

**IDEA Quality and Impact Working Group Submission to the consultation on Ireland's next Global  
Citizenship Education (GCE) Strategy  
July 2026**

This submission is made by the IDEA Quality and Impact Working Group, which consists of IDEA members (CBM, Development Perspectives, DICE Project, Financial Justice Ireland, Global Village, Inishowen Development Partnership, National Youth Council of Ireland, Self Help Africa, Trócaire, WorldWide Global Schools). Quality and impact have been core focus areas for IDEA members for over 15 years, driven by working groups since at least 2009.

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

We recognise that the current GCE strategy has been a clear and effective framework for supporting the delivery of diverse, innovative and engaging GCE across formal, nonformal and informal education settings; and we highlight the following aspects of the current strategy:

- The focus on lifelong and lifewide learning across three sectors - formal, nonformal and informal - is a key strength and aligns with the Dublin Declaration. This approach supports GCE stakeholders to engage as many people as possible across society and supports an innovative, flexible and responsive approach to GCE.
- The explicit reference to the IDEA Code of Good Practice, as a means to improve the quality of GCE practice across the sector. The Code was expanded over the duration of the strategy, particularly as more organisations were funded by Irish Aid and became IDEA members. This supported greater understanding, knowledge sharing, and expertise-building across all areas including quality and impact. Launched in 2020 alongside Irish Aid's GCE strategy transition, the Code is now a highly regarded framework by the GCE sector, Irish Aid, European partners, and GENE.
- Over the course of this strategy, IDEA and its members made progress towards a sector wide impact measurement tool which would support consistency in measurement and effective communication on the impact of GCE:
  - **2022/23:** IDEA conducted a comprehensive review of impact measurement approaches, including a desk review and member consultations.
  - **2024–2025:** Developed a sectoral Theory of Change, culminating in a tested **Theory of Impact model** launched publicly and to Irish Aid in late 2025.
  - **2026:** Partnered with a data visualization expert to create a new tool, currently being piloted by 18 IDEA members.

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

The strategic goal and outcome reference *quality* GCE. This has been a core pillar of IDEA's work, through members' work across formal, non formal and informal education settings, and through the **IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education** and the development of the **IDEA Theory of**

**Impact for GCE.** The clear strategic outputs supported the design and implementation of quality GCE programmes across the sector. The successor strategy offers an opportunity to further strengthen the focus and streamline work in this area of GCE quality and impact.

The focus on partnership has been a key strength, and is reflected in the active learning community of the IDEA Code of Good Practice; the initiative maintains a 93% retention rate (53 active members) and continuous engagement occurs through monthly meet-ups and biannual network meetings. Steps have been taken towards fostering a European Community of Practice, starting with a partnership project with LAPAS (Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation) in 2025, focused on the IDEA Code.

### **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?**

We refer to the overarching IDEA submission and to IDEA's **Vision 2030** policy document for further detail in this area. Here we highlight the importance of maintaining a lifelong and lifewide approach to GCE that reaches as wide a cohort of society as possible, to bring the values of solidarity, democracy, cooperation and human rights to the forefront as a counterbalance to increasing polarisation, rising racism and division and attacks on Official Development Assistance. In this context it is more important than ever to resource and demonstrate proper impact measurement in the GCE sector.

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

- A clear and mutual understanding of what impact means in GCE and how it is to be measured, which is co-developed between a wide cross section of GCE stakeholders and Irish Aid, to accompany the strategy. GCE stakeholders would include those funded through ICSP in the Civil Society Unit (CSU) and those funded through GCE grants in the Global Programmes Unit (GPU).
- The common understanding of impact would include long-term and short-term measures of collective impact, to recognise and mirror the lifelong and lifewide nature of GCE. A definition of impact would be rooted in an understanding of the distinction between output and impact, and multiple engagements by learners with GCE programmes would be conceptualised as an indicator of quality and interest, rather than as 'duplication'. The IDEA Theory of Impact for GCE is a key resource for the development of such a shared understanding of impact between Irish Aid and IDEA members.
- Clear and streamlined monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) frameworks that support a common understanding of impact, so that Irish Aid have the appropriate materials and feedback to communicate effectively on GCE, and so that partners are clear on the materials and feedback that are most relevant to Irish Aid. Any such approach should ensure reporting requirements are adaptable to each distinct context and do not become excessively demanding to the detriment of quality GCE with the Irish public. As mentioned on P 75 of Ireland's 2026 GENE report, M&E should reflect GCE principles and practices. This would further build on the work of the IDEA Theory of Impact for GCE.
- Long term, predictable and flexible funding models will support sustainable and strategic approaches, and allow all GCE stakeholders to be responsive, relevant and innovative in their

methodologies. Allowing sufficient funding allocation for human resources would support GCE stakeholders to improve our collective impact measurement.

- Strengthening the all island approach with more clarity on delivery architecture that recognises the asymmetry between the GCE sectors in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- Strengthened cohesion between the CSU and GPU in Irish Aid in relation to GCE investment, to streamline operations, enhance communication and increase overall effectiveness.
- Leverage Dóchas Worldview research to include a GCE focus to better understand systemic level impacts of GCE.

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

- Through a broader and deeper understanding of GCE across government departments, including how GCE relates to other forms of values education (e.g. education for sustainable development, human rights education, anti-racism education, peace education) and how GCE is grounded within Ireland's international obligations through human rights commitments (e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child) and associated frameworks (e.g. Agenda 2030).
- Strengthened policy coherence for sustainable development to reduce conflicting priorities in policy and enactment at national, European and global levels, on core issues relevant to GCE e.g. climate justice, debt relief, fossil fuel extraction.
- Through interdepartmental staff development on GCE and associated forms of values education.
- An accompanying Communications Strategy whereby the Irish Aid Communications Unit uses the data and information from grantee annual reports to highlight and showcase the work of the diverse GCE sector online, in Irish Aid Annual Reports and at any other relevant opportunities. This would be supported by the aforementioned common understanding of impact in GCE and how it can be measured.

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

- The issues GCE tackles (e.g. systemic inequalities, power imbalances, global crises) are becoming increasingly complex, and educators are dealing with mounting pressures and competing demands which can result in limited time and capacity to engage with these issues. The skillset required to effectively facilitate learner engagement with these issues is changing and supports must be provided through training and resourcing. Allowing for integrated staff time and resourcing for quality and impact measurement would be instrumental to ensuring this happens.
- Measuring and assessing GCE learning is challenging in itself (as is the measurement of educational achievement more generally), and even more so in contexts where time may be limited. There is a need to acknowledge that while GCE may *contribute* to someone's attitudinal and behavioural change, these changes can seldom be solely *attributed* to a GCE intervention, and long term measurement of these changes can be challenging.

- Lack of clarity and agreement between Irish Aid and GCE stakeholders on what is meant by 'impact' and how this is to be measured and communicated, within the principles and reality of GCE practice.
- Artificial Intelligence is impacting on learning and learners, particularly with regard to critical thinking skills and information discernment, which further reinforces the need for GCE, to foster key skills and values such as critical thinking, empathy and solidarity.
- The gaps between GCE capacity and resourcing in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland as identified in the report *Shared Island, Shared World, Shared Future: Enhancing Cross Border Learning and Connection on Global Citizenship Education*. The submissions from CADA and the Shared Island Partnership (Dóchas, IDEA and CADA) provide more detail in this area.

**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?**

- Resourcing of the further development, systematisation and refinement of a mutually agreed and clear understanding of GCE impact, along with a supporting light touch MEL framework that is utilised by all GCE stakeholders. This would facilitate effective communication from Irish Aid on the impact of GCE across the whole GCE eco-system that is properly resourced to demonstrate collective impact. The IDEA Theory of Impact model and associated data visualization tool (currently being piloted) offer significant potential for such work.
- A multistakeholder group for strategic dialogue on GCE which involves Irish Aid, other relevant government departments, and representatives from across the GCE sector.
- Expansion of the 2026 Shared Island mapping exercise to comprehensively reflect the breadth of GCE activity in ROI and NI which can then further inform evidence based geographic targeting.
- Action on the recommendations of the *Shared Island, Shared World, Shared Future* report.