



Consultation Process for Development of new Irish Aid Development and Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021- 2024

- Submission on behalf of the IDEA Formal Education Task Group (FETG)
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Date of posting response: **March 19th 2021**

The Formal Education Task Group of the Irish Development Education Association welcomes Irish Aid's invitation to present a written submission about the future of Development Education in Ireland. The Formal Education Task Group (FETG) was established in January 2015.

The recommendations proposed by the FETG build on the existing successes and strengths of the Development Educations sector and actions in relation to these strategic priorities would, we believe, lead to a revitalised Development Education sector in Ireland by the year 2024.

Question 1. How can Irish Aid support life-long learning and increase public understanding of and engagement with development and global citizenship issues as well as increasing awareness of the Irish Aid programme?

- There is a need to clearly **define** life-long learning (LLL) and have a shared understanding of what this means. A suggested definition is https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:Lifelong_learning
- A commitment to LLL reaffirms GCE/DE as a vital means of implementation for SDG 4 and sustainable development, as outlined in the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, and as an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Goals, and IDEA welcomes the recognition of GCE in quality education and lifelong learning. The GCE/DE sector is really interested in working on a LLL basis and will support this through all of their activities
- If a new strategy is to clearly focus on LLL, there needs to be a strong strategy in place for this to enable a continuum portfolio of work right across all education sectors from early years right through to higher education, otherwise we risk silos and a lack of continuation and joined up thinking between the various sectors.
- Promoting civic space for dialogue with the education sector is crucial - not just containment exercise to classrooms, especially in terms of building an open and critical culture on the SDGs.

Question 2. Are there other groups or organisations we should seek to work with in order to build this awareness and engagement?

Early Childhood	Primary	Post-Primary	Further and Higher Education	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Early Childhood Ireland</i> • <i>The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Catholic Primary School Management Association.</i> • <i>Irish National Teachers' Organisation.</i> • <i>Irish Primary Principals Network.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Junior cycle for teachers (JCT)</i> • <i>Various teacher professional networks (e.g. subject associations</i> • <i>JMB</i> • <i>Gaelscoileanna</i> • <i>Post-Primary Languages initiative</i> • <i>ASTI</i> • <i>TUI</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>HEA</i> • <i>Campus Engage</i> • <i>StudentVolunteer.ie</i> • <i>The National Forum for Teaching and Learning</i> • <i>Solas</i> • <i>The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science</i> • <i>Youthreach</i> • <i>Hibernia College</i> • <i>Union of Students in Ireland</i> • <i>IUA</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quality and Qualifications Ireland</i> • <i>Irish Research Council</i> • <i>Migrant rights organisations, Akidwa, Pavee Point etc</i> • <i>Education Centres.</i> • <i>Professional Accreditation Bodies - Engineers Ireland; Social</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NAPD 		Work; Nursing;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) • NCCA • An Foras Patrúnachta • Range of school networks and trust bodies e.g. ETBI, ACCS, Le Chéile, Catholic Schools Trust and Educate Together • COGG • The Teaching Council • National Council for Special Education • Management bodies and parents associations • Textbook publishers 				

Question 3. What has changed in the external environment since 2017, both in the education sector and broader societal changes nationally and globally, and how should that be reflected in our priorities, our relationships and in our revised strategy?

- National conversation about education as a result of COVID-19 closures and greater awareness amongst parents/guardians about the work that is done in schools as a result of school closures, providing greater opportunities to engage parents with issues relating to GCE/DE
- Greater awareness of who is being left behind because of our education system, with careful consideration needing to be given to this, particularly in the context of digital outreach and digital literacy.
- On-going curriculum reform offers many opportunities for GCE/DE, for example junior and senior cycle reform and the primary curriculum framework review. At each level, the ‘framework curriculum’ model, with a balance between knowledge, skills and learning outcomes, offers huge opportunities for interdisciplinary approaches and transversal skills
- Availability of research, e.g. Growing up in Ireland (ERSI) and Children’s School Lives (CSL) provides better opportunities to understand the context in which we are operating in
- Emphasis on equality and diversity issues in Higher Education (HE) - with the existence of Athena Swan for example paves the way for greater GCE/DE in HE
- Greater diversity in student cohorts in all levels of formal education
- Greater use of digital tools but also a clear recognition of the digital divide since Covid-19
- Intensification of global issues, such as Increasing inequality due to Covid-19, a worsening climate crisis, rise of alt right across Europe, looming debt crisis. This has led to greater consciousness and understanding of these issues and many others since 2017, such as a greater awareness of the direct provision system and issues relating to gender equality. GCE/DE has played and continues to play a key role in helping people critically engage with these issues.
- Black Lives Matter and associated consciousness around racial inequalities in Ireland and greater considerations of one's own privilege when tackling global issues

- There has been a focus on the importance of transition - e.g. between Aistear and primary, primary and junior cycle, junior cycle and senior cycle, senior cycle to the world of work and further study. There is a need to do the same when exploring GCE/DE, particularly in the context of LLL.
- Emergence of student voice in national consultation and decision-making processes in second-level education. This is consonant with the wider national policy objectives as outlined in <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/35b4c5-minister-zappone-launches-our-voices-our-schools-online-resource/>

These changes highlight the ever present role of the formal GCE/DE sector in responding to societal changes impacting on people's lives.

Question 4. What do you consider to be the key areas of progress made since 2017 in the implementation of the Irish Aid Strategic Planning process? Are there any key lessons learnt or gaps in the current response?

- The existence of an Irish Aid GCE/DE strategy is extremely positive
- In recent years GCE/DE programmes have become increasingly 'visible' in the formal education system. There is evidence of a greater focus on DE by entities within the Department of Education, for example the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). The NCCA has been influenced by the sector's consistent response to public consultations (evidenced in reports on consultations).
- In relation to output 2 of the existing strategy, Capacity Development via IDEA has been successful. The development of the IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education has been hugely valuable for the sector.
- There is a really dedicated community of practice and expertise within the sector who are valued by participants and learners of GCE/DE. This is one of the most valuable resources as a sector.
- WWGS has been a strong success (pg. 29 of the strategy) in deepening the engagement of post-primary schools in GCE/DE and strengthening the support available to schools. The level of integration at post-primary is much stronger compared to a number of years ago.
- In post-primary Initial Teacher Education, the Ubuntu Network supported projects delivered a total of 243 hours of Development Education to 2,251 post primary student teachers on 25 ITE programmes across 11 ITE institutions in the Academic Year 2019-2020. Patterns of engagement over recent years show greater and deeper involvement in Development Education in post primary ITE.
- Teaching Council - Céim standards - inclusive education and global citizenship education as two of the seven core components is extremely positive
- There has been an improvement in the communications between Irish Aid and the organisations that are funded through annual grants and strategic partnerships. There is an openness to work together to enhance the delivery of GCE/DE within formal education.
- An increase in the number of strategic partnerships is a notable success of the strategy e.g. Youth and Adult & Community.

- Level of communication between the Irish Aid and the Department of Education has strengthened, particularly in relation to the ESD strategy.
- Members report that there is greater cooperation and support between individually funded agencies and organisations in the Development Education sector. This appetite for support and collaborative approaches strengthens our common efforts towards embedding Development Education in formal and non-formal education
- Curriculum reform at junior cycle includes explicit GCE/DE content and related skills (although there is still work to be done in terms of ITE/CPD)
- The reintroduction of 2-year multi annual funding in 2020 has benefited the sector
- Resource development and production has been incrementally more relevant and varied, including wider availability via developmenteducation.ie
- EU progress on European Pillar of Social Rights an important development in creating the environment for the achievement of SDG goals in the EU - <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1226&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9939>

Question 5. With reference to the five output areas of the current Irish Aid Development Education Strategic Plan, what do you consider the key priorities for 2021- 2024 should be?

Output 1 Policy Coherence:

- **Measurement of Target 4.7.** We have yet to get a baseline from the Department of Education (who have responsibility) – more clarity is needed on how 4.7 is being measured. Develop a cross-departmental measurement strategy for SDG 4.7 that captures the important contribution of GCE/DE in Ireland to achieving the SDGs
- In accordance with the Official Languages Act it is important that as a sector we are catering for the provision of GCE/DE through the Irish Language and that this can be resourced through the new strategy. We have improved significantly in this area over the last number of years but a lot more is to be done to cater for this.
- The link with development cooperation is vital - the distinctiveness of international agendas such as the Paris Agreement and SDGS, should be visible in a new strategy

Output 2 Capacity Building

Research:

- There has been a lack of funding for research in the recent past, an element of reflecting on practice, which has been badly missed in recent years. For this reason we lack sufficient depth and breadth of research in Ireland in relation to GCE/DE.
- A strong research base is necessary to advise policy makers and curriculum development.

- On the global stage research is a core element of such approaches to education e.g. GENE and the Angel Network.
- Link with the IRC around developing a research funding stream on GCE/DE
- Establish a network of GCE/DE Researchers who can have a coherent approach to research in the area of GCE/DE, similar to the ANGEL network
- Research needed around the implementation of GCE/DE, particularly it's impact on values and attitudes, again a need for longer-term impact measurement.
- In establishing a strategic partner for primary, this needs to be underpinned by independent research within the primary sector to ensure any programme for primary will be well informed and timely. Similarly, for any new strategic partnership – research needs to be carried out ahead of the call for a strategic partnership e.g. assess needs, baseline capacity etc.
- A working group, consisting of members of IDEA, could be established to compile a list of possible research areas to advise on gaps in the sector. This could be used to inform any research undertaken by the sector and to advise Irish Aid on areas for further research within and across the various sectors that we work.

CPD and Collaboration:

- Increased capacity needs to be linked to increased funding e.g. if we are to engage more unique teachers/learners over the course of the strategy, the capacity of various organisations involved in the delivery of CPD will need to increase also.
- Encourage more CPD opportunities for Early Childhood and Primary
- Greater opportunities for learning/CPD between the 'sectors' - cross collaboration e.g. formal education linking with non-formal education (e.g. teacher capacity building and youth & community capacity building)
- More thought on teacher capacity building - centres of excellence - part and parcel of the teacher training programme - voluntary currently - reaching lecturers as well - what's deliverable/what's needed to produce an environment to deliver GCE/DE. Teaching Council has an important role here - Céim sets out its role at ITE level - <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/news-events/latest-news/ceim-standards-for-initial-teacher-education.pdf>. Its role in CPD needs further work.
- A focus on schools management incl. - Principal and Deputy Principals - important to engage management who can support the whole organisation approach
- Whole institution approaches continue to be highlighted. Recognition that the whole school is a learning environment with in-class curricula and out of class opportunities for learning
- Schools are increasingly diverse communities in terms of ethnicity and national status. Need to have discussion with education partners and wider stakeholders on how to ensure that inclusive school policies allow for the conversations and learning that underpin cultures of respect, equality and dignity - core concepts in GCE
- GCE in key periods of transition - that is, early childhood to primary, primary (as children move between stages - whatever those stages might be in the future), primary

to post-primary (including the transition between junior cycle and senior cycle) and from senior cycle to FE/HE or world of work.

Output 3 Formal Education

Primary:

- A lot of ground has been gained already at primary, including the Our World Irish Aid awards, so a strategic partner will only enhance all of this work in a more coherent manner.
- Messaging/communications with primary sector in the event of a strategic partner is key - that is, this initiative is building on the existing GCE/DE foundation.
- Focus on disadvantage or those at risk of being left behind in the primary sector - small rural schools, Gaelscoileanna, special schools etc.
- The current Primary curriculum framework review (NCCA) provides great opportunities for GCE/DE.
- One strategy is to create more Communities of Practice at primary level, involving key stakeholders, teachers, school management etc.
- GCE at primary school level is happening at present but is an ad-hoc approach and in many cases is not recorded and/or is an add-on to the primary curriculum. There needs to be a much more focused, coherent and sustained response and one which is embedded in curriculum, in educational programmes, resources, ITE, CPD and in teaching and learning materials.
- There is a need for a strategic partnership at Primary level. A strategic partner at primary level would coordinate what is actually happening at primary level and provide a leading, cohesive and advisory role to everyone involved in GCE/DE as CPD, workshops, resources, awards and strategies (many by NGOs) evolve and are set in motion. This will require a body with experience and proven ability to deliver quality support at primary level.

Post-Primary:

- Senior cycle reform continues to provide many new opportunities for DE at post-primary.
- The NCCA has commissioned a major research project with UL on the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle. Would be appropriate to seek to have it focus on GCE in the JC Framework, especially as it will look at the re-developed CSPE short course that is now part of the Wellbeing programme.
- Future advice from the NCCA to the Minister for Education and Skills on moving towards more integrated programmes in the senior cycle curriculum will provide space for more interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge areas, including GCE/DE.
- IDEA and other GCE/DE stakeholders will continue to engage with the NCCA and the Department of Education on the emerging policy advice.
- Audit of assessment - junior cycle CBAs, senior cycle project, jc/sc exam papers - for GCE/DE.

- Continue with the strong investment in post-primary.

Higher Education:

- Greater collaboration needed at third level to design an effective strategy for engagement. Perhaps a pilot project could be established in this sector, partnership with a few institutions and a clear pathway or framework developed to show HEI how they can build on their commitment to GCE/DE. Examine HEI policy and practice to align to GCE/DE. It would be valuable to commission a mapping of HEIs to find out where GCE/DE is happening - where are the gaps and opportunities. Link with ESD strategy on this or link it to the promotion of the SDGs at higher education.
- There have been a lot of successes and developments taking place in ITE - with GCE becoming core - Céim made GCE/DE mandatory from 2023, which is a big recent win for the sector - poised to make major progress in the area of ITE on the basis of Céim. Important to link also to the Céim standard related to inclusive education.
- Support for higher education professional development programmes for GCE/DE is needed for educators at all levels
- Connect with the Forum for Teaching and Learning - who could even host a fund for third level or training of third level staff on GCE/DE

Question 6. Irish Aid is considering changing the name of the programme and strategy to Global Citizenship Education; do you have any comments or concerns in relation to this suggestion?

- It is vital for Irish Aid and partners to develop a position paper, preferably identifying GCE as the term, but locating it within the context of other terms. All terms are valid and have a historical significance, including locating our work in and through 'human development' debates and realities.
- Positioning of Development Education alongside Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and under the umbrella of Global Citizenship Education is an important development in the thinking around education for social justice, equality and sustainability, and shows openness to parallel, collaborative and complementary initiatives and developments in national and international arenas. It also allows educators greater scope to reference and demystify these related terms in the implementation of Development Education.
- GCE appears to be much clearer for participants and has more resonance with learners and with the wider community.

Question 7. What opportunities have arisen from the COVID-19 experience and how can we learn from it in order to reach a broader audience?

- The digital divide has presented some challenges (for online delivery). However, online learning into the future has the potential to also provide opportunities for the sector.
- Research needs to be carried out on the impact on online/remote delivery. Facilitate i.e. fund the development and rollout of high quality online training programmes through funding. Reliance on technology presents its own opportunities and challenges; issues relating to access and inclusion need to be carefully considered.
- Availability of digital learning content across the entire subject range proved problematic for second-level teachers. Several stakeholders have called for an upgrade of the Scoilnet, the national education portal, to this end. This might serve as a good opportunity to examine the range and quality of materials available to subject teachers that have a GCE dimension, building on the audits of development education resources studies.

Question 8. How can technology and digital outreach help us?

- Use of digital can provide many opportunities but it is a tool that needs an integrated blended approach with a continued focus on face to face for the sector. Many teachers/learners/participants in GCE have better skills in accessing digital tools but more capacity building is needed here and in relation to digital media literacy/digital skills.
- Technology and digital outreach offers potential to allow for different perspectives, voices etc. and to make inputs more accessible to many audiences. As a sector we are less constrained by location, and can reach a wider audience, e.g. more rural populations.
- It is critical that research is funded to allow us to understand the pros and cons of GCE delivery online versus face-to-face delivery and the impact of online methodologies.
- Technology is an important tool, but it is not an end in itself as not everyone is proficient and/or interested in engaging via technology. It is important that we are cognisant of the digital divide that still exists and we are aware of who gets left behind when we deliver GCE via technology and engage in digital outreach.