

Please provide some brief background information on your organisation (if applicable).

About GOAL

GOAL is an international humanitarian response agency established in Ireland over 40 years ago. In addition to activities based in Ireland, GOAL is active in 14 programme countries across Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. GOAL believes in a world in which poverty no longer exists, where vulnerable communities are resilient, where barriers to well-being are removed and where everyone has equal rights and opportunities.

GOAL's Global Citizenship Education Programme

The GOAL Global Citizenship Programme is formed around the global interconnections and universality at the heart of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Using the evidence and insights from our work across the globe, and by amplifying the voices of the communities with whom we work, we engage students, teachers, educators, young people, decision makers and the public to strengthen global citizenship competencies and take action in pursuit of a more equal, fair, and sustainable world. GOAL's Development Education and Public Engagement programmes are funded by Irish Aid in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as part of GOAL's 4-year 2019-2022 Programme Grant.

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) or Development Education (DE)

GCE/DE is a direct and active educational response to the issues of inequality and injustice that characterise the world we live in. It is an approach to education that encompasses knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and action. GCE/DE is driven by the core values and attitudes of justice, solidarity and empathy and has at its heart a transformative agenda to challenge the structural causes of poverty and inequality and instilling a clear sense of global citizenship in learners. It also, therefore, entails a critical action component to put learning into practice in our everyday lives. GCE/DE is underpinned by key skills of critical thinking and analysis, of being able to question and challenge the messages and information we receive every day. It is also characterised by core methodologies, namely participative and learner-centred approaches to teaching, which value the acquisition of skills and knowledge above getting the 'right' answer.

In this submission, **Global Citizenship Education (GCE)** is used as an umbrella term, which includes Development Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Intercultural Education, and related fields, and encompasses all work to advance active global citizenship in formal education.

The remainder of the template includes two sections. Section 1 invites your overall comments and observations on the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*. Section 2 is structured to align with the six key messages related to the framework. Each message is summarised as a support for you in working on the submission.

Please email your submission to PCRRsubmissions@ncca.ie

Section 1

Please outline your overall response to the *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework*.

GOAL welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the NCCA on the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework.

The year 2020 will be remembered as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the world was reminded of the interconnectedness of our planet. COVID-19 has also highlighted the importance of community and collaboration and the need to increase our resilience at local, national, and international level.

As a Humanitarian Aid Agency, GOAL is acutely aware of the many future challenges the global community is facing: Climate Change, Poverty, Migration, Hunger and Global Injustices. GOAL knows that hearing about these global challenges can be overwhelming for children; however, we are passionate about ensuring young people believe that a sustainable and fair future is achievable and equipping them with the tools to help contribute to this future. As such, **GOAL recognises the strong opportunities that the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework has to allow children to recognise the interconnectedness of our world, the importance of challenging stereotypes, of developing an awareness of events occurring in the world, and how we can all make a difference.**

GOAL has been exploring GCE/DE with primary school children across Ireland for years, together with many other member organisations of IDEA (the Irish Development Education Association). We believe that Global Citizenship Education (as articulated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.7¹) is essential to contributing to Ireland's future as a safe, sustainable, just society that takes responsibility for its role as a member of the international community.

Active Global Citizenship and Interdependence

We agree with the assessment in the Draft Framework that *“rapidly changing environments, especially in recent years, have impacted on children’s lives.”* We welcome the framework’s inclusion of “Being an active citizen” as one of the key competencies for primary education. **We would suggest, however, that this phrasing be changed to “Global citizenship,” “Being a global citizen,” or “Being an active global citizen.”**

If education is framed in a global citizenship context, children are further encouraged to think of themselves as an important part of both their wider community and the interconnected world, expanding their horizons and expectations and preparing them for the vastly interdependent world on both a local and global level. While “enabling children to critically engage and contribute to a digitally connected and interdependent world” is recognized within the key competency of *Being a digital learner*, no further reference is made to interdependence. **The understanding of interdependence and how it relates to the inequalities seen in the world can be achieved by integrating a GCE approach throughout this Draft Framework. This would provide a space for the GCE work that is already taking place in many schools, operationalising the necessary support to spread and improve effective practice.**

¹ By 2030, ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

There is a welcome focus on children as members of society within the framework. COVID-19 and Climate Change are examples of global issues that affect all people on the planet, and in our experience, young children can be highly aware of these issues. This highlights why global citizenship is so vital for students, teachers, and parents. We believe that giving personal and significant context for connecting the primary school curriculum to children's lives in meaningful ways helps them to feel empowered rather than intimidated by these world-wide issues. We support the inclusion of these topics within the "Being an active citizen" competency and the inclusion of "Recognizing injustice and inequality and ways to take action" and "Developing capacity to make choices in favour of a sustainable future" within the "Being an active citizen" attributes. **We suggest using words like *global, collective, and wider community* to ensure the understanding of ways in which positive and negative actions can have far-reaching effects for people both locally and globally is more expressly embedded in the curriculum.**

We believe that global citizenship or active citizenship should not only be a distinct area of the curriculum, but also be embedded through all principles, all curriculum areas, and subjects. This should ensure an overall GCE approach, saving time and allowing a global citizen mindset to form organically in students.

Broadening Diversity

We agree that Ireland is more diverse than ever before. We welcome the references to Diversity and accepting others within the "Communicating and using Language," "Fostering Wellbeing" and "Learning to be a Learner" competencies of the Draft Framework.

We would suggest that the Draft Framework should **broaden the focus of diversity to strengthen the emphasis on primary school students also gaining an understanding of people outside of their own group, community, and country.** Unfortunately, inequality, racism and discrimination remain endemic worldwide and we believe that children's understanding of how these issues can manifest in a local or national context, and ways in which they can realistically make a difference, should be addressed in the Draft Framework. While "enjoying cultural experiences" is included in the Creative competency attributes, **we recommend that learning about and accepting others' cultural/religious beliefs be included as a specific addition to the "Learning about others" attribute in "Learning to be a learner."** Extensive guidance and support should be provided to teachers and schools in incorporating learnings that reflect various outlooks, while teaching within a certain school ethos. **The adoption of a global citizenship ethos will support the inclusion of cultural diversity across the curriculum, focusing not just on understanding and welcoming diversity in the classroom, but also developing an understanding of people we may never meet, but with whom we are still connected, and may encounter in future.**

To provide quality education for every child, the UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006) recommend the use of curricula and teaching and learning materials that build upon the diverse systems of knowledge and experiences of the learners, incorporating their heritage, value systems and knowledge. The Draft Framework highlights Religious/Ethical/Multi-belief Education within the curriculum areas and subjects. For the curriculum to work for every child, and for each teacher, they must have opportunities to see themselves reflected in the Draft Framework. **Appropriate representation of those with diversity in background and ability should be reflected in the planning, implementation, and evaluation process of curriculums.**

Coherence with policy and research

GOAL advocate that the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework should be explicitly linked to commitments on international agreements, existing government policy and initiatives that the Irish Government has committed to as well as any relevant research carried out, **such as the following:**

- A Better World, Ireland's Policy for International Development. It outlines Ireland's vision of a more equal, peaceful, and sustainable world.; see [here](#)
- Irish Aid Development Education Strategy, 2017-2023; see [here](#)
- The National SDG Implementation Plan 2018 -2020, and the successor plan which will be developed in 2020, see [here](#)
- The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, the Department of Education and Skills, 2014-2020 (and its successor strategy); see [here](#)
- Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015); see [here](#)
- The Council of Europe have developed a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, to be adapted for use in primary and secondary schools and higher education and vocational training institutions throughout Europe as well as national curricula and teaching programmes.
- PISA 2018 Global Competence
- UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education (2006), see [here](#)

Section 2

Agency and flexibility in schools

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Be for every child.
- Recognise teachers' and principals' agency and professionalism to enact the curriculum in their individual school context.
- Give more flexibility to schools in terms of planning and timetabling to identify and respond to priorities and opportunities.
- Connect with different school contexts in the education system.
- Give greater opportunities for flexibility and choice for children's learning.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework outlines important messages in relation to agency and flexibility in schools. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

GOAL welcomes the messages in relation to agency and flexibility in schools. This framework will facilitate schools, teachers, and children to explore concepts and resources in relation to citizenship, wellbeing and values, and teachers will have the agency to enact the curriculum in their individual school context.

We recommend that the Framework reflect the following:

- Importance of fostering understanding of and enthusiasm for global citizenship and active engagement from primary school students; this should also be encouraged in teachers, school management and parents.
- This ideally follows on from the grounding provided by the Aistear framework's highlighting of global citizenship and diversity, and carries through to junior cycle.
- A global citizenship lens can be used when approaching almost all subject areas. We would suggest that, rather than a subject-by-subject approach, teachers should be supported to integrate understanding of global citizenship across all relevant aspects of the curriculum and classroom life.
- The Education Act 1998 states that all education should "respect the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership" (Education Act, 1998). GOAL emphasises the importance of inclusion of Intercultural Education in the primary curriculum, regardless of the religious or ethical ethos of the school.
- Teachers should be empowered to reflect inclusion and intercultural learning in their classrooms, having agency and flexibility to interpret and adapt the curriculum to respond to each individual child in their class. Appropriate representation of diversity in background, culture and ability should be reflected in planning, implementation, and evaluation process.

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Curriculum connections between preschool, primary and post-primary schools

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Provide a clear vision for children’s learning across the eight years of primary school.
- Link with learning experiences provided through the themes of the *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and connect with the subjects, key skills, and statements of learning in the *Framework for Junior Cycle*.
- Support educational transitions by connecting with what and how children learn at home, in preschool and post-primary school.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework outlines important messages in relation to curriculum connections between preschool, primary and post-primary schools. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

GOAL welcomes the ways in which the principles of the framework build on those in Aistear and connect with the eight principles of the Junior Cycle Framework. We also appreciate the emphasis that is put at each stage on general Wellbeing. We support the statement within this framework that *“Schools and the curriculum, together, are often viewed as a critical site for responding to national priorities or needs and addressing societal problems.”* Throughout a child’s education, they should be viewed as a citizen now in their own right, rather than simply being prepared for future citizenship. **To this end, GOAL recommends that:**

- Language used across all educational guidelines and frameworks should be consistent. Aistear, Primary School, and Junior Cycle frameworks should use the same terms i.e.. “Fostering Wellbeing” and “Global Citizenship Education,” so that links can be made across learning.
- Educational actors should be made familiar with all stages of the curriculum at all sectors, from early childhood to post-primary. There should be clear transitions from one level to the next.
- **We recommend the embedding of GCE across all principles, subjects, and curriculum areas, to build the key skills needed for children to have ownership over their own citizenship, and to feel empowered when addressing world-wide issues.**
- Climate change is an issue which young students are very aware of, but which can be daunting and distressing for both students and teachers alike. “Wellbeing,” therefore should include examples of active contribution of young people, to empower all ages to make change now rather than preparing to make a difference in the future.
- **Awareness of important local and global issues should be supplemented with empowerment to take positive action. Embedding GCE will ensure the smooth transition to the statements of learning/principles within the Framework for Junior Cycle i.e.. Wellbeing, Creativity and Innovation and Engagement and Participation.**

Emerging priorities for children’s learning

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Embed seven key competencies across children’s learning outcomes from junior infants to sixth class.
- Focus on developing children’s skills, knowledge, dispositions, values, and attitudes. The Learning Outcomes and the Key Competencies are broad in nature to describe this wider understanding of learning.
- Have increased emphasis on some existing areas such as PE and SPHE (Wellbeing) and digital learning, and have new aspects such as Modern Foreign Languages, Technology, Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) and Ethics, and a broader Arts Education.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework outlines important messages in relation to emerging priorities for children’s learning. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

GOAL concurs with the statement within the Draft Framework that *“the importance of children’s experiences in their formative years and how these experiences shape their lives as children and as adults into the future.”* The primary curriculum framework will help to ensure the improved learning experience and success of all learners in the primary school system. To provide a solid foundation for every child to thrive and flourish, realise their full potentials as individuals and as members of society, **GOAL recommends that:**

- A GCE ethos and the Sustainable Development Goals be more explicitly reflected in the Draft Framework.
- **Interdependence, and understanding of the ways in which actions in one part of the world can affect many others, should be a far more prominent in the Framework’s key competencies or the overarching principles of teaching and learning.**
- Visible diversification in the teaching population and improved capacity of educators will facilitate improved delivery of GCE.
- Inclusivity should be a clear key element that is appropriately funded in both initial teacher education and professional development programmes and initiatives.
- Stronger bridges should be encouraged between education and the wider community, both globally and locally. The curriculum should empower all learners and teachers to critically understand wider community issues and promote active citizenship, with help children to grow and flourish as more rounded and active members of society throughout their time in education.

Changing how the curriculum is structured and presented

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Be broad and balanced in purpose and content.
- Be structured in five broad curriculum areas.
 - Language
 - Mathematics, Science and Technology Education
 - Wellbeing
 - Social and Environmental Education
 - Arts Education.

(In addition to the five areas above, the Patron's Programme is developed by a school's patron with the aim of contributing to the child's holistic development particularly from the religious and/or ethical perspective and in the process, underpins and supports the characteristic spirit of the school. These areas connect to the themes of *Aistear* and to the subject-based work in Junior Cycle.)

- Provide for an integrated learning experience, with curriculum areas in Stages 1 and 2 (junior Infants – second Class) and more subject-based learning in Stages 3 and 4 (third class – sixth class).
- Use broad learning outcomes to describe the expected learning and development for children.
- Incorporate the new *Primary Language Curriculum / Curaclam Teanga na Bunscoile*.

The *Draft Primary Curriculum Framework* outlines important messages in relation to changing how the curriculum is structured and presented. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

GOAL fully agrees with the Framework's statement that "*On a more global level, challenges such as climate change, sustainability, human migration, and geopolitical shifts illustrate the importance of dispositions and skills, such as resilience, creativity, innovation and critical thinking in the young and future generations.*" Within the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework, Wellbeing along with Social and Environmental Education are clearly interconnected with themes of active or global citizenship.

To support the building of these skills, we recommend that:

- **Themes of global citizenship and sustainability should be embedded in the curriculum and explored within all curriculum areas/modules where appropriate.** This will provide a solid foundation for students progressing on to the Junior Cycle's 8 principles, 24 statements of learning and 8 key skills at Junior Cycle, and for subjects and short courses with explicit content relating to GCE, such as CSPE, Digital Media Literacy, Geography, History, Home Economics and Science.

- Learners should understand Wellbeing as it relates to other curriculum areas, such as Language, Arts Education, or Social and Environmental Education. All aspects of the curriculum should contribute to a sense of connection with and belonging to a wider world.
- Teachers committed to GCE already make time within their classroom schedules to include this rounded, connected thinking, and the framework should explicitly support this effort.
- Clear guidance should be provided to teachers on how to interconnect GCE with each curriculum area.
- **“Embracing cultural diversity” should feature strongly in initial teacher education and continuous professional development, and opportunities for teacher training in the areas of Global Citizenship and Development Education should be made available and accessible for teachers throughout their careers.**

Supporting a variety of pedagogical approaches and strategies with assessment central to teaching and learning

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Promote high quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Conceptualise assessment as an essential and critical part of teaching and learning.
- Highlight the importance of teachers’ professional judgement in supporting progression in children’s learning.
- Encourage teachers to make meaningful connections with children’s interests and experiences.
- Recognise the significance of quality relationships and their impact on children’s learning.
- Recognise the role and influence of parents and families in children’s education.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework outlines important messages in relation to supporting a variety of pedagogical approaches and strategies with assessment central to teaching and learning. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

GOAL supports the three robust and meaningful types of assessment as set out in Figure 4 of the Draft Framework. **Global citizenship competencies and the SDGs should be factored into evaluation indicators where appropriate.**

Investment in a curriculum that is reflective of the SDG’s and of a GCE ethos, along with investment in teacher capacity, is key to achieving quality education for all.

Building on the successes and strengths of the 1999 curriculum while recognising and responding to the challenges and changing needs and priorities.

The 1999 curriculum contributed to many successes including:

- Enhanced enjoyment of learning for children.
- Increased use of active methodologies for teaching and learning.
- Improved attainment levels in reading, mathematics and science as evidenced in national and international assessments.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework proposes that the redeveloped curriculum will:

- Address curriculum overload at primary level.
- Take stock of strategies, initiatives and programmes and clarify priorities for children's learning.
- Link with *Aistear* and *the Framework for Junior Cycle*.

The Draft Primary Curriculum Framework outlines important messages in relation to building on the successes and strengths of the 1999 curriculum while recognising and responding to challenges and changing needs and priorities. Please give your overall feedback in relation to this key message.

Active participatory methodologies:

GOAL's Global Citizenship team believe that participatory methodologies such as drama can be hugely beneficial as teaching tools, especially when exploring complex concepts. **To support critical thinking, respect for different perspectives, equality and interconnectedness, children must have the opportunities to *practice* these skills and values in an active way.**

- We would recommend active methodologies such as drama, creative writing, and storytelling as effective strategies to teach and learn GCE. This allows students to take ownership of their learning, to explore complex issues such as inequality or climate action in a safe environment, and to understand their place in the world. **In our experience, active learning helps to empower young people, encouraging them to take an active interest in issues affecting our world.**

Student/learner voice:

The Draft Framework emphasises the importance of placing democratic practices at the centre of primary school education, and we strongly support the inclusion of this.

- We recommend placing even further emphasis on the student voice. Teachers should be supported to address classroom practices from an inclusive and democratic viewpoint.
- **We also believe that the Draft Framework should explicitly acknowledge the issues of access and inequity between schools. There are wide disparities between schools in Ireland, relating to school size, teacher capacity, extra-curricular capacity etc.**

Final statement

We would like to finish by expressing our appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to the formation of this Framework. We view this as an important milestone in the redevelopment of primary education in Ireland and will actively seek to support the schools in GOAL's network to incorporate citizenship and sustainability as curriculum reform solidifies in the coming years.

Data Protection

The NCCA fully respects your right to privacy. Any personal information which you volunteer to the NCCA will be treated with the highest standards of security and confidentiality, strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Acts. If you require further information related to data protection, please visit www.ncca.ie/en/privacy-statement or you can contact the NCCA's Data Protection Officer at dpo@ncca.ie.

Thank you for your submission.