IDEA SUBMISSION TO

MINISTER FOR FINANCE &

MINISTER FOR PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND REFORM

BUDGET 2024

June 2023

1. Introduction

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

Development Education, Global Citizenship Education, Education for Sustainable Development are all terms used by our members depending on the nature of their work or their areas of specialism. For the purpose of this submission, we use the term Global Citizenship Education (GCE) to encompass all relevant terms and approaches within the area of education for global citizenship and sustainable development.

Target 4.7 of the SDGs highlights the importance of GCE in achieving all of the SDGs.

> *By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*

Global Citizenship Education enables people to explore key issues such as equality, climate justice, discrimination and human rights, through creative, innovative and interactive approaches. It gives them the opportunity to examine the impact of these issues globally and locally, including how their own lives are affected. It also supports them in considering how their values, choices and actions can contribute to or mitigate an issue and in exploring what action they can take to create positive change. As GCE focuses on the interconnectedness of the world, it empowers people to create a more just and sustainable future for everyone.

Global Citizenship Education is practised by a range of actors in Ireland, including Development NGOs, community and voluntary organisations, educational institutions and networks, trade unions, educators, researchers, and activists. It engages hundreds of

thousands of people across all ages and communities throughout the island of Ireland each year.

Ireland has a high impact GCE sector, informed by values of equality, diversity, sustainability and human rights. We are recognised at European and international level as a leader in GCE due to the support structures in place and the quality of the organisations and programmes.

In its recent Development Assistance Committee report[1], the OECD noted that "Ireland has received international recognition for its development education strategies" but called for more resources to be devoted to Development Education/GCE:

> *Mobilising more funds for development education would allow Ireland to reap the benefits of its strong approach to promoting global citizenship. Ireland has received international recognition for its development education strategies. Actions under the Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017-2023 (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017[26]) cover both formal education (by targeting children and students) and non-formal education (by targeting the public at large) (Box 1.2).*
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> *Awareness-raising activities across children's school careers have an impressive reach. However, without additional investment, Ireland cannot seize the opportunity to help turn development-aware children into development-aware adults who could then contribute in their communities, as consumers, or in politics……. While Ireland remains an average DAC funder of development awareness, it commits in A Better World to mobilising more resources. This responds as well to strong calls by Irish civil society for greater resources for this.*[2]

Our sector has the potential to bring about large-scale positive societal change to create a just, equal and sustainable society and help fulfil Ireland's commitments to delivering on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Achieving these objectives is of utmost importance for our society to combat the escalating threats to democracy, the rise of racism and anti-immigrant sentiments, and to swiftly transition towards a sustainable way of living.

2. Recent Policy Developments

In recent years, there have been notable advancements in policy regarding GCE. Notably, the Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy (November 2021) has laid a robust foundation for the sector's growth until 2025. Additionally, the Dublin Declaration on Global Learning to 2050, endorsed by EU Education and Development Ministries at Dublin Castle, is a significant milestone in shaping the future trajectory of GCE throughout Europe. Also, the European Year of Skills offers an unparalleled opportunity to advance Global Citizenship Education. However, these ambitious plans have not been matched with sufficient levels of funding to fulfil their objectives.

[1] OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews, Ireland 2020

[2] Ibid p. 30

These include:

- The Irish Aid GCE Strategy
- Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development
- National Implementation Plan on Sustainable Development Goals
- Climate Action Plan
- European Council Recommendation on Learning for the Green Transition and Sustainable Development
- GENE Declaration on Global Education to 2050 (to be adopted in Dublin in November 2022)
- UNESCO 1974 Recommendation (currently under review)
- United Nations Transforming Education Summit.

Insufficient funding poses risks to our society, as it hampers our ability to equip citizens with the necessary information, tools, and choices to navigate an interconnected world that demands transversal skills and a comprehensive understanding of GCE key issues.

IDEA has developed a roadmap for GCE in Ireland in our policy document Vison 2025. In Vision 2025 we outline our proposals to develop Global Citizenship Education in Ireland to ensure that as a society we can address the myriad of challenges we face as a local and global society. `

3. Our Main Asks from Budget 2024

i. Increase GCE Funding to 3% of Official Development Assistance Budget:

- The European Benchmark for GCE funding is **3% of the national Official Development Assistance (ODA) Budget**. The Irish Aid **Global Citizenship Education Strategy,** published in November 2021 commits to an increase in funding for GCE to €10 million per annum by 2025. When reached, this would represent just 1% of our current ODA Budget and falls far short of the projected €26 million per annum that should be devoted to GCE if the 3% target was applied.

  We would be concerned that the funding proposed for the GCE Strategy does not match the ambition of the Strategy. Global Citizenship Education suffered considerable cutbacks during the years of the financial crisis (2008 – 2016).The sector is currently grappling with the aftermath of significant funding cuts endured over the years, and now faces the additional challenge of coping with rising costs amidst record-high levels of inflation. IDEA strongly advocates for a phased approach with manageable annual increases of between .2% and .7%of ODA that would see the target reached by 2025.

  For Budget 2024 we would request that the figure of €10 million per annum should be reached in Budget 2024 with a view to scaling to achieve the 3% of ODA.

- The **Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** has recently been published. IDEA members will be key actors in the implementation of the new strategy, and it is crucial that adequate funding is allocated to ensure the new strategy's successful implementation. We were disappointed to learn at the time of

launching that there was no separate budget line for its implementation, which would depend on existing funding streams.

For Budget 2024 we would request a dedicated funding stream for ESD/GCE projects to be funded under this Strategy

- The **Second National Implementation Plan (NIP) for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs**) will also require a specific budget line for GCE/ESD. GCE/ESD must be a core element of Ireland's Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan. A broad public education and outreach plan is essential if the ambitious objectives of the NIP are to be achieved. This needs to be delivered through formal, non-formal and informal education.

  For Budget 2024 we would request a dedicated funding stream for ESD/GCE projects to be funded from the SDG NIP.

- ***GCE funding streams should also be included in the Climate Action Plan and National Action Plan Against Racism.***

ii. Work towards Official Development Assistance target of 0.7% GNI

We also support the call by **Dócha**s for Ireland to fulfil its promise in the Programme for Government to reach the UN target of spending 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2030.

iii. Furthest Behind First Campaign

IDEA has signed up to the **Coalition 2030** pre-budget campaign **"Furthest Behind First".** We are committed to extend and deepen our work to support delivery of life-long, quality Global Citizenship Education that reaches all of society, including hard-to-reach communities, in a variety of settings, from classrooms and lecture halls to youth clubs and community groups through existing infrastructures and by new initiatives.

A commitment to achieving the 3% of ODA for GCE would enable the sector to reach many hard-to-reach groups, including second chance learners, unemployed people, disadvantaged young people, adult basic education learners, older people, migrants, and the Traveller Community.

iv. Precarious work –

IDEA members have highlighted concerns about the working conditions of GCE practitioners, noting that many experienced practitioners are being lost to more secure positions outside the GCE sector.

The principle of **Decent Work** in SDG 8 should apply to all GCE practitioners. Precarious conditions disproportionately affect staff in smaller and specialist GCE organisations.

When funding projects from public money we believe that the relevant Government Department should at the very least:

a) Ensure that GCE grantees are adequately resourced so that their employees have, in line with SDG 8, decent and secure work.

b) Provide guidelines to funded organisations in relation to ensuring pay and conditions

for grant-approved employees are benchmarked against comparable roles in the public service/civil service.

v. Strategic cross-government prioritisation and policy coherence for Global Citizenship Education

IDEA members work across a broad spectrum of Irish society and in many different institutions and settings. Global Citizenship Education requires a supportive and coherent policy context. Coordination is needed between relevant government departments, along with integration of Global Citizenship Education into their policies and programmes. These should include the Department of Education, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and other relevant departments.

Coordination is also needed between key policies, including the Irish Aid Strategy on Development and Global Citizenship Education, 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, and the National Volunteering Strategy (2021– 2025).

Also, as you are aware 2023 has been designated the European Year of Skills as the EU moves to ensure we are prepared for the Digital and Green Transition. At IDEA, we are committed to promoting Global Citizenship and recognizing the pivotal role of Global Citizenship Education in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We also understand the importance, the relevance and urgency for the Irish workforce to embrace GCE. This will equip learners with the essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to become responsible global workers/citizens who can contribute to a fairer, more peaceful, and sustainable world.

Integration and prioritisation of GCE in relevant institutions and networks is also necessary. These include Education and Training Boards, schools' networks, youth sector bodies and third level institutions.

Make GCE a strategic priority in the Government's policy agenda, with a coherent, integrated approach that reaches across relevant departments, including the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment and the Department of Finance

Coordination mechanisms should be developed to enable cross-departmental coordination of GCE-related policies, and for integration into key institutions and networks.

4. Conclusion

The amount and form of investment proposed coupled with the coherent policy framework proposed above, would enable the sector to

- reach people across society, through formal, non-formal and informal education
- develop education and professional development programmes and build organisational support
- build capacity of educators, create quality resources

- undertake research to inform policy and practice
- develop curriculum
- monitor & evaluate our work for optimum impact.

Global Citizenship Education has a hugely important role to play in rising to challenges facing society today and in creating a better world. We have the expertise and the potential to achieve this vision. We now need sufficient funding to scale-up, to strengthen our sector and its capacity to deliver life-long, quality Global Citizenship Education to all learners.

We would urge the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to take on board and prioritize these requests in their deliberations on Budget 2024.