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

### Cover Page

- Nature of views (indicate personal / on behalf of an organisation): On behalf of an organisation
- Organisation (if applicable): The DICE Project – Development and Inter-Cultural Education in Initial Teacher Education for Primary Level. DICE incorporates a network of experienced academics in the field of teacher education and global citizenship education from Marino Institute of Education, Maynooth University, Mary Immaculate College and Dublin City University.
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- Freedom of information: Responses are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and may be released in total or in part. Please indicate if there are aspects of your response that you seek to have withheld, and the reasons for same. The DICE Project is happy for the response to be released.
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**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?**

It is crucial to note that development educators advocate for a much wider brief than public awareness of the aid programme; whereby DE is conceptualised as a space where teachers and learners are equipped to problematise contemporary global justice issues. New iterations of IA policy in this area should avoid the tendency to see the idea of increasing development awareness used synonymously with the concept of DE. These are two separate endeavours which should arguably have discrete objectives, diverse outcomes and separate reporting mechanisms.

This remains a key debate for the DE sector – how to balance the need for public information and confidence in the aid programme, and the importance of acknowledging the power of DE as a broader educational process. This debate could be enhanced by on-going dialogue about the appropriateness of a results-based approach to DE which is characterised by a focus on numbers, results and ‘measurable’ outcomes. An empiricist preoccupation with targets and indicators is not always appropriate in an education context where some outcomes may take considerable time to emerge. Medium and long-term participative reflections on process and outcomes are an invaluable part of any evaluation and learning process and educational success and attitudinal changes develop over much longer periods of time. If the new DE Strategy is to be relevant for teaching and learning in a new global reality, it must take cognisance of the fact that increasing public understanding of global citizenship issues should not be equated with increasing public awareness of IA, and that what constitutes results in education is very different to what constitutes results in the context of increased public awareness.

The use of the term ‘lifelong learning’ also reflects the journey from initial teacher education (ITE) to induction and in-service education. As providers of ITE for primary level, DICE is well-placed to contribute to the discussions around improved induction and in-service education in GCE and welcomes longitudinal research in this area to provide a foundation for an integrated approach to lifelong learning.

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

Whilst DICE is a strategic partner of IA, with specific interest in ITE, the DICE Network has significant experience as researchers and experts in the field of teacher education and global citizenship education. As professional teacher educators, we agree there is considerable scope for working with NQTs and DICE Alumni within the Droichead framework, and a clear need for the inclusion of a GCE workshop within that programme. The need for relevant CPD for all teachers exists within the continuum of teacher education and all providers of CPD should be of high quality with expertise in the relevant area.



**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?**

**Changes:**

- Reduced funding in third level institutions especially in humanities.
- The new primary curriculum and core components of Céim Standards.
- The variation in school ethos' and increasing school choices for parents depending on their location.
- The wider global context, e.g. climate change and children's involvement in campaigning.
- The Direct Provision system in Ireland and the links between migration and global development.
- Greater diversity in Irish society and in student cohorts at HE level.
- The growing consciousness around racial inequalities in Ireland and the need for the complexity of racial justice to be addressed in schools and communities.

**Suggestions:**

- Acknowledging the success of certain programmes at different levels within the education sector, there is a need that the new strategy incorporates research findings and is not based just on programme evaluations.
- The new strategy should acknowledge the importance of intercultural education. It is crucial that race equality is not neglected in the discourse. This is a complex area that touches on white privilege, white fragility and on sensitivities about historical and contemporary inequalities; whilst some might find this challenging, it is essential that it is part of the new strategy. There is clear appetite among student teachers to understand these issues based on our experience of organising events on this topic.

**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?**

- DICE acknowledges the positives of being a strategic partner with IA and the agreed Programme 2018-2022.
- DICE welcomes the focus that IA places on having a DE Strategy and acknowledges the stability that multi-annual funding brings.
- The development of collaboration between initiatives around sustainability is a success and the start of a journey towards a place where the umbrella term of GCE can frame the parallel areas of synergy in development and intercultural education.
- Improved communication between DFA and DES has resulted in greater openness towards a cohesive delivery of DE.
- At sectoral level, there has been increased cooperation between agencies, formal education and non-formal education sectors.
- There has been a deeper analysis and thought in the production of resources and the need for the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages to be widely adhered to as a baseline of best practice.



- The lack of oversight of DE across the continuum of education from early years through primary, post-primary and HE levels is a gap that warrants further research which could guide future strategies.
- A mapping exercise of schools, organisations and communities involved in GCE related projects would help minimise the gaps due to geographical contexts and take account of historical connections between individual schools and certain organisations.

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

**Output 1: Policy Coherence**

Compliance with the Official Languages Act is a key priority and the provision of ITE trí Gaeilge and appropriate resources should be included. This is not just a matter of the translation of material, it is imperative that the unique context and culture of Irish-medium educational settings is included in such developments from the start.

**Output 2: Capacity Building**

- Research is a key area in need of strategic investment and will result in a better informed and enhanced delivery of DE.
- Any new strategic partnership e.g. a primary level programme, should be based on a needs assessment and relevant research with input from expert teacher educators.
- A research focussed working group or advisory board would be a valuable asset in helping IA decide on the research gaps that currently exist and the VfM around longitudinal studies.
- Increased funding is required in the ITE sector to enable further deepening of GCE. Currently, DICE funding allows for only 30-40% lecturing time in two of the DICE Partners. An increase in this funding would enable further reach.
- Engagement of the various parties currently involved in CPD for primary teachers could greatly enhance the in-service provision of DICE related topics.
- The PMF is a time-consuming reporting framework which is well-worth the time investment if the collated results were shared amongst the contributors.
- Acknowledging the need for both qualitative and quantitative data, a discussion on how the information being collected by IA can be used to inform decision making would be worthwhile. Developing the research capacity of all who are funded by IA beyond monitoring and evaluation would have far-reaching benefits for GCE in Ireland.

**Output 3 Formal Education - Primary Level**

Through DICE, IA has invested in specialist modules in GCE in ITE and as such has a cohort of knowledgeable and experienced graduates. Options for their further in-



service development is a gap at the moment. Longitudinal work with NQTs and DICE Alumni would help inform our teacher education programmes.

Recognition of the differences between primary and post-primary is important – different patronage/management systems/networks; proportion of small schools; multi-class settings. There is a risk of focus on what schools are doing towards a rewards scheme over the depth of what the children are learning. As we seek to contribute to the deeper understanding of global justice issues, it is crucial that there is a focus on learning, in addition to activities. This is an important but complex process that requires a longitudinal approach and sophisticated research and analysis beyond quantitative data collection. The use of rich qualitative research methods to garner information on effective creative methodologies used with children to address the issues of global justice and interculturalism would be an asset.

#### **Output 4 Non-Formal Education**

A mapping exercise showing the areas where organisations are working on GCE and DE topics would be useful for both formal and non-formal education sectors.

#### **Output 5 IA Awareness Programme**

Continued development of the IA Centre and its availability to both ITE and in-service teachers.

Further clarity on the definition and measurement tools of ‘engagement’ would increase the understanding in relation to depth and breadth of GCE initiatives.

There is a need for investment in longitudinal research in GCE. As a network of researchers, DICE feels it is important that there is diversity in the research funding beyond measuring impact and evaluation.

### **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?***

The DICE Project supports calls from IDEA and UBUNTU for a position paper on language and terminology which may illuminate some of these issues and tensions in a more in-depth manner.

As it stands, there are many and varying definitions of DE that practitioners avail of in Ireland. The original IA definition describes DE as an active learning process:

...aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship (IA, 2007).

DE practitioners in the UK and Europe operate from a similar starting point and what is common throughout their definitions is that DE is a dynamic and participatory process which aims to deepen people’s understanding of global inequality and the interconnectedness of people and events around the world. For teaching and learning to



have a DE focus, it should include multiple perspectives, a link between the local and the global, critical thinking and encourage action toward a more just and equal world. DE questions political and unequal power relations between the developing and developed nations and encourages us to consider our own complicity in global injustice.

DE is a complex and contested discipline. In addition to defining DE, it is necessary to understand its intersectionality with other issue-based educations. From a DICE perspective, it is important to note that in Ireland, DE is most commonly associated, in particular in initial teacher education' with intercultural education (ICE). The NCCA conceptualises ICE as education which respects and celebrates the normality of diversity and supports students to identify and challenge prejudice and discrimination in their daily lives. ICE converges with DE in terms of 'almost all' (Fitzgerald, 2007) its key values, with a particular focus on a social justice base and scaffolding concerned agency among students.

There is much complexity associated with the conceptualisation and implementation of DE, stemming from its diverse and pluralistic nature (Bryan and Bracken, 2011). As a result, the positive side of this complexity is that DE draws on a myriad of perspectives and wealth of cross-disciplinary knowledge for its pedagogy. This richness and diversity should be represented in any future iterations of IA policy.

From a DICE perspective, 'Global Citizenship Education' used in the Teaching Council's Céim Standards for ITE could be a useful umbrella term to ensure that teaching and learning associated with both DE and ICE could be approached in an authentic, contextualised and coherent way.

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

While reflecting on the complexities of the Covid-19 crisis, it might be tempting to rush to 'lesson-learning' in order to help us make sense of our experiences over the last year. However, it is important to remember that we are still in the throes of this crisis and as a result it is not yet possible to make recommendations in any confident or evidence-based manner. The pivot to remote delivery of DE across a wide range of educational contexts over the last year, was done in the context of an unprecedented global emergency. While this might have had a positive impact on the reach of DE interventions, whether it had an impact on the quality of the DE that was delivered has yet to be determined.

As a result, at this juncture, it is essential to remember the critical pedagogy of DE. The focus on debate, discussion and dialogic praxis in DE is at the core of its emancipatory roots. Active and participatory methodologies have a huge part to play in encouraging DE learners to be proactive agents of change. In DE there is a focus on inclusive, dialogic and non-didactic ways for the teacher to impart information to their class. These methodologies take learners through a process of awareness raising, to critical thinking which then leads to informed action.

The shift to the online delivery of DE had a real impact on the extent to which active, participative and dialogic methodologies could be modelled in an online space. In teacher



education, lecturers have worked hard to create a space for students to examine global issues, reflect on their positionality and explore their underlying values system. In spite of efforts to meet this challenge in a confident, creative and skilful manner, these objectives have been extremely challenging to meet in an online environment. In some instances, complex and/or sensitive content had to be postponed as online learning would not have done justice to the themes/topics. From a DICE perspective in teacher education, the 'digital divide' and equitable access to online content was an issue for some learners. Some students struggled to engage in the remote delivery of DICE lectures due to inadequate wifi, unreliable access to devices, or because they did not have a safe or appropriate study space where they could participate meaningfully in class discussions. The sense of isolation and distance that many learners experienced during this time warrants further examination.

#### **8. How can technology and digital outreach help us?**

Technology can assist the teaching and learning of global citizenship education in a number of different ways. Much of DE is concerned with the inclusion of multiple perspectives, in particular, Southern voices in debates and discussions on development issues. The use of technology in this regard could have scope to explore links of solidarity between people in different parts of the world and examine how actions taken in one place can have consequences locally, nationally or internationally.

The flexibility of online learning carries the potential to utilise a variety of media and teaching techniques e.g. small group work, independent tasks, checking in with students; using a variety of formative assessment strategies. From a pedagogical perspective, digital learning can be used to scaffold independent research on a global topic among pupils, to incorporate interactive games/ quizzes/ stimulus questions into class time, or within the strand of media education, to analyse how certain global topics are approached in different forms of media in different parts of the world.

Recommendations arising from a recent report in Ireland on the potential of digital technologies to advance GCE in schools include: the need to focus on pedagogical strategies rather than specific technologies; a focus on the possibilities that technology can offer teachers CPD through blended programmes; well designed initiatives that include aspects of connecting with others using digital technology enhances a more nuanced understanding of the world; digital literacy and GCE are two dynamic and diffuse fields that are integrated areas of formal education, rather than discrete subject areas (Martinez-Sainz & Barry, 2020). Full report:

[https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/chrce/digital\\_technologies\\_to\\_advance\\_gce\\_in\\_schools.pdf](https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/chrce/digital_technologies_to_advance_gce_in_schools.pdf)