



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

This submission is made on behalf of GOAL

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Date of posting response: 19th March 2021

Introduction

GOAL welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the new Irish Aid Development and Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021- 2024. As a Humanitarian Aid Agency, GOAL is acutely aware of the many challenges the global community is facing and we believe that Global Citizenship Education that fosters learners' understanding of the interconnectedness and universality at the heart of SDG's is essential to contributing to Ireland's future as a sustainable, just society that takes responsibility for its role as a member of the international community and for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Please note that in this submission we are using the term Global Citizenship Education as an umbrella term that includes all Development Education programming.

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

For GOAL, global citizenship is not a destination to be reached but a life-long process of curiosity, learning and development and we believe it is important to accommodate the varying starting points and levels of engagement of the people we engage with as a sector. In our own work we understand Public Engagement (PE) and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) as a continuum with the same target competencies set as our intended outcomes, to varying degrees.

We are part of an active, broad Irish Development Education (DE)/GCE sector and see our programmes complementing the work of other agencies and organisations: together reaching different target audiences, coordinating to ensure best practice and increase impact. As such, we appreciate Irish Aid funding for the IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education and for the Worldview research project and believe that both initiatives will improve quality and impact.

Our recommendations are:

- To ensure a **clear and shared understanding of life-long-learning** in the new strategy and to provide **clear definition of Public Engagement (PE) and the relationship between GCE/DE and PE.**
- To **understand Global Citizenship Education and Public Engagement as a continuum** on which people engage on different levels. They complement each other to foster global citizenship knowledge, values and skills on the route to becoming or being 'active' global citizens. Investment in GCE should be prioritised over PE.
- To ensure **actions towards aligning a Global Citizenship Education continuum across sectors and subjects** from early childhood, primary, post-primary to higher education (including and beyond ITE) and community education, ensuring continuation and consistent understanding. The ongoing development of the new primary curriculum framework, senior cycle reform and National Youth strategy, will offer opportunities for further alignment, for example.
- To ensure that life-long learning includes **increasing efforts to ensure access to new or under-represented target audiences.** For this publishing a database that shows current coverage as part of Irish Aid funding to inform any future interventions and audiences would be useful.
- To ensure **continued and increasing funding over time of sector learning and community of practice coordination spaces** to ensure best-practice and coordinated approaches. This could include further investment in the IDEA Code of Good Practice management.

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?

In recent years, the clear rise of nationalist populism, reflected in right-wing violence and votes in Europe, Brexit, and the events surrounding the 2016 & 2020 US presidential elections, is posing a serious threat to global citizenship. Ireland has been slightly more resilient to these trends compared to other countries but is likely heading into a similar future political reality. In the face of this inward-turning populace, the challenge for the sector is to preserve and increase support for global citizenship.

At the same time, the global support of the Black Lives Matter movement has resulted in public discourse around racial inequalities, reflected in Irish discourse¹, and considerations of unconscious bias. Similarly, COVID-19 and the worsening climate crisis have contributed to higher awareness of global interconnectedness and the need for united global response to global challenges. After Swedish secondary school student Greta Thunberg's first school strike for climate action sparked the now global independent climate strike movement *Fridays for Future*, the Fridays For Future Ireland branch began since January 2019.

The re-development of this strategy coincides with a period of change in the sections of the primary sector education system in which GOAL operates, namely the significant curriculum changes from 2024 onwards. Through our in-person and now online classroom workshops, GOAL witnesses the increasing diversity of Irish classrooms and the increase demand for 'non-denominational/multi-denominational schools' is also evident, showing that norms in Irish society are changing rapidly. We see these impending changes as representing further opportunity to embed inclusive and creative GCE activities into the formal education sector.

Our recommendations are:

- To **increase global citizenship funding** and make a commitment to phased annual increases to reach the European funding benchmark of 3% of Overseas Development Assistance by 2025. This will help bring about large-scale positive societal support to fulfil the commitments of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and to both counter the presenting challenges and make use of the opportunities (both outlined above) for Global Citizenship Education.
- To continue investment in **research to better understand both attitudes and motivations** of the Irish public as started with the Worldview research, **and to invest in research to better understand impact of current GCE** to ensure maximum programming impact.
- To **strongly emphasise equality and diversity issues and strengthen the links between intercultural learning/inclusion education and GCE.**

¹ Examples: *Anseo* by Úna Minh-Kavanagh, Timi Ogunyemi's online presence, and "Black and Irish" Facebook/Instagram pages

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?

We want to acknowledge how positive a step the Development Education Strategy is for ensuring more coordinated action and impact measurement for the sector. In the OECD's 2020 Development Cooperation Peer Review of Ireland's approach to Development Education has been commended as having "received international recognition".

The development of the IDEA Code of Good Practice for Development Education has been an obvious success for the sector in the past two years. We also welcome the efforts to monitor sector impact as part of the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) and understand that assessing its impact is far from straightforward. We would like to highlight the potential to improve clarity regarding the relationship of Global Citizenship Education/Development Education and Public Engagement, and to improve PE impact measurement based on the Worldview research.

Our recommendations are:

- To invest in a **more robust system to oversee M&E of the strategy**. This could include a simplified data (online) collecting system and continuous access for implementing agencies to ensure that programming is informed by timely and relevant sector information, both quantitative and qualitative. Potential for alignment of PMF and RF data and end of year reports should also be explored. Also, a rationale for collecting specific data (for example demographic and background data) will be helpful.
- To **explore more flexible and best practice approaches to meaningfully measure qualitative impact**, acknowledging the different learning settings (including online) and capabilities of participants (including junior children).
- To invest in **research for improving long-term impact measurement of the sectors GCE interventions**.
- To provide **clear definition of Public Engagement and the relationship between GCE/DE and PE**.

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?

Our recommendations are:

Output 1 – Policy engagements and coherence

- To continue to **make links to other development cooperation agendas** explicit where appropriate to ensure an un-siloed approach to GC programming and ensuring that all forces work together.
- To develop a **cross-departmental measurement strategy for SDG 4.7** that captures the important contribution of DE/GCE in Ireland to achieving the SDGs.
- To resource the provision of **GCE through the Irish Language** in accordance with the Official Languages Act.
- To coordinate with relevant Government Departments to ensure **Global Citizenship Education continuum across sectors and subjects** from early childhood, primary, post-primary to higher education and beyond. The current Primary Curriculum Framework review (NCCA) provides a particular opportunity to mainstream GCE within Irish classrooms and in the Student Teacher curriculum.

Output 2 - Capacity building and collaboration

- To invest in research and consultation to explore the **opportunities and challenges for establishing a strategic partnership** for the primary sector and make decision based on needs, capacities, and implications.
- To explore how to ensure a **stronger research base to advise policy makers and curriculum development**, to ensure strong GCE policy environment. The investment in funding research/policy officers within organisations to lead on research could be explored.
- To research **effective online learning methodologies**, based on the experience of the sector in adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic, considering inclusion and accessibility, and best practice approaches to measuring impact of these programmes for different age groups.
- To encourage and highlight the importance of **more Continuous Professional Development opportunities for Early Childhood and Primary**.
- To encourage and highlight the **importance of whole institution approaches**, including school management, with in-class curricula and out of class opportunities for learning.

Output 3 - Formal Education

- To further **integrate and mainstream quality GCE in formal education** curricula, programmes, and structures from primary to third level, working towards mainstreaming GCE as a lens through which to view the curriculum, rather than as a stand-alone topic or subject area (as outlined above) and promoting it particularly in transition periods (early childhood to primary, primary to post-primary and from senior cycle to FE/HE or world of work).
- To further invest in **growing the development sector's primary school reach**, with a focus on reaching rural schools, DEIS schools and Gaeilscoileanna, and (see above) explore potential for establishing a strategic partnership.
- To engage and invest in **higher education institutions including and beyond Initial Teacher Education** to advance their commitment to GCE and support GCE capacity-building for higher education professionals.

Output 4 – Non-formal Education

- To emphasize **inclusion and diversity in GCE programmes** working directly with young people, in addition to reach and quality.

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?

In 2020, GOAL changed the name of its Development Education programme to Global Citizenship Education. We have observed that GCE is more accessible language and is clearer for participants. It has more resonance with schools and is better understood by the wider community. Positioning DE alongside Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) under the umbrella of Global Citizenship Education shows openness to parallel, collaborative, and complementary initiatives and developments in national and international arenas.

Our recommendation is:

- Irish Aid and partners to **identify GCE as the term**, locating it within the context of other terms, acknowledging that all terms are valid and have a historical significance.

- 7) **What opportunities have arisen from the COVID-19 experience and how can we learn from it in order to reach a broader audience?**
- 8) **How can technology and digital outreach help us?**

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly reminded the global community of the interconnectedness of our planet and highlighted the importance of community, collaboration, and the need to increase our resilience at local, national, and international levels. As such, the concept of interconnectedness, the values of solidarity and empathy and the commitment and the call to *build back better* in the recovery process, present significant opportunities on which to build as a sector.

On a practical level, COVID-19 has opened new opportunities (and challenges) in terms of online learning. The inclusion of participants from the Global South was a positive outcome for GOAL, and this will be a growing part of our future programming. Online tools have also made GCE workshops and programming more accessible for remote areas in Ireland. However, issues relating to access and inclusion need to be carefully considered, both within Ireland and when connecting around the globe. Measuring impact in this context should be further explored and we must find innovative ways, not just adapting what we would do in-person to an online format but developing new programmes that take advantage of the positives of online communication and collaboration.

GOAL is planning to incorporate these new opportunities, building on the experience by working with a blended approach, returning to face-to-face offerings as soon as it is safe and possible once more, and using online tools wherever appropriate and useful.

Our recommendations are:

- To fund, **alongside face-to-face GCE, high quality, innovative digital learning programmes**, while addressing issues of inclusion and accessibility, and investing in best approaches to measuring impact of these programmes for different age groups.
- To emphasize **opportunities for connecting people across the globe** as part of their global citizenship programmes.
- To increase **investment in online CPD for teachers and student teachers**, making it more accessible for remote schools.
- To **use the momentum created by the response to this pandemic by researching changed understanding and attitudes of concepts** of interconnectedness, and values such as empathy and solidarity.