

This is an overarching submission with high-level sectoral messages. Please see IDEA member-led group submissions on GCE in Formal Education, Adult and Community Education, Youth Work, Higher Education, Quality and Impact of GCE and GCE in the ICSP programme for details related to those specific areas.

1. What aspects of the current Global Citizenship Education Strategy (2021–2025) have worked well?

- The combined five outputs of the Strategy have strengthened the GCE ecosystem in the republic, ensuring GCE is offered in all education settings: **formal, non-formal and informal** while the **all-island dimension** has enabled critical support for GCE in the North.
- The structural approach to advancing GCE within educational settings (primary, post-primary, adult and community education, higher education, youth work, initial teacher education) via **strategic partnerships**, as well as supporting other GCE practitioners in these spaces, e.g. small and specialist organisations, INGOs, etc.
- Ensuring key GCE infrastructure exists to support sectoral quality, capacity-strengthening, peer learning, collective advocacy and access to a repository of GCE resources.
- **Multi-annual funding** has enabled more stable and strategic GCE programming and has helped to recruit and retain skilled staff to deliver GCE programmes.
- Promoting inclusion of GCE in teaching and educator training standards, curriculum frameworks, curricula and whole-institution approaches has helped ensure GCE is embedded in systems, approaches and policy.

2. What aspects of the current Strategy have been most relevant to your work or experience?

- The emphasis on sector leadership, coordination and capacity strengthening.
- The strategy explicitly recognised IDEA's leadership role in building GCE sector capacity, supporting quality standards through the Code of Good Practice, providing coherent policy and curriculum input, and fostering collaboration across organisations and sectors. This has reinforced IDEA's role as the representative body for GCE in Ireland and has provided an important strategic foundation for strengthening a connected, high-quality and influential sector.

3. How has the national and global context for Global Citizenship Education changed 2021-2026, and how should the next Strategy respond to those changes?

The challenges identified in the outgoing strategy have intensified: rising conflict, climate breakdown, growing global inequality, biodiversity loss, etc. Moreover, since 2023, there has been intense geopolitical instability, growing disregard for international law, undermining of human rights, energy insecurity, ongoing global health impacts and mounting pressures on democracy and multilateralism.

At global and national level, there has been a sharp rise in misinformation, online polarisation, anti-migrant narratives and social division, amid the threat from the misuse of AI. Populism, racism and declining social cohesion are growing challenges in Ireland, Europe, and further afield. Cost-of-living pressures and a growing housing emergency continue to influence public attitudes on domestic and global issues.

The next Strategy should respond to these changes by adopting to the extent possible the overarching priorities and priorities for specific education sectors articulated in [Vision 2030: Towards a Society of Active Global Citizens](#)¹ and [What is needed to provide Quality GCE for All by 2030](#)², e.g.:

- Provide a coherent, integrated approach to GCE that reaches across relevant departments, supported by strong leadership, oversight, and resourcing mechanisms. This requires greater coherence with GCE-adjacent national strategies (see list in Vision 2030, p.23) and stronger strategic cross-departmental coordination among relevant departments.
- Expand the reach and depth of GCE across the island of Ireland in formal, non-formal and informal settings, aiming for a more equitable geographic spread and a better balance between provision across different settings.
- Strengthened cross-border cooperation through a coordinated all-island GCE approach.
- Greater engagement with people from the Global South (including those living in Ireland) to champion inclusion, representation, and enhance empathy and solidarity while challenging racist narratives.
- More supports for educators: Expand access to CPD and other upskilling and mentoring supports, remove barriers so educators can meaningfully engage with these opportunities, and expand holistic approaches to embedding GCE in schools and other places of learning.
- Expanded focus on research, monitoring and documentation of effectiveness, relevance and impact to ensure the strategy remains responsive to ongoing challenges.
- Promote critical awareness of, and ethical engagement with, digital media and AI.

4. What actions could support increased uptake of GCE across formal, non-formal and informal education settings?

- An effective multistakeholder communications strategy to increase the visibility of and demand for GCE from educators and learners.
- Ensuring more GCE facilitators and GCE champions within all education settings, including support to returned international development volunteers/workers as key GCE champions.
- Creation and cross-departmental funding of posts for regional coordinators within CSOs to coordinate with institutional actors to ensure comprehensive and sustained GCE delivery, inspired by the One World Network promoters' programme.
- Ensuring adequate resourcing to recruit and retain GCE facilitators who engage learners in formal, non-formal and informal education settings. The cost-of-living and housing crises creates challenges for many in the GCE sector; therefore, adequate pay and conditions are essential to the sector's sustainability and effectiveness.
- Integration and prioritisation of GCE in relevant institutions and networks, e.g. Education and Training Boards, schools' networks and patron bodies, youth sector bodies, volunteer centres, third-level institutions, etc.
- Developing and resourcing an engagement strategy for hard-to-reach or underserved learners.

¹ <https://irp.cdn-website.com/9e15ba29/files/uploaded/Vision+2030+Full+Document.pdf>. See pp. 22-28 for overarching priorities, p.30 for Early Years Education priorities, pp.33-34 for priorities in schools, p.36 for Initial Teacher Education priorities, pp. 38-40 for Higher Education priorities, pp. 42-43 for Adult and Community Education priorities and pp. 46-48 for Youth priorities.

² <https://irp.cdn-website.com/9e15ba29/files/uploaded/Vision+2030+-+Priorities+for+GCE+sector+FINAL.pdf>

- Mandate the integration of global health competencies within GCE.
- Scaling of whole-institution approaches to GCE in schools and other learning environments.
- Maintain a strong social justice dimension and ensure policy coherence by integrating related frameworks such as the ESD strategy, the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and the broader EU competence family e.g. the EU guidelines for democratic citizenship education and EU citizenship competence framework, the OECD global competences and UNESCO frameworks.

5. How can collaboration between Government, civil society and education stakeholders be strengthened?

- Via a formalised regular **multistakeholder structured dialogue space** with representatives from relevant government departments, civil society and education stakeholders. Such a group could meet quarterly to discuss GCE strategy implementation and how to enhance collaboration for more joined-up implementation.
- Via an **annual national GCE event** that brings together all relevant government, civil society and education stakeholders to discuss challenges, opportunities and showcase good practice and learning.
- A decision at Cabinet level to adopt and coordinate a whole-of-government approach to GCE would stimulate strengthened collaboration among the relevant government departments.
- As recognised in the 2025 GENE Peer Review of Ireland, there is already very strong collaboration among and between GCE practitioners within the IDEA network, which comprises both civil society and some education stakeholders. There is also already growing collaboration between IDEA and other civil society networks and coalitions, such as Dóchas, CADA, Coalition 2030 and Stop Climate Chaos. This can be strengthened with additional resourcing and incentives to encourage all GCE stakeholders to work collectively and collaboratively, e.g. towards better collective impact measurement.
- Beyond the next Strategy maintaining an all-island approach to GCE, we would welcome the introduction of GCE as a core priority of the Department of Taoiseach's Shared Island initiative.

6. What are the main challenges facing Global Citizenship Education stakeholders at present?

- The issues that GCE tackles are becoming increasingly complex and their impacts more intensified, combined with limited time to engage with learners. Extremist and populist politics, the strategic use of mis- and disinformation and on-the-ground community tensions, have resulted in GCE-related topics such as migration becoming heated and divisive. The skillset required to effectively facilitate learner engagement with these issues and in this context is changing and supports must be provided through training and resourcing.
- Many policy makers and educators seem not to see GCE as a core component of the central goal of education in enabling a flourishing society.
- Impact measurement remains a challenge although significant strides have been made via development of the Theory of Impact for GCE³.
- Retention and recruitment of highly skilled GCE workers.
- The impact of mis- and disinformation and Artificial intelligence on learning and learners.

³www.ideaonline.ie/theory-of-impact-for-gce

7. What new potential practice opportunities exist which could increase GCE reach and uptake in Ireland, and Ireland's GCE influence in Europe under the next Strategy?

Increasing GCE reach and uptake in Ireland:

- Refinement of existing mapping to have a better understanding of where reach and uptake is poor.
- Increase in Communities of Practice among practitioners across different education settings.
- Collaboration with GCE-adjacent networks.
- Alignment with well-being frameworks and linking GCE with developing empathy and critical awareness.
- Strategic engagement with various institutions that provide a gateway to more reach and uptake in different settings, e.g. partnerships with school boards of management, Oide, Local Authorities, ETBI, ETB education officers, etc.

Increasing Ireland's GCE influence in Europe:

- Use the EU Presidency, while building on GENE Peer Review recommendations, to demonstrate Ireland's national and EU leadership on GCE, including advocating for the preservation of funding and creation of new funding streams for ESD and GCE.
- Champion the Dublin Declaration as a basis for further EU collaboration, participate in GENE peer learning visits, participate in delegations of other countries' Peer Reviews. A peer learning visit with Portugal could be used to explore the multistakeholder GCE cooperation mechanism that the Portuguese government has created.
- Further promotion of the Code of Good Practice and sharing of the Theory of Impact for GCE among European counterparts as a collective impact measurement framework and tool that could be adapted and used in other European countries.
- IDEA will continue to play a leadership role within the Civil Society Alliance for GCE, and to explore further opportunities for knowledge exchange, learning, and development.
- Pro-active engagement by IDEA, IDEA members and other practitioners in other European GCE spaces – Angel, the DEAR Multistakeholder Group (if it is reactivated), Council of Europe North-South Centre, Lifelong Learning Platform, etc.
- IDEA, IDEA members and other practitioners continue to participate in multi-country European GCE projects (e.g. DEAR⁴, Erasmus+, CERV projects).
- Harness or create opportunities to strengthen collaboration among different Irish stakeholders active at European level, e.g. Irish MEPs, the Irish Permanent Representation Office in Brussels, Irish EU Commissioner Michael McGrath, Irish members of the European Economic and Social Committee (e.g. Committee President Séamus Boland).
- Pro-active engagement with the Democratic Citizenship project currently being undertaken by DG-EAC.

⁴If DEAR programme retained under new EU budget.