GENE Peer Review of Global Education in Ireland 2025

Submitted by IDEA – July 2025

This overarching written submission collects the views and inputs of [IDEA](#) staff and several IDEA members, including the eight other Irish Aid strategic partners. It also integrates excerpts of the draft IDEA Vision 2030 document, which is a strategic vision and roadmap for GCE on the island of Ireland for the coming five years. Additional information and clarifications are available upon request.

Contents

List of acronyms/initialisms

ACE - adult and community education

ALU - African Leadership University

CPD - Continuous Professional Development

CSO - civil society organisation

DEIS - Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools

ESD - education for sustainable development

GCE - global citizenship education

GYW - global youth work

HEI - higher education institution

ITE - initial teacher education

NCAD - National College of Art and Design

PPN - Public Participation Network

QQI – Quality and Qualifications Ireland

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

SPHE - Social Personal Health Education

TY - Transition Year

WWGS - WorldWise Global Schools

Executive Summary

As the national network for development education(DE)/global citizenship education (GCE), representing over 100 members, [IDEA](#) welcomes the opportunity to make a written submission to the 2025 GENE Peer Review of Ireland.

It comes at a time when Ireland is recognised internationally for its strong leadership, progressive policy, and sustained funding in the areas of international development, humanitarian aid, and global citizenship education (GCE).

Between 2021 and 2024, Irish Aid invested €33.6 million in programmes and projects aiming at educating over 1.2 million people[1] on this island to become informed and active global citizens. This investment has achieved solid foundations in embedding GCE across formal, non-formal and informal education settings and within policy, structures, curricula and teacher education.

Now at a time of immense turbulence and intensified global and local challenges, those foundations must be protected, built upon and expanded. The need for Ireland to continue and increase investment towards a society of active global citizens has never been greater.

Looking to future strategy development, IDEA suggests several key priorities. These include a focus on using GCE as a bulwark to disinformation and polarisation, enhanced engagement with the Global South and greater efforts to increase the diversity of learners and inclusivity of GCE. This is in addition to structured periodic multistakeholder policy dialogue with civil society partners and other relevant government departments, increased funding for GCE programmes and projects north of the border as part of an all-island approach and strengthened coordination between government departments on the relationship between ESD and GCE.

These key priorities are recommended in tandem with a consolidation of support for further embedding GCE into further education and training, local authorities, curricula, and higher education strategies. Furthermore, it is recommended to expand the provision of GCE in primary and second level schooling, in initial teacher education, in continuous professional development for educators, to higher level students and in youth and ACE settings. This can be achieved via strengthening existing strategic partnerships and other multi-annual funding partnerships. Another key priority would be to ensure a better geographical spread of GCE opportunities for learners in formal, non-formal and informal settings and in mainstream and alternative schools.

IDEA also believes that a whole-of-government approach to GCE is imperative to improve policy coherence and strategy implementation. One proposal could be the establishment of a national

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[1] Irish Aid GCE Strategy Mid Term Review report, May 2025.

multistakeholder forum to bring together relevant departments, agencies, and education stakeholders. This forum could support alignment of strategies, clarify roles, and ensure GCE is recognised and integrated as a complementary and critical dimension of Ireland's broader sustainability and global education agenda.

An emphasis on advancing GCE research on impact and on other questions should be another priority, as well as developing an effective multistakeholder promotion and communications strategy (including digital media). This strategy could increase the visibility of and demand for GCE from teachers, educators and learners as well as benefit GCE policy and public discourse.

Looking at the implementation of the current Irish Aid GCE strategy, the work by IDEA members aligns very well with the objectives of the strategy, and within the IDEA network, there is a common vision and strong coherence of policy positions and approaches. This is exemplified by our strategic vision and roadmap document [Vision 2025](#) and its successor Vision 2030, which is currently under development and will be launched in Autumn 2025. The section on Future Strategy Development of this submission includes the provisional top priorities for the coming five years towards our vision.

However, there are areas where better coordination between CSOs, social sectors and government departments could enhance coherence. Frequent structured multistakeholder policy dialogue on GCE and more proactive partnership and collaboration between Government Departments would be welcome. Local Authorities could and should do far more to support GCE within their own spheres of influence.

In terms of making a difference, this submission provides many examples of Irish GCE initiatives that involve great practice, strategy and approaches that other countries might learn from, as well as examples of significantly increased reach and quality. GCE in Ireland has become more inclusive in recent years, and several examples are provided by several IDEA members of projects with marginalised or underrepresented groups (migrants, youth, Traveller community, Roma community).

In terms of funding available for the current strategy, we acknowledge and value the increase in funding from 2021 to 2023. While it has supported valuable initiatives, the length of time required from project application to receiving the grant and high reporting burdens can restrict long-term planning and sustainability. Innovations like accompaniment or depth education require long-term, relational approaches which are harder to sustain under current models. Furthermore, the multi annual strategic partnerships are welcome and have enabled coherence and some innovation but amounts indicated and agreed upon need to be delivered

if we are to have the desired impact at a sectoral level. In addition, the amounts maintained for 2024 and 2025 did not account for inflation and rising operational costs.

In conclusion, Ireland's Global Citizenship Education sector stands at a vital juncture. The achievements to date are significant - rooted in collaboration, strategic vision, and shared values - but they must not be taken for granted. As we face into an era of intensified global challenges, IDEA and its members reaffirm our deep commitment to working in partnership with Irish Aid, government departments, civil society, and international networks to protect, deepen, and expand GCE as a cornerstone of Ireland's contribution to a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. We welcome the GENE Peer Review as an important opportunity to reflect, connect, and collectively strengthen our impact in the years ahead.

Making a difference

The role of IDEA in promoting, increasing and improving GE in Ireland

- [IDEA](#) plays a vital **convening and support role** in promoting Global Citizenship Education (GCE) by fostering collaboration across CSOs, amplifying effective practices, driving increased quality of GCE, influencing policy, advocating for policy alignment, and supporting professional development. It acts as a unifying voice, promotes coherence, and provides opportunities for shared learning and strategic development.

- By **cultivating community**, IDEA **creates spaces for dialogue** between organisations and practitioners in the sector to actively engage in making GCE more accessible, impactful, and structurally embedded across the Irish education landscape.

- IDEA creates spaces for members to come together to discuss thematic issues within GCE from a policy and programmatic perspective. This is done via the **IDEA working groups: Formal Education** Working Group, **Adult and Community Education** Working Group, **Quality and Impact** Working Group and the **Development Education on Palestine** Working Group. These working groups are member-led spaces, convened by members.

- IDEA helps to embed GCE, builds capacity, fosters collaboration and **ensures quality standards in the sector** through its in-person and online engagement with members of the [IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education (CoGP)](#). Fifty-four IDEA members (70% of organisational members) are signatories of the CoGP, which offers members an opportunity to reflect on and self-assess their GCE work according to a set of 12 principles and 27 indicators, and set goals to improve for the future.

- IDEA delivers **funding clinics** for applications for Irish Aid funding which some members build on, e.g. Youth 2030 builds on these clinics to support youth organisation applications.

The effects of Irish GCE initiatives - examples of great practice, strategy, initiatives that other countries might learn from

- **Céim Standards for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) now includes GCE** - this means that all students completing ITE will engage with GCE topics and methodologies throughout their education. All courses are now updated to include this, and modules are being redeveloped with these standards in mind. Aligning with national curriculum reform (e.g. Aistear, Social Personal Health Education), DICE ensures that GCE is not an add-on, but integrated into pedagogy, planning, and critical reflection within ITE.

- In ITE, DICE-supported **modules** have focused on **critical literacy, social justice, and sustainable development, influencing 3,000+ pre-service teachers annually**.

- DICE-funded workshops and seminars helped staff explore critical pedagogies, anti-racism education, and participatory learning methods. **Continuous professional development (CPD) and Communities of Practice** for ITE staff have **deepened the pedagogical confidence of lecturers to teach and model GCE**.

- DICE's **collaborative model—working with multiple colleges under one framework**—is unique and scalable and could be replicated in other countries. It ensures collective impact, shared focus and collaborative learning.

- Comhlámh's **Code of Good Practice for Volunteer Sending Agencies** and associated compliance process: fully revised version launched in 2024, which is informed throughout by DE/GCE approaches and places emphasis on depth approaches to values-led volunteering. The Code engages 25 organisations who support approx. 1,000 people every year, through involvement in international volunteering. Supported by Irish Aid, the Code assists the international volunteering community to reaffirm a commitment to social justice, ecological sustainability, respect, integrity and solidarity and support the volunteers to develop mutually supportive relationships that recognise the interconnectedness and interdependence of people and planet.

- Ireland's first **National Volunteering Strategy** (2021-2025) includes a specific commitment (Objective 4) to promoting **ethical and skills-based international volunteering** to deliver results for beneficiaries and to enhance global citizenship in Ireland. It states that a "global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands our rapidly changing, interdependent

and unequal world - and their place in it. They take an active role in their community, and work with others to make the world more equal, fair and sustainable in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals." There is a cross-sectoral subcommittee to support this commitment, which includes the promotion of Comhlámh's Code of Good of Practice for volunteer-sending agencies.

- As part of a series of Erasmus+ programmes, Comhlámh has worked in recent years to **strengthen organisations' capacity to mainstream GCE internally**. This includes a focus on psychosocial support/resilience (the Working for a Better World project); ethical communications (two iterations of the ETICK project), and depth education approaches (the DEFY project, led by STAND). All projects have produced GCE courses and resources that continue to be used by a wide range of practitioners and organisations to inform their practice. This includes audiences from the national and international volunteering sectors, migrant solidarity groups, third level institutions, and formal and non-formal educators.

- **Case studies** where schools are highlighted for the work they do with support from WWGS. School 1: Acting in Solidarity, School 2: Unlearning and Reconstructing.

- Global Village **Needs Analysis** **research** highlighted perspectives and gaps around GCE support for primary teachers - **supporting an evidence-based approach**. This research has been built upon in the current phase of the programme, ensuring that decisions made on a strategic level are teacher informed, and research centred.

- Global Village GCE and **outdoor learning workshops** are creative and innovative ways of bringing GCE into popular education approaches that cut across different curriculum areas.

- Global Village provides **an accredited summer course** with inputs from various GCE stakeholders, showcasing the GCE programmes available to schools across Ireland. This model of collaboration provides greater networking opportunities for GCE Stakeholders while also avoiding duplication within the sector.

- The **SDG Advocate Training** is an example of good practice for those involved in adult and community education (ACE). The "Stories of Action" document that is produced annually points to the impact that this training leads to - **Stories of Action**.

- Saolta **2nd Mapping of GCE in the adult and community education sector** report.

- Having a strategic focus on ACE is unique across Europe (Saolta EERA Presentation 2022).

- STAND, an Irish Aid strategic partner for GCE in higher education (non-formal engagement), **embeds GCE principles into national and campus-level student leadership structures** via a strategic partnership with **Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ - previously called the Union of Students in Ireland**). AMLÉ represents over 360,000 students across the island of Ireland. Through GCE training, policy engagement, and national platforms like the Student Achievement Awards, STAND equips student leaders to integrate global justice into their advocacy and decision-making. Since 2024, STAND has extended this impact through the **Board of Irish College Societies (BICS), reaching 800+ societies across 11 higher education institutions (HEIs).** Initiatives include the Global Solidarity Award, a GCE digital badge for all society leaders, and society-level training, embedding GCE in diverse student-led spaces and cultivating a new generation of globally aware leaders.

- **STAND Changemakers Academy** - Between 2002 and 2020, STAND ran an international volunteer programme that trained over 1,200 student volunteers to work with local partners in Zambia, Kenya and India. During the Covid pandemic, this programme was stopped and STAND engaged in a deep consultative process to assess the place of this programme in a changed world (see [report](#)). As a result, this programme was replaced in 2023 with the [STAND Changemakers Academy](#). This is a solidarity-based leadership programme that responds to the needs of a new generation (desire for connection, unification, exploration and mutual learning in the face of deepening global fractures) and harnesses the rich diversity that has developed across campuses in the past 20 years. The first iteration launched in September 2023, bringing together students from different countries and backgrounds to learn together for five months and build a connected global community of leaders. It was accoladed with a **GENE award in 2024**. See the [video](#) showcasing extracts of participant speeches and some [impact case studies](#).

- STAND develops **manuals and toolkits for HEI stakeholders to mainstream GCE**, based on the DEFY Erasmus+ programme, which focuses on **depth education** approaches. STAND is also working with Dr Brighid Golden from Mary Immaculate College on a research project that brings critical thinking to the core of GCE. This aims at informing the practice of educators, in particular HEI staff and student leadership. From both these projects, STAND has deepened its own **critical global education framework** and has mainstreamed this approach across programmes. This is fit for sharing and scaling to HEI staff training.

- The **[NUI Certificate Global Youth Work and Development Education](#)** is a Level 8, Special Purpose award delivered by the National Youth Council of Ireland in partnership with Maynooth University. Aimed at those working in the youth sector, this programme

develops students' knowledge, skills, and competence in global youth work (GYW) and development education practice in youth settings.

- **STAND's strategic Global North–South Partnership with the African Leadership University (ALU):** In 2023, STAND initiated a transformative partnership with the African Leadership University (ALU) in Kigali, Rwanda, to co-create the 2024 STAND Student Festival exhibition. This collaboration exemplifies an **equitable Global North–South partnership, centred on student leadership, co-creation, and mutual learning.** The process engaged students from across Ireland and the African continent in a shared creative journey. Through a joint nomination and selection process - involving ALU's regional hubs and STAND's Irish networks - inspiring youth-led projects advancing global justice were identified and curated for exhibition. The initiative was grounded in reciprocal governance, with decisions co-led by ALU and STAND student committees. A total of 34 higher education students took leading roles in shaping the exhibition content — including research, interviews, writing, photography, and design - supported by staff from both institutions. Featured stories spanned key global justice issues, from food security and education access in South Sudan, to climate action and anti-racism advocacy in Ireland, and waste reduction in Nigeria. The exhibition launched at the University of Galway in September 2024 and toured 17 Irish campuses, reaching an estimated 20,000 students. In October 2024, the Kigali edition was hosted by ALU in its outdoor 'Global Village', featuring two days of vibrant student-led programming including panels, performances, and networking events. This initiative demonstrates the strategic value of sustained, equitable student partnerships between Global North and South institutions in advancing GCE, fostering mutual understanding and student-led responses to shared global challenges.

- Ubuntu Network Strategy 2022-2027: Examples of good practice include: Artefacts of Learning (Creative Notebooks, NCAD; Curriculum Review; Padlet Resources for GCE/ESD in STEM); Media Bites (Ubuntu Voices: Exploring Possible Futures for GCE); Development of strategic Thematic Areas (Digital Technology and GCE; Teaching Emotive and Controversial Issues; Educator Self-Awareness and Critical Reflection). Ubuntu projects and partnerships have developed **digital resources like Storymaps and Virtual Learning Hubs**; Integration of the Global Teacher Award across several post-primary ITE programmes; Reflective exhibitions, teaching handbooks, and Communities of Practice. Notably, NCAD's Change Lab, UCC's A Teacher's Handbook on Global Citizenship Education in the Post-Primary Classroom and ATU's Safe Space Café and climate events illustrate innovative practice and social relevance. Read the Ubuntu Network's **impact Case Studies.**

- Adopting a holistic youth sector approach, Youth 2030 is working with the 6 HEIs on the island of Ireland through their **All-Ireland Youth Work Educators Forum.** These HEIs have responsibility for the education of youth and community workers. Youth 2030 undertook a mapping of the curriculum in each HEI and got recognition for GYW and GCE in the new **[Criteria and Procedures for the Professional Endorsement of Higher Education Programmes of Study in Youth Wor](#)**k (2021).

- Youth 2030 created a **module designed to develop the capacity of youth workers to bring a GYW dimension to their work within their own specific contexts.** It is online and free to download: [Module 7 - Global Youth Work - YouthWorkAndYou.org](#)

- **[Good Practice Guidelines](#) for the Youth sector and GYW Self-Assessment Tool** were developed in 2024: They include case studies from Irish partner youth organisations.

- **[Starting Out](#)** is a set of resources to help those in youth work organisations who are responsible for delivering **induction and follow up training to volunteers** in their service. This training framework provides content for volunteer training modules/components, including a **focus on GYW and climate justice**, with an emphasis on learning outcomes rather than standardised or prescriptive training content. This enables youth work organisations to be flexible in the design and delivery of their volunteer training programmes. The framework also supports youth work organisations to address the core principles in the National Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Groups.

- The Youth 2030 [Global Youth Work Learner's Network](#) holds online sessions for youth sector collaborators in Ireland and in the global south to enhance youth worker's knowledge and participation in issues affecting Ireland and the world.

- The work of the Youth 2030 [Young People's Committee](#) aims to enhance young people's knowledge, understanding, critical thinking, and participation in global justice issues affecting Ireland and the world. The group can review and advise on the relevant work of Youth 2030 and to lead projects based on global justice issues that matter to them.

- Youth 2030 funds small initiatives in community settings around Ireland as part of One World Week (Global Education Week in Europe): [2025 One World Week Seed Fund.](#)

- The Youth 2030 [Youth Climate Justice Programme](#) works collaboratively with youth and development organisations to increase the focus on climate justice in the youth sector

- Creation of a map that documents [Global Youth Work & SDGs in the Youth Sector](#).

- Working in partnership with Irish Aid and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to manage Ireland's [UN Youth Delegate Programme](#) which celebrates 10 years in 2025.

- NYCI were members of a European-wide **Youth Task Force** including the European Youth Forum, who informed and shaped the groundbreaking policy and succeeded in achieving a new [Council of Europe Recommendation on Young People and Climate Action](#) including a focus on youth work and GYW/GCE. This is the first international text on the topic.

- Creation of supporting [educational resources](#) for the youth sector, which are often used alongside [Global Youth Work Training](#).

- Saolta created a **QQI compliant level 4 module on Migration for Further Education and Training and community education** (to be validated). It is based on andragogical approaches that integrate values-based critical perspectives on issues surrounding migration.

- Saolta created a **QQI compliant resource on communications for GCE** which focuses on **critical information literacy** and the need to incorporate global perspectives into discourse comprehension.

- Saolta developed a **set of guidelines for creating GCE educational partnerships and collaborations between Global South and Global North ACE organisations.** These are based on Saolta's current collaboration and 2-year Advanced GCE exchange programme with the **Development Education Network Liberia**. This programme embeds GCE values-based approaches through experiential, participatory, and transformative learning: Experiencing and exploring cultural values-based approaches to education by participating, firsthand, in the methods and approaches used and learning to activate those perspectives in creating transformational educational experiences.

- **Learner-led thematic Communities of Practice** (CoP) have been established in ACE settings by Saolta. These CoPs are built on themes that participants have the greatest imperative to learn more about, such as Equality and Diversity, and Climate Justice.

- The following good practice examples contribute considerably to **principle 6 of the IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education, focuses on the creation, quality and impact of 'knowledge products'**, aligning with Irish Aid's GCE Strategy and working strategically with subject associations, university lecturers and the GCE strategic partners working across the sector:

- ○ [developmenteducation.ie](#) maintains a **curated digital repository for DE, GCE and ESD** resources and developed innovative and relevant content. The resources library is the largest open digital repository of DE/GCE resources in Ireland.

- ○ Following public consultation, [developmenteducation.ie](#) updated its **Guidelines for Producing Development Education and Global Citizenship Education Resources** (2nd Edition), which builds on key frameworks such as the SDGs and critical education tools such as the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures initiative and Africa No Filter. The guidelines include checklists, tips for ethical storytelling and support the skills, awareness and confidence of resource writing teams across all education sectors in Ireland, from formal to non-formal.

- ○ **Periodic audits of DE/GCE resources** every 4 years that are produced as key baselines for educators and resource producers, and the 'guidelines for producing DE/GCE resources' support high quality and impact-driven resource production in Ireland (for example the 2017-2020 audit and the 2021-2024 audit).

- ● 'Cluster work' streams by groups of members in the [developmenteducation.ie](#) consortium **responding to the findings/gaps identified in the resource 'audits'** or current global issues through knowledge product based projects such as the **fact checking project** (with involvement from the National Adult Literacy Agency) and an annual World Food Day in conjunction with Scoilnet.

- ● The [Irish Global Solidarity in 100 Objects exhibition](#), led by [developmenteducation.ie](#), stands out as an impactful area of work as an in-person and online exhibition, a podcast and education materials, making use of the exhibition to sustain its onward educational use in different contexts. With over 700 people visiting the exhibition, it was featured on RTÉ Radio 1, the Irish Independent, thejournal.ie, the RTÉ News website and more, the project introduced 100 objects that connected to actions, campaigns and activities in Ireland related to GCE and global solidarity across five decades in Ireland.

- ● ECO-UNESCO's Youth Climate Justice Advocate programme works with young people and youth organisations to develop knowledge and skills in young people around climate justice. ECO-UNESCO co-leads this programme with organisations including Feachtas (Irish language youth organisation), No Name Club and Poppintree Youth Service. It supports them to act locally and culminates each year in an Earth Gala which brings together young people to highlight their work to policy makers and decision makers. Each year, the programme surveys over 1,000 young people from across Ireland via a [Youth Climate Voices Survey](#), to hear their views on climate issues.

- Concern's **TY (Transition Year) Academy programme** brings teens together for a weeklong work experience programme that also serves as a global citizenship education programme. They look at some of the big challenges that Concern deals with – hunger, conflict, gender equality, poverty - and explore root issues, solutions, and the importance of adopting an approach that emphasises solidarity, responsibility and positive change. Concern's **Project Us summer academy** brings **third level students** together to explore global issues, investigate root causes, and develop their campaigning skills.

- The **Concern Worldwide Debates programme** engages students at primary and secondary school levels to engage with global issues and adopt local to global focus in their research – making connections between what's happening locally and more broadly, explore different perspectives, and improve their critical thinking and research skills. We deliver **training sessions to adjudicators and mentors, so they understand how the programme helps students understand our world better** and develop their knowledge, skills and empathy so they can become active citizens. Adjudicators and mentors are included in these educational benefits of the programme.

- Concern Worldwide resources aim to tackle stereotypes through the language we use, images we show and stories we tell, e.g. our 'Language Matters' resource. We have also created resources which critically examine power structures - e.g. our 'model COP' resource which can be used in formal and informal youth settings.

- ECO-UNESCO **Youth for Sustainable Development (YSD) programme** is funded by Irish Aid and builds knowledge and skills in young people to become active global citizens. We engage young people across communities in Ireland. Through the YSD programme we promote peer-to-peer learning and peer education, and we train young people as peer educators to lead and work with other young people. The programme has a focus on key sustainability and GCE issues such as climate change, consumption, globalisation and the SDGs. The programme is run as an after-school club programme and we ensure learning is targeted and youth centred, looking at issues that young people are interested in exploring and acting on. We also deliver a QQI accredited training course at **Level 5 in Peer Education for Sustainable Development** to young people who have come through the YSD foundation programme. Through YSD we work with a broad range of young people from different geographic areas around Ireland and we work with a range of Youthreach centres across Ireland. We also have a Global Conversations element to the programme linking young people in Ireland with young people in the Global South.

- **ECO-UNESCO Learning2Change our World** is a **secondary schools programme** which includes workshops, **Students' Council training and teacher training** focusing on key issues related to sustainability and GCE. This is funded with support from WWGS.

- **ECO-UNESCO Training Courses** - ECO-UNESCO is a QQI accredited training centre and delivers a range of accredited training courses from Levels 3 to Levels 6. These include Level 3 Community Participation; Levels 5 Sustainable Development and Peer Education; Levels 6 Ecology and the Environment. We currently deliver the Level 3 module in Community Participation and Levels 5 in Peer Education through our ECO-choices and YSD programmes.

- ECO-UNESCO delivers a range of **educator courses,** seminars and training which supports them to embed sustainability into their practice, including into their subject areas and on mentoring action projects with the young people they work with. We worked with over 200 educators and teachers in 2024. We delivered training to student teachers and pre-service youth workers in Maynooth University, with student teachers in University of Galway and with teachers and youth workers in practice. In conjunction with Leargas, in 2024 we ran a Study Visit with youth workers and leaders from across Europe and Ireland on incorporating sustainability into their work. Our online learning hub the ECO-Academy offers a range of training courses https://learn.ecounesco.ie/.

Examples of significantly increased reach and/or quality

- The number of members of the IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education has grown to 54 (70% of IDEA organisational members). Each member self-assesses once per year against the 12 principles of good practice, receives feedback from experts and commits to an action plan to implement improvements. This is systematically increasing the quality of GCE in Ireland incrementally.

- The Ubuntu Network increased the number of participants engaging with network activities from 3,085 in 2021 to 4,033 in 2024 - reflecting a **31% increase in participation.** The Ubuntu Network **significantly expanded its reach and quality by adopting a new model of onward funding of projects and via new partnerships**, incorporating Artefacts of Learning and Exemplars of Practice, and embedding GCE across a wide range of subjects and modules (e.g. Sociology; Curriculum Studies; Textiles; Science; Citizenship; Subject Methodologies; Practitioner Research; Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment; Inclusion, Diversity and Global Education; Inclusive Pedagogy; Curriculum-Related Art and Design Practice; Science Pedagogy; Geography Pedagogy; Citizenship & Democracy Education).

- Global Village - Leadership symposium in Year 1 was attended by 40 and Year 2 by 81 - focus in Year 2 was on teachers sharing their own learning and practical examples of GCE in their schools through a TeachMeet input. The inclusion of teacher voice brought greater credibility to the quality of the Global Village programme.

- Through the National Volunteering Strategy's subcommittee on international volunteering, significant work has been undertaken to deepen connections between global citizenship approaches and values-led international volunteering and the national volunteering sector. This includes the incorporation of a dedicated section on the **IVOL database to showcase international volunteering opportunities that are being offered by Comhlámh's Code of Good Practice members.** Comhlámh has also worked with Volunteer Centres around Ireland to provide tailored GCE training on pre-departure training, intercultural awareness, and child-centred care reform, exploring how to incorporate critical DE/GCE approaches into courses, training and events for local volunteers.

- Comhlámh's most recent **Ethical Communications course** (funded through the E+ programme) used a "beta reader"/critical friend approach throughout its development. This involved working with educators, researchers and activists with Global South backgrounds to review material and contribute to review and revision of content, greatly enhancing the final content. In addition to self-guided learning, the course includes an option for accompaniment, through facilitated conversation circles. Feedback from learners shows the value and importance of this accompaniment, and of the huge quality of engagement that results from developing and supporting communities of learning.

- Increased reach to teacher educators over the past 5 years, given the inclusion of GCE in the Céim Standards for initial teacher education.

- The **Global Village Community of Practice (CoP)** is an online space **for teachers and GCE stakeholders to meet weekly**, on a drop-in basis. The relaxed format of the sessions has allowed teachers greater flexibility in terms of attendance and therefore increased the level of participation. The purpose of the CoP is to provide an opportunity for GCE teachers and stakeholders to meet and network, and to share resources, activities and good practice. The overall purpose of the CoP is to contribute to the improvement in participants' understanding of and confidence in teaching about GCE topics while also increasing their GCE skills and knowledge. In May of this year Global Village hosted a face-to-face workshop to thank our most engaged teachers and GCE stakeholders for their engagement with Global Village over the past three years, many of whom are part of the CoP cohort.

- The SDG Roadshow - SDG Roadshow 2022.

- Through [Youth 2030 Irish Aid Funding support sessions](#) (which build on IDEA sessions), we have seen an increase in youth organisations accessing Irish Aid funding and in turn, rolling out Global Youth Work to the youth sector in Ireland. The **increase in Irish Aid funding for youth organisations** to engage with learners from a broad range of backgrounds including those who are often most marginalised went **from 3 to 11 organisations since 2021.** Young people accessing GCE through youth organisations in 2020/21 was 1,599; 2021/22 was 3,332; and 2022/23 was 10,947. [Annual reports | Ireland.ie](#)

- The Global Compass award - embedding GCE in Further Education - [Global Compass](#).

- Broad inclusion of external marginalised voices in ITE because of the funding available through DICE. This ensures that in a sector where there is a significant diversity gap, we are engaging voices that educate students, give them an understanding of different perspectives and lived experiences.

- STAND's reach increased from 7 higher education campuses in 2020 to 17 in 2024, and now reaching 20,000 third level students with the [festival exhibition](#) and events.

- WWGS have changed their engagements with teachers so that **all schools it engages with use the [Global Passport](#) Framework.** The Global passport offers a framework for integrating **whole school GCE approaches** into post-primary education settings.

- Through the Youth 2030 capacity development strategy, working in depth with youth organisations through an Innovation Fund provides on-granting to support learning: [Innovation Fund - National Youth Council of Ireland](#) including case studies.

- [developmenteducation.ie](#) recorded **707,892 website users from 2018-2022**. A combined reach of **527,402 social media impressions** across Facebook, Instagram and X and **8,888 people directly engaged** in programme activities. **300 DE/GCE/ESD resources were added to the resource library** and over **86% of respondents reported improved knowledge or skills** across 15 hands-on workshops about producing DE/GCE resources.

- Concern Worldwide: The Debates programme runs across every county in Ireland. **Moving the league phase and knock-out phases online has allowed for a broader selection of schools (especially schools in remote locations) to engage in the programme and** means that schools aren't limited to only debating other schools within their local county/region. We also have a **Debates Officer based in Belfast,** and so it is **an all-island programme** that allows students from different backgrounds to connect and learn from different perspectives. Young people who were previously involved in the debates

programme at school sometimes come on board as volunteer adjudicators. TY Academy runs 3-4 times a year, as there is such high demand. Our 1Planet4All programme links in with youth organisations across the country – e.g. Sphere 17.

- **ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA)** promotes youth-led action for 10–18-year-olds and recognises and rewards the work of young people who protect the environment through local environmental action projects. **In 2024, over 5,500 young people participated, 271 projects were registered from 30 counties, 110 reached the finals and over 108,000 people** were impacted by the YEA local environmental action projects**.** Young people carried out projects in a wide range of categories with 66% of projects coming from young people aged 15-18; 23% from those 12-14 and 11% from those 10-12. All projects have a local to global criteria included in their assessment. All project categories have been aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. There is a special Local to Global Award. Projects were registered in categories including Community Development; Waste, Biodiversity, ECO Health and Well-being; Climate Change, ECO Art & Design, ECO-Innovation, Water, Energy, Food, Transport, Local to Global & Further Growth. Regional ECO-Dens provided an opportunity for young people to present their projects to panels of experts and key influencers. An annual Showcase and Awards Ceremony was held with over 1,000 young people. The programme has developed a number of resources which are available to all YEA Mentors: e.g. the [Young Environmentalist Awards Manual and Toolkit](#) following the 6 Steps Framework; [additional resources](#) to support YEA Mentors in schools and youth groups to take on the project; an [inspiration pack](#) to support YEA Mentors and young people with their project ideas, a [Young-Environmentalist-Awards-Finalist-Booklet-2025](#) each year, which provides information on each of the projects and provides inspiration to others; and [an e-learning course](#) which is available to young people and YEA Mentors and covers the YEA 6 Steps process.

Examples of how GCE has become more inclusive in Ireland in recent years, including examples of work with marginalised and underrepresented groups

- AkiDwA, the **network of migrant women,** has for the past five years been supporting women from both migrant and indigenous backgrounds in Ireland to engage in global education, learning and reflecting on their roles and responsibilities as global citizens, and taking action for a fairer and more sustainable future. To date, **more than 500 women have benefited from GCE comprehensive training, with thousands more reached through informal awareness sessions and media campaigns.** AkiDwA's GCE work focuses on exploring the causes of inequality and reflecting on the SDGs, with a particular

focus on SDG 5 – gender equality, and SDG 10 – reduced inequalities. It also enables women to link what is happening in Ireland with regional and global contexts.

- Comhlámh has seen an increasing need for **DE/GCE approaches to be a central part of intercultural training** that is made available for learners across the country. Through connections with Volunteer Centres around Ireland, we have developed courses that explore intercultural awareness, using interactive and participatory learning methodologies. Themes include **exploring difference** and how we meet it**; solidarity as a practice** - and the things that can get in the way; and **perspective** shifting - bringing awareness to how we view the world (our 'lenses'). A range of audiences (local authorities, community development groups, volunteer groups) have offered these courses.

- Development Perspectives has completed several projects that target marginalised groups in the last 3-4 years. Examples: **Freedom Football, Bridges 2023, Amplifying Voices 2023**.

- Development Perspectives facilitated the **Joint Migrant Integration forum for Louth and Meath County Council for 2022 and 2023.**

- WWGS and Ubuntu, supported by the University of Limerick have an **ongoing study investigating the ease with which GCE is integrated into alternative educational settings** such as Youthreach and other non-mainstream settings.

- WWGS focuses on adapting resources to be available in Gaeilge and is working to include as many education settings as possible, North and South of Ireland, in its Global Passport Framework.

- Ubuntu's focus on equity, diversity and inclusion is evident: through its involvement with the **ED-TED project** (an Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnerships project) **which focuses on promoting equity and diversity in teacher educators' professional development**; support for the Safe Space Café for LGBTQ+ students in rural ATU campuses; and the support and inclusion of modules on restorative justice, racial bias, and social justice and systemic barriers for marginalised groups.

- Youth 2030 has worked to support the youth sector to grow its GCE/GYW work and to enhance its visibility:

  - 5 Ways Youth 2030 Helped Us Grow - National Youth Council of Ireland

  - Five key outcomes of engaging with Youth 2030 - National Youth Council of Ireland

- Youth 2030 and the NYCI Equality and Intercultural Programme made a government submission for **greater focus on young people in its** National Action Plan Against Racism. **A measure asked for was adopted into the Plan**: Action 2.11: *Take measures to ensure the inclusion of minority ethnic young people in mainstream youth work and other State-funded youth initiatives; reinforce support for targeted minority ethnic group youth initiatives; and resource initiatives aimed at empowering young people to understand and challenge racism*. NYCI continues to monitor whether this action is being implemented or not.

- Youth 2030's Level 8 **Certificate in Global Youth Work and Development Education** has **supported marginalised and underrepresented groups including Travellers and immigrants, young people out of formal education**, and people from **urban and rural** communities to complete and gain certification.

- Youth 2030 recently ran a Global Youth Work CPD training entitled **'There is nothing normal about inequality',** in which many participants were from **Traveller and migrant communities**. It also ran an event for Traveller Pride highlighting and celebrating Traveller youth and Traveller youth workers, as well as youth work with Traveller young people.

- Youth 2030 reaches many individuals/groups through training on topics such as social justice, power and inequality. There is no "one size fits all" approach to this work, which ensures that the voices of marginalised groups are included, supported, highlighted and celebrated. **Through these we have reached organisations who support the Traveller community, immigrants and Muslim community organisations**. Anti-racism, cross-sectional and anti-oppressive practices are at the core of the work.

- **STAND's programmes have become significantly more inclusive, and participants more diverse, in the past four years, reflecting both intentional strategy and the evolving diversity of Irish higher education.** STAND has prioritised creating learning environments that bring together third-level students from a broad range of backgrounds, disciplines, and lived experiences - recognising that diverse participation strengthens the depth and impact of GCE. A key partnership in this regard is with ICOS, which manages the Irish Aid Fellows Programme. **Scholars from the Global South participating in this programme have engaged strongly with STAND's programmes, enriching dialogue with international perspectives grounded in lived experience**. Further inclusivity is achieved through ongoing **collaboration with the University of Sanctuary network, supporting students in the international protection system**, and **Access Programmes aimed at those facing structural barriers to higher education - including students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities**.

These efforts ensure that STAND's learning spaces are inclusive not only in demographic terms but also in pedagogical design - supporting dialogue across differences, critical thinking, empathy-building, and co-creation of knowledge. These spaces allow students to explore the root causes of global issues, challenge dominant narratives, and imagine different futures. The STAND **alumni network extends this impact,** sustaining an international, cross-sectoral community of informed and engaged global citizens.

- **DICE has redefined inclusivity in GCE by ensuring that initial teacher education does not shy away from difficult topics like racism, cultural exclusion, or systemic bias.** Its work shows how GCE can be both local and globally focused, rooted in justice, voice, and representation. This is not only good practice; it's leading practice that other countries can learn from. Examples of voices included in each institute with students: **members of Traveller, Black Irish, African diaspora, migrant and refugee populations, marginalised youth and rural teachers and schools.** Each group shares their lived experience while also focusing on that experience's links to global issues. Similar voices have been included with work for teacher educators, including anti-racism workshops in four institutes and an online anti-racism and black studies course.

- DICE's influence has led to **inclusive GCE being embedded in foundation and methods modules** (not siloed as a separate topic), e.g. sociology, literacy, SPHE, School Placement.

- Inclusivity was chosen as the theme for Global Village's large-scale events in 2024/25 - the TeachMeet in Mary Immaculate College and the Leadership Symposium in Iveagh House.

- Global Village provided professional learning to **51 teachers and school staff at St. Cecilia's Special School**, Sligo in 2024, supporting access to quality GCE for students with additional learning and behavioural needs.

- Concern Worldwide: **The post-primary debates programme going online has allowed rural schools** to also engage. **Wording of motions are carefully chosen s**o that they are applicable to, and inclusive of, **schools in both the republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.** The primary debates programme is run through regional Education Support Centres, which allows it to run across the country, either in person, or online. The TY Academy programme reserves places for students from DEIS schools. We engage with TUD for debates with inner-city DEIS schools. We have worked with many youth groups like Youth Work Ireland, the YMCA and Sphere 17 and engaged about 15 different youthreach centres in the ClimACT Programme. Our campaigns team has engaged various Youth groups. Concern funds Changemakers in Donegal to work with rural groups.

- Saolta has worked with **various migrant organisations and inclusion and equality organisations such as Inclusion Ireland, CBM and Project Possible Adventures, INAR**.

- Through its Youth for Sustainable Development programme, ECO-UNESCO works with a broad range of young people from different geographic areas around Ireland and different socio-economic backgrounds. We work with a range of groups including Boomerang Youth Cafe Drogheda, Youthreach centres across Ireland and universities. We run an ECO-Choices programme which works with marginalised young people in the Dublin city area. Through the Youth Climate Justice Advocate programme, we work with other youth organisations with distinct needs and target groups - Feachtas (an Irish language youth organisation), No Name Club (a national youth organisation) and Poppintree Youth Service Ballymun (a local youth service). We ran a Green Youth Employability course between 2023 and 2025 with over 50 International Protection Applicants between 18 and 25 providing knowledge and skills around sustainability issues, opportunities in the green economy and key employability skills. Through the Young Environmentalist Awards, we have a broad range of groups participating including schools, DEIS schools, Youthreach centres, youth services and groups working with young Travellers and young migrants. We are running a new Climate and Environmental Literacy programme with Adult Literacy for All programme in conjunction with 2 ETBs focused on building climate and environmental literacy in learners.

Local and Regional Government initiatives

- Over the past few years, there have been important advances made in embedding GCE at Local Government level. For example, all local authorities have enshrined the SDGs in their most recent County Development Plans. In addition, Saolta, the Irish-Aid funded strategic partnership for adult and community education in Ireland has worked extensively with Local Authorities and Public Participation Networks (PPNs - networks of community groups that engage with Local Authorities on community issues) to promote the relevance of SDG 4.7 in relation to their work. In addition to policy dialogue with Local Authorities and PPNs, 13 Local Government staff /PPN staff and locally elected reps from 11 Local Authorities have participated in and completed SDG advocate training by Saolta and Development Perspectives over the last number of years.

Private sector innovations and partnerships in the GCE sphere in recent years

- During the DEAR-funded Bridge 47 project (2018-2021), IDEA led out on several initiatives to provide guidance on and build GCE partnerships with the private sector. For more info, see here and here.

- Chambers Ireland, the national network of Chambers of Commerce in Ireland, was a national SDG Champion in 2023/2024. Following on from that, Development Perspectives (DP) worked with the Drogheda Chamber of Commerce to include a "Sustainable Development" category in their awards in 2024. DP had won the Environmental and Biodiversity award in 2023 so had an existing relationship. A delegate from DP was one of the judges in the category in 2024 which had over 90 entries from the Northeast of Ireland.

- EirGrid, Ireland's state-owned electricity Transmission System Operator has an interesting community engagement strategy. It takes a community based and collaborative approach to their engagement as well as investing substantial amounts of money directly into communities on projects that must address the SDGs. It offers a community benefit fund and sets up a Community Forum for each capital project it engages in. This is explicitly mentioned in their community benefit guidelines. Each forum is chaired independently and DP chairs the North Connaught and Kildare/Meath Forum.

Strategic Coherence

Coherence among the various organisations, programmes and activities involved in GCE in Ireland

- There is growing coherence, supported by IDEA's coordination and Irish Aid's GCE strategy. Irish Aid's strategic funding model has also enabled sector-wide coherence and innovation.

- There is a common vision among IDEA members – Quality GCE for all towards a society of active global citizens (all-island) - as documented in Vision 2025 and the forthcoming Vision 2030. The latter is an updated strategic vision and roadmap document being developed by IDEA with its members for 2025-2030. Vision 2030 will be launched in Autumn 2025. The section on Future Strategy Development of this submission includes the provisional top priorities for the coming five years towards our vision.

- The Irish Aid GCE Strategic Partners Forum is an important step to ensure further coherence within the broader sector. The nine Irish Aid Strategic Partners (IDEA, DICE, Ubuntu, Youth 2030, Saolta, Global Village, WorldWise Global Schools, STAND, Developmenteducation.ie), most of which are also consortia, also help ensure coherence within their respective sub-sector.

- The uniqueness of the current strategy is its recognition and inclusion of all sectors along the learner's life-long education journey, both formal and non-formal education from early years, primary, secondary, third level, to youth, adult, and community. Having a focus and sub-strategy for each of these sectors has certainly supported coherence and coordination. However, challenges remain in ensuring coherence across newer or non-traditional actors in the GCE space, and there is potential for a more coherent all-island approach.

- Core themes mirror those of the overall GCE sector - human rights, sustainability, intercultural understanding, critical engagement with inequality. Shared vision rooted in justice has ensured a **common pedagogy and ethical framework**. For example, there may be some variety in individual organisational approaches, but almost 70% of IDEA organisational members are members of the **Code of Good Practice for Development Education.** These members adhere to **12 common principles** in designing and implementing their work and they commit to improving the application of those principles consistently over years, according to specific indicators. Also, there are numerous networking meetings, training offers and knowledge exchange where members share examples of good practice that allows all organisations in the sector to learn from one another, and problem-solve together.

- The national collaborative infrastructure across all publicly funded HEIs providing ITE allows for collaboration, increased confidence, giving DICE and Ubuntu internal cohesion and contributing significantly to a unified GCE approach within ITE.

- The developmenteducation.ie consortium is committed to working collaboratively with other Irish Aid GCE strategic partners in a multilateral approach. Following consultation with WorldWise Global Schools, Comhlámh, DICE, Stand, the Irish Development Education Association, Youth 2030, Saolta, Global Village and the Ubuntu Network, the following six guiding principles were agreed to guide engagement:

- *Equality - a horizontal way of working that is collegial and supportive toward each other*

- *Autonomy - ability to have independent agency as individual strategic partners working within and across very different learning and teaching contexts*

- *Reciprocity as part of lifelong DE/GCE learning approach*

- *Amplify - get the word out about each other's work*

- *Multilateral - working across education sectors and spaces, not just within*

- ***Doing things differently together*** - *more than the sum of individual strategic partners individually.*

Degree to which the GCE work by CSOs aligns with the objectives of the Irish Aid GCE Strategy 2021–2025

- The GCE work by CSOs and other non-governmental stakeholders aligns well with the objectives of the Irish Aid GCE strategy. The biggest supporter by far of GCE in the State is Irish Aid so they ensure that there is alignment. However, more could be done by other Government Depts to align - Increase policy coherence for sustainable development.

Areas for improvement in terms of coordination and coherence between CSOs, social sectors and with government departments or other partners

- There needs to be much more policy coherence, partnership and collaboration between Government Departments. As one example, the Department of Education and Youth is providing funding for CSOs to deliver ESD projects in post primary schools. The Dept of Further and Higher Ed could and should do the same?

- Local Authorities could do far more to support GCE within their own spheres of influence. Saolta is doing important work in that space but with further support, more could be done.

- Bring together Irish Aid, the Climate Unit in DFAT, the Department of Energy, Climate and the Environment, Department of Education and Youth and the GCE sector around climate justice issues and ESD. This would build on what already exists in terms of ESD Advisory Groups for Schools and for Children and Youth.

- Continue to employ seconded personnel into Irish Aid from both the formal and non-formal sectors. These positions are crucial in advancing policy and practice in Ireland and globally. The people involved have been very successful during the current strategy.

- In its work across HEIs, STAND regularly engages with diverse institutional policies and strategies, particularly the National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). This strategy has gained significant traction within HEIs, supported by strong departmental leadership and funding. STAND actively works within these ESD structures, identifying synergies and contributing a GCE perspective that enriches and broadens the scope of sustainability education. However, strengthened coordination between government departments on the relationship between ESD and GCE could improve coherence and strategic implementation at national level. A cross-departmental approach

would be needed - particularly between DFHERIS and the DFAT, where GCE is more prominently situated. One proposal could be the establishment of a **national multistakeholder forum** to bring together relevant departments, agencies, and education stakeholders. This forum could support alignment of strategies, clarify roles, and ensure GCE is recognised and integrated as a complementary and critical dimension of Ireland's broader sustainability and global education agenda. Also funding a GCE staffer on higher education campuses - as focal point on campuses & coordinating with ESD policy.

Future Strategy Development

From your perspective, in this current political climate, what should be the key priorities in the next Irish Aid GCE strategy (post-2025)?

An overarching key priority of the next Irish Aid GCE strategy should be to **protect and build on the strong foundations** achieved via Irish Aid's investment over the outgoing strategy. This would mean consolidating an integrated approach to GCE and expanding and deepening GCE provision across the island of Ireland. Within that, the following sub-priorities would be strongly encouraged (provisional top priorities from Vision 2030):

- Promotion of a **whole of government approach** (cross-departmental) to GCE

- Continue and **expand provision** of **GCE** programmes in **primary** and **second level schooling, in ITE,** to **higher level students** and in **youth** and **ACE settings**, via strategic partnerships and multi-annual funding partnerships.

- Further **embedding GCE** into **further education, local authorities, curriculum review**, and **higher education strategies**.

- Increased collaboration and coordination among stakeholders (Irish Aid and its partners and other relevant government departments to ensure a **more even geographical spread of GCE** opportunities for learners in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings and in mainstream and alternative school settings.

- Increase **diversity of learners and inclusivity of GCE** by reaching new and marginalised communities through existing education infrastructure and new initiatives, including via digital technologies. Continued commitment to working with those who are marginalised - experiencing economic, social and cultural disadvantage,

those whose specific circumstances limit their opportunities such as Travellers and Roma, Immigrants/Migrants, carers, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+, those not in education, training, or employment (NEETs), those experiencing rural isolation, and those experiencing homelessness.

- **Enhance engagement with the Global South** and integrate more Global South voices into GCE to make meaningful local to global connections regarding social, economic and environmental justice issues.

- Communicate the importance of **GCE** methodologies and content as **tools for all educators** who are increasingly engaging with **misinformation, disinformation, polarisation and questions of ecological and social injustice** in learning spaces.

- Continuous professional development to support educators to engage with learners around "**difficult knowledge", discomfort and depolarisation techniques** using GCE-informed approaches, which might not be part of the formal curriculum.

- **Multistakeholder partnerships** across CSOs, trade unions, government departments, statutory bodies, and corporate entities to work together to ensure:

  - GCE is a visible and thought-out **component of policy development in education**.

  - GCE is an **all-island priority**. Policy coherence by promoting GCE as a central component of the **Shared Island Initiative** of the Department of the Taoiseach, with strong coordination between relevant government departments north and south of the border. More all-island initiatives and partnerships.

  - **GCE providers** are **adequately resourced and supported** in engaging with policy development at local level and national level.

  - Commitment to continue alignment with the **Dublin Declaration on Global Education.**

- **Stronger and more strategic coordination between relevant Government departments**, along with integration of GCE into their policies and programmes. These include, but are not exclusive to, the Department of Education and Youth, Department of Environment, Climate and Energy, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Department of Rural and Community Development.

- **Stronger coherence between key existing policies**, such as the Irish Aid GCE Strategy, National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, National Youth Strategy, Further Education and Training Strategy, the Climate Action Plan, the National Action Plan Against Racism, the National Volunteering Strategy and the National Counter Disinformation Strategy.

- **Integration and prioritisation of GCE** in **relevant institutions and networks**. These include, but are not exclusive to, Education and Training Boards, schools' networks and patron bodies, youth sector bodies and third level institutions.

- Curricula include **more emphasis on socio-emotional learning**.

- Recent **curriculum changes are adequately integrated** into **teacher professional development by Oide**.

- An effective multistakeholder **promotion and communications strategy (including digital media)** to increase the visibility of and demand for GCE from teachers, educators and learners, and increase its visibility in policy and public discourse, builds the profile of GCE, and promotes public understanding and awareness of its purpose, goals and activities. The strategy should include podcasts, strategic social media and expanding reach and impact in the digital sphere, especially for younger audiences.

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Further inputs from members:

- In response to not only the current political climate but also in the current context of interconnected polycrises - climate emergency, war and genocide, impunity, deepening systemic inequalities, worsening systemic injustice, impacts of disinformation, polarisation and the collapse of any credibility in the international rules-based order, there are some **cross cutting thematic priorities that need to be centred in the next strategy, such as critical media literacy, human rights climate justice, ecological sustainability**. **anti-racism, democratic values and practices.**

- Recognise the importance of civil society space, human rights, democracy, tackling poverty, anti-racism, gender equality, tackling conflict, and climate justice.

- GCE is a **bulwark against rampant disinformation, racism, hate and division**. GCE can help ensure that public support for development doesn't diminish in the way that it has in other countries. The key priority in the next Irish Aid strategy should be to acknowledge the power, potential and need for high quality GCE now more than ever.

Arguably, the medium to long term future of Irish Aid depends on how effective GCE is in the next 3-5 years.

- That GCE is recognised in any new strategies developed by Irish Aid during the timeframe of the new GCE strategy, e.g. any follow up to 'A Better World', etc. Also, Irish Aid staff, working with GCE partners, continue to push for policy and practice recognition across government departments in Ireland and through membership of GENE at European level.

- In response to rising racism and anti-migrant sentiment, a continued/increased focus on how DE/GCE can strengthen our shared commitment to human rights and anti-racism. **Tackling racial discrimination** is going to take **everyone working together**. This will be an ever-present challenge during the next GCE strategy. Working cross-departmentally, and with GCE educators, intercultural groups, and media, we should be able to make a meaningful contribution to this social issue in our society. Otherwise, positive support for international development cooperation could be in jeopardy.

- DICE perspective: Deepening and safeguarding GCE within the formal education sector is essential going forward to protect GCE from being weakened by politicised narratives or "culture war" resistance. **Prioritising anti-racism and critical inclusion** is essential. Funding antiracism, decolonial and inclusion-focused CPD for teacher educators is needed for all. While ITE lays the foundation, without support for induction and in-career professional development, many new teachers struggle to sustain GCE. Future proofing GCE through research and innovation would be hugely advantageous.

- Ubuntu Network: From the perspective of post-primary initial teacher education (ITE) the Ubuntu Network has identified the following key priorities for consideration: Institutional Integration and Strategic Commitment; Deepening Curriculum Integration; **Supporting Transformative and Reflective Pedagogies**; Enhanced teacher educator capacity; A robust research base for GCE in ITE; Enhanced Outreach and Advocacy; Formalised Strategic Partnerships with relevant stakeholders (e.g. WWGS, relevant HEIs); National and International Collaborations; Policy and Funding Support.

- Continue to **work with business** and continue to seek out new partners.

- Continue to include an exploration of a **grant system** that would support informed **reciprocal exchanges between Ireland and Global South partners**.

- **Ongoing, regular engagement between Irish Aid and the GCE sector** in terms of sharing information, results, outcomes, and trends. We are in the midst of an unstable

time in history, and it is important we work together to ensure our combined work is relevant, timely, meaningful, and impactful.

- GCE programmes that **help people critically navigate increasingly polarised online and public spaces**, increase empathy for marginalised groups in Ireland and globally, and encourages agency and civic participation.

What new innovations or directions are most needed to ensure quality GCE for all?

- Supporting **depth education pedagogies and approaches**, including capacity building for adult educators and facilitators.

- More acknowledgement (and time) for the **important role of accompaniment in ongoing GCE learning/building** and sustaining **communities of learning/practice**.

- Further acknowledging and incorporating intersectionality across our GCE work and **centring the voices of those most affected by injustice**.

- **Creating models of measuring what we are doing/achieving** in ways that are more critical, flexible and **not built on assumptions of linear change**.

- **Ensuring that we capture impact** is essential to the long-term future of GCE.

- DICE Project: **Deepen critical pedagogies in an age of mis- and dis- information**. GCE infused media literacy and AI ethics modules, as well as digital criticality are essential. Strengthen the local-global links in the curriculum, develop holistic and impact tools for GCE. Quality GCE must reflect the realities of our world and prepare teachers and learners to change our world for the better, not just understand it.

- Ubuntu Network: **Expand digital and arts-based pedagogies;** Strengthen reflective and transformative learning strategies; Embed positionality and self-awareness training; **Use GCE to address polarisation and contested issues through philosophical inquiry and 'safer space' practices**.

- **Artificial Intelligence** is predicted to **change everything,** for everyone on the planet. This will have consequences for our work and our reach. As educators, we should be open to learning and understanding as well as being aware of the environmental, social, and economic consequences for our GCE learners, educators, and partners here in Ireland and in the Global South. It will be important that our GCE sector takes a lead.

- **Social media critical literacy** is essential moving forward. With much unrest in the world and changing geo-political times and with the rise of disinformation, supporting

all of us to be critical thinkers and to be able to analyse our social media engagement will be important. Youth 2030, in partnership with the NYCI Young People's Committee developed this resource: **Stop! Wait A Minute! – Critical Social Media Literacy Tool**.

- Technology is increasingly being used as a force for good and for bad. As educators, we should have an awareness of transnational oppression and restrictive/open laws around technology and the consequences for our learners and educators.

- A **GCE research programme that is bigger than New Foundations funding** to build robust GCE capacity.

- Depolarisation, inclusive practice, and longer-term engagements (i.e. depth over breadth emphasised in GCE targets).

Funding and Sustainability

Does the current funding model allow you to plan, scale, or sustain your GCE work?

- Irish Aid's strategic partnership model has enabled sector-wide coherence and innovation.

- While current funding has supported valuable initiatives, the short funding cycles and high reporting burdens can restrict long-term planning and sustainability. Innovations like **accompaniment or depth education require long-term, relational approaches** which are **harder to sustain under current models**.

- The multi annual strategic partnerships are welcome but amounts indicated and agreed upon need to be delivered if we are to have the desired impact at a sectoral level.

- DICE Project: Current funding enables us to embed GCE in ITE, deliver high impact programmes and initiatives, and build sustainable communities of practice. It **limits longer term strategic planning**, and it **limits our scope to scale** throughout the specific project. It means we are vulnerable to policy shifts, and changes in political priorities. It also limits our ability for longitudinal study.

Suggestions for improvement

- Government **long-term commitment** to maintain and increase investment in GCE as a **critical public good** and an essential part of the solution to unprecedented challenges.

- Continue with a multi-annual funding model for strategic partners and for annual grantees but provide **more flexible funding for innovation, reflection, and experimentation**. Adapt the current funding models to acknowledge the time-intensive nature of inclusive and relational GCE.

- **Predictability of funding** where possible to support strategic working and planning and relationship building.

- **Funding for GCE work from other departments**, such as the Department of Education and Youth, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, the Department of Energy, Climate and the Environment, and the Department of Justice.

- **Irish Aid used to consult the DE/GCE sector on key issues annually** as part of a collaborative approach to engaging challenging or rising issues on GCE. The leadership role Irish Aid practiced here has been **left open to others - mostly the Dept of Education as part of their annual ESD Forum or to the SDGs Stakeholders Forum**. As part of building the value and importance of development cooperation (and multilateral cooperation, peacebuilding etc.), Irish Aid should consider the importance of demonstrating their own leadership activities also. The distinctiveness of GCE is not always accessible or given proper spotlight at these other events (as an add-on).

- **Creating partnerships with Global South groups and organisations takes time.** Building trust and collaboration and establishing goals that are mutually beneficial takes time. Trying to establish these within short timeframes can challenge their legitimacy and inhibit longer-term solidarity and partnership.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Ireland's Global Citizenship Education sector stands at a vital juncture. The achievements to date are significant - rooted in collaboration, strategic vision, and shared values - but they must not be taken for granted. As we face into an era of intensified global challenges, IDEA and its members reaffirm our deep commitment to working in partnership with Irish Aid, government departments, civil society, and international networks to protect, deepen, and expand GCE as a cornerstone of Ireland's contribution to a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. We welcome the GENE Peer Review as an important opportunity to reflect, connect, and collectively strengthen our impact in the years ahead.