

Global Education and Youth in Europe:

Practice and Policy

Compiled and edited by

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2024

GENE 



Co-funded by
the European Union

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The work of the Global Education Network Europe is funded by the European Union, and by the following ministries and agencies: Austrian Development Agency and the Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Belgium; Ministry of Education, Culture Sport and Youth, Cyprus; Czech Development Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Estonia; Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland ; Agence Française de Développement and the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France; Engagement Global, with funding from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany; Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland; Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Italy; Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Luxembourg; Ministry of Education and Employment, Malta; Ministry of Education, Montenegro; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Camões – Institute for Cooperation and Language, Portugal; Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation, Slovakia; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia.

GENE – Global Education Network Europe
13 Herbert Place
Dublin 2, Ireland

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Book design: Diana Stern

Electronic edition ISBN: 978-1-911607-29-8

GENE – Global Education Network Europe is the network of Ministries, Agencies and other bodies with national responsibility for Global Education in Europe. GENE supports networking, peer learning, policy research, national strategy development and quality enhancement. GENE works to increase and improve Global Education towards the day when all people in Europe – in solidarity with peoples globally - will have access to quality Global Education. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official views of GENE, the Ministries or Agencies associated with GENE, nor of the European Union.

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Foreword

Mr. Rareş Voicu

President of the European Youth Forum



Picture 1: Rareş Voicu speaking at the Dublin Conference, November 2022 (Source: GENE)

Youth participation is a fundamental part of building fairer, more inclusive societies. But meaningful involvement requires more than just goodwill or empty gestures - it demands structural support for young people and youth organisations alike.

Global Education plays a vital role in this process. It equips young people with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking needed to address the challenges of an interconnected world while fostering understanding, empathy, and responsibility. This publication, developed with GENE's expertise, highlights the importance of Global Education as a means to empower youth and create pathways for their meaningful involvement in shaping policies and decisions.

Still, we have to be honest about the obstacles. Too often, youth engagement is met with minimal recognition, and their contributions are expected to be voluntary. That's

simply unsustainable. To truly empower youth organisations, they need resources to build their capacities and be treated as equal partners in decision-making processes. It's not just about hearing them; it's about actively including them in shaping the policies that affect the future of young people.

At its core, this is about creating more spaces for meaningful participation, where youth perspectives can contribute to solving the big issues, we face today. By amplifying the voices of young people and strengthening these opportunities through Global Education, we're not just investing in them - we're investing in all of us. Let's make that commitment together.

Mr. Liam Wegimont

GENE Executive Director



Picture 2: Liam Wegimont speaking at the Dublin Conference, November 2022 (Source: GENE)

At the heart of Global Education lies a longing for justice, peace, human rights, sustainability, human flourishing for all. And along with this dream of a better world, there has always been an accompanying recognition of the importance of education in the pursuit, collectively, of a better world for all. As people have longed for a better world, they have also considered how to teach each other and learn from each other, intergenerationally, in ways that question the way the world is, in ways that seek to undermine current unjust structures and to build alternatives together.

Global Education, variously understood and differently named, is about just that – learning together how to understand what is right with the world and what is wrong with the world, not in order to just interpret the world, but also to change it. That is why youth work and Global Education are necessary allies and are intrinsically related to one another. Who better to teach us how to decry injustice

and create a world of greater justice, human rights and sustainability, than young people and their organisations? What major change towards greater human freedom, justice or care for the earth has not been sparked by, led by, or had at its centre, young people and their ability to organise and mobilise?

A personal story – I came to youth work late, having been a teacher for seven years. I left teaching on the basis that youth work provided for a better way for me to engage in education for social change. For almost 14 years I worked in youth work and Global Education – in youth worker training, the development of Global Youth Work materials, and in national and international policy. Then I moved back to formal education, and was a school principal for 15 years – in a school that was known for having a culture of student freedom, and where support for student-led protest - such as Fridays for the Future – was clear.

Life is complex – as are the relationships between formal and non-formal education – and teaches us nuance. Not all youth work is liberatory; formal education and schools can and often do provide spaces for freedom and critical thinking. While I may have a more nuanced understanding now, based on experiences of youth work, youth policy and later school leadership; nevertheless, the firm belief persists: youth work, in all its varied forms, is qualitatively different from the education that schooling can provide. Youth work puts the power of decision-making regarding what is learned, and how, in the hands of the learner. In the best of youth work, the structures of organisations themselves become the site of, and the laboratory for democratic engagement. This is why, just as with formal education, youth work is crucial to Global Education.

In GENE's work, for over 20 years, we have had a quiet but necessary insistence on the importance of youth work to Global Education. We realise this in many ways:

- Through support for youth organisation and national youth council engagement in the development of national strategies. While it is not GENE's role to tell sovereign governments how to conduct national strategy development, we do gently nudge where such youth engagement may not have been present or not yet (though this is less and less needed).
- Through direct engagement with youth organisations in the processes of national peer reviews – again seeking to ensure that national youth councils and youth organisations active in GE are consulted, and their voices heard, in the processes of development of, and follow-up to, peer reviews of GE policy and provision.
- Through our GE awards scheme, which, in 2024 for example, is focused on youth-led Global Education initiatives.
- Through the process of consulting the Dublin Declaration, which engaged existing youth

organisations, national youth councils and the European Youth Forum. Here we decided against establishing a new structure, and instead to work with existing structures to ensure their voices were heard in the process of the development of the Dublin Declaration.

So, I am delighted that we are able, two years after the agreement of the Dublin Declaration on GE to 2050, to publish this volume – a volume many years in gestation. We trust that it further attests to GENE's core purpose. We look forward to the day when all young people, and their organisations, and those who train the youth workers and leaders across Europe, will ensure that quality Global Education is at the heart of youth work across Europe; and that Global Education policy and provision support that necessary inclusion.

Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed their practices, reflections, insights and valuable time by participating in interviews, completing the survey, or sending their inputs via email. Your contributions have been invaluable.

Many thanks to the European Youth Forum, namely Mr. Rareș Voicu, President, Ms. Anja Fortuna, former Vice President, Mr. Kristof Papp, Policy Officer; and to the members of the Global Education Youth Working Group for a constructive partnership throughout this process: Mr. Philipp Türke, Austrian National Youth Council; Ms. Sandra Rozman Papak, Croatian Youth Network; Ms. Elisa Briga, EFIL; Ms. Electra Zacharias, IGLYO; Ms. Valerie Duffy, National Youth Council of Ireland; Mr. Raivis Gunārs Tauriņš, National Youth Council of Latvia; Ms. Sara Amaral, National Youth Council of Portugal; Mr. Dominik Derenčin, National Youth Council of Slovenia; Mr. Xavier Trians Gómez, National Youth Council of Spain; Mr. Antonio Martis, TDM 2000 International, Ms. Catriona Graham, World Organisation of the Scout Movement. Also we would like to thank all the young people who have participated in the survey and especially those who have contributed to this publication by giving an interview.

We also wish to thank the many policymakers who engaged in this process and contributed to this publication by sharing about their work and their experiences. Special thanks to Dr. Aravella Zachariou, Coordinator of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth of Cyprus, Ms. Cécile Giraud, Global Citizenship Education Expert, Enabel Belgian Development Agency, Ms. Sanna Puura, Senior Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland, Mr. Jaakko Lindfors, Counsellor of Education, Finnish National Agency for Education, Ms. Mare Oja, Ms. Liia Varend and Ms. Katrin Pihor, Advisors in the field of General Education, Department of General Education Policy, Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia, Ms. Maria Riordan, Education Officer, Global Programmes and Global Citizenship Education Unit, Irish Aid and Mr. Vítězslav Slíva, Ms. Ludmila Třeštíková, Department of Strategies and Analyses and Ms. Jana Ticháčková, Youth Department, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic, for contributing and reviewing the national policy chapters.

Finally, special thanks go to the GENE Secretariat for their guidance and support, including Ms. Katarína Kováčová, Ms. Rumi Gumus Mattiussi, Ms. Jo McAuley, and Mr. Liam Wegimont. Last but not least, we also would like to thank Mr. Mikhail Silvestro Sustersic for his support with data collection.

Abbreviations & Acronyms

AFS	American Field Service
ANGEL	Academic Network for Global Education and Learning
COE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEAR	Development Education and Awareness Raising
DG INTPA	Directorate General for International Partnerships
DGE	Directorate-General for Education
EC	European Commission
ECSI	Education for Global Citizenship and Solidarity
EDUFI	Finnish National Agency for Education
EE	Environmental Education
EFIL	European Federation for Intercultural Learning
EFJ	European Youth Forum (European Forum Jeunesse)
EPEV	Education for the Prevention of Extremist Violence
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
EU	European Union
EYF	European Youth Foundation
GCE	Global Citizenship Education
GDE	Global Development Education
GE	Global Education
GENE	Global Education Network Europe
IDEA	Irish Development Education Association
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFEA	Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
MSS	Mladinski svet Slovenije - National Youth Council of Slovenia
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	North-South Centre of the Council of Europe
NYC	National Youth Council
NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
OBESSU	Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programmes for International Student Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
WOSM	World Organisation of the Scout Movement

Executive summary

The aim of *Global Education and Youth in Europe: Practice and Policy* is to offer GENE policy-makers, both from Ministries of Education and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as other relevant stakeholders in the youth field, an overview of GE in European and national youth policies, so as to inspire continued support and inter- and intra- ministerial dialogue and coordination on GE and youth.

The idea for this publication emerged during the process leading to the Dublin Declaration on Global Education to 2050 (2022), which entailed a consultative process with youth, as well as survey research on young people, global issues and GE. The publication builds on the insights and dialogue gained from this engagement and expands on them through further research and analysis.

Gathering further data for this publication involved a mapping of Global Education (GE) activities in youth work and supporting policies, led by two researchers. The mapping aimed to enhance understanding of GE and youth work in practice, providing an overview of existing youth policies in Europe and relevant GE policies at the national level. The key focus was to look at the intersection of youth policy and Global Education policy and how they can be mutually reinforcing in relation to youth and Global Education.

The European Youth Forum suggests that GE should be mainstreamed across all policies rather than be a separate topic of youth policy, strategy and work. This publication is informed by that perspective and acknowledges the need to consider how GE policymakers engage with youth, not only as regards policies directly related to youth, but also in relevant GE-related policies such as education, environment and development cooperation.

The rationale and context are important for understanding one of the key aims of GENE's work, namely, to contribute to the implementation of the Declaration. We hope that this book can contribute by:

- Raising awareness of the **diversity and quality of GE practices in the youth field** so that these practices receive recognition and support, and their potential for development can be tapped into;
- Showcasing **good practices across Europe** and analysing the factors that have enabled or limited them so as to identify opportunities and lessons learned;
- Raising awareness about how **national and European youth policies** have guided and made GE possible so that policies continue to empower the youth sector and adapt if necessary to deepen and scale up support measures.

Global Education and Youth: Practice and Policy is published in the context of GENE's approach to policy learning, enabling ministries and agencies to learn from each other's policies and practices, specifically in the fields of youth policy and youth work in GE. In this way GENE hopes to inspire policymakers and other stakeholders in the field to build on these GE youth policies and practices and further enhance partnership, coordination and policy coherence.

This publication complements the GENE series of policy reports which started with the now biennial State of Global Education in Europe in 2015. These reports offer an overview of the development and state of GE in the European countries participating in GENE - policy, support, strategy, structures and sector-wide initiatives for GE in Europe.

The intention of this publication is to complement GENE's other published research and reports with the youth dimensions of GE. It offers a descriptive and analytical picture of the trends and practices in Europe. Given the differences in national contexts, the aim is not to offer an exhaustive analysis of all countries in Europe but to show a number of representative examples of what can be considered quality GE in youth policy and related policies, such as educational policy, as well as youth work in Europe.

This publication is structured as follows. Chapter 2 presents GE as experienced by young people. The team felt it was important to start from those lived experiences and perceptions of young people first, to understand their needs, aspirations and visions. Chapter 3 describes the main trends in youth work and GE practice and examines a set of examples of youth-centred GE practices, identifies their special features and the factors that have enabled them, as well as their challenges. Chapter 4 shows how national GE policies and youth policies converge to enable GE practices that put young people at the centre and, at the same time, strengthen youth work with GE dimensions. The cases of Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland and Ireland are described in order to distil key features and inspiring approaches. Chapter 5 looks into European youth policies and their interlinkage with GE. The publication concludes with some overall reflections and key policy recommendations.

We trust that the book will be useful to those engaged in policy development and analysis in youth work and in Global Education; along with those training and teaching youth workers and leaders. It will also be useful to other educationalists; and to all who wish to understand in granular detail some of the ways in which young people are already engaged, and the importance of youth work, and young people, in changing the world.



Chapter 1:

Introduction



1.1. Rationale

The idea for this publication emerged during the process leading to the Dublin Declaration when GENE engaged in depth with youth organisations through consultation, survey research and a mapping of Global Education (GE) activities in youth work and policies. The mapping aimed to enhance understanding of GE and youth work in practice, providing an overview of existing youth policies in Europe and relevant GE policies at the national level with a view to understanding how they can be mutually reinforcing in relation to youth and Global Education. In addition to findings at the policy level, the research revealed a wealth of rich and diverse Global Education practice in the youth field. By bringing these dimensions together and sharing them in this publication, GENE hopes to provide a useful reference in the follow-up and implementation of the Dublin Declaration, in the following ways:

- Raising awareness of the **diversity and quality of GE practices in the youth field** so that these practices receive recognition and support, and their potential for development can be tapped into;
- Showcasing **good practices across Europe** and analysing the factors that have enabled or limited them so as to identify opportunities and lessons learned;
- Raising awareness about how **national and European youth policies** have guided and made GE possible so that policies continue to empower the youth sector and adapt if necessary to deepen and scale up support measures.

In other words, *Global Education and Youth in Europe: Practice and Policy* hopes to inspire continued support and inter- and intra- ministerial dialogue and coordination of GE and youth among GENE policymakers, both from Ministries of Education and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as other relevant stakeholders in the youth field.

This publication uses the concept of Global Education defined in the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 (2022). It is based on key principles such as GE being values-based, designed to develop critical thinking and understanding of diversity, participatory and intentionally directed towards transformative learning. GE was defined in the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 as:

education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future.

Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education.

GENE always acknowledges the use of specific terms used in European countries to describe approaches, policy and practices in national contexts. The most commonly used such terms are Development Education, Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development, though other related terms such as peace education, intercultural education, etc. are often used and do in practice discuss global justice and sustainability issues. GENE welcomes the use of different, but related terminology, as outlined in the annex to the Dublin Declaration. One of the things they all have in common is the focus on young people as learners and agents of change.

1.2. Young people in the process leading up to the Dublin Declaration on Global Education to 2050

Youth work actors have become one of the key implementers of non-formal GE activities in Europe. But this was not always the case. Twenty-five years ago, participants of the GE events were educators, policymakers, representatives of development and peace NGOs and institutions, but rarely young leaders and representatives of youth-focused and youth-led organisations. This has changed drastically.

Young people are central to Global Education (GE) practices and policies, actively shaping and leading initiatives both as part of school systems and in non-formal education sectors. Their voices resound louder than ever before, demonstrating a vibrant community deeply engaged in shaping our collective future through their commitment to GE. Rather than being mere subjects of discourse about the future, young people actively drive initiatives as leaders of the present. This shift in perspective recognises their agency, leadership, and unique contributions to GE, moving beyond traditional approaches that viewed them solely as beneficiaries or passive recipients of educational efforts.

The primary role of the youth sector was underlined further through the partnership and consultative process between GENE and key European youth organisations in the lead-up to the European Declaration on Global Education in Europe to 2050, adopted at the Dublin Congress on 3-4 November 2022, Dublin Castle, Ireland. GENE convened policymakers, international institutions and key stakeholders in GE in Europe and beyond to take part in an 18-month long consultation process that led to the adoption of the new Declaration – a new European strategy framework for Global Education.



Picture 3: Anja Fortuna speaking at the Dublin Conference, November 2022 (Source: GENE)

“
Young people need to be at the table when we are designing education.

*Ms. Anja Fortuna, Vice President,
European Youth Forum*

As part of this process, consultations were held with representatives of youth organisations¹ and National Youth Councils across Europe. These consultations, conducted in cooperation with the European Youth Forum, took the form of a dedicated working group on Global Education (GE) and Youth. This working group provided a platform for dialogue and the identification of youth priorities for the new Declaration.

.....
¹ These comprise both youth-focused and youth-led organisations.

There were preparatory meetings in which representatives actively participated in the drafting of the Declaration's text. To support these contributions, the GE and Youth working group decided to conduct a survey among young people and youth workers involved in GE in Europe. The survey was translated in several languages and reached hundreds of young people in Europe. This brought several insights in values, understandings and GE activities in which young people are involved in Europe today.

Based on the experiences of the organisations in the Youth Working Group and the analysis of the survey results, the group brought up the following issues to the Declaration's Drafting committee:

- the importance of making non-formal and informal education settings and practices more central in the document;
- the need to recognise specifically the role of educators working in civil society organisations and to consider their training;
- the need to assure accessible funding schemes for youth organisations, often having low financial management capacity; to the adoption of the new Declaration.
- the importance of making more and better use of existing youth engagement platforms, networks and mechanisms;
- the relevance of making the SDGs a reference point for the implementation of the Declaration.



Picture 4: Peter Butchkov (on the right) at the European Congress on Global Education to 2050.

“

We have a long way to go to empower and engage youth. I believe this shows that youth have a place in GENE. This is the right way to engage youth. Whenever they are stakeholders, invite them to work with you while you are working on the documents.

Peter Butchkov, Acting Deputy Minister for Youth and Sports of Bulgaria - at Dublin Conference, November 2022.

The youth group played an active role in the drafting process of the Dublin Declaration, providing valuable feedback and comments on the draft text and articulating youth expectations from policymakers.

These insightful contributions and feedback were carefully integrated into the Declaration, ensuring that youth voices were heard and youth perspectives represented.

Young people were represented at the Congress by youth-led and youth-focused organisations and made up 25% of the participants. They participated as speakers and facilitators in several sessions, including at the Ministerial Session where they presented the youth statement which was pivotal in formulating the new European Declaration on GE to 2050.

In the Youth Parallel Session of Day 1, the group generated numerous ideas on how to engage young people in GE, including the following:

- Having youth-only panels and decision-makers in audience;
- Inviting young people in from the beginning of the process;
- Creating Youth Advisory Panels;
- Recognising the difference between youth representation and youth participation;
- Letting young people speak first;
- Developing youth research and ensuring collective representation.



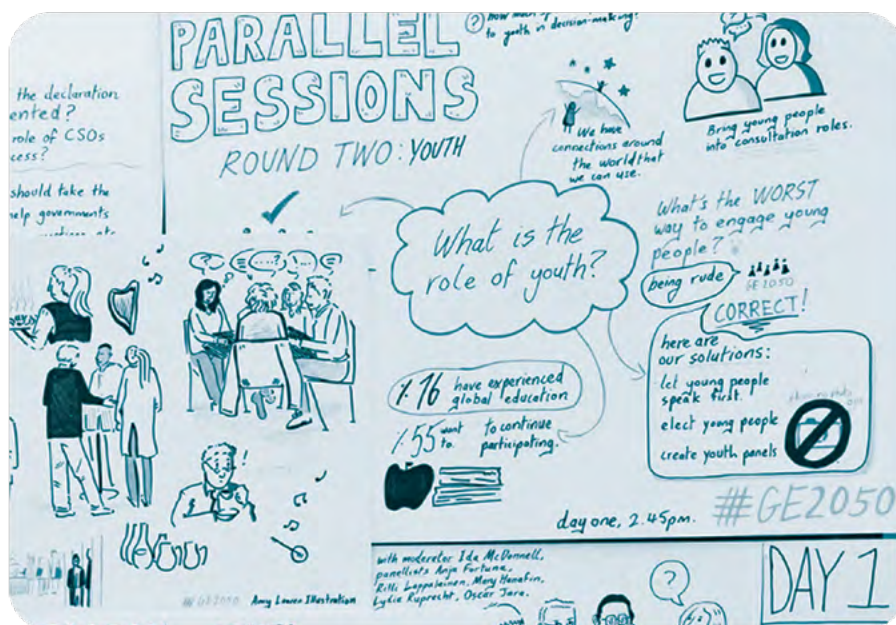
Picture 5: Rareş Voicu speaking at the Dublin Conference, November 2022 (Source: GENE)

“
We are asking for young people to be at the table at every step of the way in Global Education.

Rareş Voicu, Board Member of the European Youth Forum, and member of the Youth Working Group

Youth perspectives and creativity were also highlighted through a select group of young journalists². They interviewed participants and developed youth-led video footage on the Congress. Additionally, a talented young artist visually captured the essence of discussions, adding depth and interest to the event.

.....
² Young journalists included Louise Finan, Fabian Boros, Matthew Jess, Alannah Wrynn, Darragh Walsh, Angel Williams, Carolina Meregali da Rocha, Mark Healy, and TJ Hourihan, Coordinator YMCA Cork, Ireland.



Picture 6: Piece of graphic harvest by Amy Lauren during the Congress (Source: GENE)

The results of the youth sector's participation in this process showcased the depth and breadth of GE practices and the commitment to GE. But it also highlighted the need for a supportive policy environment that can respond to the learning needs of young people regarding GE, and that can also be nurtured by their ideas and innovative practices.



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[GENE \(2018\) Global Education in Europe - Concepts, Definitions, and Aims in the Context of the SDGs and the New European Consensus on Development.](#)

[European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 \(2022\).](#)

Chapter 2:

**Global Education
as experienced
by young people**



2.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the experiences of young people in Europe with Global Education (GE). It delves into whether they encounter global issues in their school curriculum, to what extent non-formal education contributes to their understanding, and how involvement in youth work influences their development as global citizens. Through examining these aspects, this chapter aims to understand the impact of these experiences on young people's lives and how they view GE.

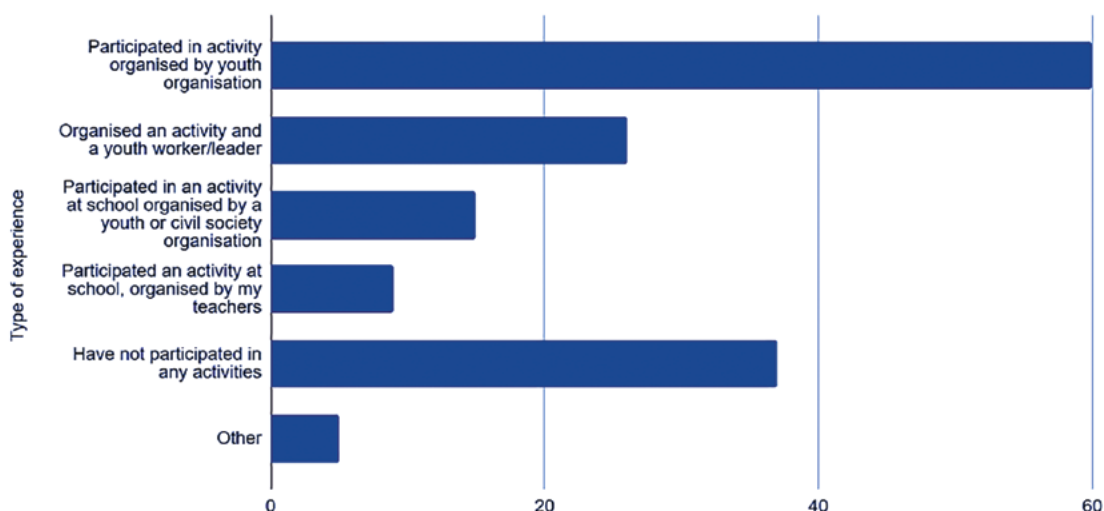
In order to learn about these experiences, GENE, together with the members of the Youth Working Group decided to conduct a survey on the experiences of GE among youth in Europe in 2022. This survey was developed to inform the consultative process leading to the Dublin Congress. They designed a survey questionnaire collaboratively which was available in English, German, Slovenian and Italian. The survey was widely circulated by the group members through their networks and social media during the months of February to July 2022. There were 154 respondents from 25 European countries. Eighty-five per cent of them were below 35 years, with a representation of different age groups within the category of “youth”³: 15-18 years: 14.9%; 19-24 years: 38.3%; 25-29 years: 18.8%, and 30-35 years: 13%. The majority of respondents were female - 64.3% - while 34.4% identified themselves as male and 1.3% as non-binary/other. The team complemented the information gathered by the survey with interviews with 14 people representing 12 organisations in nine countries.

2.2. Overall trends

Given the way that the survey was distributed - largely through youth networks - the team anticipated a degree of bias towards young people who had been involved in some form of non-formal education activity. An important assumption at the start of the survey was that young people who engaged in non-formal education activities in the context of youth work in Europe were likely to be exposed to activities in which global issues are addressed and discussed. This was confirmed as most survey respondents have had some experience of GE activities (76%), either as participants (55.3%) or as youth leaders/educators (17.1%). This is in any case a high percentage and noteworthy; it shows that young people find in youth work a conducive and safe space to reflect on the global issues affecting their lives.

The relevance of experiences that were organised by youth organisations (39.5%) in contrast with those taking place in a school setting (15.8%) is remarkable as illustrated in [Graph 1](#). It is also important, though, to indicate that some activities in schools were facilitated by youth together with civil society organisations. This result is expected as the survey was circulated among participants of youth organisations and National Youth Councils. However, it indicates that those participating in GE activities seem to do so more in the context of youth work, and less in a formal education setting. This is a crucial finding that reinforces previous research which shows the specific relevance of youth work as a space for learning and identity building (See for example, Allaste et al, 2022; and Del Felice and Solheim, 2011).

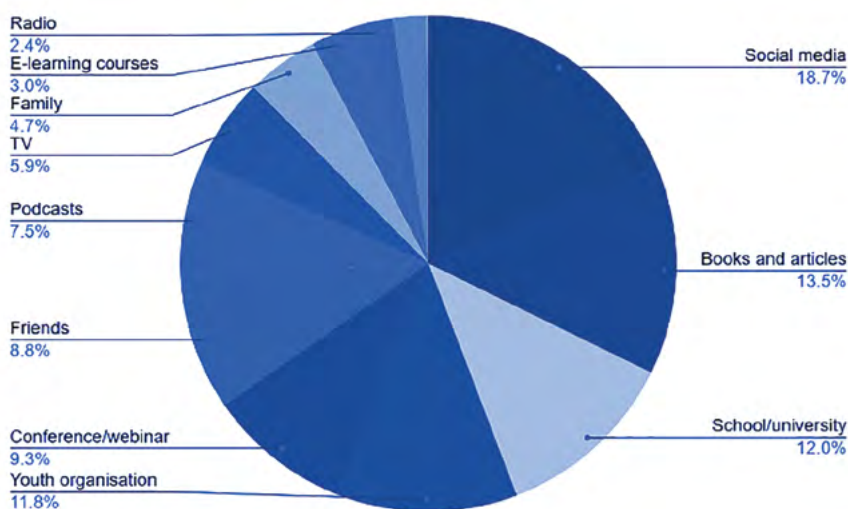
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³ Youth can be broadly defined as a transition from childhood to adulthood that has biological, social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. Different age ranges are used in Europe, and youth is defined by the European Commission as people between 15 and 29 years of age and multiple others at national level. See: Perovic, B. (2016) [Defining youth in contemporary national legal and policy frameworks across Europe](#). EU-COE Youth Partnerships.



Graph 1: Experiences with Global Education

2.3. Young people and knowledge about global issues

When asked about their knowledge of global issues, the average rate respondents give themselves a 6.5 out of 10, which is considerable. Young people report being informed about global issues in general mostly through social media (18.7), followed by books and articles (13.5), and through school or university (12%) and youth organisations (11.8%) as illustrated in Graph 2. This means traditional media and specific seminars appear less relevant as sources of information. In this group of respondents, formal education as a source of information on global issues is limited and almost equivalent to that of youth organisations.



Graph 2: Sources of information on global issues

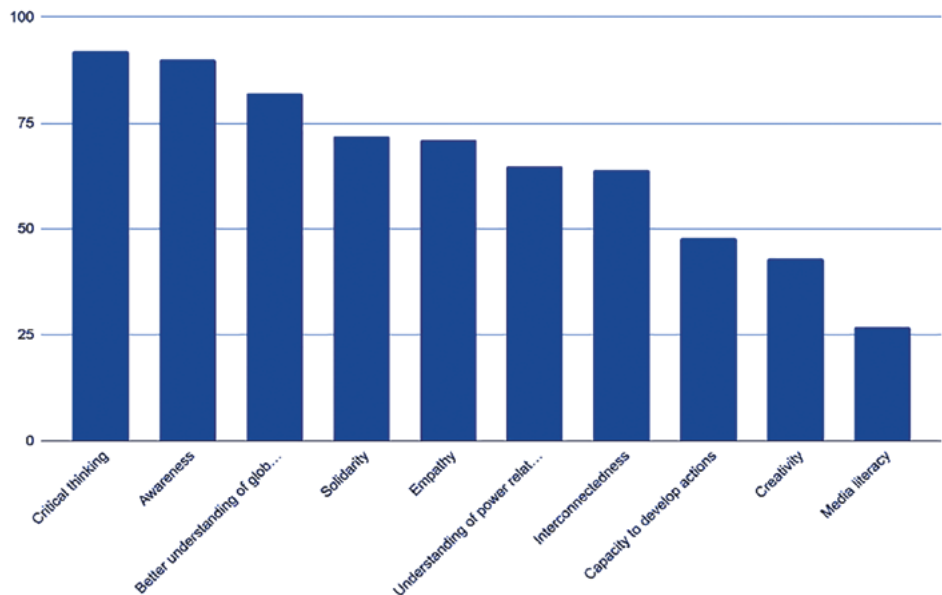
The key question that arises is not only how young people are informed about global issues, but most importantly, how they make sense of large amounts of information about complex and sensitive issues, especially in the context of ideological polarisation in Europe. This is why the need for facilitated, youth-friendly safe spaces of reflection and action is greater than ever.

Survey respondents indicated climate change as the main issue of concern. Interviews also revealed the amount and type of information can be overwhelming and lead to phenomena such as “climate anxiety” (Whitlock, 2023). After climate change, young people indicated they were concerned about the following global issues (in order of priority):

- Peace
- Quality of democracy
- Lack of youth and students participation and inclusion by national governments
- Global health
- Social injustice, inequality and exclusion
- Quality of education
- Migration and misconceptions about it

The findings of the youth survey above tallies well with the findings of the recent OECD Development Cooperation report⁴, in which GENE colleagues analysed existing public opinion polling in Europe and globally and found that not only is there a strong concern among the public about tackling issues of poverty, inequality and a just green transition; but that this concern is strongest amongst young people.

When asked about what they learned through GE activities, young people highlighted a series of skills and values, centrally critical thinking skills and awareness and better understanding of global issues as indicated in Graph 3.



Graph 3: Key skills and attitudes developed by Global Education

.....
4 OECD DCR 2024 GENE chapter 15 Public Opinion.

2.4. Relevance and impact of Global Education in young people's lives

The qualitative explanations on the impact of GE experiences indicate that these experiences were highly significant and relevant, and revolved around four areas.

- *Global Education has helped young people to develop key competences, such as **empathy**, **openness** to other perspectives, **critical thinking** and **self-reflection** on power in social relations.*

Respondents explained how GE has impacted every aspect of their young adult life. The experiential approach of activities aimed at developing skills and attitudes help young people address identity issues, enhance their self-esteem, provide them with tools to understand the world around them and how to relate to others. Respondents also highlighted that interacting with other young people helped them de-construct prejudices and stereotypes.



Picture 7: Anna during Dublin Congress, November 2022
(Source: LinkedIn)

Anna's story

Anna Bichon is Deputy Secretary General at AFS France. She is 22 years old and she participated in an exchange and intercultural educational programmes in 2021. These programmes aim to develop intercultural communication skills, empathy, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving among others. She now supports the organisation in preparing new participants. She shared that she keeps learning a wide range of skills in her volunteer work, from managing her feelings and fears to practical organisational and logistical skills.

“

My work as a volunteer at AFS means a lot to me, it is about sharing and living my values and helping other students have the same experience I had. It is humanly amazing. The experience makes you grow and deconstruct your own life. I feel I am a global citizen. I am French, a European and a global citizen.

- *Global Education specifically developed more awareness and understanding on global issues while also emphasising interconnections between local and global realities.*

Respondents explained how GE allowed them to have a better knowledge of the world and social issues that happened around them. It helped them explore the links between larger global issues and their local realities. One of them stated:

“

We learn that our choices and activism not only affect us but people everywhere. That is a sad but also very empowering thought. We're all in this together, for better or worse.



Picture 8: Nadine Toye (Source: Sintaxglog)

Nadine's story

Nadine Toye was the International Officer at the Irish Second-level Students' Union (ISSU) (2019-2020), and is currently a Board member of Organising Bureau of European School Students Union (OBESSU). She described one of the projects she led at ISSU, the European ChangeMakers Academy which aimed to empower young people to become changemakers in their own community, fostering active participation on the local level as well as part of the European and global community. This project brought together 120 activists from six countries in Europe. As it was implemented partly during the pandemic, they creatively re-designed the activities to online ones and managed to create local-international connections.

“

Throughout my term [as International Officer] I have immersed myself into the world of international student politics and I've gained so many new experiences and knowledge that I was always able to bring back for the benefit of ISSU and second-level students in Ireland.

Source: ISSU

- *Global Education has helped young people develop a sense of belonging to a global community and hope.*

Respondents explained how learning about the experiences of other young people helped them feel part of a wider global community. One of them stated that it helped him/her have a “feeling of connection and hope”.



Picture 9: Teté Bigman (Source: Afrikarte)

Teté's story

Teté is one of the leaders of Novisi Elkartea, a space of intercultural exchange created by young migrants from Togo and other West African countries to promote young African citizens' participation and rights in Bilbao and the Basque Country, Spain. They organise a wide range of educational activities in cooperation with the local authorities, notably an annual event called “Afrikarte” which combines an African fashion show, music and dance performances, and an arts and crafts fair.

“

These educational activities contribute to social transformation, creating changes in the dynamics of discrimination, exclusion and invisibility of minority groups. We want to highlight the richness and potential of Africans so they are seen in a positive light and promote a sense of hope for them and among host communities here in Spain.

- *Global Education activities have helped young people become active in addressing global challenges.*

One of the respondents explained that the impact of GE activities had been “huge”, and most comments stress that GE activities such as volunteering or cultural exchange programmes had been the first step in their engagement with social and global issues. One of them explained that activities “put a more open perspective on the world and maybe initiate the willingness to live an active life, and questioning circumstances becomes the new normal.”



Picture 10: Nico Edwards (Source: Youth Fusion)

Nico's story

Nico Edwards co-ordinated Youth Fusion, the Abolition 2000 Youth Network (2021-2023). This network facilitates intergenerational dialogue and cooperation in the nuclear disarmament field through the global Youth Fusion network – awarded the 2022 Voices Gorbachev / Shultz Youth Legacy Award.

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Finding your own voice on global existential challenges like nuclear weapons and climate change, is one thing. Believing in that voice and accessing the opportunities to make it heard, is something else entirely. This is what the Youth Fusion network means to us and what we want it to become for others – a space, a possibility, a reassurance that youth voices will matter in the making of tomorrow.





Picture 11: Raivis Gunārs Tauriņš (Source: Facebook)

Raivis's story

Raivis Gunārs Tauriņš was Project Manager of the National Youth Council of Latvia (2022). He explained how they organised Facebook lives and information activities to inform and engage young people in Latvia and the public in general. Topics have been the Covid pandemic, inclusion of minority linguistic population, rights of sexual minorities, and the war in Ukraine. He stressed that social media is also a space for raising awareness among young people, for example, the case of a young influencer whose resident permit was not renewed opened the space for a debate about migration and inclusion in Latvia.

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Projects focused on building on youth energy, thinking of young people as “social batteries”, these include educational activities such as awareness-raising and training activities.

2.5. Conclusions

Young people's experiences of GE reveal the relevance of youth workspaces and learning opportunities to make sense of an ever-changing world. They learn about global issues through social media, but also through books, school and peers. At the same time, they emphasised the importance of facilitated activities where they can understand not only the issues but also their interconnections, their personal impact, and their potential for influence. They learn practical skills and get motivated for action, feeling accompanied in navigating these challenging times, equipped with tools and experiences to channel their emotions and energy into constructive civic engagement.

Enabling a policy environment that strengthens Global Education experiences among young people in formal, and especially non-formal and informal education is key to the process of the construction of democracy, as citizenship needs to be learned and practiced at all levels. Supporting young people's participation in policy processes and involving them as equals in policy dialogues needs to be further supported, as all stakeholders gain from this exchange and develop a renewed understanding of issues that matter and how to address them.

References

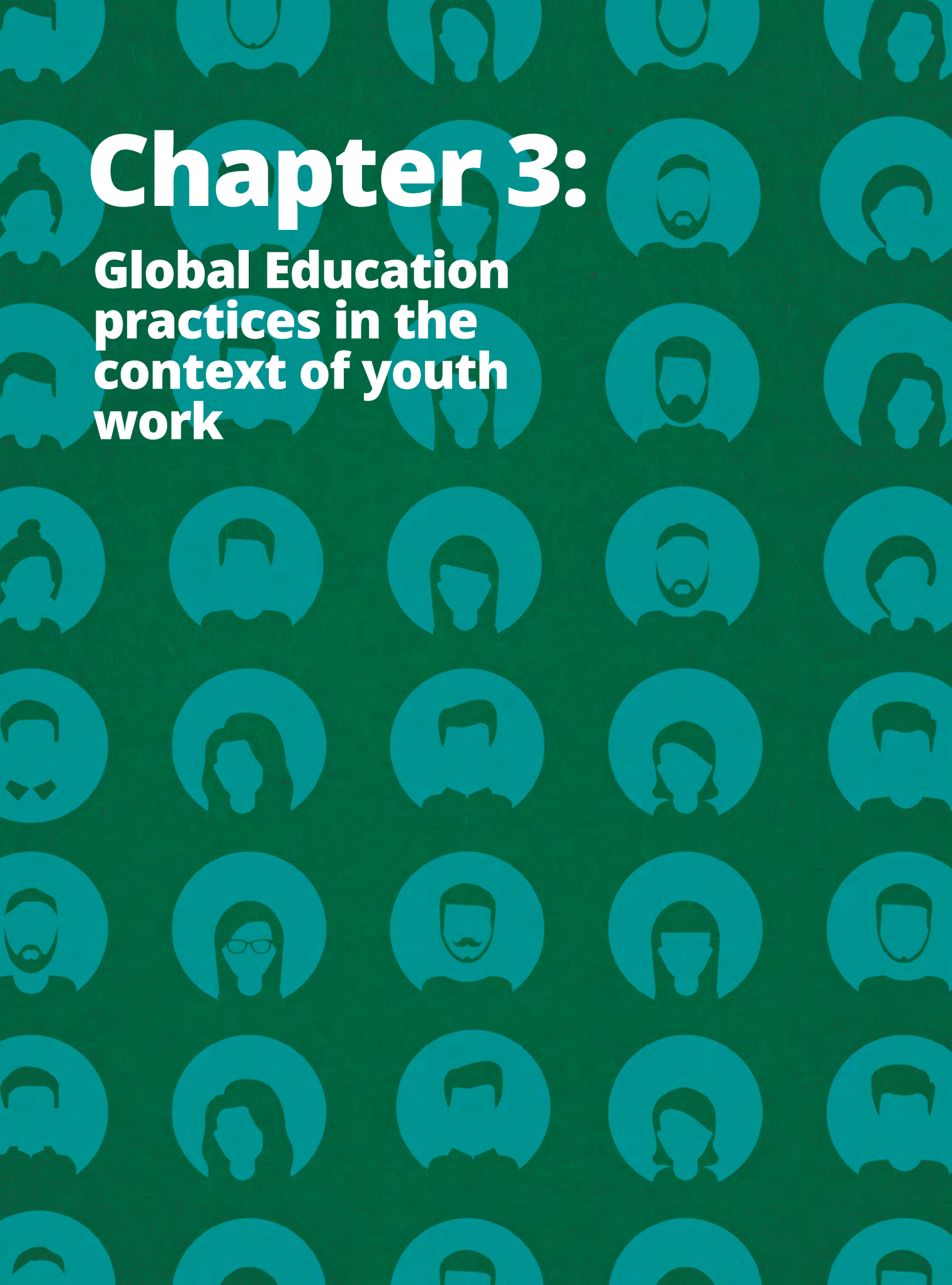
Allaste, A.; Beimann, M.; and Pirk, R. (2022) "Non-formal and Informal Learning as Citizenship Education: the Views of Young People and Youth Policymakers", *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*

Del Felice, C. and Solheim, L. (2011), "Youth organisations as learning organisations", *Development in Practice*.

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3.1. Introduction

Chapter 3:

**Global Education
practices in the
context of youth
work**



3.1. Introduction

There is a great diversity of experiences of Global Education (GE) among young people and how these have impacted their lives has been illustrated in Chapter 2. An increasing number of young people engage with the issues they feel concerned about, and many of them do so in an organised way through multiple organisational forms, such as local youth groups, student federations, advocacy groups within international development NGOs or social movements. The number of initiatives nominated to the GENE Global Education Awards (GENE, 2021) and their engagement in policymaking processes provide further evidence of a committed and vibrant sector. Importantly, what makes it a unique sector is that young people are not only benefiting from educational activities, but are taking initiative, co-leading, designing and implementing activities for their peers and other age groups. This allows them to shape both the content and approaches of activities, thus ensuring the relevance and an increasing accessibility to not-so-engaged youth through peer-to-peer language, but also bringing to the fore their “take” on issues, their aspirations and views while engaging in intergenerational dialogue on global justice issues.

This chapter aims to illustrate the rich practice of GE in the context of youth work in Europe and to contribute to the understanding of its special contributions, strengths, enabling factors as well as its challenges, so as to identify ways in which supportive policy environments can be enhanced.

This chapter starts by presenting the concept of “Global Youth Work” as a distinct approach which has emerged from practice and at the same time has guided it. It is a reference and a starting point for analysing the GE practices in the context of youth work. Subsequently, it is a framework to help describe practices is proposed, consisting of four key aspects: their thematic orientations, the centrality of a global dimension, the type of activities and the kind of youth agency, i.e. the kind of roles young people take in design and implementation of activities. The chapter continues to present the main characteristics of practices mapped using this framework, which are being illustrated with selected examples. The analysis of these practices is used to identify enabling factors and challenges. Finally, the conclusion offers key takeaways and implications for policy and practice.

This chapter draws on the information collected through a mapping study conducted in 2022-2023 which included a multi-lingual online survey, desk-research, interviews and consultations with key stakeholders. The mapping identified 170 non-formal education practices in the context of youth work which had central GE dimensions. These were implemented by 149 organisations in 31 European countries in the period 2017-2023.

3.2. Global Youth Work - a specific approach to Global Education

Youth work is a well-defined and distinct practice in some countries in Europe, having its own professional qualifications. In others there is a more diverse landscape of social and educational practices when working with young people, including welfare and cultural activities (Council of Europe, 2024). Youth work has been defined by the Council of Europe’s resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2009) as:

a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sports and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of 'out-of-school' education, as well as specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation.

This broad definition implies that GE activities in the context of youth work can be organised by public institutions or by civil society organisations, or a combination of both. It can be led and run by adults with and for young people or by young people for young people and through various combinations of co-leadership. In the context of youth work, it is important to acknowledge the existence of both formalised youth-led organisations as well as other informal groups and networks, such as, for example, campaign-based youth-led groups or cross-national online communities which may not be registered, but must be recognised as important spaces of youth informal learning.

Youth work practice and GE meet in the concept of Global Youth Work which has been defined as a form of development or global citizenship education. However, what makes global youth work distinct is that it starts from young people's own perspectives and experiences and develops a negotiated agenda for learning" (DEA, 2004:21 quoted in Sallah, 2009: 41).

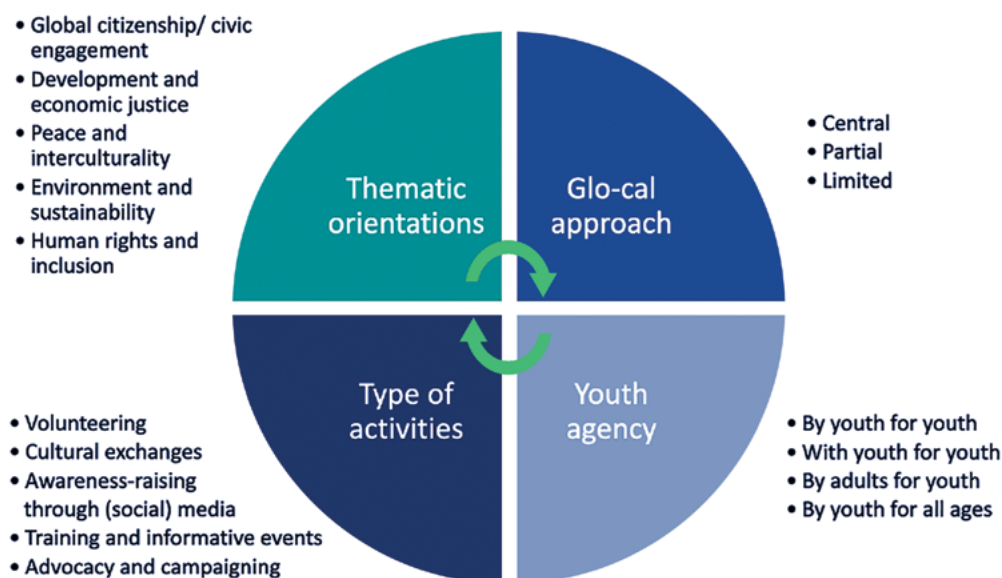
This is important as the mapping undertaken in the context of this publication focuses on activities in which young people's agency is at the centre. This means practices were identified primarily among those either implemented by youth-led organisations, networks and movements or youth-focused organisations in which youth had an important leadership role and autonomy. This was a choice given how specifically meaningful these spaces can be in terms of learning for young people. Young people perceive that one of the main benefits of engaging in youth organisations is learning competences for active citizenship and social transformation (Del Felice and Solheim, 2011). The study found that learning was facilitated by the fact that this type of organisation had little, or no formalities and hierarchies, which allowed young people to feel less constrained to express themselves honestly among peers.

3.3. An analytical framework

In order to explore GE practices in the context of youth work, an analytical framework was developed based on the concepts of GE and global youth work as referenced above. It looks at four aspects of the practices:

- **the thematic orientation**, that is, the topics or angles that the practice focused more on or that prevailed, given most practices discussed more than one theme, and often linked them with one another;
- the **centrality of a *glocal* approach**, that is, enabling critical awareness and actions on the local - global interdependencies and their social justice implications;
- the **type of activities**; and
- the **youth agency** observed, that is, the kind of roles young people take in design and implementation of activities.

This framework could be used to analyse any GE practice, yet, with regard to youth agency in particular, it stresses how learner-centred practices are and how they enable young people's engagement.



Graph 4: Analytical framework

3.4. Thematic orientations

Thematic orientations in the 170 practices mapped varied, but the main ones were global citizenship education, including political participation and inclusion; sustainable development in the framework of Agenda 2030; interculturality; peace education; gender equality and climate change.

Identifying the prevailing thematic orientation of mapped practices according to themes was challenging as most practices had more than one theme, and some such as gender equality remained implicit and transversal to activities rather than the sole focus of activities. The category with the most practices is global citizenship education (25.3%) which includes practices that address overall civic and political youth participation, with some degree of reflection on local and global interdependencies (glocal dimension) and addressing multiple topics. (See Graph 5 below.)

The second largest groups are Intercultural education (18.1%) and development education, notably with a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (17.5%). Though this latter is closely followed by peace education (14.5%) which largely overlaps with intercultural education. While practices focusing on peace education address issues like disarmament, violence prevention, and inter-religious dialogue, those dedicated to intercultural education focus more on intercultural communication, inclusion of migrants and refugees, and cultural minorities like Roma.

Development education is also very much linked to activities focusing on climate change (14.5%), protection of the environment and sustainability. These thematic orientations also greatly overlap. While development education practices focus more on economic justice, solidarity and overall awareness-raising and implementation of the SDGs, the climate and environment themes focus more on the sustainability aspects.

Finally yet importantly, practices also focus on gender equality and inclusion of sexual orientation and gender minorities (3%), human rights education (4.8%). This appears as a relatively smaller group in this sample, however these themes are present and mainstreamed in activities under other themes. At the same time, activities which focus specifically on these themes have a more local, national and regional focus, and less glocal emphasis, that is, with less explicit GE dimensions.



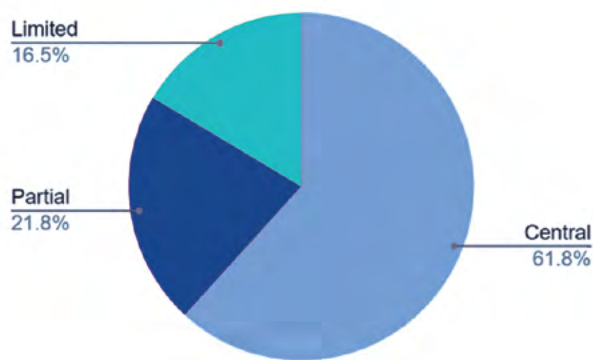
Graph 5: Global Education thematic orientations

3.5. Centrality of Glocal approach

Another dimension of analysis was to what extent practices adopted a glocal approach, that is, how they included activities and topics that help learners understand the interconnections and interdependencies between their local reality and global phenomena and helped them act upon them. For example, being able to take local action on global issues, and at the same time, realising the impact of these local actions on individuals and societies in other parts of the world.

Qualitative analysis of activities (topics and materials) showed that 61.8% of practices had a clear and central glocal dimension. Others adopt a glocal approach partially (21.8%), or in a limited way, for example, some focus on global issues but local action or reflections on the local reality were not evident. Conversely, in some only the local or regional dimension was explicit (16.5%). This is overall very positive, considering that it can be challenging to integrate

analysis of the local-global interdependencies in an educational practice. At the same time, it is important to note that this sample is already a selection of practices that were identified as a GE practice, so this result was to be expected, and additional research should be done on a sample of youth work educational practices as a whole.



Graph 6: Global approaches to youth practices

3.6. Type of activities

Most of the pedagogical and methodological approaches were competence-based and action-oriented, with a high prevalence of practices that were predominantly action-oriented. Non formal education based on learning by doing principles lead to active engagement of learners with issues, the challenges they pose, as well as the possible solutions. There is a direct link between learning and an active engagement in terms of making an impact, however small it may be, in the field. This means practices engaged young people mostly through experiential learning. The main activities identified were:

- Volunteering and community service;
- Outdoor education;
- Trainings and seminars;
- Cultural exchanges, and
- Advocacy actions and campaigns, including social media awareness-raising actions.

3.7. Youth agency

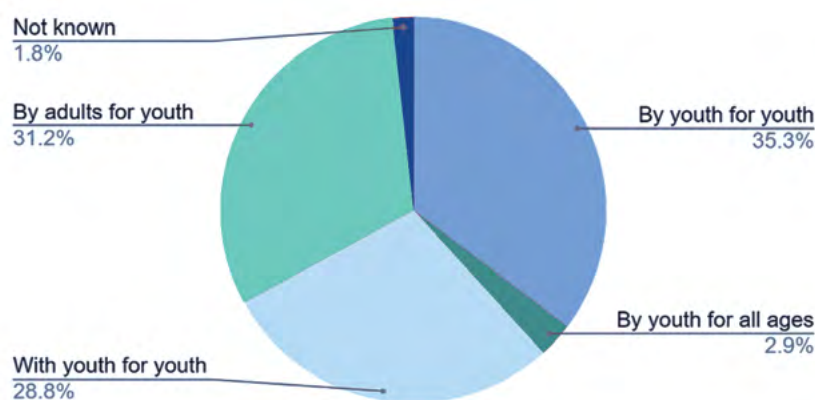
In most cases, these activities were youth-led or co-led together with other organisations. It thus seems that young people increasingly have more space to express their preferences and more agency to shape activities. In terms of capacities, activities are largely run by volunteers and unpaid activists, accompanied and supported by paid staff as coordinators and training leaders⁵.

This list presents the overview of the different ways young people were involved in the activities, as leaders, or as participants:

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⁵ For example, the National Youth Council of Ireland (2012) estimated that 383.000 young people took part in youth work activities in Ireland, supported by 40.145 youth workers who were volunteers, and by 1397 youth workers who were paid staff.

- Practices that were youth-led and for peers, that is, by youth for youth. These practices were typically organised by youth-led organisations, informal student groups and youth movements and international youth networks (35.3% of practices).
- Practices that were implemented with youth for youth, that is, in cooperation with other organisations but in which youth co-led efforts and had meaningful participation. These are typically practices that are implemented by a development, peace-building or human rights NGO or umbrellas, yet in which youth have ample space for implementing the activities (28.8% of practices).
- Practices that were implemented by adult-led organisations for youth as the main participants or beneficiaries, with a limited level of autonomy or responsibility in the management of activities (31.2%). Typically, these are workshops organised for young people in which they are attendees or trainees.
- Practices that were youth-led but which target society as a whole (2.9%). For example, we identified that Fridays for Future student-led activities aim at attitude and behavioural change in society and communicate directly to political leaders, teachers and parents. We also noted that artistic and sports events organised by youth also aimed to engage the whole community.



Graph 7: Youth work and youth leadership

3.8. Diversity of Global Education and youth practices

The sample of practices documented via desk-research and interviews indicate the breadth of practices and their approaches. This section briefly describes five examples to illustrate this diversity, how they adopt a central global approach and different forms of youth (co-) leadership, acknowledging that this is a limited representation of a wider sector.

Practices overview

Type of organisation	Thematic orientations	Glo-cal approach	Type of activities
International NGO network/ European platform	EFIL/ AFS - peace and Intercultural education	Building peace and justice, addressing negative stereotypes about other groups.	Cultural exchanges Trainings and seminars
International youth organisation	World organisation of the Scouts Movement - Environmental education; Sustainable Development Goals	Local actions and services in support of achieving the SDGs	Outdoor education Volunteering Awareness-raising
National Youth Councils	National Youth Council of Ireland and National Youth Council of Slovenia - Global citizenship education	SDGs North-South Relations Youth participation at local, national, European and global levels	Training and seminars and advocacy, creating spaces for young people to raise their concerns and propose their solutions to global challenges.
Youth-led campaigning group/ movement	Fridays for Future - Environmental and development education	Addressing climate change through advocacy at different levels, and individual behaviour (consumption and eating habits, fast fashion)	Advocacy and campaigning, awareness-raising through social media and activities in the public space

Table 1: Overview of youth practices in Global Education

European Federation for Intercultural Learning (EFIL)

EFIL (2023) is the umbrella platform for AFS organisations in Europe and the Mediterranean. Its aim is to contribute to peace and justice in a diverse world by promoting intercultural understanding and sensitivity among European and other countries, organisations and citizens. For example, one of its members, AFS France, promotes intercultural understanding and global citizenship competences through exchanges and training programmes. They prepare young people for the experience of living and studying abroad, as well as the host families who welcome participants from other countries. The initiative is based on experiential learning, and it is action-oriented as young people can practice their intercultural communication

and other skills in volunteer projects. AFS is an organisation that works for and with young people. Most activities are heavily volunteer-led and young people increasingly get more responsibilities and roles.



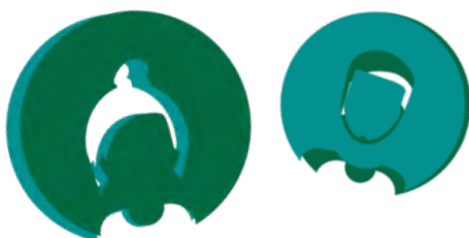
Picture 12: AFS Expanding Pupil Mobility (Source: Facebook)

World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM)

Scouting is the world's leading educational youth movement empowering 57 million young people and volunteers to be active global citizens and agents of change in their communities. One of its programmes, Scouts for SDGs (WOSM, 2023, sdgs.scout.org), encourages and supports young people to address the biggest challenges facing the world today, from poverty to hunger, peace and climate change. The Scout Movement aims to make the world's largest coordinated youth contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. To date, 2.8 billion hours of community service have been completed and more than 16 million local actions and projects. Testimonies confirm the positive impact of Scouting in equipping young people with tools to become active citizens.



Picture 13: Scouts of Greece (Source: [Scouts website](#))



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A game-based project that we really enjoy! New skills, new way of thinking, new attitude! Thank you Scouts of Greece for the great ideas, for the support and for converting the motto “creating a better world” into actions!”, young female Scout, Greece.

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Without Scouting, I wouldn't have the same ambition to create a better world” Paul Klahre, Youth Representative of World Scouting, Germany.

National Youth Council of Ireland⁶ (NYCI)

The National Youth Council of Ireland is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. It advocates on issues that impact on the lives of young people, promotes the development of quality specialist youth work practice knowledge and capacity building, and professional development. The NYCI supports the SDGs and is a member of the Code of Good Practice for Development Education of the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA).

GE is a central approach in its strategic plan (2023-2027) and three programmes can be highlighted: a) The Youth 2030 Programmes - Global Youth Work, which seeks to strengthen, support, and empower the youth sector in Ireland ensuring young people are informed, skilled and engaged as Global Citizens through Global Youth Work, challenging injustice, inequality, and climate change, in solidarity with those left behind; b) The North/South Youth Work Development Hub, which aims to strengthen and develop sustainable north-south youth work sector relationships among and between organisations, staff and volunteers, and enhance the quality of the learning experience of young people participating in youth services across the island and c) The Equality and Intercultural Programmes, which supports the youth sector in Ireland to embed equality, inclusion, diversity and interculturalism into their youth work settings and practice.

These programmes are supported by a rich set of resources which examine power dynamics, models of development and sustainability. Here are some examples:



Picture 14: Examples of resources provided by the National Youth Council of Ireland

National Youth Council of Slovenia

Slovenia's National Youth Council (MSS in its Slovenian acronym) is an umbrella organisation linking all national youth organisations irrespective of their various interests, ideological or political orientations. As a non-profit and non-governmental organisation, it connects

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⁶ <https://www.youth.ie/documents/irelands-youth-pact-for-the-future/>

national youth organisations and represents the opinions of Slovenian youth at the national and international levels. The key purpose of MSS is to defend young people's interests and promote their participation in the policymaking process in fields that significantly impact their lives and work.

Activities raise awareness about Agenda 2030 and support the agenda's implementation with its member organisations, partners, local youth councils and governmental bodies. Educational workshops and discussions are organised in combination with activities to enable the participation of young people in these topics at local, national and global levels.

This includes participating in Slovenia's government review of the implementation of all 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda. The process included youth in different stages of the process, and one of the workshops in the series of the workshops of the review was led by the National Youth Council of Slovenia.



Picture 15: Neža Repanšek speaking at the European Economic and Social Committee plenary debate on climate change, December 2023. Source: [Twitter account](#).

The Council has a Vice President on Sustainable Development and a working group on the topic. It has also a UN Youth Delegate programmes and impactful youth dialogue activities which focus on the topic and SDGs.

The Council also creates opportunities for young leaders to interact with their peers through activities involving their members, and also with policymakers and community actors in multiple spaces. Partners include the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, Slovenian Office for Youth, Club Alpach Senza Confini, UN entities, Focus Association, Institute for Youth Participation, Health and Sustainable Development (IMZTR), and members of the national and European parliament.

Fridays for Future Latvia

This is a youth-led informal group working in collaboration with other youth groups and organisations as part of the global movement, Fridays for Future. Their main activities are climate activism in public spaces, participation of Latvian young people in the international climate congress, practical webinars on environment-friendly habits, literary evenings, social media information-sharing. For example, the group participated in the Environmental Education Congress in Prague, Czech Republic in 2022. The group also organises local action in solidarity with global movements on other topics, showing the interconnectedness of global challenges, for example, joining a global protest against the war in Ukraine and highlighting the tragic impacts of war on human beings and the environment. Activities are proposed and run by young activists in coordination with other groups that are part of the movement, at European and global levels and in partnership with environmental local organisations such as Zero Waste Latvija.



Picture 16: Riga, Latvia, Climate March 25 March 2022. Source: [Fridays For Future Latvia Facebook Account](#).

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We invite every young person who cares about the future of their and their peers, as well as every adult who wants safe old days for themselves and their children!

3.9. Strengths, enabling factors and challenges

The analysis of practices identified and insights from interviews show that the youth sector is committed to GE, sometimes not explicitly so, but building the basic foundations in terms of civic competencies and action-oriented skills in youth spaces. The main strengths of youth work practices were their flexibility, innovation, and the readiness of youth-led educational efforts to incorporate new topics and outreach to peers and to persons of all ages as well as technology-based/digitally-hybrid, artistic, engaging and action-oriented activities.

The analysis also identified specific training on GE as an enabling factor. There are quality trainings and opportunities for professional development specifically targeted at youth workers or with a focus on youth, but the offer and accessibility of these opportunities differ from country to country (Taru, Krzaklewska and Basarab, 2020). It is important to note that youth work is not recognised as a profession in all countries in Europe but is often a sub-category

within social work or education. Often, there may not be specific training on GE within the formal higher education system for youth workers and educators working in the non-formal sector. At the same time, in those countries in which youth work is a professional field, there are remaining challenges with regard to the depth and quality of this training. For example, a study showed that there is no consistency across higher-education institutions in the UK, with a high variance of length and depth of study when including GE contents and specific competences in the curriculum (Sallah, 2009). Three examples illustrate the offer of GE training for youth workers.

First, the NUI Certificate in Global Youth Work and Development Education (NYCI, 2023b) is a university degree certificate/Special Purpose award delivered by the National Youth Council of Ireland in partnership with Maynooth University. The NUI Certificate in Global Youth Work and Development Education is offered as part of the National Youth Development Education Programmes “Youth 2030” which is a partnership between the National Youth Council of Ireland, Maynooth University, Trócaire, Concern and Irish Aid. The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is working in consortia with Concern Worldwide, Maynooth University, and Trócaire to deliver Development Education in the Youth Sector. This Programme sets out to build the capacity of the youth sector in the area of global youth work and development education. Chapter 4 offers additional details on how the Irish policy approach supports the environment for such practice.



Picture 17: Source: [NYCI](#)

Second, the Council of Europe’s North South Centre has been a pioneer in GE training and in engaging youth. One of its flagship programmes is the University for Youth and Development, in partnership with the Spanish government, the European Youth Forum, and the Spanish Youth Council, and it has taken place in Spain since 2000 (COE, 2024). The Centre has also offered a wide range of trainings, both face-to-face and online, which has explicitly aimed at involving young people and youth workers since 2008. Chapter 5 highlights European youth policies where European youth training features in more detail.

Third, multiple trainings and exchanges took place in the context of the Erasmus+ programmes. For example, a training of trainers course called “Global Educati-ON” (Salto, 2023) was de-

veloped under the Erasmus+ programmes dedicated to youth workers, teachers, facilitators and community leaders working on a regular basis directly with young people from seven European countries. Participants developed their knowledge on global justice issues such as responsible consumption, migration, natural resources and zero-waste philosophy, climate change, responsible business and critical approach to media. More on Erasmus+ programmes and the opportunities it offers can be found in Chapter 5.

Despite the promising landscape, the sector also faces important challenges. Three main ones emerged in the analysis:

- **Training and education of youth workers** - Despite the exceptional examples of GE training for youth workers described above, such training opportunities and their offer remain limited. Youth workers express a certain confusion around the different terms used and conceptualisations of GE, and there is still a limited number of formal and non-formal education training opportunities or qualifications on GE for youth workers in some countries.
- **Funding of youth work GE practice** - The limited long-term funding hampers the sustainability of these initiatives. Most practices identified relied on European funding schemes (for example, EU Erasmus+ programmes funding and Council of Europe's European Youth Foundation) leading to reliance on volunteers.
- **Partnerships outside of Europe** - Youth workers noted the administrative and financial challenges in setting up partnerships with organisations outside of Europe.

3.10. Conclusions

With its strengths and challenges, the youth sector makes special contributions to the advancement of GE. GE practices are action-oriented, innovative, technology-based, flexible, and create spaces for youth to reach out to their peers and to speak up and bring to the fore their perspectives in dialogue with other generations. Young people's testimonies on the impact of these activities on their personal development as global citizens shows their relevance. However, this chapter also noted the challenges that the sector faces to ensure the sustainability and quality of these activities. Political, financial, and pedagogical support to Global Education youth initiatives is vital. This could mean more accessible funding to youth-led organisations and strengthening formal education schemes and in-service training opportunities for professional youth workers. Funding schemes could also support the establishment of North-South/global partnerships, as a considerable proportion of funding requires partnerships at European level only. Strengthening and increasing national GE funding structures for youth is welcome.

Finally, supporting GE in the context of youth work has been shown to promote the participatory and inter-generational dimensions of education. It is important to continue to integrate young people as actors of change and partners, and not only as beneficiaries of programming. Recognising their special contributions and adopting an intergenerational approach in all GE sectors and activities would certainly strengthen youth involvement, and the relevance and inclusiveness of educational practice. GE does not only open people's eyes, minds and hearts to the realities of the world, but it intends to help us imagine how reality could be and how to bring about a world of greater justice. Engaging young people in that journey and building on their special contributions constitutes an opportunity that cannot be missed.

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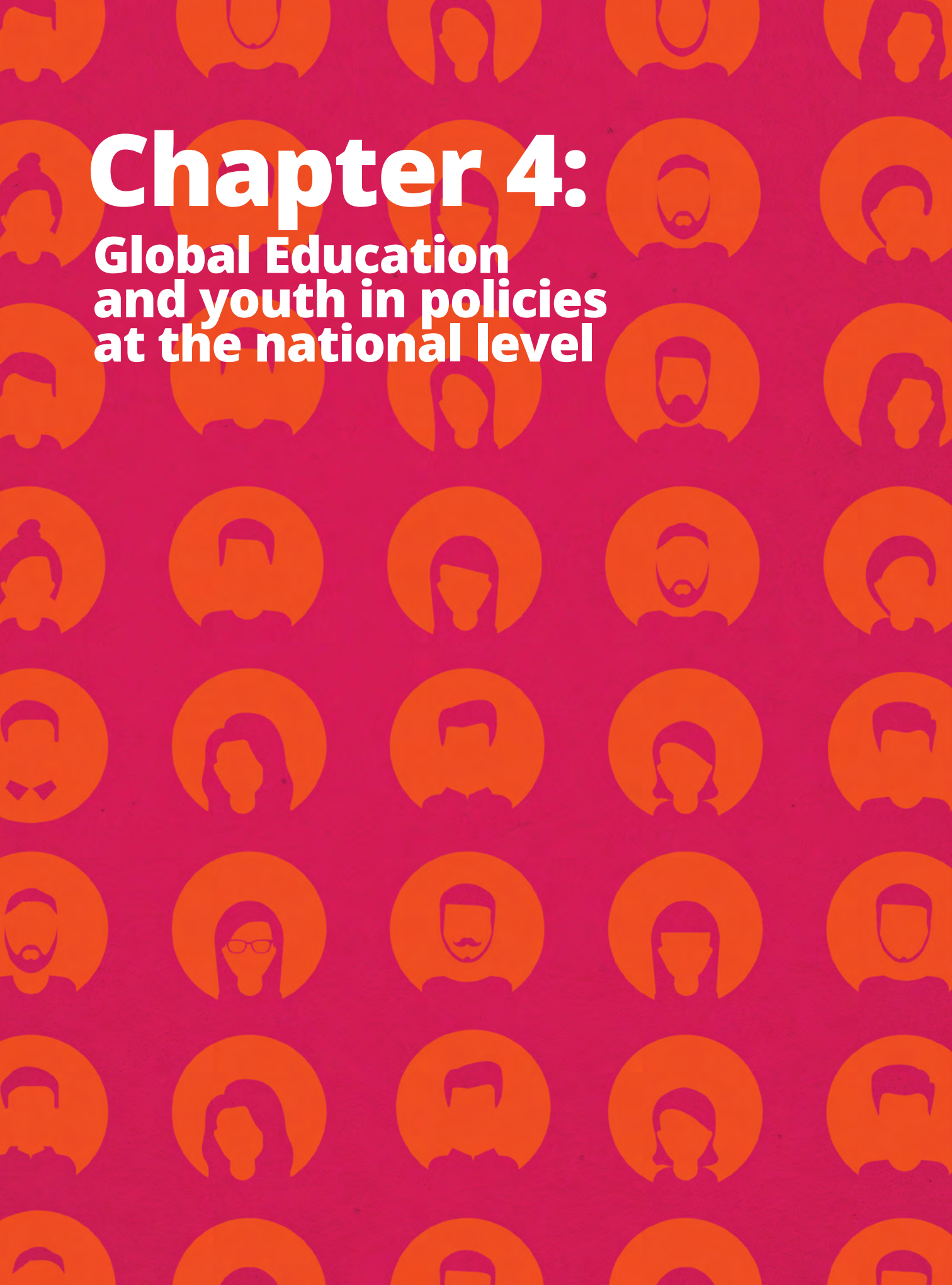
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Chapter 4:

Global Education and youth in policies at the national level



4.1. Introduction

The growing recognition of young people as key partners in Global Education (GE) has become evident in the ways policies, strategies and programmes have been designed and implemented at national level. In policy dialogue and meetings facilitated by GENE, policymakers often ask how they can reach out to and engage young people and improve how institutions work with youth organisations.

This chapter aims to respond to this need by exploring how national policies focusing on GE on the one hand, and youth policies on the other, have converged to enable GE practices that put young people at the centre and, at the same time, strengthen youth work with GE dimensions. The idea is to describe and illustrate different approaches to engaging young people in GE policy for the purpose of policy learning, highlighting key features in terms of coordination mechanisms, policy and strategy, programmes and support measures.

The chosen case studies were selected in an attempt to represent the wide spectrum of approaches and institutional frameworks needed to bridge the divide between young people and GE at policy level, as well as to ensure geographical balance within Europe. Data was gathered via literature review of national documents in the GE/GCE and youth policy fields, notably including GENE resources and the EU-supported platform YouthWiki; and six key structured interviews with GENE's members and partners in the period between September and November 2023⁷.

The analysis especially looked into how synergies were built and policy dialogue sought, considering that policy coherence⁸ between GE and other policy fields is a significant objective of the GE Declaration (2022:5). This was indicated by:

- Formal or informal coordination and dialogue mechanisms between Ministries, departments and units, including whole-of-government approaches;
- Long-term political commitments shown through the development of strategies and plans;
- Policy integration, particularly when youth dimensions were present in GE policies, and at the same time, in the way GE dimensions appeared in youth policies and practices;
- Youth stakeholder engagement.

This chapter examines the synergies between youth policies and Global Education (GE) policies. It looks at, first, how youth policies that promote civic education and encourage young people's participation incorporate GE dimensions, enabling them to tackle issues like climate change and social justice while fostering a sense of international solidarity through an understanding of local-global interdependencies. Second, it explores how GE policies can adopt a youth-centred perspective, ensuring alignment with national youth policies and other related frameworks.

The chapter includes six national case studies, presented in alphabetical order per country's name. Each national case study describes:

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⁷ A number of complementing interviews and fact-checking exchanges also took place between September and November 2024.

⁸ Policy coherence refers to efforts to put in place institutional mechanisms and processes to harmonise and manage often competing policy objectives and interests (OECD, 2016); more specifically horizontal coherence refers to the coherence within one level between policy areas.

- How GE and youth are conceptualised and understood in each national context; Who the key stakeholders are that constitute the institutional framework of both GE and youth, and the linkages between both;
- The policy approaches and synergies between GE and youth policies illustrated by specific strategies, plans, programmes and project examples;
- The funding mechanisms that support and enable such approaches.

Finally, it also includes some of the GE and youth policy highlights.

Youth policies in European countries typically cover a wide range of themes aimed at addressing the needs and challenges faced by young people. These policies are often designed to support the personal, social, educational, and economic development of youth. Commonly, youth policies in Europe promote educational opportunities to increase young people's employability, civic engagement and environmental awareness; encourage youth employment and entrepreneurship; promote social inclusion, accessible housing, mobility, access to cultural activities and young people's health and well-being. However, it is important to note that youth policies vary largely across Europe on a range of criteria:

- Age range of young people they work with (In some cases youth policies refer to children, young people and young adults starting from zero and going up to 30 or even 35 years of age)
- Thematic orientations
- Level of implementation - local, regional and national
- Where they are situated in the institutional organogram (youth policies are often the responsibility of Youth Ministries and Youth Agencies, or in some cases Youth Departments within larger Ministries of Education, Culture, Sports, Social Affairs or similar. Youth policies are often cross-sectoral as young people as an age group are concerned and their rights and interests are overlapping with various fields.)

Overall, the specific feature of youth policies is that they are largely developed in a participatory way, in cooperation with youth organisations (National Youth Councils, Youth Networks and movements) and young people themselves to ensure that they reflect the needs and aspirations of young people. This characteristic is well-aligned with the GE ethos, and pedagogical approaches that put learners at the centre as agents of their learning journeys.



4.2. Belgium's policy approach

4.2.1. Global Education and youth in Belgium

The definition used in the Strategic Note on GCE in Belgium (2024) refers to the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050: "Global Education is education that enables people to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world at local and global level. It empowers people to understand, imagine, hope and act to bring about a world of social and climate justice, peace, solidarity, equity and equality, planetary sustainability, and international understanding. It involves respect for human rights and diversity, inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future. Global Education encompasses a broad range of educational provision: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide. We consider it essential to the transformative power of, and the transformation of, education".

In Belgium, GCE has three components: education (formal, non-formal and informal), individual and collective mobilisation, and political advocacy. This is the concept used for all levels of education, whether formal and non-formal, including young people who take part in any form of educational process.

The Flemish Community officially defines "youth" in the [Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan 2020-2024 \(JKP\)](#) as the group of children and young people up to and including the age of 30. At the same time, the French Community uses different age brackets. For example, the [Decree establishing a Youth Forum](#) defines youth as aged between 16 and 30, and the [Decree on Youth Centres](#) focuses on people between the ages of 12 and 26. In addition, the German-speaking Community youth are defined as persons between the ages of 10 and 30 years. Despite these differences, it is clear that youth is a priority issue at all levels of government, federal, community and local.

4.2.2. Institutional framework

The main actors in charge of GE in Belgium at the federal level are the Federal Public Service of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation and the [Belgian Development Agency Enabel](#), both GENE members. Due to Belgium's federal setup, lead actors are at the community level. These include the Development Co-operation Department of the Flemish community (DIV), the Development Co-operation Agency of the Wallonia-Brussels community (WBI), the Wallonia-Brussels Council on Development Co-operation (CWBCI), the Flemish Department of Education and Training, the Ministry of Education in the French Community and the Department of Education of the German Community.

Local authorities also play important roles in promoting sustainable development and development cooperation. Important actors are the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities (VVSF), which offers training on global issues (like on the SDGs); the Municipal Councils for Development Cooperation (GROS), which has advised on issues such as the promoting Fairtrade products and spending 0.7% of the municipal budget for development cooperation; and the Union des Villes et Communes de Wallonie & Association de la Ville et des Communes de Bruxelles (AVCB-VSGB), which promotes local democracy and international engagement.

Civil society organisations active in development co-operation, humanitarian assistance and global citizenship education (GCE) coordinate through the following platforms:

- [ACODEV](#) – Fédération des OSC francophones et germanophones de coopération au développement;
- [NGO Federatie](#) – Flemish federation of NGOs for development cooperation;
- [CNCD](#) – Centre national de coopération au développement (National Centre for Development Cooperation) – platform of French and German speaking NGOs and associations involved in international solidarity; and
- [11.11.11](#) – Umbrella organisation for Dutch-speaking organisations, including NGOs, unions, and youth groups based on a political charter.

Though most organisations work with all age groups, some focus specifically on children and youth issues. For example, out of the 68 ACODEV members, which include CNCD and 11.11.11.; eight (12%) have as their main focus, children and youth rights and specific youth-related development challenges. Furthermore, youth movements and youth-led organisations also form part of community platforms. For example, members of 11.11.11. include youth-led and youth-focused organisations. This indicates the integration and overlaps of the youth and the development sectors.

In relation to the institutional framework of the youth sector, each Community has a minister responsible for youth, a parliamentary commission and a number of administrative departments with competences on youth and a number of specific youth-related budget lines. There are also agencies for youth at federal and community level that are also responsible for EU youth programmes. These include:

- JINT, which supports international exchange and cooperation of young people and youth organisations and is the National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps and coordinates the Bel'J programmes in Flanders,
- BIJ (The International Youth Office) is a service of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation and set up to manage international programmes intended for young people from Wallonia and Brussels.
- JugendBuro (Youth Office) is the contact point for extracurricular child and youth work in the German-speaking community.

Youth organisations come together in youth councils in every community, representing the voices of young people in policymaking (The French Community's Youth Council – Forum des jeunes in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation; The Flemish Youth Council in Flanders and the Council of German-speaking Youth (RDJ)).

The actors listed in this section and how they are connected shows a cohesive institutional framework in Belgium. Most importantly, this framework integrates youth-led and youth-focused organisations in policymaking as well as in the development sector. At the same time, youth organisations address global issues through their work and thus contribute to the GE field from their unique perspectives.

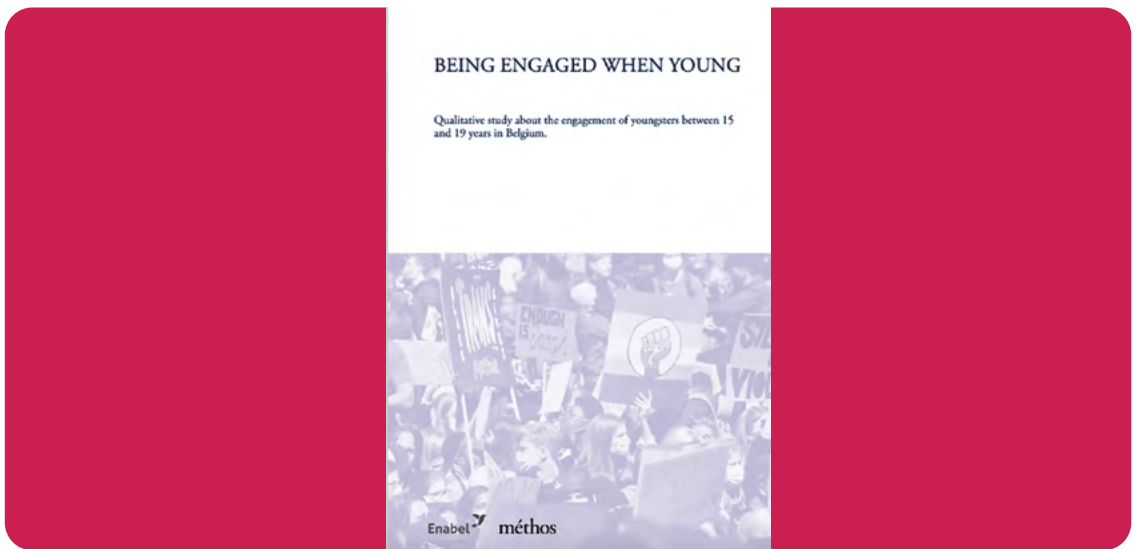
4.2.3. Policy approaches to Global Education and youth

GE policy and how it addresses youth

The last GENE-facilitated Peer Review in Belgium recognised “the strength of provision of Global Education in Belgium, whilst appreciating the complex context and structures involved, and also the strength of the policy framework and the quality and diversity of provision” (GENE, 2017: 13). At the same time, the review also recommended “considering the youth sector – and voluntary youth organisations – as strategic partners”.

In 2021, the governmental GE programmes (Kruit/Annoncer La Couleur⁹), implemented by Enabel, was approved by the Minister, in line with the ongoing refinement of the GE strategy. It was also decided that the programmes would broaden its scope (and activities) to three specific objectives: (1) Strengthening global citizenship education in the formal education sector, (2) Strengthening GE-actors strengthened with relevant expertise on global citizenship, (3) Strengthening youth engagement for global citizenship and international solidarity.

This process was accompanied by relevant youth studies implemented by Enabel. The first one focused on young people’s values in 2019 and the second on youth engagement in 2022. Another support document was published in 2023, supporting young people to create a space for youth action.



Picture 18: Source ENABEL.

It is to be noted that youth has gradually become a pillar in GE policy in Belgium. The vision of BeGlobal has become more focused on young people. In particular, the knowledge centre for global citizenship education, supported by Enabel (2024) is directed at young people specifically:

.....
9 Kruit/Annoncer la Couleur has since become BeGlobal.

We believe in the power of young people who are aware of global challenges and the opportunities that our global connection offers. Young people who think critically and take action individually and collectively for a solidarity-based, socially just and sustainable future.

Enabel's Strategy Position 2030 “# ACT FOR IMPACT” targets youth within its five domains: Peace and Security, Climate change, Social and Economic Inequality, Human mobility and Urbanisation. In recent years the interest in involving young people - particularly from diaspora in the GE related policy-making and implementation - has been evident, however more “know-how” is needed for full practical roll-out.¹⁰

Enabel also has a junior programme to ensure that more young people are committed to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. Young people, during their field experience, focus on developing competences, and on contact with local realities in the Global South (Enabel, 2022).

BeGlobal also offers tools and training for education professionals within formal and non-formal education, through its Global Citizenship Education (GCE) programmes “Annoncer la couleur”/ Kruit (“Speaking Out”). Interestingly, Enabel has developed several offers for young people under the name 'SoliDare': the SoliDare Fest, an annual festival focusing on international solidarity; the SoliDare Hack, which invites young people to devise solutions to global challenges; and the SoliDare Hub, an experimental model that prioritises youth engagement.

Box 1: SoliDare Hub

This project is part of a wider process, initiated in 2021 at the request of Minister of Development Cooperation, Ms Meryame Kitir, who wanted to better integrate young people into international cooperation, whether in partner countries or in Belgium. SoliDare Hub selects and accompanies five youth-led international solidarity initiatives contributing to one of the 17 SDGs in Belgium. Each initiative is pitched to an external jury that selects one project that receives a financial award to boost its implementation.

The initiatives take place in Belgium, but can also refer to one of the partner countries that is already developing a youth-led initiative. The initiatives selected in 2024 cover areas, such as: mobilising the Belgian population to send emergency contraception to conflict zones by connecting Belgian pharmacies with local pharmacies; opening academies to integrate sport in DCR schools; the establishing a mental health centre in DCR; the creation of podcasts based on poetry workshops in schools in Belgium, Burundi and Morocco, enabling young people to express themselves and connect across borders; the development of beekeeping contributing to employment creation for young women in Rwanda.

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¹⁰ Interview with Cecile Giraud, Global Citizenship Education Expert, Enabel Belgium Development Agency, 29th September 2023.

At the municipal level, the “Winning through twinning” programmes of the Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities is a good example of GE activities that centrally engage youth. The programmes facilitate youth exchanges and enable local authorities to be active actors in development co-operation by collaborating with partners in the South through town twinning or city-to-city co-operation.

According to Ms. Cécile Giraud, Global Citizenship Education Expert at Enabel¹¹, there continues to be strong support for GE, with strong civil society involvement and focus on youth participation in a number of policy related processes. However, this support is dependent on the current political leadership, which may change with elections.



Picture 19: Source ENABEL.

“For Enabel, global citizenship education should be part and parcel of all sustainable development initiatives.”

Source: *Enabel*

“We believe in the power of young people who are aware of global challenges and the opportunities that our global connection offers.”

Source: <https://beglobal.enabel.be/over-ons/>

The latest developments in Belgium are very promising. The 2024 Strategic Note on Global Citizenship Education states that the DGD also develops its own GCE programmes and activities. This is primarily via the BeGlobal programmes run by Enabel, the Belgian federal development agency. BeGlobal encourages young people to take their place as citizens of the world. In addition to supporting GCE in education, BeGlobal invests in research, focuses on actions to foster engagement among young people internationally, and promotes global citizenship within Enabel.

.....
11 Idem.

Youth organisations are recognised as important actors in multi-stakeholder partnerships contributing to the dialogues on GCE, as well as, with its implementation in practice.

Youth policy and how it addresses GE

The federal level of government has limited competence in education and youth, so there is no federal youth policy but rather at the level of the Communities: the Flemish, the French and the German Community.

Policy connections between youth, education and development policies have so far been implicit. However global citizenship education is an area where development cooperation, education and youth intersect. Furthermore, the youth policy field is placing young people and youth work high on the agenda, while promoting an integrated approach to policymaking. GE aspects are present in the youth policies in all three communities (YouthWiki, 2022):

- The current Flemish Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan (2020-2024) is the second plan with an integrated approach: including children and young people in all policy areas of the Government of Flanders. The plan is set to make a difference for children, young people and young adults in Flanders in terms of (1) well-being and positive identity development, (2) healthy and liveable neighbourhoods, (3) civic engagement through volunteering, (4) leisure for all and (5) media literacy.
- The French Community's political declaration outlines the priorities in the field of youth for the period 2019-2024, in relation to education, youth work policy, youth welfare policy, sport and culture.
- The German Community third Strategic Plan (2023) focuses on civic participation, digitalisation, emotions and self-image and the sustainable development of East-Belgium.

4.2.4. Funding of Global Education and youth

Belgium's total Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Euro 2.5 billion) increased in 2022 due to an increase in its bilateral aid, and represented 0.45% of gross national income (OCDE, 2023). Within this, the GE specific budget for 2022 was 28.540.585 Euro, which is 1.13% of ODA¹². In addition, Enabel has a budget of 1 million Euro on top of official budget for the Incubator programme¹³.

According to the EC Youth Portal, in 2023, the budget for the youth programmes was 65.662.000 Euro, which represents 0.1% of the total budget for the Flemish community in 2023 (62.555.985.000 Euro). In addition, the budget allocated to youth within the Department of Culture, Youth and Media is 58.223.000 Euro in 2022. The budget allocated to the Act on the Flemish policy on youth and children's rights (2020-2024) is 33.270.000 Euro in 2022.

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12 The figures have been submitted to GENE as part of country reporting in connection with GENE Roundtables during 2021 (Spring), as accessed at <https://knowledge.gene.eu/countries/belgium/> on 14th November 2023.

13 Interview with Cecile Giraud, Global Citizenship Education Expert, Enabel Belgium Development Agency, 29th September 2023.

4.2.5. Key highlights

GE is integrated and largely supported in education policy, there are aspects of GE in youth policies, and increasingly young people have become the focus of GE policies. The distinct features allowing for GE and youth synergies in Belgium are:

- Youth has become, in recent years, a clear priority in the development cooperation sector, resulting in a number of emerging GE initiatives aiming to strengthen youth participation in the development and GE fields.
- Strong support for GE is championed by the current political leadership, resulting in the introduction of experimental and innovative programmes substantiated with relevant funding.
- Strong civil society involvement and focus on youth participation in a number of policy related processes, has also resulted in integrating the principle of youth participation in GE.
- Integrated, cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial approaches are visibly present in the youth policy field.

4.3. Cyprus's policy approach

4.3.1. Global Education and youth in Cyprus

The [GENE Peer Review of Global Education \(GE\) in Cyprus](#) (2017) identified several distinct strands including: Global Education; Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development; Citizenship and Global Citizenship Education; Anti-Racism Education; Peace Education; Human Rights Education and Intercultural Education (GENE, 2018). This continues to be the case today, with many stakeholders acting upon these several strands, depending on their interests and areas of expertise. Officially, leadership and liaising with the Global Education Network of Europe is entrusted to the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute and the Unit for the Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development (EESD) of Cyprus' Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoESY).

In the Republic of Cyprus, the definition of youth encompasses individuals aged 14 to 35 years, a range that reflects the dynamic and evolving needs of young people as they transition through different life stages. This age range is officially recognised by the Youth Board of Cyprus (YBC) and forms the foundation for the country's youth policies and programmes. The [National Youth Strategy of Cyprus 2017-2022](#) and the subsequent planning for the country's National Youth Strategy to 2030 is the country's main youth policy document. The enactment of the strategy and the youth's participation in institutional mechanisms indicate that the youth are increasingly perceived as partners and actors in decision-making.

4.3.2. Institutional framework

The Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth (MoESY) is the government agency in charge of policymaking and implementation of programmes on GE and Youth in the Republic of Cyprus. A mechanism at the MoESY to ensure horizontal policy coherence between GE and other policies is led by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute which coordinates the Interdepartmental Committee on Global Education, of which the Youth Board of Cyprus, and other organisations are members.

The Unit of EESD is responsible for integrating and monitoring ESD in formal, non-formal and informal education in Cyprus and oversees the horizontal integration of GE and ESD in curricula and across all aspects of education. In addition to bringing formal and non-formal education closer together on GE and ESD, in the past few years the EESD Unit has also initiated a youth working group focusing on ESD and established an informal network of organisations and individuals interested in this topic with the support of UNECE.

Other relevant institutions include:

The Youth Board of Cyprus is tasked with the Republic of Cyprus's policy aspects that are related to the youth. This government agency was established to address youth issues, design and manage youth related programmes and initiatives, support individuals and entities with funding, as well as producing and disseminating information on youth policies and opportunities. The Youth Board of Cyprus plays a key role as the official mechanism through which young people and their organisations are consulted on the formulation of national policies, mostly those directly affecting young people. The Youth Board and its members are largely involved in non-formal education activities on the topics relevant for youth and GE in Cyprus.

The Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes administers the Erasmus+ programme in Cyprus. This public foundation serves as the national agency responsible for implementing and overseeing the Erasmus+ programme at the national level. It works to ensure that Cypriot students, educators, and organisations can fully benefit from the opportunities offered by Erasmus+, which include international mobility for education, training, youth exchanges, and volunteering.

The Observatory on School Violence in Cyprus is a specialised body under the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth tasked with monitoring, analysing, and addressing issues of violence and bullying in schools. Its primary goal is to promote safer, more inclusive educational environments. The Observatory collects data on incidents of school violence, conducts research, and develops prevention strategies. It also provides support and training to teachers, students, and parents on how to manage and prevent violence. Through its initiatives, the Observatory aims to foster positive behaviours and ensure the well-being of students in Cyprus.

Other relevant independent governmental offices include the Office of the Commissioner for State Aid Control, the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment, the Office of the Commissioner for Children's Rights, and more, all of whom are involved in international cooperation and activities for young people.

Many civil society organisations in Cyprus are also active in leading GE activities and adopting youth-inclusive approaches. For example, the Center for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology – CARDET, the Centre for Social Innovation (CSI), Citizens in Power (CIP), the NGO Support Centre, the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, Sistema Cyprus, and more, are organisations that work in the areas of education, sustainable development, social justice and technology-empowered solutions with a central focus on youth.

Finally, the voices and aspirations of Cypriot youth are also represented by the [Cyprus Youth Council \(CYC\)](#). Several of the Council's member organisations such as [Friends of the Earth](#), and [Youth for Exchange and Understanding \(YEU\)](#) work on GE topics.



Picture 20: Mr. Loizos Loukaidis, Director of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, presenting the Association's educational materials for Gender Equality.

4.3.3. Policy approaches to Global Education and youth

Cyprus's policymaking and implementation processes operate under the principle that greater inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral cooperation is essential for enhancing the complementarity and effectiveness of governmental policies. Consequently, there is an inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral committee at the level of the Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth (MoESY) that brings together key representatives related to Global Education (GE), including civil society and youth representatives. This committee discusses developments in GE and explores how each member can contribute to sharing information and promoting GE, particularly concerning the annual GE week in November. In 2023, the theme of GE week focused on youth and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The MoESY's vision features youth empowerment alongside its mandate to develop literate citizens with skills, responsibility, democratic ethos, historical identity, as well as respect for diversity. In general, policy and decision-makers are increasingly creating the essential opportunities for the youth voices and perspectives to inform policy and decision-making.



Box 2: Youth Parliamentary Discussion

The Youth Parliamentary Discussion is one of the mechanisms used to capture the youth's perspectives on critical issues. In 2023, these issues included the climate crisis and sustainability, as well as inclusivity and democracy. In formal education, alongside the focus on empowering and building the capacities of teachers, there is a strengthened emphasis on youth participation. Another example comes from the work of municipalities, such as the Municipality of Nicosia, that offers after-school programmes, community centres, counselling centres, and educational seminars, as well as social and cultural events, sports, and festivals primarily for young people, contributing to their engagement with Global Education activities.

While there is no formalised Global Education (GE) policy per se, GE is integrated into the sustainable development policy, as well as in other policy documents related to GE themes. The newly revised Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and Green Transition 2030 is designed to bring specific programmes and actions that focus on the values of solidarity, democracy, and respect. Although young people are not explicitly mentioned, they are intended to be the stewards of these themes and play a critical role in topics such as green transition and active citizenship. One process that supports young people's engagement with GE and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is the launch of a new series of programmes for families. These EESD Unit led programmes take place in various fields and communities and are offered every weekend during the school year and during the summer. The programmes aim to strengthen intergenerational communication between parents and children, as well as with local populations, professionals, and other groups of particular interest in the environment and sustainability.





Picture 21: Dr. Aravella Zachariou, Head of Education for the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit, MoESY

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there is still a need to link the strategic intentions better to the practice and confront the gaps by bringing closer formal and non-formal education. In Cyprus, both Global Education and youth are highly ranked in the policy agenda. And this is very important because most of the policies are applied now in Cyprus, in relation to sustainability and inclusivity. Both policies support each other and are interconnected due to many similarities in terms of approaches and methodologies¹⁴.

The recognition of youth voices in policymaking is accompanied by youth-specific strategies that adopt a global perspective. This was notably evident in the National Youth Strategy 2017-2022 (NYS), the first youth policy document enacted in Cyprus, which included significant dimensions related to Global Education. The NYS called for an investment in young people, prioritising their rights and aiming to enhance their prosperity and full participation. One of the main targets of the NYS was to reinforce the role of young people in the democratic process in Cyprus.

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¹⁴ Interview with Dr. Aravella Zachariou, Coordinator of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth, 25th September 2023.

Based on the EU's Youth Strategy, the main policy fields of action in the NYS include the "Youth and the World" priority, with Objective 2: "Promotion of a universal intercultural and ecological consciousness and culture". Several topics from the global agenda, such as climate change, human rights, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are addressed within this objective. Nevertheless, there is a need for top-level policies, initiatives, and programmes specifically aimed at engaging and informing young people about global issues that concern them, as well as encouraging their participation in international exchanges with other young people and relevant stakeholders (YouthWiki, 2023b).

Currently, the process for creating the new National Youth Strategy for 2030 in the Republic of Cyprus, is underway. The process is led by the Youth Board of Cyprus and it involves extensive consultations and collaboration with various stakeholders representing the youth. Among other actions and activities, the Youth Board has initiated a series of workshops, focus groups, and surveys to gather input from young people, educators, community organisations, and policymakers, ensuring that the voices of youth were central to the strategy's development. This participatory approach allows for the identification of key issues and priorities affecting young people, such as education, employment, mental health, and civic engagement. Furthermore, the strategy aims to align with broader European Union initiatives, incorporating themes like sustainability and inclusivity. "By leveraging best practices and insights from international frameworks, the Youth Board aims to create a comprehensive and forward-thinking document that addresses the needs and aspirations of young people in Cyprus while fostering their active participation in shaping their future. The strategy is expected to be a dynamic framework that will evolve over time, reflecting ongoing changes in the social, economic, and political landscape"¹⁵.

4.3.4. Funding of Global Education and youth

Since GE is largely integrated into the formal education system, it is difficult to separate GE-specific funding information from the overall education budget. However, the Permanent Unit on EESD of the Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth manages a 2.5 million budget exclusively for implementation of 2024-2026 Action Plan outlined in the revised Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and Green Transition 2030. Additionally, GE in Cyprus is funded through the European Commission, Erasmus+ programmes, the United Nations and through a small number of other external funds and private foundations.

In Cyprus, development co-operation is closely aligned with the European Union's goals and priorities, with a central focus on poverty eradication and sustainable development. Over the past six years, Cyprus has provided most of its official development assistance (ODA) through multilateral channels, but bilateral projects are also being implemented. Policy and priority setting, and project implementation are the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For its key partners, Cyprus's co-operation focuses on sharing know-how and expertise and providing in-kind, demand-driven humanitarian assistance (e.g. medical supplies). The primary focus of Cyprus's ODA includes support for countries in the Eastern Mediterranean and Africa, with specific attention to humanitarian assistance, development projects, and capacity-building initiatives. The government aims to continue expanding its ODA in the coming years to align more closely with the EU and its international standards and commitments.

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¹⁵ <https://onek.org.cy/en/>

Cyprus has been active in regional cooperation and development efforts, often aligning its assistance with EU initiatives and participating in various multilateral organisations to enhance the effectiveness of its contributions to global development challenges. Specifically, according to [available data by the OECD](#), the country provided USD 18 million (preliminary data) of ODA in 2023 (USD 17.2 million in constant terms), representing 0.07% of its GNI. This constitutes an increase of 25.6% in real terms in volume and an increase in the share of its GNI from 2022. Within Cyprus's ODA portfolio in 2022, 100% was provided in the form of grants.

In 2018, as part of the GENE Increase programmes, a co-funding mechanism and a national GE budget were created. This co-funding mechanism was mainly used for activities aiming at young people. The Youth Board of Cyprus, as the National Agency for the management of EU Youth Programmes, funds projects that are submitted by organisations and informal youth groups that are based in Cyprus. The Youth Board also administers the national funding scheme, Youth Initiatives, which financially supports activities implemented by youth organisations and youth groups in Cyprus. The budget of the Youth Board of Cyprus for 2022 as published in the Cyprus Government Gazette was €17.182.816 (YouthWiki, 2023a).

4.3.5. Key highlights

Global Education (GE) is integrated and largely supported in education and youth policies, and young people are gaining more focus in the revised sustainable development policy. The distinct features allowing for synergies between GE and youth in Cyprus are as follows:

- Education and Youth, as well as GE, are all situated within the same ministry, and GE policies are coordinated by a specific ministerial unit. This arrangement results in increased coordination and horizontal policy coherence between GE and other policies, as well as closer ties between formal and non-formal education.
- An inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral committee at the ministerial level brings together key representatives related to GE, including civil society and youth representatives. This collaboration results in joint decision-making on creating policies and implementing programmes and activities that focus on youth and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Legislation prescribes and provides guidelines for youth consultation regarding youth policy, resulting in the mainstreaming of youth participation in the formulation of youth policies, though this is not necessarily applied systematically in other fields.
- The first National Youth Strategy was developed through multi-stakeholder dialogue and in alignment with the EU Youth Strategy, leading to GE being included as one of the priorities under Youth and the World. This is set to continue in the renewed National Youth Strategy to 2030.
- Although there is no specific GE policy, GE is integrated into the sustainable development policy, including the new Strategy for Sustainable Education, which results in financial allocations for the implementation of the action plan for 2024-2026.

4.4. Czech Republic's policy approach

4.4.1. Global Education and youth in the Czech Republic

Global Education, or until recently Global Development Education (GDE) - the terms used in the Czech Republic, are somewhat supported in both education and youth policies, and young people are in focus of specific GDE strategies.

The National Strategy of the Global Development Education (GDE) 2018-2030 refers to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and aims to support competencies to understand in a qualified and objective manner global, regional and local political, economic, social, environmental and cultural processes, including their common contexts and interconnections of their impacts. The main emphasis of GDE is a more effective integration of global development topics and critical understanding of global contexts into the system of formal and non-formal education, including appropriate methodological and didactic support for teaching staff, as well as information for professionals and the general public. At the European level, the Czech Republic has been leading the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050 process, which has resulted in the change of the key terminology to "Global Education" at the national level.

Youth includes the age group of 15- to 26-year-olds for youth policy consultations, yet the youth conception and strategy provides for 15- to 30-year-olds, aligning with the EU legislation.

This chapter outlines the summary overview of structures, relevant youth and Global Education policy approaches, GE funding as well as highlights key features of Czech policy approach.

4.4.2. Institutional framework

The key governmental bodies involved in Global development education (GDE), include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, and the Czech Development Agency (all members of GENE). The Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid within the MFA consults with and reports on evaluations to the Council of Czech Development Cooperation – an interdepartmental coordination body. The council brings together government and non-governmental stakeholders and is responsible for overseeing the development cooperation strategy. Additionally, the Ministry of the Environment has a long-standing tradition of involvement in Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, the Government Council for Sustainable Development coordinates Agenda 2030. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports also hosts the Czech School Inspectorate that gathers relevant data on conditions and quality of the education system and the National Pedagogical Institute that provides methodological support to teachers and undertakes curriculum development. CSOs active in development co-operation, humanitarian assistance and global citizenship education are coordinated through the umbrella body [ForS – Czech Forum for Development Cooperation](#).

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports - also the central state authority in the field of youth and through its Section for Education and Youth - is formulating state policy on Children and Youth as a 'National Youth Strategy'. However, the state delegates many of the

practical issues to regions and municipalities who are charged with creating and implementing their own youth policy strategies and practices. The Czech National Agency for International Education and Research (Dům zahraniční spolupráce) for the Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps and Eurodesk is also responsible for the youth field. The Czech Council of Children and Youth (CRDM) and regional councils of children and youth represent the voice of young people and ensure youth participation in the policy cycle. Furthermore, it promotes conditions for quality of life and overall development of children and young people and supports non-formal education and activities for its members. CRDM includes GDE in its programmes and activities.

4.4.3. Policy approaches to Global Education and youth

The National Strategy of the Global Development Education 2018-2030 is closely aligned with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and also refers to non-formal education and how GDE is to be brought within youth work. Its aims include:

Non-formal education provides opportunities for learning through activities that can complement educational programmes in the field of formal education. Non-formal education enables children, youth and adults to engage in global development education outside institutional framework.

Organised educational activities outside the established system of formal education will offer interested parties the development of life knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes and life experiences that respect the goals and principles of global development education as well as good practices and innovation in the field.

Children, youth and adults will be introduced to themes reflecting global and development challenges of today's world through extracurricular activities. GDE principles and themes will be included in the conception of the State children and youth policy and in the State Support Programmes for work with children and youth.

Pedagogical support will be offered to facilitate the inclusion of GDE in the extra-curricular school activities. Organisations working with children and youth in their free time will also receive adequate pedagogical support to include GDE in their work.

In addition, GDE support will be provided to the existing offer of leisure, environmental and healthy lifestyle youth activities placing a greater emphasis on the global dimension and responsibility for sustainable development.

Traditionally, both children and youth issues are interlinked and mutually supportive in the Czech Republic policy framework. In recent years, there has been more attention dedicated to children's issues rather than to youth or young adults' issues. Since 2021, there has been no national Youth Strategy¹⁶.

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16 The Czech Council of Children and Youth called for the creation of a new youth strategy and the Minister took a decision to develop a new one in the course of 2023-2024.

Since 2023, there have been ongoing consultations on the development of a new youth strategy for the coming years, informed by the Dublin Declaration on Global Education to 2050.

The previous Concept (strategy) of youth support for the period 2014 - 2020 of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as the "Concept 2020") addressed environmental and global development issues, as well as young people's access to rights and information. It can be understood that the latest youth strategy has been aligned with GE. In addition, there has been a specific Strategy Action plan for the implementation of the National strategy for the primary prevention of risky behaviour of children and youth for the period 2023-2025 focusing on well-being, issues of anti-discrimination, bullying and others related to GE.



Picture 22: Youth representatives of the "Youth Pannel" - youth consultation meeting organised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in June 2024, Source: [MSMT](#)

The new Education Strategy 2030+ has brought as one of its GDE priorities connecting formal and non-formal education, and also covers partial aspects of supporting youth work and non-formal education. Leisure-based education is partly regulated by the Education/ School Legislation, and the Civil Code and related legislation regulate other forms of youth work based on non-formal education and informal learning.





Picture 23: Mr. Jan Mareš at a meeting with young refugees, Source: MSMT

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Non-formal education and youth organisations bring an important added value to formal education, which we cannot see in the classes. In non-formal education you can better work with learning from one's mistakes since every learner has a right to learn from his or her mistakes. Usually, at school we cannot work with such an approach to mistakes, we take it too seriously. In non-formal education you can work with mistakes differently.

Jan Mareš, General Director for Education and Youth, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport at the European Congress on Global Education to 2050

Overall, terminology and concepts are aligned and consistent within policy frameworks referring to GDE and Youth. The key focus for GDE within formal education is on curriculum development, its implementation, and the methodological support for teachers. The curriculum framework has recently been revised and schools are being encouraged to innovate approaches by involving pupils' (children and youth) perspectives and organising learning by involving the community outside of school.

There is no special comprehensive policy for the promotion of young people's engagement with global issues at international level. However, the MFA's communication strategy includes awareness-raising through digital and social media, and formal and non-formal global development education. Awareness-raising and transparency has resulted in an [online mapping](#) of all supported projects, and podcasts on each priority. Furthermore, the ongoing revision of the curricular framework and recommendations to move to whole-school approach and cross-curricula civic and media education are creating space for greater involvement of the youth perspective and integration of GE¹⁷.

Participation of young people in the global policymaking process is mostly in the domain of civil society. The Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS) is actively contributing to the promotion and advancement of GDE specifically through its Global Development Education working group which brings together the civil sector, academia and the public sector. However, young people and/or youth organisations are not represented in this platform. Still, they engage in different spaces focusing on civic dialogue, sustainability and democracy, such as the civil society coordination [Neon platform facilitated by Glopolis](#). Civil society, including youth organisations that bring important expertise and education on topics of GE, in principle, have access to schools. Still, non-formal education programmes brought by organisations could be better used by schools that have autonomy to develop their own curricula based on the national model.

The culture of solidarity is strengthened through the proactive implementation of projects funded by the European Solidarity Corps programmes.

Due to extensive decentralisation, both horizontal and vertical cross-sectoral approaches are integrated into public policymaking in the Czech Republic's in both GDE and Youth field.

Within GDE, the principle of inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder cooperation is embedded in the policy development, e.g. a working group drafting a new Strategy for Global Development Education (2018-2030). Horizontal cooperation is also present in the form of inter-ministerial initiatives to collaborate in terms of funding. For example, in 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Czech Development Agency transferred 150.000 Euro to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for teacher training. Vertically, in formal education, schools are independent in the creation of their own curriculum frameworks and entrusted to develop and implement relevant educational programmes in line with the national curriculum framework.

The horizontal cooperation in the field of youth was, however, largely discontinued with the expiration of the latest National Youth Strategy. Youth policy coordination has recently become again a political priority, and new consultative structures are emerging in an attempt to re-define and update the state youth policy. In addition, there are bodies in Parliament responsible for the field of youth which contribute to the horizontal coordination. The vertical cross-sectoral cooperation is ensured through work of 14 regional public authorities with competencies in the field of youth (each region has to set up a Regional Committee for Education, Youth and Sport according to the §78 of Act on Regions no. 129/2000 Sb.). There are cross-sectoral cooperation structures, such as the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic (Asociace krajů ČR), where several Commissions and Councils operate, for example, on education and sport, but so far this does not include youth. Finally, local public authorities have also competencies in the youth field.

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¹⁷ Interview with Vítězslav Sliva, Ministry official, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Department of Strategies and Analyses of Czech Republic, 11th September 2023.

European policy dialogue on GE is primarily accessed through membership in GENE and a global one through UNESCO. The Czech Republic also participates in European youth policy and youth work dialogue, mainly as a member of the EU and the CoE and through European cooperation in the field of youth. Additionally, the Czech Council of Children and Youth is a member of the European Youth Forum and thus contributes to bringing youth perspectives to European and global dialogue. Globally, Czech youth also participate in the UN Youth Delegate Programmes, where they can exchange their views within the General Assembly of the United Nations and respective UN youth forums, such as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum.

4.4.4. Funding of Global Education and youth

A fairly stable fund of 12 mil. CZK on an annual basis (ca. €550,000) is allocated for global development education, with support schemes involving mainly non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Czech Republic's total official development assistance (USD 987.1 million, preliminary data) increased in 2022 due to support to Ukraine and in-donor refugee costs. It represents 0.36% of gross national income (GNI) (OCDE, 2023).

The budget for the Youth Policy was allocated within the State budget - Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Subchapter for Free time and leisure time activities of children and youth (youth work and work with children) and subsidies were provided to NGOs for the implementation of projects that contributed to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Youth Strategy for the period 2014-2020¹⁸. The state provides financial support to youth organisations based on the State Subsidy Programmes for Supporting Work with Children and Youth in Non-Governmental Organisations and their Concept for years 2022-2023.

4.4.5. Key highlights

Youth represent an integral part of the GE strategy till 2030, as part of non-formal education, which is one of the five key strategic areas. According to the GE strategy, GE principles and themes will be included in the conception of the state policy for the area of children and youth and in the State Programmes support for work with children and youth.

- Education and Youth are housed in the same Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and GE policies are coordinated by the specific ministerial unit, resulting in increased coordination in both vertical and horizontal policy coherence in GE. Although the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is not responsible for the coordination of GE as a whole, as this role belongs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it has the potential to coordinate the cross-cutting policies across its own structures.
- Within the education sector at all levels, there are close ties between formal and non-formal education.

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¹⁸ Currently there is no National Youth Strategy in place.

- The GE working group is bringing together the ministerial stakeholders as well as the key CSO and youth representatives, resulting in strategic actions and activities. So far, most of the synergies between youth and Global Education were brought through participation of young people in the global policymaking process through civil society.
- There is a fairly high decentralisation in policy delivery, where the state delegates both education and youth policies to regions and municipalities. As the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MSMT) informed, there is a great potential of including GE through the current work on the new Youth Conception 2025+.
- The intertwined children and youth approach has resulted in all educational programmes (from pre-primary to upper secondary education) including the cross-curricular themes in relation to GE.
- There is stable funding for GE through support schemes directed mainly at non-governmental non-profit organisations (NGOs), not necessarily including youth organisations. In parallel, there is stable funding for youth organisations, some of which includes GE.

4.5. Estonia's policy approach

4.5.1. Global Education and youth in Estonia

Building on a strong tradition of environmental education, gradually embracing the Education for Sustainable Development; Global Education in Estonia is a relatively new concept in the field of education. Initially led mainly by NGOs, the Estonian term for GE “maailmaharidus” is defined as “an active learning process, founded on values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and cooperation that enables people to move from basic awareness through understanding the causes and effects of global issues, to personal involvement and informed action.”¹⁹

Since then, both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research adhere to the GE definition of the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050, which was also translated to [Estonian](#).

Overall, Global Education has been largely integrated in education policy and also several elements can be found in youth policy, specifically the [Youth Sector Development Plan 2021 – 2035](#). Both are situated within the same Ministry of Education and Research. Youth are increasingly considered as partners in GE policy although they do not yet have a central position. Young people in Estonia are defined by the Youth Work Act as those of 7 to 26 years of age and their interests are represented by the Estonian National Youth Council. Although there is a great focus on local issues, there is a great interest among young Estonians and a growing capacity to relate those to European and global contexts.

This chapter includes a summary overview of relevant structures, a presentation of GE policy approaches, a GE and youth funding overview and the highlights of the key features in Estonian policy approach.

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19 GENE Peer Review Report Global Education in Estonia, p. 21.

4.5.2. Institutional framework

Key ministries and agencies responsible for GE in Estonia include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), its Estonian Centre for International Development (ESTDEV) and the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), all GENE members. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for both youth and Global Education. The Department of Youth and Talent Policy, with a key responsibility for youth, deals with areas of youth work, hobby education, and talent policy. The Education Ministry also hosts a strategic group on ESD that includes some of the key NGOs. While it considers non-formal education and youth inclusion as important elements of their work, so far youth representatives have not been actively participating in this group.

The oversight of the educational framework is managed by a governmental agency, Harno (Education and Youth Board), formed in 2020 on the basis of the services of four former state-level institutions: Innove Foundation, Archimedes Foundation, Information Technology Foundation for Education, and Estonian Youth Work Centre. This joint institution is responsible for both education and youth field operational implementation and brings together various educational foundations and centres, consolidating their efforts to provide comprehensive and effective educational services. Since 2021, Harno has also held a role in the National Agency for EU youth programmes Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps.



Picture 24: Estonian model of the United Nations, organised annually by NGO Mondo, source: <https://maailmakool.ee/en/estmun/>

The Ministry of the Environment (ME) also plays an important role, as within formal education, Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are central components of GE in Estonian curricula. Both the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of the Environment have youth boards. The Estonian Environmental Education Association with more than 100 members participates in the implementation of the environmental education action plan and the creation of a quality system and organises trainings and summer academies for the development of its members.

Within civil society, the [NGO Mondo](#) is a strategic partner to both Ministries, demonstrating the importance of collaboration between government and civil society in advancing GE initiatives. Mondo, cooperates with the youth sector on an ongoing basis through a number of different activities.

Furthermore, AKÜ Estonian Roundtable for Development Co-operation is a platform hosting the Global Education Working Group of NGOs.

[Estonian National Youth Council](#) (ENL) is an umbrella organisation of youth organisations and participation groups, representing the youth political interests in the country and internationally, and promoting the active participation of young people in society. ENL is a member of the Estonian Commission for Sustainable Development which is an advisory commission to the government.

The Estonian National Commission of UNESCO is the coordinator between UNESCO and the organisations, institutions and individuals involved in the activities of UNESCO in Estonia, ensuring Estonia's participation in global cooperation in the creation of common values.

4.5.3. Policy approaches to Global Education and youth

In development cooperation in the field of GE, youth is mainly targeted within the 'awareness raising' goal. Namely, in the [Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2024–2030](#) Objective 5 is: "Societal attitudes that are supportive of development cooperation, humanitarian aid, and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals is to contribute to the eradication of poverty and to attaining the other Sustainable Development Goals", with a clear focus on the 'active work in the field of Global Education' that includes Global Education competency model implementation, as well as on building greater coherence between actors in the Global Education process, for example through the creation of a platform for the relevant stakeholders. However, in the education and youth fields young people are much more centrally involved.

Estonia has a strong tradition of systematic organising of the youth field based on national youth strategies since the early 2000s. Youth participation is central in the widely set policy framework which consists of 29 different legal acts targeting children and young people. The youth field (youth policy and youth work) in Estonia is regulated primarily by the [Youth Work Act](#) that defines the obligations of different authorities in the youth field for the age range from 7 to 26 years, and in relation to quality youth work.

However, there is no description of the rights and obligations of young people in the act, even though young people have been consulted and there is a systematic approach to involving youth representatives in discussions on amendments to the Youth Work Act.

Research on youth work and global issues in Estonia indicate that youth organisations have a positive interest in global issues, and particularly in relation to intercultural dialogue (79% of the respondents), access to education (75%), sustainable development (70%) and human rights and discrimination (62%). According to the study, organisations show a high level of interest in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes connected with GE. However Estonian youth and youth organisation members are not accustomed to thinking about global issues or linking local issues to global problems (YouthWiki, 2023c).

Under the overarching national strategy Estonia 2035, specific field policy strategies were developed. The [Youth Sector Development Plan 2021-2035](#) (Noortevaldkonna arengukava

2021-2035) is a key policy document that recognises one of the main challenges as the starting position of young people in facing future challenges and global trends. Strategic goals are set to provide young people with a wide variety of development opportunities so that a sense of security and strong support creates an Estonian state that the youth wish to further develop. The Plan positions young people as a key 'creative driving force' and it aims to further advance the participation opportunities for youth by introducing two new measures at the highest level: an advisory group at the Prime Minister's office, and a youth roundtable at the President's office. A consistent evaluation of a youth-centred policy development is organised in cooperation with the Estonian National Youth Council. The Education Strategy 2021-2035 sets a key goal *'to equip the population of Estonia with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that prepare people to fulfil their potential in personal, occupational and social life and contribute to promoting the quality of life in Estonia as well as global sustainable development'*. The strategy emphasises the need to take account of globalisation and to ensure equal access to quality education for all in a rapidly changing world. The common focus of the Education Strategy and the Youth Strategy 2035 is on supporting diverse learning pathways and using an approach that empowers young people, as well as linking youth work and non-formal education with formal education to promote diverse skills development. A permanent youth policy working group has been created, with the task to support the work of the multi-stakeholder steering committee with sectoral know-how in monitoring of the Education Strategy and the Youth Sector Development Plan implementation. In parallel, the Environmental education and awareness action plan 2023-2025 defines among its seven goals *"support to educational institutions and environmental education centres to become active community leaders in environmental and sustainable development"* and *"support children's and young people's sustainable development initiatives"*. The activities also include building capacities of youth organisations to plan, request support for and implement their environmental initiatives.

Global sustainable development is prominent in the Education strategy 2035 which targets young people and teaching staff. The competence model of GE is included in study area principles and subject syllabuses. Since 2002, the national curriculum has had the horizontal theme of Environment and Sustainable Development. Delivered by over 120 different environmental education centres through a financing support system for study visits for kindergartens and school groups, the curriculum supports the development of learners to be environmentally aware citizens. Furthermore, civic values are fully integrated in the national curricula's wide range of subject areas based on the constitution, key UN resolutions and EU policy documents. The education strategy also promotes young people's engagement with global issues at international level. A multi-stakeholder process was organised to integrate the Council of Europe model of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) in the national curricula and adapt it for classrooms in Estonia. The ministry is encouraging schools to create partnerships at local level that would enable them to run civic education in a way that would lead young people to act upon identified issues locally²⁰.

NGO Mondo's Global Education Centre organises GE activities and facilitates the knowledge, skills, methodologies and materials that support schools, educational workers and the youth on discussing global topics. Its GE portal Maailmakool.ee includes study materials, films, exhibitions, guest lectures and workshops that support students in analysing global topics. The Estonian Youth Workers Association (ENK) is at the forefront of youth work professional standards development and is participating as a local partner to Mondo in the peace education of youth workers.

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 20 Interview with Mare Oja, Liia Varend and Katrin Pihor, advisors in the field of general education, Department of General Education Policy, Ministry of Education and Research Estonia, 13th September 2023.

GE principles and themes are present in the youth sector even though GE as such is not really connected with the youth field. Efforts are being made to bring good approaches from the youth civil sector into the formal education system for example, by validating learning outcomes from non-formal education and community practice.

In Estonia inter-ministerial collaboration is stipulated by the law. The State Budget Act creates an organisational environment that implies collaboration between ministries and ministerial departments in two contexts: the drafting of development plans and strategies, and the implementation of development plans - including implementing policy programmes and carrying out other activities. The leading role in all implementation plans is carried out by the ministry responsible for a concrete development plan, but a considerable number of activities are carried out by other ministries, by several ministries or jointly by organisations.

The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Education and Research prepared a joint Implementation Plan for Environmental Education and Environmental Awareness 2019–2022. The document covers formal as well as non-formal education, and awareness raising with the wider public. The implementation plan additionally brought specific focus on digital teaching and learning materials. The two ministries also jointly developed a competence model on global (world) education and encouraged schools to create partnerships at local level and run projects where development of civic education competences would be learned through action and not just teaching. A network of UNESCO schools is particularly active in engaging young people and teaching them such competences through practice and action.

4.5.4. Funding of Global Education and youth

Estonia's total official development assistance (ODA) increased in 2022 to USD 203 million (preliminary data), from 49.45 million USD in 2019. The increase in ODA volume was mainly due to an increase in in-donor refugee costs. However, in 2022 ODA represented 0.54% of gross national income (GNI) (OECD, 2023). Estonia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as its Ministry of Education and Research (MER) provide financial support for GE. The MFA is the main funder of NGO projects both in terms of calls for proposals and of co-funding organisations who have successfully attracted EC funding. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided funding at the scale of 220,000 Euro in 2019 and 240,100 Euro in 2018. The budget is mainly distributed through three-year agreements with strategic partners that involve umbrella organisations such as a teacher's association. It is also noteworthy that the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) and the Ministry of the Environment make funding available, primarily in the field of Education for Sustainable Development. An example of MER-funded work is the UNESCO ASPnet school network, which combines two key strands of GE – Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education. In 2020 and 2021, the Government used the state supplementary budget to support environmental education centres and their non-formal education programmes overcoming the COVID-19 crisis.

There is a specific budget for youth policy and youth work development, with different policy areas and measures funded from different sources and responsible ministries, which include: national budget; municipal budgets (municipalities are responsible for youth work, social work, formal education system, local transport, hobby education); private initiatives (e.g. Kids and Youth Creativity Accelerator VIVITA); European funds (e.g. European Social Fund); other foreign funds (e.g. EEA Grants and Norway Grants); other funds. The Youth Sector Development Plan 2021-2035 stipulates 356,29 million euros funding for the youth sector for the overall implementation period. In 2019, a new approach to funding of youth

organisations was introduced at the state level, through so-called three-year strategic partnerships between organisations and the Ministry of Education and Research. According to the Local Government Organisation Act, the local governments have a key role in organising local life, including youth work services. Most of the financing of youth work also comes from the budget and own income of the local municipalities.

4.5.5. Key highlights

Both GE and youth policies represent an integral part of Estonian policy. There is an increasing dialogue between the two areas that sometimes still operate in silos. The distinct features allowing for GE and youth synergies in Estonia are:

- Education and Youth are situated in the same Ministry and policies are implemented through joint institutions. However, GE and development aid are the responsibility of two other ministries, resulting in modest synergies between GE and youth focusing mainly on awareness raising among young people.
- Structurally youth participation is supported through youth boards at ministerial level, resulting in young people's engagement with relevant education and youth policies, although not at the same scale in relation to GE policies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Inter-ministerial collaboration is stipulated by the Law, resulting in joint plans and initiatives to promote learning and teaching GE through cooperation between formal and non-formal education and through youth engagement in actions and practice in local communities. In practice, youth is not always represented in the respective consultative spaces.
- Facilitation of Estonia's involvement in global cooperation is through the UNESCO framework, resulting in UNESCO schools championing young people's engagement and acquiring civic competences through practice and action.
- Focus on updating and modernising teacher training as well as greater recognition of youth work, is resulting in the creation of stronger links between formal and non-formal education, which benefits the students.
- Funding of GE is done through longer term strategic partnerships, resulting in relative stability and continuity of activities, although with no clear involvement of youth as strategic partners.

4.6. Finland's policy approach

4.6.1. Global Education and youth in Finland

Since 2013, both Development Education and Global Education have been central to Finland's development policy (GENE, 2018: 31) and deeply embedded in Finland's Global Education Strategy (2010:11). In this strategy, GE is defined as a comprehensive activity which guides both individual and communal global responsibility. The definition includes ethical, political, social, economic, cultural dimensions of citizenship in a globalising world, and it concludes that it...

comprises human rights education, equality education, peace education, media education, intercultural understanding, questions relating to development and equity, and education for sustainable development.

In the youth policy field, the Youth Act (1285/2016) and the newly adopted National youth work and youth policy programmes for 2024-2027, which is the third of its kind, define youth in Finland as those under 29 years of age.

4.6.2. Institutional framework

The main public institutions that lead Global Education (GE) in Finland and participate in GENE are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM) and The Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI). Other relevant ministries and agencies that support GE efforts include the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the National Commission on Sustainable Development.

The OKM is also responsible for the overall development of youth work and youth policy. EDUFI is also responsible for youth and acts as national agency for Erasmus+ in the youth field. Additionally, 309 municipalities implement youth policy and support youth work at the local level.

Many lead civil society actors in the field of Global Education are associated in Fingo, a platform of around 270 development CSOs. Fingo hosts the EU-funded project Bridge 47; the Finnish network of UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), a network of approximately 60 educational institutions, ranging from kindergartens to University Teacher Training Schools; the Peace Education Institute, a politically non-aligned peace organisation for educators who work in formal and non-formal education settings. At least 10 explicitly youth-focused or youth led organisations were identified in Fingo's membership (4%)²¹ indicating that the development sector integrates a youth focus, and that youth-led organisations are also leaders and implementers of development education initiatives.

In the youth sector, the Finnish National Youth Council (Allianssi) is the umbrella organisation for youth organisations with a membership of over 150 national youth and education sector organisations. Allianssi was a lead actor in co-developing Finland's First National Action Plan on Youth, Peace and Security (2021), which includes several targets to empower young people's participation in building peace in Finland through civic and peace education and also includes a global perspective and approach. For example, one of its targets reads: "Finland raises awareness among young people about peace work, crisis management and humanitarian activities and related themes".

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21 Based on the list of members, available at: <https://fingo.fi/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Jasenten-aanimaarat.pdf>: Nuorten Kotkien Keskusliitto - Unga Örnars Centralförbund NKK ry, The Children and Youth Foundation (Lasten ja nuorten säätiö rs); Muona Children and Youth Support Association (Malawin Lasten ja Nuorten Avuksi ry); Social Democratic Youth Association; Finnish Centre Youth (Suomen Keskustanuoret); Suomen Kristillisdemokraattiset Nuoret ry; Suomen Nuorten Naisten Kristillisten Yhdistysten Liitto; Suomen YK-nuoret ry; Association of Green Youth and Students, AIESEC.



Picture 25: Source - [The Finnish National Youth Council Allianssi](#)

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Youth organisations and groups will be given opportunities to influence the content, implementation and development of Global Education.

Global Education Strategy, 2010: 16

4.6.3. Policy approaches to Global Education and youth

Finland's curricula for general education at all levels incorporate GE and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Schools are independent in the implementation of national curricula and responsible for involving students (and parents) in the curricula development at the local level. The Finnish school culture promotes a whole-school approach to sustainable development, reflecting the nation's commitment to nurturing responsible and informed citizens. General education, based on a human rights approach, lays the foundation for global citizenship that respects human rights and encourages the pupils – children and young people - to act for positive change. Youth agency and engagement in international cooperation and global citizenship are particularly encouraged in general upper secondary education. Initial teacher education also has concepts of GE incorporated and Oulu University offers Global Education teacher training (EDGE). [Global Education Research in Finland](#) demonstrates that GE is very much ahead in concepts, yet it doesn't engage young people in full capacity²².

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22 Interview with Jaakko Lindfors, Counsellor of education, Finnish National Agency for Education 12th September 2023.

There are some links between the key civil society actors in GE and the non-formal education field, including the youth workers, in an attempt to strengthen their connections with teachers. For instance, the Peace Education Institute offers the [Material Bank](#), with selected material that supports equality and global citizenship in line with the standards of critical GE. Furthermore, the [Global School \(Maailmankoulu\)](#), supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, connects NGOs and educational professionals offering expert support for teachers and other educators on the matters of GE. In practice, teachers, youth workers or activists who are interested in creating safer, more inclusive and equal spaces in their work and in wider society can access relevant resources and support.

GE is also advanced through Finland's development policy. The White Paper for Development Policy (2021) has a focus on girls (together with women), and on training and education (among others such as sustainable economies and decent work, democratic societies and climate change, etc). Though the Policy does not specify youth as a primary focus, in Finland's Report on Development Policy Across Parliamentary Terms (2021) the policy implementation demonstrates awareness of youth-specific issues and youth as partners. For example, the report refers to the situations affecting young people and women specifically, such as difficulties in accessing decent work; phenomena such as youth population growth in some countries, and the positive roles of young people in conflict prevention. Finland has been a lead supporter of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda in international fora and through its programming.

In the Global Education Strategy (2010) there is no specific focus on youth, but yet the aim to work with the different sectors is clear (p.12):

The programmes seeks to encompass the different sectors of and parties to Global Education comprehensively. The programmes addresses Global Education in terms of practical work, administration, cooperation and evaluation, as well as education, cultural, sport, youth and social policies.

Furthermore, the Strategy includes a "Child and youth policy development programmes which planned to include the growth into internationalism in the child and youth policy development programmes" (2010: 13) and included youth organisations as partners: "Youth organisations and groups will be given opportunities to influence the content, implementation and development of Global Education" (Global Education Strategy, 2010: 16).

Youth policy and youth work in Finland represent a strong policy pillar. Finland has been a pioneer in youth policy in Europe and has had a distinct legislation on youth work since the beginning of the 1970s. [The Youth Act](#) (1285/2016) covers youth work and activities, youth policy and the related responsibilities of the central and local government, cross-sectoral cooperation as well as state funding. It promotes social inclusion, opportunities for young people to participate in the decision-making over matters of concern, development of individuals' abilities, improvement of living conditions, and access to free-time hobbies and youth work. What is of youth concern defines youth policy and in this way global issues and concerns become part of Finnish youth policy reality.

The Youth Act is complemented by the [Government Decree on Youth Work and Policy](#) (2017) specifying the allocation of the duties involved at the national, regional and local levels. In addition, several other laws, such as the Child Welfare Act and the Basic Education Act, refer to youth issues and address the rights and obligations of young people.

The National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programmes coordinates the objectives and measures determined by the key ministries for promoting young people's growth and living conditions, and aims to establish the youth policy perspective as part of public sector decision-making. The Programmes for 2020-2023 focused on reinforcement of the status of youth work, increasing young people's awareness of their rights, promotion of young people's opportunities for participating in decision-making that concerns them in different areas, prevention of social exclusion and the enhancement of inclusion, and support to young people's climate change mitigation activities.

This newly adopted programmes, named Strengthening young people's wellbeing through multidisciplinary measures: National youth work and youth policy programmes for 2024-2027, includes several references to Global Education. The highlights inform that:

- Finland promotes the wellbeing of young people in accordance with the youth policy objectives of the National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programmes 2024-2027. These are also promoted in international and European cooperation. Sector consultations carried out for the preparation of the programmes in connection with international co-operation highlighted, among other things, the promotion of peace work and democracy education, as well as climate issues and sustainable development (p.36).
- Finland continues to promote the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security and the related national action plan (p. 40).
- Finland strengthens the role of youth work in supporting young people in climate and nature issues (p. 41).
- Finland promotes the inclusion of young people in climate and nature issues both nationally, at EU level and globally.

In conclusion, it is evident that the same principles that underlie Finnish youth policies and development policies, include GE. For instance, through its ODA Finland championed gender equality across a range of investments related to peace and security, agriculture, and climate change. The implementation of the Youth Act is based on solidarity, cultural diversity and internationality, sustainable development, healthy lifestyles, respect for life and the environment and cross-sectoral cooperation. In addition, the Government has launched a national cross-administrative democracy programme extending until 2025. One of the key priorities of the democracy programme is to develop school teaching and other school practices, as well as to support children's and young people's ability to have a say in their local environment and society.

4.6.4. Funding of Global Education and youth

Finland's total official development assistance (ODA) (USD 1.6 billion) increased in 2022, representing 0.58% of its Gross National Income (OECD, 2023). Finland's annual spending on GE has been estimated at around 5 million Euro per annum (GENE, 2019). This is done through three funding instruments:

- 1) Calls for GE project proposals from the CSO community which are allocated every two years (1.4 million Euro for 2019-2020);

2) GE component of the programmes-based CSO funding (estimated at approximately 4 million Euro per annum);

3) Support to Finnish UN-affiliated CSOs that carry out GE and development communication efforts in Finland.

Spending on youth is mainly implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture which annually allocates government funding to the youth organisations, municipal youth work, statutory bodies, and other actors doing youth work. The Ministry has additional appropriations for measures that address topical issues, such as young people's social empowerment, international projects, and new forms of youth work and youth culture. For 2023, the state budget for this work is estimated at 76.282 million Euros (YouthWiki, 2023d).

4.6.5. Key highlights

Both youth policy and GE represent strong pillars of policy in Finland. Although both function in fairly distinct ways with links and communication within responsible departments of the OKM and EDUFI, GE is integrated and largely supported in education policy, and youth policy is addressing young people's concerns and involvement in GE in significant ways. The distinct features allowing for GE and youth synergies in Finland are:

- Education and Youth are within the same Ministry and the same National Agency, although GE and youth represent two distinct policy areas with a modest level of dialogue at policy level. However, the principle of decentralisation enables greater synergy between GE and youth at the local level. Examples include involvement of (youth) civil society focusing on GE at the local level accompanied by schools themselves promoting a whole-school approach to sustainable development engaging students (and parents).
- The newly adopted National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programmes 2024-2027 emphasises the importance of promotion of peace work and democracy education, as well as climate issues and sustainable development among young people, and aims to strengthen the role of youth work in supporting young people in climate and nature issues nationally, at the EU level and globally.
- The latest education reform focuses on teacher practice, resulting in the launch of a national cross-administrative democracy programme extending until 2025 with the aim to support children's and young people's ability to have a say in their local environment and society.
- GE Research is conducted in Finland, resulting in relevant evidence base build-up and the bridging of gaps between research and practice on GE in formal and non-formal education settings, including youth.
- The inter-sectoral cooperation highly valued in the youth sector is not completely present in the GE field. However, there are initiatives within key GE civil society actors that involve non-formal education field and youth workers and connect them with teachers.
- Finland is engaging in regular evaluations of global development and GE related funding instruments, resulting in various improvements including aligning calls for proposals from the NGO sector with the SDGs, including youth.

4.7. Ireland's policy approach

4.7.1. Global Education and youth in Ireland

Development Education has been the key concept used in Ireland in the past decades and was defined at length in the Irish Aid Development Education Strategy (2017-2023). Key aspects of the definition are the centrality of critical exploration of global justice issues; the interconnectedness between these and the everyday lives of people in Ireland, and the understanding of education as a transformative lifelong process which empowers citizens to address global issues through actions at all levels. Though the new Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy (2021-2025) (Irish Aid, 2021) largely keeps the same definition, it uses the term "Global Citizenship Education". At the same time, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is used by the Department for Education and Skills, in line with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

These three terms are those that are mainly used in Ireland, though there seems to be a recent shift towards Global Citizenship Education. Interestingly, the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) explains that their members use a variety of terms including the three mentioned, but also refer to Global Youth Work (IDEA, 2024).

Past and current GE strategies give high prevalence to the role of young people, youth groups and organisations as well as youth workers. This is an indication of how embedded DE/GCE activities are in non-formal education organisations, and more specifically, youth-focused organisations. This is largely due to the fact that Ireland has a long tradition of youth work being a kind of community work focused on addressing the specific needs of young people. According to the Youth Development Index, Ireland scored as being the 9th best country in which to be a young person – out of 183 countries (Commonwealth, 2020).

Young people in Ireland are defined as any person aged between 10 and 25 years of age, in line with the upper age threshold of the Youth Work Act (2001) and with the definition used by the United Nations. It is also important to note that young people in Ireland acquire the majority of age and voting rights at 18 years of age, and can run for office once they are 21. The National Youth Strategy (2015-2020) provides a rich analysis of youth as a "distinctive phase in the life course during which young people experience profound and rapid physical, neurological and psycho-social changes" (p. 43) and the importance of young people being engaged and contributed to their schools and communities in this phase is highlighted at several points in the document. The document also stresses the relevance of youth organisations and programmes in supporting civic engagement.

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... [the youth consultation on the new Global Citizenship & Development Education Strategy] “reflects the richness and diversity of the youth sector here in Ireland, and the fact that so many of you see yourselves as global citizens”.

Former Minister Colm Brophy, 7 April 2021²³

These understandings of GE and youth are the result of long-term trajectories of policy development, underpinned and guided by a special institutional framework, which includes governmental initiatives and platforms as well as civil society ones converging in public-civic policy dialogue spaces as further described in the following sections.

4.7.2. Institutional framework

In terms of governmental institutions, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Education and Skills (both GENE members) are the lead government institutions in relation to GE, while the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) is the main government department responsible for youth policy. The Youth Affairs Unit of the latter in particular, supports the alignment of policies and services related to youth with other Departmental policies and services, as well as with the broader policy and services field, as many pieces of youth policy take a whole-of-government approach. DCEDIY also leads “Hub na nÓg”, a centre that supports organisations to give children and young people a voice in decision-making on issues that affect their lives.



23 Source: https://twitter.com/Irish_Aid/status/1379835117192032258/photo/1



Picture 25: Source - [Irish Aid](#)

Additionally, there is a semi-state body, “Léargas”, under the remit of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) that acts as the national agency for Erasmus+ funding in the field of youth.

Civil society organisations and platforms also compose Irish GE and youth institutional framework. Organisations active in GE are part of a) [Dóchas](#) - Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations, and b) [the Irish Development Education Association \(IDEA\)](#). At the same time, voluntary youth-focused and youth-led organisations are represented by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) and there are multiple spaces for young people to participate in decision-making, at local level, through Youth Councils in all 31 local governments, and nationally, through the National Youth Parliament.

Though these platforms are distinct, the two sectors are intertwined. For example, the NYCI and other nine youth-led or youth-focused organisations are among the 52 members of the Code of Good Practice of Development Education coordinated by IDEA (19%), demonstrating how embedded youth organisations are in the DE/GCE sector, and 40 of its 116 organisational members offer activities for young people (34%) showing how organisations offering GE activities engage young people specifically.

4.7.3. Policy approaches to Global Education and youth

Global education policy and how it addresses youth

The [Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025](#) has a direct focus on young people, as well as Irish Aid's Communication Strategy 2023-2025. Furthermore, key strategic documents that are defining Ireland's approach to GE identify young people as a key stakeholder: 1) the 2017-2023 [Development Education Strategy](#) and 2) the [ESD to 2030: 2nd National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development \(ESD\)](#). The latter supports young people in the non-formal sector through the five year strategic partnership with National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) as the lead partner in the consortium Youth2030. It also supports youth groups through lifelong learning and youth workers as a community of practice. Specifically, *Priority Action Area 4: Empowering and Mobilising Young People* commit to the meaningful involvement of young people in policy decisions and developments across the ESD spectrum.

It is noteworthy that the document mentions a child-friendly explanation of ESD as '*what you learn in school to make the world a fairer and better place for everyone*' developed by the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth's Citizen Participation Unit. This effort indicates the intention to engage with children and youth in the terms that are easier for them to understand, stressing the fact that GE activities and reflections on global issues can be adapted to all age groups.

This work builds on the previous SDGs National Implementation Plan (2018-2020). Ireland's UN Youth Delegates reported on young people's understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals, the issues that were affecting them, how these issues related to the SDGs and on young people's capacity to contribute positively to Ireland's implementation of the SDGs (NYCI, 2018). They used SDGs indicators as a framework for monitoring both progress on the achievement of SDGs as well as youth development in Ireland. This reporting indicated how SDGs/youth indicators are being mainstreamed²⁴.

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is considered a strategic partner by Irish Aid as well as eight other organisations working on a specific focus based on specific needs (e.g. supporting Syrian refugees in rural areas; supporting integration of Ukrainian children and youth in education). The NYCI runs trainings for youth workers on working with young people to address global issues, such as the SDGs. Some examples of these courses are: Action – Youth work and the SDGs; Going Global – Connecting and Threading Practice and Organisation; Intro to Global Youth Work and Development Education; Youth Work Can Make a Difference in How We Address the Climate Crisis. Furthermore, NYCI has developed an [Inter-active map: Global Youth Work and the SDGs in the Irish Youth Sector](#) as an online resource which identifies organisations, projects, and educational institutions that engage in Global Youth Work, Global Citizenship Education and SDG-focused youth work across Ireland.

Furthermore, the NYCI, within its Youth 2030 Programmes developed a Level 8 Special Purpose Award in Global Youth Work and Development Education. Irish Aid has also supported training modules for youth workers on GE, for example, a Level 8 Certificate course in Global Youth Work and Development Education is being provided at Maynooth University in cooperation with the NYCI as explained in section 3.9. of this publication in which this was noted as a key enabler of GE in youth work.

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²⁴ Out of 232 indicators 68 provided information that was directly relevant to youth and an additional 19 provided information that was highly relevant to youth (NYCI, 2018).

Additionally, other related national strategies and plans have also aimed to engage youth. One particular example was the government's Climate Action Plan 2019 which sought to maximise young people's engagement and contribution through identifying concrete activities to amplify their voices and give them the space to contribute to climate change solutions. A second example, the National Volunteering Strategy (2021-2025) is worth mentioning, though it is not a specific GE strategy. Among its five strategic objectives, one is directly referring to "promotion of ethical and skills-based international volunteering to deliver results for beneficiaries and to enhance Global Citizenship in Ireland".

In conclusion, youth voices and perspectives are brought in GE and other national related policies, getting "out of the box" of those traditionally considered youth-focused policies. For example, through the NYCI and its UN delegate programme, youth has contributed to the National security policy and SDGs implementation respectively.

Youth policy and how it addresses Global Education

GE is also integrated in the Irish youth policy. First, Ireland's first National Policy Framework for Children and Young people entitled Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 has as one of its five expected outcomes that children and young people are "Connected, Respected and Contributing to their World" (Irish Government, 2014: 97). Specific sub-aims with explicit GE dimensions, particularly in 5.1; 5.3; and 5.4 are about how young people need to develop their identity and be free of discrimination and be supported to be civically engaged - socially and environmentally conscious and aware of their rights. The document shows young people as not only a group to be supported but as agents of change: "They are often keenly interested in social, political and environmental issues, envisioning the kind of world they want to be part of and taking action to create such a world" (2014: 102).

A Blueprint of the Policy Framework for Children and Young People (Irish Government, 2022) was published in August 2022. The new policy framework that will retain the five National Outcomes is expected to be published in 2024 and run until 2028.

Second, the National Youth Strategy 2015-2020, has a specific objective related to GE: "they are empowered to be active global citizens" (Government of Ireland, 2015: 32). Following the end of this strategy, DCEDIY issued a Statement of Strategy (Government of Ireland, 2021) to announce the development of a successor strategy.

It is important to highlight that these documents refer to young people in all their diversity, and specifically those that are disadvantaged or marginalised due to their socioeconomic background, ethnic or religious affiliation, migrant or refugee status, etc²⁵.

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 25 Young people marginalised by location or geography or socioeconomic reasons; Young Travellers, Roma, young people from ethnic or religious minorities; Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; Young people with disabilities or mental health issues; Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people; Young carers; Young people in conflict with the law; Young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs); Young parents; Young people in care; Young people in direct provision; Lone parents under the age of 25 years. National Youth Strategy page 41

4.7.4. Funding of Global Education and youth

Ireland's official development assistance (USD 2.5 billion, preliminary data) increased in 2022, representing 0.64% of its gross national income (OCDE, 2023). ODA budget has been constantly increasing over the last ten years due to the positive public attitude towards spending for the Global South. In this context, the GE budget has increased to 10 million euro annually, with the new Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy (2021-2025).

In the period 2017-2020 the youth sector was receiving 8% of available development education funding and young people were direct beneficiaries of 58% of available funding in formal and non-formal education. Irish Aid supports the NYCI (with a membership of 54 youth organisations working with 380,000 young people), and directly supports eight individual youth organisations to develop global youth work in their regions. Irish Aid also makes workshops on ODA as part of DE/GCE freely available to schools and the youth sector.

The current Strategy continues this support, and also envisages launching an Innovation Challenge Fund to support research, outreach to new learners and communities, build links with schools, institutions, youth groups and the Global South; and review the GCE grants scheme.

Youth policy is funded through the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). The Youth Services Grant Scheme (YSGS) has supported youth organisations and their youth policy initiatives since the 1980s. In 2022, €12.9m was allocated for expenditure through the YSGS scheme for 30 national youth organisations, with Individual annual grants ranging from around €3 million to less than €50,000. A targeted youth funding scheme UBU Your Place Your Space was launched in December 2019 bringing together four already existing, overlapping schemes with a value of over €38.5 million. The first cycle of UBU ran to December 2023 targeting 10–24-year-olds who are marginalised, disadvantaged, or vulnerable and providing a young person-centred, community-based, and out of school youth services to them. The Irish youth work sector is strongly dependent on non-profit organisations, many of which are at least partially funded by the government.

Young people can also benefit from funding from the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) that runs from 2021-2027 and requires national co-financing allocations of 10% on young people not in employment, education or training. It also encourages complementarity to other funds, such as Erasmus+, the Asylum and Migration Fund, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, and the Structural Reform Support Programmes. Finally, Léargas manages a number of youth-related programmes and initiatives, and supports both individuals and entities with funding opportunities.

4.7.5. Key highlights

Ireland's long-standing commitment to GE is evident in its policies, institutional framework, funding schemes and programmes. Young people are a central focus of this, reflected in policy approaches that consider young people in all their diversity as key stakeholders of GE. GE is integrated into all educational sectors, including the youth sector. Young people's engagement with global issues in Ireland and at international level is expected and encouraged. Evidence of this was found in Chapter 3 describing the rich practices of the NYCI, and the enabling environment created by the combination of GE and youth work strategies, which included specific training opportunities.

Furthermore, the fact that Ireland hosted the European Congress on Global Education in 2022 placing significant focus on involving young people and youth organisations as described in the introduction of this publication, is testimony of that.

In summary, the distinct features of Ireland's approach are:

- A "whole of government approach" to policymaking, resulting in GE integration into all relevant policies, including development cooperation, education, youth and volunteering strategies;
- An approach that considers young people as partners and efforts to include them in consultative and decision making spaces beyond those traditionally considered fit for young people. The inclusion of youth-friendly language in GE documents is one example of these efforts;
- Strengthening of GE into youth work based on the good practice from formal education, resulting in relevant capacity building opportunities for youth workers in cooperation with a university;
- Integrating SDGs monitoring indicators with youth development ones, and including young people as partners in monitoring and reporting efforts, for example, through the UN Delegates annual reports;
- Institutionalised strategic partnerships with youth representative structures, resulting in young people's engagement with global issues in Ireland and at international level.
- Diversification of funding modalities and overall increased funding based on evidence and multi-stakeholder dialogue, resulting in greater access to funds by the youth sector for GE activities.

4.8. Reflections on the arising opportunities at the national level

In an increasingly interconnected world, the role of young people in shaping global policy processes, including Global Education cannot be understated. Youth is increasingly considered as a partner and an important stakeholder when shaping Global Education policies. Most examples of national Global Education policies demonstrate that there is an improved understanding of the role of young people, and an increased recognition of youth, as a constituency, as well as a partner, rather than a target of programmes or mere beneficiary.

As the demographic landscape globally shifts, with a substantial portion of the population being young people in most contexts, and an aging population in others, youth voices and needs must be prioritised in educational frameworks. Global Education policies are not only essential for fostering a different world view based on social equity, solidarity, global justice and sustainability but also for promoting inter-generational dialogue.

Young people are increasingly invited to the table to be heard and, above all, participate in decision-making. At national level, many examples of youth involvement in policymaking can be found. Although this is still not a reality in all governmental institutions across Europe, all studied countries appreciate youth engagement and recognise the need for it. There is a pressing need for deeper dialogue on the significance of youth participation and representation. Global Education policymaking should strive to move beyond mere consultations with young people, which can often feel tokenistic, and instead take meaningful action that truly reflects their voices and concerns. Young people, represented by youth organisations and national youth councils are considered as an actor in Global Education policy and strategy.

At the same time, youth policies may also integrate Global Education perspectives to fully realise the aspirations and potential of young people. Regrettably, Global Education is frequently overlooked as a political priority within national youth policy frameworks. Instead, it is often driven by the demands of young people themselves, leading to an ad hoc approach that lacks consistent political support. However, there are exceptions, as seen in countries like Belgium, Cyprus and Ireland, where Global Education is more effectively prioritised.

Most national youth policies present accessible opportunities to incorporate Global Education. A key enabler is the emphasis on active citizenship, human rights and democracy education within youth policy and youth work. Young people, namely youth organisations, leverage these foundations to foster global interconnectedness and address global issues. Additionally, many youth organisations take advantage of funding opportunities aimed at education for sustainable development, often provided by Ministries of Environment, further enhancing their capacity to promote Global Education.

Many youth organisations acting at national and local levels still struggle to engage fully in Global Education policy and practice due to a lack of capacity. Without structured support, their ability to participate is limited. Effective support goes beyond merely providing funding; it includes comprehensive capacity-building through youth work training in Global Education and Global Youth Work. Recognising the importance of youth engagement in global issues, and facilitating youth participation at local, national, international and global levels, are also crucial elements of this support.

Finally, the alignment between Global Education and youth policy presents a unique opportunity for achieving policy coherence, enabling both sectors to work in synergy to address pressing challenges such as inequality, access to quality education, and social justice. By fostering collaboration among various stakeholders - including governments, educational institutions, civil society, and youth organisations - we can create a more inclusive and resourceful educational landscape that empowers young people to make meaningful contributions to society.

For instance, policy mechanisms such as inter-ministerial coordination on youth and Global Education in Ireland, exemplify how strategic collaboration can enhance policy coherence. Additionally, evidence suggests that fostering multi-stakeholder dialogues leads to increased efforts in creating synergies between formal and non-formal education spaces, with youth work playing a crucial role in shaping these environments.

There are undoubtedly various approaches to placing youth at the centre of Global Education efforts. In several countries, financial support exists for both Global Education and youth programmes, with youth work being increasingly recognised as a vital ground for fostering Global Education. In these spaces, young people can reflect, learn, and engage as active citizens through diverse youth-led initiatives or in collaboration with development and social justice organisations. However, in many countries, support for global youth work at the national level remains limited, and numerous initiatives driven by young people are often excluded from formal youth work frameworks, lacking recognition from authorities. While substantial resources are directed toward large NGOs like Oxfam and Plan, there is a notable gap in support for smaller initiatives, pilot projects, and innovative experiments, which are essential for enhancing the diversity of youth work and empowering young leaders at local level.

Numerous questions emerge that invite a deeper reflection among key actors regarding youth engagement in Global Education policy and the strengthened role of Global Education within youth policy. Addressing these questions could lead to more strategic support for young people, fostering their active involvement and ensuring their voices are heard in shaping policies that affect their lives.

These initial reflections pave the way for a deeper examination of the complex relationship between youth and Global Education policies at national level, highlighting the potential for transformative change when these two align.

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[YouthWiki](#) (2023d) country report on Finland, last updated on 25th July 2023.

Chapter 5:

Global Education and European youth policies



5.1. Introduction

European policy developments have significantly influenced the awareness, knowledge, and implementation of youth policies at national and local levels. These developments have shaped and informed both national youth policies and youth work practices, particularly by addressing the challenges young people face in an increasingly globalised world. At the same time, national policies and youth work practices contribute to shaping broader regional strategies and programmes defined by European institutions. These regional strategies, although framed at the European level, are often influenced by the policy priorities of individual member states. In all those instances, youth participation in shaping policies that affect them is understood as prerequisite in all policy cycle phases (design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation). As Agnieszka Skuratowicz, Head of Unit at the Directorate-General for International Partnerships, highlighted during the 2022 Dublin Congress,

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To the youth representatives here today, don't shy away from reminding us of the commitments we have made.



Picture 26: Agnieszka Skuratowicz speaking at the Dublin Conference, November 2022
(Source: GENE)

This mutual influence is evident in resources such as the Youth Wiki, an online platform that presents youth policy information from 33 European countries. One of the topics highlight-

ed on the platform is Youth and the World, emphasising the growing recognition of global issues in youth work.

As illustrated by the case studies in Chapter 4, there is increasing awareness at the European level of the importance of integrating Global Education into youth policies, and vice versa focusing on youth in educational and global cooperation policies. As Marija Pejčinović Burić, Secretary General emphasised during the launch of the new Council of Europe Education Strategy

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... the Council of Europe has championed access to quality education for over 25 years, aiming to create confident and engaged citizens ready to deal with complex issues and diverse communities.

Considering emerging global challenges and ongoing digital transformation, climate crisis, and geopolitical shifts, as well as the changing needs of young people, a forward-looking youth policy, enhancement of cross-sectoral policy coherence and a more comprehensive approach to youth participation seem a necessity. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the relationship between Global Education (GE) and youth policies at the European level by looking at the European Youth Forum (YFJ), as the key European youth platform for international youth organisations and national youth councils, as well as the key European institutions in the youth field: the European Commission (EC) and the Council of Europe (CoE). These three institutions have been central to advancing GE through youth policies and youth work, and their efforts are examined in chronological order based on when they initiated youth-related activities.

- The Council of Europe established its first European Youth Centre in 1972, marking the start of its engagement with youth policies.
- The European Youth Forum, founded in 1996 by national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations, represented a key platform for European youth organisations.
- The European Commission started focusing on youth in 2001 with its first formal youth policy White paper on youth, and the chapter will explore its contributions to youth work.

The *youth work community of practice* has gathered at [European Youth Work Conventions](#) since 2010 to discuss the latest developments in youth work and policy, draft joint declarations that shape youth work policy and practice at all levels.

Both the EC and CoE have developed European Youth Strategies with the active involvement of young people with specific youth participation mechanisms. The [European Union Youth dialogue](#) (EU Youth Dialogue) is the largest structured citizen participation process in the European Union where through a series of youth consultations on a mutually agreed and youth-relevant topic young people can express their views simultaneously across all the EU member states.

The [Council of Europe's Advisory Council on Youth](#) is the non-governmental partner in the co-management structure which establishes the standards and work priorities of the Council of Europe's youth sector and makes recommendations for future priorities, programmes and budgets. Most of the members of the Advisory Council are nominated by the European Youth Forum.

These institutionalised forms of youth participation have led to the creation of high-level policy documents that reflect the youth views, political will of European Member States and regional organisations alike. These mechanisms have provided guidance for both regional programming and national policy development.

Since 1998, the [Youth Partnership](#) between the EC and the CoE has played a key role in systematising knowledge about youth policies and youth work in Europe. It has promoted the concept of participatory youth policy, grounded in evidence-based practices. Although the Youth Partnership does not have a primary mandate for Global Education, it supports related initiatives such as intercultural learning, education for democratic citizenship, and youth participation. These efforts often align with the principles of Global Education, reflecting the long-standing commitment of both institutions to these values.

Although various international and global mechanisms for youth participation are established within organisations such as UNESCO, OECD, UNECE, OSCE, the Earth Charter, and other regional bodies, this publication will not specifically address these frameworks at the European level. Doing so would necessitate additional research that exceeds our current capacity.

5.2. European Youth Forum

The [European Youth Forum](#) (YFJ) is the largest platform of youth organisations in the world. It brings together National Youth Councils and International Non-governmental Youth Organisations to advocate for the interests and rights of young people in Europe. YFJ is a key partner at European (and global) level bringing voices and interests of young people to relevant policies, primarily in relation to youth rights, democracy, climate, sustainable development. YFJ mobilises a pool of trainers and collaborates on major initiatives, such as teaming up with the European Environmental Bureau to promote sustainable development post-COVID. Its 2008, [Policy Paper on Global Education: a global vision on education - an education for global citizenship](#) emphasised the need for global citizenship education to

empower youth for societal transformation, integrating development education, human rights, and sustainability. The paper called for GE, as an educational concept with political, philosophical and pedagogical backgrounds, to be a "new approach to education".

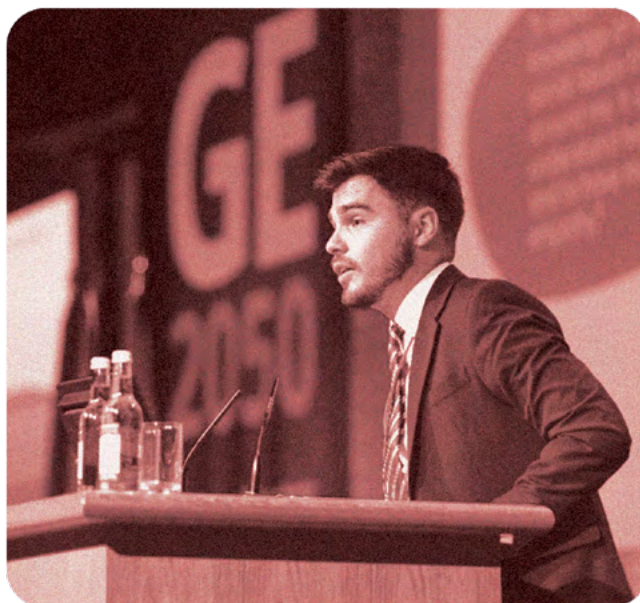
As a youth voice, YFJ engages directly with European-level policymakers, advocating for systemic change to include youth perspectives on education, human rights, and sustainable global policies. For the post-2015 agenda the YFJ prioritised empowering children, youth and adults to be global active citizens, able to engage in and transform their societies and the world.

At COP28, YFJ co-hosted events like Beyond Growth to explore sufficiency for a sustainable future. YFJ also contributed to the [Dublin Declaration \(2022\)](#), ensuring that youth perspectives are considered in global policy frameworks.

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Be open to make mistakes – and be open to fix those mistakes with us.

Rareş Voicu, President of the European Youth Forum, former Board Member of OBESSU at the European Congress on Global Education to 2050



Picture 27: Rareş Voicu speaking at the Dublin Conference, November 2022 (Source: GENE)

Non-formal education has been one of the topics the European Youth Forum has worked on since its creation, especially when it comes to non-formal education activities facilitated and provided by youth organisations. Soft skills, such as adaptability, intercultural awareness, critical thinking, communication and interpersonal skills, problem solving, leadership and teamwork are not just thought about but also "learned by doing" in real life contexts which youth organisations often provide.

Through advocacy, capacity building, partnerships, and research, the European Youth Forum works to make Global Education a reality for all young people. In particular, YFJ plays a significant role in advocating for quality education for all young people, not just within Europe but on a global scale and for increased funding for education, as well as promoting inclusive education policies, and addressing barriers to education such as discrimination and inequality.

5.3. The European Union

The involvement of the European Union (EU) can be characterised by an evolving approach to both youth and Global Education. This sub-chapter examines how EU policies have progressively integrated Global Education into its broader youth strategies.

The EU's commitment to youth and Global Education has evolved over several decades, building on its foundational treaties and policy frameworks. Today, EU policies promote youth participation, non-formal education, and global citizenship, positioning young people as key actors in shaping Europe's future. Recognising that the future of Europe and the world rests in the hands of today's youth, the EU has integrated Global Education into its broader youth policy framework. This approach aims to foster critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and a sense of shared responsibility among young people for global issues such as climate change, inequality, and sustainable development.

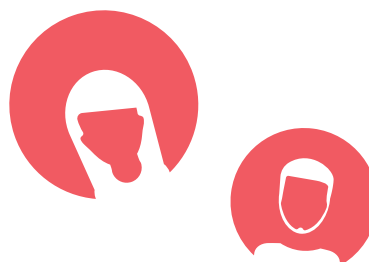
The following sections describe the EU's approach to youth and Global Education, tracing its policy developments, examining current strategies, and considering potential future directions for enhancing youth engagement with global challenges.

5.3.1. EU approach to youth and Global Education

The EU's current approach to youth and Global Education is firmly grounded in its [Youth Strategy 2019-2027](#), which is built on three core pillars: Engage, Connect, and Empower. These pillars aim to foster youth participation in democratic life, promote opportunities for cross-border mobility and learning, and empower young people to contribute actively to society, both locally and globally. As former European Commissioner for Youth Mariya Gabriel stated,

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Young people are not just the future; they are the present. Their active involvement in addressing global challenges is critical to building a sustainable and just world.



Global Education is integral to this approach, as it equips young people with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to address global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and digital transformation. The EU recognises that young people must be empowered to act as global citizens, capable of engaging with complex international issues. The strategy places strong emphasis on youth dialogue as a mechanism for involving young people in policy discussions, ensuring their voices are considered when addressing both European and global challenges.

At the policy implementation level, the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Solidarity Corps are key instruments for advancing youth and Global Education objectives. Erasmus+ supports youth mobility and cooperation through non-formal education and capacity-building projects, often focused on global issues such as intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, and sustainable development. The European Solidarity Corps engages young Europeans in volunteer activities that directly contribute to addressing societal challenges both within and beyond Europe, thereby fostering a sense of global responsibility.

Box 3:

The Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) is responsible for developing and implementing the European Commission's policies in these sectors, with a strong focus on youth and global education. In the youth field, DG EAC leads initiatives under the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, aimed at engaging, connecting, and empowering young people across Europe. It fosters non-formal education, active citizenship, and youth participation in democratic processes through programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, which promote intercultural understanding and global citizenship education. These initiatives support youth mobility, leadership development, and the acquisition of key competences, including digital literacy and environmental awareness, contributing to Global Education goals by enhancing youth's capacity to address global challenges like climate change and social inequality. Through partnerships, DG EAC also works to integrate youth voices into policy development, reinforcing the importance of youth as global actors in a rapidly changing world.

Additionally, the EU's Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) Programme within the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) plays a significant role in Global Education. DEAR encourages European citizens, particularly young people, to engage with global issues by fostering awareness of global interdependencies and the importance of sustainable development. Through DEAR-funded initiatives, young people in the EU and partner countries collaborate to raise awareness and build mutual understanding, furthering the EU's policy coherence for development.

Moreover, the Youth Sounding Board gives young people a direct platform to influence EU external actions, allowing them to contribute to policy discussions on pressing global issues

like climate change, digital transformation, and human rights. This board encourages youth voices from both Europe and the Global South to guide EU policies, ensuring they remain relevant and responsive to young people's needs in a rapidly changing global context.

5.3.2. EU political commitment to youth and Global Education

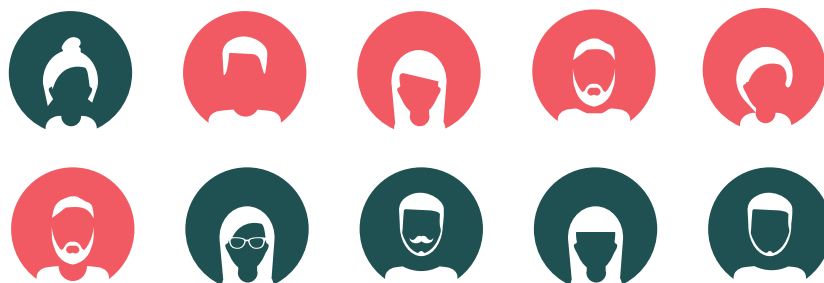
The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (2018/C 456/01) acknowledges the pivotal role young people play in shaping the global agenda and addressing international challenges. The strategy is guided by five key principles: equality and non-discrimination, inclusion, participation, a focus on the multi-level dimension (global, European, national, regional, and local), and a dual approach. This dual approach consists of (1) targeted youth initiatives that promote non-formal education, volunteering, youth work, and mobility, and (2) cross-sectoral mainstreaming, ensuring youth perspectives are integrated into broader policy areas such as education, employment, and health.

A central feature of the Strategy is its emphasis on ensuring young people's voices are considered in global decision-making. It seeks to foster youth participation in democratic life, support social and civic engagement, and ensure young people have the necessary resources to contribute fully to society, in alignment with Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Moreover, the Strategy advocates for a coherent, cross-sectoral policy approach at national levels, encouraging authorities to enhance youth participation in policymaking processes, particularly regarding global issues like climate change, sustainable development, and human rights. It calls for youth policies to be grounded in a thorough analysis of young people's realities, involving stakeholders across all sectors that impact youth, and promoting active engagement beyond Europe to reinforce young people's contributions to global challenges.

This approach parallels the Dublin Declaration on Global Education and youth, which similarly emphasises policy coherence and youth engagement at all stages of policy design, implementation, and evaluation.

The EU's external action policies have further integrated Global Education. The Youth Action Plan in EU External Relations (YAP), adopted in 2022, underlines the importance of partnerships with youth globally, particularly in fostering global education initiatives. The YAP emphasises the need for joint youth-led initiatives between EU countries and external partner regions to develop a shared understanding of global challenges and solutions, such as in the areas of climate change and sustainable development.



As Agnieszka Skuratowicz, Head of Unit at the Directorate-General for International Partnerships, highlighted during the 2022 Dublin Congress,

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You open people's eyes, you provoke critical thinking, you raise awareness and empower young people to become agents for positive change, to become active as global citizens. In a world where the space for democratic engagement and activism is shrinking.

5.3.3. EU policy instruments:

EU youth programmes and Global Education

Two major instruments play a crucial role in implementing the EU's youth policy. The Erasmus+ Programme, a flagship initiative in the fields of education, training, and youth, offers young people opportunities for learning mobility and international cooperation. Key actions under Erasmus+ (KA1, KA2, and KA3) support individual learning mobility, collaboration between institutions and policy reform respectively. The European Solidarity Corps complements these efforts by offering young Europeans aged 18-30 the opportunity to participate in community-based volunteering projects, both abroad and domestically.

The Erasmus+ Programme is a cornerstone of the European Union's lifelong learning framework, designed to support the educational, professional, and personal development of individuals across Europe and beyond. By fostering education, training, youth, and sport initiatives, Erasmus+ contributes to sustainable growth, quality employment, social cohesion, innovation, and the reinforcement of European identity and active citizenship.

In the field of youth, Erasmus+ promotes non-formal and informal learning mobility, fostering active participation among young people, as well as cooperation, creativity, inclusion, and innovation at the organisational and policy levels. The programme focuses on four key priorities that align closely with global education principles: inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environmental sustainability and climate action and participation in democratic life. These priorities ensure that Erasmus+ projects not only address the needs of young people within Europe but also engage them with global challenges, enhancing intercultural understanding and cooperation.

Erasmus+ supports various initiatives that promote global education, citizenship education, intercultural dialogue, and international cooperation among young people.

These initiatives are organised under three Key Actions (KA):

- Key Action 1 (KA1): Mobility projects for learners and staff, providing opportunities for personal and professional development through learning mobility.
- Key Action 2 (KA2): Cooperation among organisations and institutions, supporting collaboration and knowledge exchange to improve the quality of education, training, and youth work.
- Key Action 3 (KA3): Support for policy development and cooperation, facilitating dialogue between policymakers, young people, and youth organisations to influence youth policy at national and European levels.

Each of these Key Actions aligns with the global education dimensions, particularly in terms of inclusion and diversity. The focus on mobility, cooperation, and policy dialogue is integral to fostering exchanges in education, training, youth, and sport, both within the EU and with third countries in neighbouring regions such as Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, EuroMed, and South-East Europe. These exchanges are further supported by [SALTO Resource Centres](#), which offer resources and training to enhance the impact of Erasmus+ projects.

Box 4:

In practice, according to RAY research findings E+ supported projects are reaching results aligned with GE dimensions. Among 5,007 project leaders surveyed, over 75% strongly agreed that Erasmus+ Youth in Action achieves its objectives, particularly in:

- Promoting respect for cultural diversity (98% agree/strongly agree);
- Enhancing intercultural dialogue (97%);
- Fostering solidarity among young people (97%);
- Combating discrimination, intolerance, racism, and xenophobia (93%);
- Encouraging active citizenship and participation in democratic life (92%).

Further, of the 23,571 participants surveyed, the majority reported improvements in key competencies related to citizenship:

- 62% improved their ability to discuss political topics seriously;
- 90% enhanced their ability to negotiate joint solutions in diverse groups;
- 88% felt more capable of contributing to community or societal interests;
- 94% improved their ability to get along with people from different cultural backgrounds.

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) 2021-2027 complements Erasmus+ by engaging young people in addressing societal and humanitarian challenges through volunteering or solidarity projects. Building on the legacy of the European Voluntary Service, the ESC offers a range of actions, including volunteering projects, volunteering teams in high-priority areas, and solidarity projects. The ESC also provides a quality label for volunteering activities, promoting inclusion, diversity, and green practices in all projects. The programme aims to foster environmental responsibility and promote the digital transition by supporting projects that enhance digital skills and digital literacy.

The ESC promotes youth participation in democratic processes and civic engagement, with the flexibility to adjust its priorities annually. For example, in 2024, the ESC prioritized initiatives related to relief for persons fleeing armed conflicts and victims of natural or man-made disasters, as well as fostering positive learning experiences and outcomes for young people with fewer opportunities.

Box 5:

According to findings from the [Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth \(RAY\) Network](#), Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps projects are highly effective in promoting outcomes that align with Global Education principles. A comparative research report (2014-2020) concluded that participation in these programmes leads to high levels of competence and skills development. Notably, 96% of project participants reported improvements in their ability to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, while 90% felt more capable of achieving something in the interest of their community. Additionally, 86% of participants were actively involved in project preparation and implementation, practicing their civic participation. Importantly, 37% of respondents reported increased civic engagement as a direct result of their participation in these projects, compared to their level of engagement prior to the project (RAY, 2020).

5.3.4. The Youth Sounding Board: young people from Europe and the Global South to shape EU's external actions

The [Youth Sounding Board \(YSB\)](#) is a vital initiative launched by the European Commission, particularly through its Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), to ensure that young voices, both from Europe and the Global South, actively shape the EU's external actions and international partnerships. It provides a platform for young people to influence and contribute to policies and programmes across a broad range of critical global issues, including climate action, digital policy, cybersecurity, human rights, and efforts to combat radicalisation. This participatory mechanism aligns with the EU's broader commitment to inclusive policymaking, ensuring that youth perspectives are integrated into strategies that address both European and global challenges.

A key objective of the YSB is to foster greater youth engagement in policy areas where they can drive impactful change. During panel discussion at GLZ's summer reception in Brussels, Agnieszka Skuratowicz, Head of Unit for Youth, Education, and Culture at DG INTPA, emphasised the innovative nature of this initiative:

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The goal of the action plan is nothing less than (...) allowing the youth to teach us on these issues.

Effectively timing transforming youth participation into a core instrument for all, rather than a luxury for the few, these statements underscore the EU's recognition of young people as not just beneficiaries but also active contributors to shaping international development and cooperation policies.

Through the YSB, youth are positioned to work closely with EU institutions, offering insights and solutions grounded in their experiences, particularly from regions disproportionately affected by global challenges. By fostering collaboration across borders and sectors, the YSB aims to strengthen the role of youth in building resilient societies and promoting sustainable development globally.

5.3.5. EU youth and Global Education policy evolution

The European Union (EU) has progressively shaped its approach to youth policy, integrating Global Education as a critical component in empowering young people. Its involvement in youth policy officially began under the [Treaty of Maastricht \(1992\)](#), where it acquired a range of competencies in this field. A significant step forward, however, came with the adoption of the [White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth" \(2001\)](#), which demonstrated a clearer commitment to promoting youth participation, information dissemination, voluntary activities, and improving the understanding of young people's needs. This White Paper established the foundations for a more structured European youth policy and laid the groundwork for subsequent legislative developments.

Further progress was made with the [Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union \(2008\)](#), which solidified the EU's role in youth policy through Article 165. This article explicitly calls for the "*encouragement of the development of youth exchanges and exchanges of socio-educational instructors*" while also promoting youth participation in European democratic life. This legislative framework has since underpinned many EU initiatives in the youth sector.

Building on this foundation, the [EU Strategy for Youth – Investing and Empowering \(2009\)](#) introduced a more comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to youth policy. The strategy addressed a broad range of policy areas including education, employment and health, with a strong emphasis on engaging young people in policy development. Importantly, this strategy also introduced the concept of youth dialogue as a formal mechanism for obtaining youth perspectives on policy decisions, further institutionalising youth participation within the EU's policy processes. The [Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the Youth Field \(2010-2018\)](#) further developed this approach by formalising consultations and structured dialogue with young people and youth organisations. As a result of this dialogue, [11 Youth Goals](#) were identified, which have since served as a foundation for shaping the [EU Youth Strategy \(2019-2027\)](#). This strategy is built around the objectives to 'Engage, Connect, and Empower' young people, with a particular focus on fostering youth dialogue that includes policymakers, civil society actors, experts, and researchers. This dialogue serves as a continuous forum for reflecting on, and consulting about, European youth policy priorities and implementation.

In terms of the European Commission's commitment to Global Education (GE) and Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR), the [Youth Action Plan in EU External Relations](#) represents a critical milestone. As stated by the European Commission, the Youth Action Plan provides a guiding framework for fostering partnerships with and among youth through global education initiatives. The Commission has notably extended its DEAR programme to encourage young Europeans and youth in partner countries to collaborate on projects that raise awareness and understanding of global interdependencies and development challenges.

In 2020, the EU Council adopted the [Resolution on the Framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda](#) laying the foundation for a coordinated and cohesive approach to youth work development across Europe. The [European Youth Work Agenda \(EYWA\)](#) was called for by the final declaration of 2nd European Youth Work Convention (2015) and spearheaded by Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union and its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (2020). The European Youth Work Conventions (EYWC) are a central platform for discussing the latest developments in youth work practice and youth policy in Europe. Conventions have been held every five years since 2010. [Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention \(2020\)](#) launched an EYWA implementation process as a call for common actions across Europe directed primarily at the youth work community of practice - defined as including youth workers and youth leaders, youth work managers, project carriers, accredited and independent youth work organisations, trainers, researchers, educators of youth workers, local communities and municipalities, National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps, youth representations, young people, and policymakers at all levels of governance. This declaration brought notably more focus on global education and global youth work, by both calling for *"fostering in youth work practice a societal and global challenges dimension"* and for *"being aware that contemporary youth work practice is embedded in a global community"*.

5.4. The Council of Europe: Global Education and youth rooted in rights, youth participation and North-South cooperation

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Global Education must provide both a historical perspective and move with the times - learning that is fit for the modern age.

Björn Berge, Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe at the European Congress on Global Education to 2050



Picture 28: Björn Berge speaking at the Dublin Conference, November 2022 (Source: GENE)

The Council of Europe (CoE) has long been a pivotal organisation in fostering democracy, human rights, and the rule of law across Europe and beyond. Its mission is clear: to promote peace and stability by creating a shared space of values and cooperation. Over the decades, one of its key focal areas has been *human rights education* and *youth engagement*, addressing the need to integrate human rights, youth participation, and cooperative efforts between the Global North and South. The Council of Europe's efforts in global education and youth engagement have evolved through decades of commitment to human rights and participatory democracy.

This sub-chapter explores the current trends, as well as key historical developments of global education and youth, highlighting the CoE's role in shaping a youth-driven, rights-based approach to education and participation.

The following section describes how commitments to youth policies, youth work, youth participation and global citizenship education have become realised through specific strategies, programmes and initiatives.

5.4.1. Council of Europe's approach to (Global) Education

The Council of Europe prioritises education, particularly with and for young people, as a tool for building peaceful, democratic societies. The Council of Europe's Youth Directorate approaches global education by fostering youth participation, human rights education, and intercultural dialogue. In-house educational advisors contribute by designing and delivering non-formal education programmes, facilitating the development of competences needed for active participation in society, and supporting the capacity-building of youth organisations. One key initiative is [the Compass programme](#), a manual for human rights education with young people, which provides tools and resources for educators to address global issues like social justice, peace, and sustainable development. Trainings on human rights education for youth workers equips them with the tools to address global challenges and foster social inclusion.

Box 6:

The [European Youth Centres](#) (Strasbourg and Budapest) are an important instrument of the CoE's youth policy. They are international training and meeting centres with residential facilities, hosting most of the youth sector's activities. They run an annual programme of 40 to 50 activities in close co-operation with non-governmental youth organisations (NGYOs). These organisations represent a wide diversity of interests: party political, socio-educational and religious youth groups, rural youth movements, trade union and young workers' organisations, children's organisations and environmental networks.

European youth co-operation and youth-led focus on GE topics is particularly supported by the specific CoE division, the European Youth Foundation. Through its grants, the EYF funds local, national, and international projects that aim to empower young people as active citizens capable of addressing global challenges. The educational support coupled with the emphasis on youth participation allow for innovative approaches to global education tailored to the needs and contexts of young people across Europe. These projects often focus on promoting global citizenship, critical thinking, and awareness of global issues such as social justice, climate change, and peacebuilding. The study sessions - international educational youth seminars bring together members of youth organisations and networks and experts for discussions on a specific subject. For example, in 2024, [CoE supported study sessions](#) focused on (non-exhaustive list): Strengthening youth participation and youth work; Protecting and standing-up for democracy and human rights; Navigating conflict and creating more peaceful and inclusive communities; Empowering Roma youth leaders, hard of hearing and LGBTQI activists and advancing inclusion of rural youth; Right to a healthy environment; Countering shrinking civic spaces and strengthening resilience of youth spaces in Europe; Safeguarding a sustainable and peaceful future.

Box 7:

The European Youth Foundation (EYF) provides financial and educational support for youth-led initiatives that align with the CoE's values. The EYF funds activities that contribute to peace and cooperation in Europe, promote understanding among young people, and encourage mutual aid and information exchange. Projects supported by the EYF must address the key priorities of the youth sector. The EYF emphasises non-formal education, gender equality, sustainability, and inclusion in the projects it supports. Many EYF-funded initiatives also address Global Education themes, such as including migrants and refugees, fostering environmental action, and promoting international cooperation.

5.4.2. Youth participation at the core of Council of Europe

The Council of Europe's approach to youth participation has consistently been rooted in the understanding that young people are not merely recipients of policies but active participants in shaping them. The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (2003) established clear guidelines for local and national governments to engage youth in democratic processes. This rights-based approach is grounded in the principle that young people have the right to influence decisions that affect their lives. Over the years, the CoE has promoted youth involvement in policymaking through its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which encourages youth to take leadership roles in governance. Initiatives like the Youth Department's co-management system, where youth organisations and governments work together, further institutionalised youth participation as a core value of European governance.

Box 8:

The co-management system of the Council of Europe (CoE) is an innovative approach to decision-making, where young people and government representatives work together on an equal footing to shape youth policies and programmes. This system operates primarily within the Youth Department, which oversees activities related to youth engagement and participation. In this system, the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ), representing governments, and the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), representing youth organisations, work together in the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ). Through co-management, representatives from youth organisations and government authorities meet in joint committees to discuss, plan, and allocate resources for initiatives that impact young people. This ensures that young people have an equal say in shaping policies and programmes that impact them, reinforcing the CoE's commitment to a participatory and rights-based approach to governance.

The Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), composed of 30 youth representatives from international youth organisations and networks, co-manages the youth sector alongside governmental representatives, ensuring that young people's perspectives are central to policy development. In the realm of Global Education, the CCJ focuses on fostering values like human rights, democracy, and cultural diversity through non-formal education and policy advocacy. For example, the [No Hate Speech Movement](#), spearheaded by the CCJ, aims to combat on-line hate speech through awareness campaigns and educational activities that emphasise digital literacy, human rights, and global responsibility. Also, the CCJ promotes Youth Peace Camps, which bring together young people from conflict-affected regions, using human rights education as a means to build peace and understanding across borders.

5.4.3. Global co-operation and youth in the Council of Europe framework

Furthermore, from its early years, the Council of Europe recognised the importance of engaging with countries beyond its immediate geographic scope. The rise of the Global South, the post-colonial world, and the increasing interdependencies between regions made North-South cooperation a strategic priority. North-South cooperation in the context of Global Education seeks to promote equitable partnerships between countries with different historical, political, and economic backgrounds. [The CoE's North-South Centre](#), established in Lisbon in 1989, was a major step toward fostering dialogue and cooperation between Europe and regions like Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. It aimed to address global inequalities by creating partnerships based on mutual respect and shared responsibility for global challenges. Lately, the CoE's focus has shifted towards ensuring that this cooperation is rooted in a framework of human rights and democratic governance, which can help address the shared global challenges of migration, climate change, and social inequality. Youth are central to this cooperation and are actively involved in addressing the challenges to their participation such as the global rise of authoritarianism, populism, and nationalism, the digital divide and fewer opportunities for youth from marginalised backgrounds in Europe to fully engage in democratic processes. The CoE's commitment to human rights, democracy, and intercultural dialogue positions young people as leaders building bridges between North and South and effectively being at the heart of global response to the challenges posed by climate change, migration, and socio-economic inequality.



Box 9:

The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, established in 1990, aims to promote dialogue and solidarity between the Global North and South. Its focus is on empowering civil society—especially youth and women—through intercultural dialogue and Global Education. The Centre plays a key role in linking youth organisations with Global Education efforts through activities like:

- Global Education Week, an annual Europe-wide campaign that raises awareness of global interdependence, with youth organisations as key coordinators.
- The Universities on Youth and Development, including the flagship University on Youth and Development in Spain, the African University on Youth and Development, and the Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship.
- Stakeholder Meetings, which bring together youth organisations, civil society, and other actors to coordinate efforts on youth and Global Education.

These initiatives promote intercultural understanding, global citizenship, and youth-led cooperation across regions, contributing to the CoE's goals of fostering peace, inclusion, and solidarity.

5.4.4. Council of Europe political commitment to youth and Global Education

The Reykjavik Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe during the May 2023 summit, holds significant importance for youth and Global Education. This declaration reaffirms the commitment of European leaders to uphold democratic values, human rights, and the rule of law, with a specific focus on empowering youth to actively participate in shaping the future. For Global Education, the declaration calls for fostering critical thinking, civic responsibility, and cross-cultural understanding among young people to address pressing global issues like climate change, digital transformation, and social inequality. It emphasises strengthening youth participation in decision-making and promoting educational initiatives that support global citizenship, thus aligning with the Council of Europe's broader efforts to integrate Global Education into youth policy. This commitment is vital in preparing younger generations to engage with complex global challenges, equipping them with the tools needed for fostering inclusive, sustainable, and democratic societies. Particularly significant is its commitment to integration of a "youth perspective" in its overall policies, ensuring young people are seen and engaged with as active contributors to societal development.

The [Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030](#) is designed to empower young people across Europe to actively engage with and benefit from the CoE's core values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The strategy focuses on enhancing young people's access to rights, expanding their knowledge, and increasing their participation in democratic processes. Its four main thematic areas are:

- Revitalising pluralistic democracy
- Ensuring young people's access to rights
- Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies
- Strengthening youth work

The development of the strategy considered the evolving landscape of the youth sector and its stakeholders, acknowledging the complex social challenges young people face today, such as persistent poverty, health and well-being issues, the climate crisis, and security concerns. It also addresses emerging threats like the rise of populism, nationalism, and the shrinking of democratic spaces. In response, the strategy outlines measures to strengthen youth leadership, provide human rights education, and foster democratic citizenship. Additionally, it aims to improve institutional responses to these challenges by promoting European unity, global solidarity, intercultural dialogue, and environmental sustainability, and to position youth work more centrally. During a symposium on youth work development in Europe (2023), Matjaž Gruden, Director of Democratic Participation at the Council of Europe, highlighted the essential role of youth cooperation in addressing contemporary global challenges and emphasised that

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we must embed youth work practice in a global community, addressing societal and global challenges while promoting solidarity, inclusion, and respect for cultural diversity.

5.4.5 Evolution of Global Education within the Council of Europe

In 1950, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was adopted, serving as a cornerstone for human rights protection and education. The Convention emphasised the need to promote understanding and respect for human rights across all social strata, including young people. This laid the groundwork for the Council's efforts to integrate human rights into formal and non-formal education systems.

By the 1970s, the CoE's focus expanded to educating youth, with the establishment of the European Youth Centre (EYC) in 1972 and the European Youth Foundation (EYF) in 1973. These institutions aimed to facilitate youth participation in civil society and empower them as agents of democratic change. These centres, along with numerous youth programmes, helped advance global education initiatives that encouraged cross-cultural learning and instilled democratic values among young people.

The focus on non-formal education (NFE) for youth began in the 1970s, emphasising experiential learning outside traditional schools to promote human rights, democracy, and active citizenship. Over time, this evolved into a broader commitment to youth work, which encompasses not only NFE but also a structured, professionalised approach to supporting young people's development. By the 2000s, CoE policies expanded to recognise youth work as a key tool for social inclusion, personal growth, and active participation in society, formalised through frameworks like the [Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on Youth Work](#) (2017). Today, youth work is integral to CoE strategies, linking education and civic engagement.

The concept of Global Education emerged in the 1990s as globalisation reshaped the world, leading to greater interconnectivity between countries, cultures, and economies. Recognising the need to prepare youth for this interconnected world, the CoE launched the Global Education Week initiative, encouraging young people across Europe to explore global issues like poverty, migration, climate change, and peace.

Global Education, as endorsed by the CoE, was not just about teaching young people global issues, but also about fostering a values-based education that integrates human rights, intercultural dialogue, and social justice. By 2002, the [Maastricht Global Education Declaration](#) set the parameters for this approach, emphasising that global education should promote awareness of issues concerning the Global South and foster a sense of responsibility toward global challenges.

Today, youth participation is taking new forms as young people do not conform to traditional mechanisms for civic participation and harness digital platforms, social media, and civic activism to influence societal change. Moreover, recent trends show an increase in youth-led movements across Europe. From environmental activism, epitomised by the Fridays for Future movement, to advocacy for social justice and human rights, young people are playing a significant role in mobilising societal change. The CoE has acknowledged this shift and continues to support youth-driven initiatives through its Youth for Democracy programmes. The CoE's Youth Sector Strategy 2030 is a key framework guiding youth participation in modern democracies, placing particular emphasis on ensuring that young people from marginalised communities are heard. It addresses new challenges like the climate crisis, digitalisation, and the rise of populism, all of which affect youth profoundly.

5.5. Conclusions

In conclusion, while different terminologies and priorities have been used in European youth policies regarding Global Education (GE), existing programmes and projects significantly contribute to promoting GE, preparing young people to address both local and global challenges such as climate change, digitalisation, and globalisation. Youth empowerment, intercultural education, solidarity, and community engagement are key components of those projects, and correspondingly of global education. Though some have more explicit global dimensions than others, all share the overarching goal of preparing young people to be active participants in their societies, promoting democratic values of tolerance, diversity, and global responsibility - notably, with environmental sustainability and climate change becoming a central issue in activities, together with international peace and cooperation.

Key European level institutions and policy documents recognise those emerging issues affecting youth and call for greater integration of youth voices and perspectives in the policy responses. European youth policies emphasise the empowerment of young people to become active, informed, and engaged citizens who can contribute to addressing local and global challenges. To further strengthen these efforts, policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration should be enhanced, especially between GE and youth policies. Increased focus on climate action, digital literacy, and global cooperation can ensure young people remain central to future policy agendas. Enhanced inclusivity and targeted support for disadvantaged youth can also better integrate diverse perspectives into global education initiatives, ensuring a more equitable and impactful youth policy framework.

Moving forward, European institutions and (youth) civil society actors should focus on further embedding GE principles into formal and non-formal education systems, while deepening youth participation in international policymaking processes. Political commitment to those principles could be further strengthened by the design of concrete mechanisms and increased budgetary allocations for meaningful youth participation in GE policy and programmes development, implementation and evaluation.

By increasing opportunities for youth leadership in addressing global challenges in such a meaningful way, the future of GE will be more inclusive and responsive to emerging trends. Additionally, policy coherence and cross-sectoral cooperation between stakeholders responsible for GE and youth policies is yet to be further developed.

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Don't shy away from reminding us about our collective commitments that we made in Dublin.

A special call to youth representatives present at the European Congress on Global Education to 2050 by Agnieszka Skuratowicz, Head of Unit for Youth, Education, and Culture at DG INTPA.

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Chapter 6:

Final reflections and conclusions



This publication recognises and illustrates the power of GE in the context of youth work. The rich array of GE practices in the context of work with and by young people presented in this publication show the relevance of these practices and their special features. Young people learn about global issues through non-formal education activities in these spaces and take action, building their own identities as global citizens and working towards social transformation.

Survey results showed that young people access information about global issues largely through social media; nevertheless, it is in the context of non-formal education settings where they can make sense of this information and develop competences through various kinds of activities, notably, using experiential learning and action-oriented projects. It is where they build connections to their peers and to society, where they build hope for a better future by imagining and developing alternative ways of being and living. A distinct feature evidenced by the practices described is that young people are not only more aware of global challenges such as climate change, rising inequalities or deteriorating civic space, but they are committed and determined to address these challenges and engage in inter-generational dialogue.

However, young leaders and youth workers face challenges such as limited support, tokenistic approaches when engaging young people or lack of quality training in GE available to young people and youth workers. The great transformative potential of GE work with young people is hindered and represents a worrisome, missed opportunity.

Policies and programmes increasingly address these challenges, and those formulating policies and programmes increasingly work directly with young people in meaningful partnerships. This allows young people, through direct consultations or through representation by organisations and networks, to express their needs and ideas, and thus co-design, shape and implement those policies and programmes.

This requires strong political leadership and support. This publication provides examples of this sort of leadership at the national and European level. Such leadership enables innovative programmes, cross-sectoral approaches with integrated mechanisms facilitating youth participation. Clearly, where whole-government approaches to GE policy are deployed, GE is integrated across all relevant policies emphasising youth as partners in decision-making and policy implementation. Such efforts include youth-friendly and accessible language in GE documents, along with capacity-building for youth workers. It also involves strategic partnerships and diversified funding that enhances youth engagement in global issues. Recognising that this is not a reality everywhere, there are many other examples of how GE and youth work can be mutually reinforced. Another example involves a dual approach, where GE and youth policies operate side-by-side in a distinct way. It can be observed that decentralisation of national policies, and/or attention to coherence between national and local/regional policy and provision, can promote local synergies, bringing together GE and youth in coordinated and complementary ways.

Overall, policy coherence is often enhanced by strengthened dialogue. Where youth sit together at the table as one of the actors in the multistakeholder dialogue on GE, there are increased possibilities for GE being integrated across youth policies, and at the same time youth concerns being present across GE strategy and its programmes.

At the European level, there is space to further enhance policy coherence and cross-sectoral collaboration between GE and youth policies. Increased focus on global issues that young people are clearly concerned about, such as climate action, digital literacy, global justice and international cooperation can contribute to youth maintaining a leading role in global policy agendas. While overall youth participation mechanisms are increasingly improving at all levels of European policy, inclusion of disadvantaged youth in all its diversity could be strengthened.

European institutions and youth organisations can work together to an even greater extent towards further embedding GE into formal and non-formal education and enhance youth participation in international policymaking. Strengthening political commitment requires concrete mechanisms and increased budgets for meaningful youth involvement in developing, implementing, and evaluating GE policies and programmes. Increasing opportunities for youth leadership to address global challenges in meaningful ways will contribute to GE being more inclusive and responsive to emerging trends.

Based on the experiences documented and the enabling and limiting factors identified in this publication, the following main areas of attention can be highlighted:

- **Recognition.** There is a need to further document and recognise the specific approaches and impacts of GE engaging or led by young people at national levels so that their work can be supported appropriately and in context-specific ways, and so that the whole GE community can build on these experiences.
- **Engagement in multi-stakeholder dialogue on GE.** Young people, through national youth councils and international youth organisations, should continue being an equal partner in multi-stakeholder dialogue on GE, GE strategy development and other related policy dialogues and learning at local, regional, national and international levels.
- **Support.** Young people, through youth-led groups and organisations and youth-focused organisations should continue to be supported with adequate funding programmes and training opportunities that adapt flexibly to the different organisational capacities, and that are planned on longer-term trajectories, rather than short-term projects or one-off events to ensure their sustainability.
- **Partnership.** GE policies and programmes should include young people as partners “every step of the way”, as expressed by representatives of the European Youth Forum. This means avoiding approaches that propose activities for young people only, or engage young people in youth policies development, but rather partner with young people in all relevant policies and programmes. Civil society and local and regional governments should continue involving youth-led organisations as partners in their GE activities. In summary – nothing about youth without youth.

- **Centrality of GE in funding programmes.** Programme funding for youth work should have more central and explicit GE dimensions, increasing opportunities for exchanges and cooperation within Europe but also with partners from other regions. Similarly, funding for GE at national and European level should (and often does) recognise the need to support youth GE.
- **Peer review and peer learning.** Young people and their organisations should continue being actively involved in national GE peer reviews, and in peer learning opportunities at national level. Additionally, peer learning among young people on GE at national and local level should be supported and strengthened.
- **Policy research.** While policy research in GE has increased and improved in recent years (see www.angel-network.net), with some notable exceptions, the bulk of policy research is focused on formal education. There is a need for a strengthened focus on young people as partners in defining the policy research agenda in GE - with and for youth, and for young people in GE policy research - by increasing opportunities for early career researchers, as well as involving youth within the design of GE policy research.
- **Piloting and innovation.** Young people should be encouraged to pilot, experiment and bring innovation in GE, especially in non-formal education. This may require specific small grant funding lines at both national and European levels.

We look forward to continuing the policy dialogue with youth organisations, with other stakeholders, and with national and European policymakers in line with the Dublin Declaration on Global Education to 2050.

About the authors

Celina Del Felice is an educator and researcher working in the fields of peace and global citizenship education in non-formal education, youth work and youth participation in peace-building efforts. She has supported efforts towards the implementation of the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda. Celina has a background in political science and conflict studies and completed her PhD research on the role of civil society in trade and development policymaking. Currently, she is the President of the Agency for Peacebuilding, Italy, and is a member of the Code of Practice Panel of Experts of the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA).

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#Global Education #Youth #Europe

An inspiration for policymakers and other stakeholders in Global Education to build on youth practices and policies and further enhance partnership, coordination and policy coherence.

The idea of this publication emerged during the process leading to the Dublin Declaration on Global Education to 2050 (2022) in dialogue with representatives of youth organisations and national youth councils. It entailed a consultative process with youth, as well as survey research on young people, global issues and Global Education youth work practice. The publication builds on the insights and dialogue gained from this engagement and expands on them through further research and analysis.

Gathering further data involved a mapping of Global Education (GE) activities in youth work and supporting policies. The mapping aimed to enhance understanding of GE and youth work in practice, providing an overview of existing youth policies in Europe and relevant GE policies at the national level. The purpose was to look at the intersection of youth policy and Global Education policy and how they can be mutually reinforcing in relation to youth and Global Education.

We hope that this publication will contribute to GENE's policymakers, both from Ministries of Education and Ministries of Foreign Affairs, as well as other relevant stakeholders' in the youth field, overview of Global Education in European and national youth policies so as to inspire strengthened support and inter- and intra- ministerial dialogue and coordination on Global Education and youth.

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Electronic edition ISBN: 978-1-911607-29-8

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