Global Education policy and practice.

At European level, to

- Develop and strengthen a universal, rights-based approach to Global Education in Europe, in dialogue with peers and colleagues from other regions.
- Support continuing coordination between local, regional, national, pan-European and international levels to ensure support for policy dialogue and policy coherence in the field, in line also with ongoing work on United Nations agendas and education targets.
- Support sector-wide coordination of Global Education through networks at European level; enhancing and enabling networking between Global Education actors from civil society, youth and local and regional governments and partnerships with other sectors and different types of actors and organisations.
- Seek to ensure adequate and accessible funding for Global Education at pan-European level, coherent with national level funding and with this Declaration's ambitions.
- Advocate for Global Education as a cross-cutting and integrated priority within European Institutions including the Council of Europe, subsequent EU Presidencies, as well as in other international organisations.
- Continue to work with peers and colleagues from other regions of the world to engage in mutual learning and support regarding the development of regional structures for networking between policymakers, and other stakeholders, inter-regionally, and globally.
- Continue to strengthen the European Global Education Peer Review process, the State of Global Education in Europe, and other quality improvement mechanisms.
- To support the work of GENE, as an intergovernmental organisation devoted to networking policymakers in member states, for increased and improved Global Education in all countries in Europe.
- Develop a monitoring framework, with clear and manageable reporting mechanisms based on existing models and focused on key milestones leading up to 2050. (See Appendix 2).

Dublin Declaration Appendix 1: Renewing the Definition of Global Education

A Renewed Definition

Building on the 2002 Maastricht Declaration and informed by subsequent processes and emerging definitions and changing realities, the Dublin Declaration proposes the following definition:

Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future.

Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education.

Core Values, Principles and Dimensions of Global Education

Global Education includes certain core elements. These include:

- *Core values of global and local social justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, inclusion, human rights, the embracing of diversity, and international understanding.*
- *A focus on the interconnection between local and global dimensions of issues affecting people, other living beings and the planet; between generations; between cultures and between past, present and future.*
- *A common commitment to pedagogical practices that are inclusive, participatory, inspire hope, enable critical thinking, and do justice to the primacy of the learners; while building competences and skills for informed, self-reflective, meaningful action, individual and collective.*

Uniting for Coherence and Impact

This Declaration recognises the diversity of terms used according to national circumstances, and that the use of specific terms changes over time. It uses Global Education as an umbrella term to bring together related concepts and areas of policy and practice, to promote coherence, facilitate policy learning, avoid silo-isation and ensure greater combined effect.

Global Education encompasses formal, non-formal, informal education; life-long and life-wide and intergenerational learning. It is about people's realities, local, national and global, in a plane-

tary context. It involves critical thinking, learning to deal with complexity, democratic and participatory pedagogical practices. It encompasses a variety of ways of understanding how people learn. It includes historical consciousness, a critical analysis of present systems, and a vision of hope for the future of people and the planet. Currently aligned to the Global Goals and to specific commitments such as SDG4.7; Global Education also harnesses the power of broader, longer and deeper human aspirations for social justice, peace, equity and equality, sustainability, human rights and a decent life for all.

Global Education includes...

Global Education is an intersectional umbrella term which encompasses a variety of related terms that are used at national and international level, including, inter alia:

- Anti-Racist Education
- Development Education
- Diversity and Inclusion Education
- Education for Gender Equality
- Education for Global Citizenship and International Solidarity
- Education for Sustainable Development
- Global Citizenship Education
- Global Development Education
- Global Learning
- Global Youth Work
- Human Rights Education
- Intercultural Education
- Learning for Environmental Sustainability
- Peace Education

The global dimensions of

- Citizenship Education
- Civic and Moral Education
- Digital Citizenship Education

Dublin Declaration Appendix 2: Monitoring Progress

Follow-up to the Dublin Declaration will involve a monitoring and reporting mechanism that seeks to build on existing reporting and monitoring, balancing transparency and the need to monitor and celebrate progress annually and every five years, with the need to be realistic about reporting.

The following is proposed:

An annual national reporting process to report on progress vis-à-vis the Declaration; based on and taking account of existing processes of national reporting annually to peers (at GENE Roundtables). This would include:

- A focus on National Strategy and policy development (and review, evaluation, re-design, etc.) that will also be reported annually, and compiled on a pan-European basis.
- A focus on national funding mechanisms, data and changes to levels of funding, from ODA and from other sources, being shared at European level annually.
- A focus on developing inter-ministerial cooperation, on supporting stakeholder engagement, dialogue, and networking.

All three categories will inform the periodic State of Global Education in Europe report. Dialogue with other stakeholders, including at local and regional levels, and with colleagues from other regions may also act as mechanisms for critical dialogue and strengthening progress.

Progress towards the achievement of the aspirations of the new Declaration will also directly feed into the European GE Peer Review process, facilitated by GENE, with national reports using the Declaration to develop nationally relevant benchmarks. Where relevant and appropriate, national reports should also feed into OECD DAC Peer Reviews.⁸⁵

European conferences will also be used to report progress and, where necessary, review the Declaration, starting in 2027, and in principle, every five years.

These processes will, in keeping with good practice at national level, build space for political, policymaker, stakeholder and researcher engagement, reflection, dialogue and scenario-building; into each of these processes.

The GENE Secretariat will also ensure that this process of reporting is consistent with, and aligned towards, the re-invigorated UNESCO process of reporting towards the revised 1974 recommendation and other relevant international processes (EC, OECD, UNECE, CoE, IEA) and will seek to strengthen cooperation in this regard.

⁸⁵ Pillar I.3 of the (2021) OECD DAC Peer Review Methodology – approved by consensus by the OECD DAC – focuses in Section I.3 on “Global Education, awareness-raising and public support”. This focus, and the associated indicators, will be assessed in all DAC members. See here for the official document.

Dublin Declaration Appendix 3: Core Reference Documents

The Declaration on Global Education in Europe to 2050 is a European Strategy Framework for increasing and Improving Global Education. It builds on existing international and European agreements, including the following, while also seeking to be coherent with relevant emerging international processes.

- UNESCO (1974) [Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#)
- UN (1992) [Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development](#)
- UNECE (1998) [Aarhus Convention on the Right to Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters](#)
- EU Council (2001) [Development education and raising European public awareness of development cooperation](#)
- Council of Europe/GENE (2002) [The Maastricht Declaration on Global Education in Europe to 2015](#)
- UN (2002) [World Summit on Sustainable Development](#)
- UN (2004) [World Programme for Human Rights Education](#)
- UNECE (2005) [Regional Strategy for ESD for the UNECE region](#)
- Belgium DGDC & European Commission (2005) [European Conference on Public Awareness Raising and Development Education for North-South solidarity](#)
- Council of Europe (2010) [Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#)
- European Union (2010) [Council Conclusions on Education for Sustainable Development](#)
- GENE/EDUFI (2011) [The Espoo-Hanasaari Conclusions on Global Education in Curriculum Change](#)
- Council of Europe (2011) [Recommendation on Education for Global Interdependence and Solidarity](#)
- UN (2011) [United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training](#)
- UNECE (2011) [Learning for the Future: Competences in Education for Sustainable Development](#)
- GENE (2012) [The Hague Conclusions on Global Education to 2020](#)
- European Commission (2012) [Commission staff working document on Development Education and Awareness Raising \(DEAR\) in Europe](#)
- UN (2012) [Rio+20 The Future We Want, A/RES/66/288](#)
- Council of Europe (2013) [Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture](#)
- UNESCO (2013) [International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures \(2013-2022\)](#)
- GENE/EDUFI (2014) [The Espoo Finland 2014 Conclusions on the Education of Global Citizens](#)
- UNESCO (2014) [UNESCO Education Strategy 2014 – 2021](#)
- UN (2015) [Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- UN (2015) [Paris Agreement \(COP 21\)](#)
- UNESCO (2015) [Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development 2015-2019](#)
- UNESCO (2015) [Second UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education: Building Peaceful](#)

and Sustainable Societies

UNESCO (2016) [Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all](#)

European Union (2017) [European Consensus on Development \(see paragraph 122, page 54\)](#)

OECD (2017) [Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets: An Assessment of where OECD Countries Stand](#)

European Union (2018) [Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#)

European Union (2018) [Council Resolution 2018: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027, including the European Youth Goals](#)

OECD (2018) [The OECD PISA Global Competence Framework](#)

Council of Europe (2019) [Global Education Guidelines](#)

European Union (2019) [The European Green Deal](#)

Bridge 47 (2019) [Envision 4.7 Roadmap](#)

OECD (2019) [Conceptual Learning Framework: Transformative Competencies for 2030](#)

European Union (2020) [Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention Signposts for the Future](#)

European Union (2020) [Council Resolution on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda](#)

European Union (2020) [Council Conclusions on Youth in External Actions](#)

UNESCO (2020) [Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap](#)

UNESCO (2020) [Extraordinary Session of the Global Education Meeting, Education post-COVID-19: 2020 Global Education Meeting Declaration](#)

GENE (2020/2021) [CODEV Deliberations on Importance of GE/DEAR](#)

European Union (2021) [Council Resolution on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training towards the European Education Area and Beyond \(2021-2030\)](#)

European Union (2021) [Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation \(NDICI\) Instrument – Global Europe \(Article 8 paragraph 7, p.23; and Annex III, Section 2, paragraph 3 \(a\) and \(b\), p.65\)](#)

OECD (201) [The Updated Youth Action Plan: Building Blocks for Future Action](#)

UN (2021) [The Glasgow Climate Pact](#)

UNESCO (2021) [Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development](#)

UNESCO (2021) [Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education](#)

European Union (2022) [GreenComp: The European Sustainability Competence Framework](#)

European Union (2022) [Council Conclusions on the transformative role of education for sustainable development and global citizenship as an instrumental tool for the achievement of the sustainable development goals \(SDGs\)](#)

UNESCO (2022) [Marrakech Framework for Action on adult learning and education](#)

European Union (2022) [Council Recommendation on Learning for a Green Transition](#)

European Union (2022) [Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Pathways to School Success \(COM/2022/316 final\)](#)

UNESCO (2022) [Vision Statement of the Secretary-General on Transforming Education](#)
UNESCO (2022) [Revised Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms \('1974 Recommendation'\)](#)
UNECE (2022) [Draft Ministerial Declaration of the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference](#)

This repository of agreements will be reviewed and amended periodically.

ANNEX V *Contributions*

International Peers

Luxembourg

Ms. Virginie Gilbert, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Portugal

Mr. Sérgio Guimarães, Camões, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

National Researcher

Dr. Hadjer Taibi

GENE Board and Peer Review Secretariat

Mr. Liam Wegimont, Executive Director

Ms. Jo McAuley, Head of Peer Review and Policy Research

Editors

Ms. Jo McAuley

Mr. Liam Wegimont

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The European Global Education Peer Review Process

The European Global Education Peer Review Process is facilitated by GENE - Global Education Network Europe. It grew out of the Maastricht Declaration on Global Education in 2002 and was reaffirmed in the Dublin Declaration in 2022. The process serves to highlight good practice and offer a critical review of Global Education policy and provision in each country. For more details, please visit www.gene.eu/peer-review

The Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland

This National Report contains the findings from the Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland that took place during 2025. It focuses on Irish Aid's strategic work in Global Citizenship Education and includes observations and recommendations intended to assist Irish Aid and Irish Global Education actors to further improve and increase provision in the country. It also provides case studies of good practice.



Global Education Network Europe (GENE) is the network of ministries, agencies and institutions with national responsibility for Global Education. GENE supports networking, peer learning, policy research, national strategy development and quality enhancement in the field of Global Education. GENE works to increase and improve Global Education towards the day when all people in Europe - in solidarity with people globally - will have access to quality Global Education.

For more information, please visit www.gene.eu



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