

CURRICULUM MAPPING OF GCE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE NINE JURISDICTIONS IN THE GLOBAL EDUCATION TIME (GET) PROJECT

STUDIES

GCE in curriculum

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Global
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Time

From school curricula
to youth actions
for sustainable development

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1. Introduction

The Global Education Time (GET) project, co-funded by the European Commission, seeks to strengthen the capacity of formal education systems across eight European countries - Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Spain - to foster Global Citizenship Education (CGE) with students and teachers, through a shared sense of responsibility for both local and global sustainable development. The project specifically addresses four key global challenges: climate change, gender inequalities, international inequalities, and migration.

A key finding from the previous EU-funded project Get Up and Goals! identified the lack of structured dialogue between educational authorities and other key stakeholders with responsibility for GCE implementation as a significant gap. In response, one of GET's central objectives is to facilitate greater knowledge-sharing and collaboration between civil society organisations (CSOs) and educational authorities in the participating countries.

To achieve this, the GET project undertook jurisdictional specific research focused on two main areas: (i) identifying opportunities and challenges in the implementation of GCE strategies and related public policies, and (ii) mapping select curriculum documentation to assess where and how GCE can be integrated.

Known within the GET project as Work Package 2 (WP2), the aim of the curriculum mapping study was to uncover the evidence for Global Citizenship Education (GCE) through the four interconnected global challenges (climate change, gender inequalities, international inequalities, and migration) in a selection of curriculum documentation aimed at learners aged between 11–16 years. This study was undertaken by researchers in nine jurisdictions using a shared curriculum mapping tool based on learning outcomes for the four global challenges of the GET project.

The purpose of this synthesis report is to offer a transnational interpretation of how GCE is enabled or constrained in the selected curriculum documents for learners aged between 11–16 years. The synthesis is not intended as a comparison or ranking of the nine contexts. Instead, it seeks to reveal curriculum realities, to discuss a reading of curriculum opportunities and constraints across the various and varied educational contexts, highlighting shared experiences and convergences. The separate jurisdictional research reports and this synthesis report are deliberately intended to be usable for relevant educators in CSO settings and in schools, for researchers and policymakers; to directly inform discussions about GCE enactment, ongoing or future curriculum reforms, teacher professional learning, and above all, to provide actionable recommendations based on insights.

Following this brief introduction, the synthesis report details the methodology employed in analysing regional/national curriculum documentation (Section 2). Research findings, including those based on the thematic and course/subject analysis, are discussed in Section 3. The conclusion (Section 4) reiterates the key findings, acknowledges limitations and provides recommendations arising from the research.



2. Methodology

This synthesis report is grounded in the separate jurisdictional curriculum research undertaken in the nine jurisdictions participating in the GET project, as follows:

- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy
- Poland
- Portugal
- Spain (Andalusia)
- Spain (Central and Northern regions)

Jurisdictional research was carried out by researchers in these regions/countries,¹ either those employed directly by the GET project, or commissioned by the GET project following a tender process. In compiling their jurisdictional reports, researchers conducted a systematic desk-based curriculum analysis. They liaised directly with and reported to the GET project staff in their jurisdiction, and formed part of an international research team, led by two research coordinators and two representatives from the lead organisation in the project, CISP (Italy). Throughout 2024-25, the international research team met in a series of online meetings to identify three curriculum case studies in each jurisdiction for an in-depth GCE analyses; to determine the criteria upon which the analysis would be based; to develop a curriculum mapping report template; and, to share progress, challenges and insights.

By October 2025, researchers in the nine jurisdictions completed their reports which were structured as follows:

Part A: Introduction

- Overview of the formal education system
- Curriculum review and redevelopment

Part B: Curriculum documentation for students aged 11-16 years

¹ Bulgaria, Iva Boneva; Czech Republic, Lenka Pánková, Jana Poláková Vašátková and Dita Palašáková; Greece, Diamorfosis team; Ireland, APA team; Italy, Giulia Filippi, with Giordana Francia and Massimiliano Lepratti; Poland, Marta Gontarska and Elżbieta Olczak; Portugal, Hugo Cruz Marques, Jorge Cardoso and Sandra Fernandes; Spain - Andalusia, Luisa López Luisa and Elisabet Padial García; Spain - Central and northern region, Marta Ruiz and Rafael Moreno.



- Curriculum: General section
- GCE/DE/ESD in the curriculum (11-16 years)

Part C: Curriculum case studies

Part D: Conclusion

Depending on jurisdiction, relevant sources for analysis included:

- legislation underpinning the formal education system (Parts A & B)
- national or regional curriculum frameworks (Part B)
- national or regional course/subject curriculum documentation (Part C)
- guidance on pedagogy and assessment (Part C)

While Parts A and B provide important contextual information, as the most substantive section of the jurisdictional reports, Parts C & D are the main focuses of this synthesis document.

The researchers were asked to identify three curriculum case studies per region/country. This approach was based on the idea that GCE is inherently interdisciplinary, even in jurisdictions with a standalone, timetabled Civic/Citizenship Education course or subject. An initial scoping activity with GET project staff identified Civic/Citizenship Education, Geography and History as the courses/subjects offering most strategic importance for GCE. However, researchers, in discussion with their GET project co-ordinator, had scope to select another curriculum case study or studies if, for example, Civic/Citizenship Education was not present in their jurisdiction either as a standalone course/subject or as an interdisciplinary theme across other courses/subjects, or if, in their context, a different course/subject was perceived as offering greater GCE opportunities.

For each curriculum case study (Part C of the jurisdictional report) the template consisted of course/subject profile information, a table for each global challenge to facilitate mapping against the curriculum document, and prompt section for suggested improvements to the curriculum document and the GET learning outcomes. Part C concluded with a section for overall conclusions and recommendations. The analysis was carried out using an agreed mapping tool, based on the GET project learning outcomes. This had the advantage of providing a shared framework for analysis and reflection across the nine jurisdictions.

Each global challenge of the GET project (climate change, gender equality, international inequalities, and migration) has an associated set of seven learning outcomes (twenty-eight project learning outcomes in total). Although there are challenge specific nuances, the four sets of learning outcomes focus on:

1. Definitions or concepts
2. Root causes and interconnections
3. Governance
4. Respect

5. Values and beliefs
6. Individual and collective action
7. Skills and participation in action

These learning outcomes are based on a vision of learning that moves beyond knowledge acquisition to include critical analysis, ethical values and reflection, and student engagement in informed action. This approach integrates understanding of root causes, power structures and global interdependencies with opportunities for participation, the exercise of voice, and real-world application. The GET learning outcomes provided a coherent analytical lens through which researchers could look at a diversity of curriculum case studies (see Appendix 1 for the full text and background to the GET learning outcomes).

The mapping tool supported researchers to rate the level of evidence or emphasis on the GET learning outcomes in the curriculum documentation. Researchers were asked to identify whether their case study curriculum documents offered substantial (#3), moderate (#2), limited (#1) or no (#0) evidence/emphasis for each GET learning outcome. They were also asked to provide examples to support their rating or decision (see Figure 1, below).

Figure 1: Extract from the shared mapping tool

Populate the most relevant column only. For example, if you identify that the subject/course curriculum documents include limited emphasis on the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes indicated in the specific GET project learning outcome (LO) **, you should only populate the cells in the limited emphasis column				
GET project Climate Change LOs***	No evidence/emphasis = 0	Limited evidence/emphasis = 1	Moderate evidence/emphasis = 2	Substantial evidence/emphasis = 3
Students should be able to...				
LO 1. discuss root causes of climate change from historical and scientific perspectives and the interconnectedness of local and global consequences	[insert 0 if applicable]	[insert 1 if applicable]	[insert 2 if applicable]	[insert 3 if applicable]
Notes Discuss - provide a considered, balanced review based on evidence and including a range of arguments. Sample content for this LO: - Human activities and today's climate changes - Processes that cause climate change - Consequences of climate change and its impact on people, animals and plants - Effects of climate change on different places and communities in the world		Example [insert relevant extract from curriculum document, for example, a learning outcome]	Example [insert relevant extract from curriculum document, for example, a learning outcome]	Example [insert relevant extract from curriculum document, for example, a learning outcome]

The mapping tool moved the analysis beyond the content in the curriculum document, to identifying how visible GCE is in the selected case studies, and whether the learning moves from knowledge acquisition to skills development, application and action. The use of a shared mapping tool meant that there was an agreed common language for analysis. The tool also supported sensitivity to regional/national curriculum documentation.

The research coordinators provided feedback on the draft jurisdictional reports. Researchers in the nine jurisdictions integrated this feedback and produced research posters and summary reports based on their completed substantial reports (available [here](#)). This synthesis report is grounded in the information provided in all these jurisdictional outputs.

3. Findings and discussion

Section 3 begins with an overview of the twenty-seven curriculum case studies in the nine jurisdictions. The findings relating to the four global challenges are then presented, followed by a discussion of findings at a course/subject level. Throughout, opportunities are taken to highlight evidence from across the nine jurisdictions. Section 3 also includes a general discussion of shared challenges and opportunities and the nuances of these across different jurisdictions.

3.1 The curriculum case studies

In each of the nine jurisdictions, analysis focused on the official curriculum documentation for three cases studies, as follows:

Table 1: Curriculum case studies by jurisdiction

Country (and regions)	Civics/Citizenship Education	Geography	History	Other A	Other B
Bulgaria (BL)	<i>Citizenship Education</i> (interdisciplinary) Grades 5-10: 11-16-year-olds, approx. 900h over 4 years. Pedagogy is mainly traditional and discussion-based, with some project work; limited active citizenship practice. School-based assessment consists of essays, projects, tests.	<i>Geography and Economics</i> (mandatory) Grades 5-10: 11-16-year-olds. Pedagogy is predominantly orientated to the transmission of content with some scope for analysis (maps, statistics), with some focus on problem-solving. Assessment is mainly summative, e.g. tests and written tasks, with limited	<i>History and Civilisations</i> (mandatory) Grades 5-10: 11-16-year-olds, 72h per year. Pedagogy is predominantly teacher-led, with a focus on content and chronology; there is some document/source work. Assessment is mainly summative, e.g. tests and essays, with limited		



		opportunities for project work.	opportunities for project work.		
Czech Republic (CZ)	<i>Civic Education*</i> (mandatory, standalone) Grades 6-9: 11/12-15/16 years, approx. 120h over 4 years. Mixed pedagogical approaches (discussion, case studies, critical thinking, limited action-orientation). Assessment is mainly summative, e.g. tests, essays, oral work, with limited opportunities for student agency. *in testing phase, not yet implemented nationally.	<i>Geography*</i> (mandatory) Grades 6-9: 11/12-15/16 years, approx. 240-280h over 4 years. Mixed traditional and analytical pedagogies (maps, data, comparisons). Assessment is mainly summative, e.g. tests, exercises * in testing phase, not yet implemented nationally.	<i>History*</i> (mandatory) Grades 6-9: 11/12-15/16 years, approx. 320h over 4 years. Mixed pedagogy (traditional teaching with some document analysis, discussion and inquiry-based learning). Assessment is mainly summative, e.g. tests, essays, oral elements. * in testing phase, not yet implemented nationally.		
Greece (GR)	<i>Active Citizens Actions*</i> (interdisciplinary) Grades 5-6 in primary and the first 3 years of secondary: 11-16-year-olds, 50h over 5 years (complemented by 200h of skills workshops). Pedagogies are envisaged as participatory, experiential, interdisciplinary.	<i>Geography and Geology</i> (mandatory) Grades 7-8, 63h in Grade 7 and 98h in Grade 8. Pedagogies are mostly knowledge- based, with some descriptive analysis, and limited inquiry opportunities.	<i>History</i> (mandatory) Grades 5-10: 12-16 years, 72h per year. Pedagogy is predominantly knowledge- driven, some discussion/ interpretation. Assessment is mainly summative		

	Assessment is formative, based on portfolio. * introduced in 2024. NB: Students also study Social and Political Education, but this was not included as a case study.	Assessment is mainly summative (tests).	(tests, written work).		
Ireland (IE)	<i>Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE)</i> (mandatory, standalone) 1st- 3rd year; 12-15-year-olds; 100h over 3 years. Curriculum envisages active and participatory learning (class discussions and debates, group work, student voice, practice of active, reflective citizenship). Enactment is uneven and CSPE suffers from a low status in many schools. Formative and summative classroom-based assessment in the form of an Action Record.	<i>Geography</i> (mandatory in majority of schools) 1st- 3rd year: 12-15-year-olds, 200h over 3 years. Pedagogy is envisaged as inquiry-based, skills-focused (fieldwork, investigation, case studies). Mixed classroom-based and external assessment – project work (classroom-based), written state exams.	<i>History</i> (mandatory) 1st- 3rd year: 12-15-year-olds, 200h over 3 years. Curriculum envisages inquiry-based learning (sources, interpretation, debate). Mixed classroom-based and external assessment – project work (classroom-based), written state exams.		
Italy (IT)	<i>Civic Education*</i> (cross-curricular, co-taught by all class teachers under the coordination of a designated teacher)	<i>Geography*</i> 1st–3rd year of lower secondary school: 11-14 years, 35-40h per year	<i>History*</i> 1st–3rd year of lower secondary school: 11-14 years, 35-50h per year		

	1st–3rd year of lower secondary school: 11-14-year-olds; 33h per year Cross-disciplinary and values-based pedagogy; increasing use of projects and discussion Assessment is knowledge-focused with some project tasks, varying degree of enactment. * new curriculum (2025) not yet implemented	Pedagogy is envisaged as missed (descriptive and analytical), increasing use of case studies and thematic work. Assessment is envisaged as mainly consisting of tests/oral exams, with some scope for project work. * new curriculum (2025) not yet implemented.	Narrative + analytical pedagogy, increasing use of discussion and thematic analysis. Mainly written/oral exams, some project-based tasks * new curriculum (2025) not yet implemented.		
Poland (PL)	<i>Civic Education*</i> (standalone or interdisciplinary – depends on age/stage) 1st and 2nd/secondary: 15-16 years olds (standalone); 2h in general education, 1h in technical and vocational education. Pedagogy is mainly focused on knowledge transmission, with some discussion and case studies. Assessment is mainly written, e.g. tests. * new citizenship education subject from 2025.	<i>Geography</i> (mandatory) 1st-5th technical education: 15-19/20 old, 4h per year (4 years of general education) and 16h for geography, biology, chemistry and physics in technical education. Pedagogies are mostly content and data-driven, with some focus on building analytical skills. Assessment is mainly summative	<i>History</i> (mandatory) 1st-5th technical education: 15-19 years old, 7h per year. Knowledge-focused pedagogy, with some discussion and document analysis. Assessment is mainly summative (tests, essays).		



		(tests, written work).			
Portugal (PT)	<i>Citizenship and Development</i> (standalone & interdisciplinary – depends on age/stage) 3rd cycle: 7th-9th grades (standalone): 12-15-year-olds, 45 mins in 1 semester or 45 mins fortnightly per year. Pedagogy is envisaged as participatory, project-based, student-centred. Assessment is formative, through projects.	<i>Geography</i> (mandatory) 3rd cycle: 7th-9th grades: 12-15-year-olds, 325 mins per week over 3 years. Pedagogies are student-centred, inquiry and project based. Assessment is determined by school clusters. Summative (test-based) assessment dominates.	<i>History</i> (mandatory) 3rd cycle: 7th-9th grades: 12-15-year-olds, 325 mins per week over 3 years. Increasing focus on project-based pedagogies. Assessment is determined by school clusters. Summative (test-based) assessment dominates.		
Spain (SP) Central and northern region	NB: <i>Education in Civic and Ethical Values</i> exists but was not included as a case study because it can be flexibly paced across years and therefore lacks consistent progression	<i>Geography and History</i> (mandatory) 2nd stage: 12-16- year-olds, 72-108h per year Active, project-based and inquiry learning; case studies and debate. Formative assessment (projects, debates, reports).	<i>Biology and Geology</i> 2nd stage: 12-16- year-olds: 72-108h per year Active & participative pedagogies including projects, observations and experimentations. Assessment is competence based, formative and continuous.	<i>Spanish lingual & literature</i> (mandatory) 2nd stage secondary: 12-16-year-olds, 130-160h per year Mixed pedagogies, increasing use of multimodal texts. Assessment is competency based and continuous, school-based.	

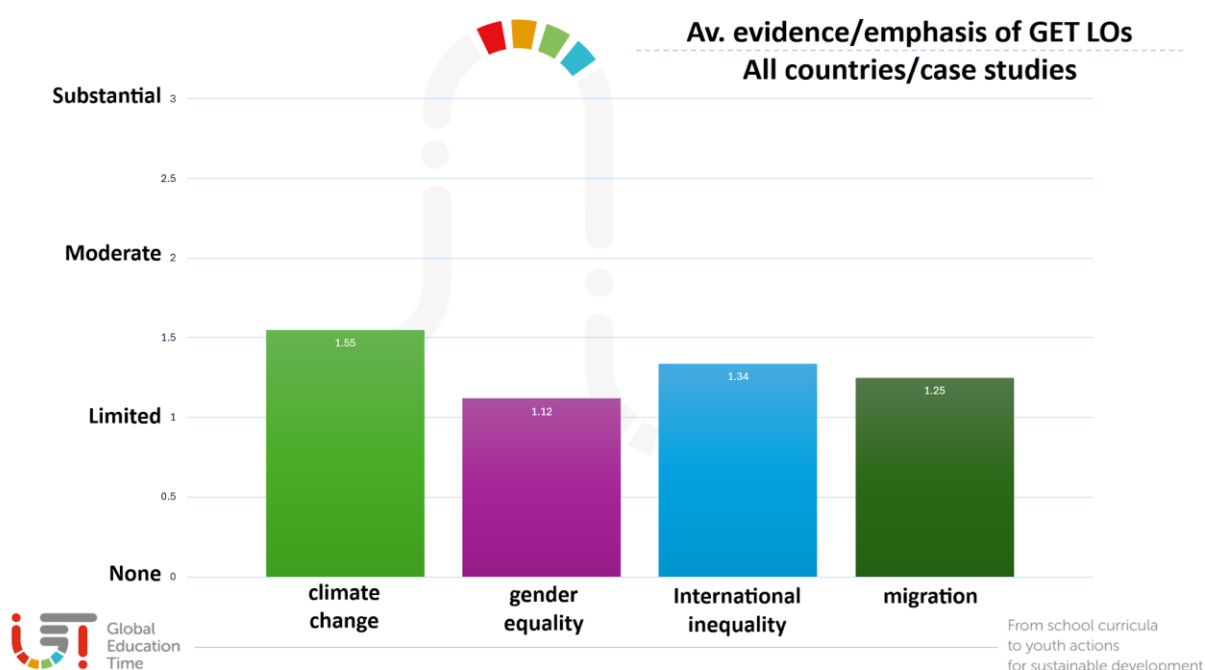


Spain (SP) Andalucia	<i>Education in Civic and Ethical Values</i> (mandatory, standalone) 2nd stage: 12-16-year-olds, 25-40h per year Pedagogy is envisaged as active and participatory. Some action possibilities. Assessment is formative, based on discussions and reflection.	<i>Geography and History</i> (mandatory) 2nd stage secondary: 12-16-year-olds, 420 hours over the 4 years Pedagogies are active, project-based and interdisciplinary (case studies, local/global analysis). Assessment is formative (projects, debates, data work).	<i>Biology and Geology</i> (mandatory) 2nd stage: 12-16-year-olds, 72-108h per year Active and participative pedagogies including projects, observations and experimentations. Assessment is competence based, formative and continuous, with an emphasis on self- and peer-assessment.	
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3.2 The four global challenges

As previously stated, GET project activities are centred around four global challenges: climate change, gender inequalities, international inequalities, and migration. All curriculum case studies analysed levels of evidence/emphasis of these four challenges. Figure 2 (below) shows the composite average rating from the twenty-seven case studies in the nine jurisdictions.

Figure 2: Average evidence/emphasis of GET Learning Outcomes (LOs) across the case studies in the nine participating jurisdictions



The average rating for each of the global challenges was limited, with climate change the most evident in the selected national curriculum documentation, followed by international inequalities, migration and lastly gender equality.

3.2.1 Climate change

Table 2: Climate change – learning outcomes data

GET climate change LOs	Av	Significant evidence/emphasis ('3')
(LO1) root causes and interconnectedness	2.07	Geography (IE, PT, PL), Geography & Geology (GR) Civic/Citizenship Ed (GR, PL, PT) History (IT); Geography & History (SP_Nth)
(LO2) society's impact on the natural world	1.96	Geography (IE, PT); Geography & Geology (GR) Civic/Citizenship Ed (PT, GR)
(LO4) respect for all living entities	1.74	Geo (PT); Geography & Geology (GR); Biology & Geology (SP_Andalusia, SP_Nth) Civic/Citizenship Ed (CZ, GR, IE, IT, PT, SP_Andalusia), Spanish (SP_Nth)
(LO5) values and beliefs	1.33	Geography & Geology (GR); Biology & Geology (SP_Andalusia, SP_Nth) Civic/Citizenship Ed (PT, SP_Andalusia) Spanish (SP_Nth)
(LO7) skills for active engagement and action	1.26	Geography (PT) Civic/Citizenship Ed (CZ, GR, IE, PT)
(LO3) interaction of global, national and local governance structures	1.22	Geography (IT, PT); Geography & Geology (GR) Civics/Citizenship Education (GR)
(LO6) individual and collective action	1.07	Geography (PT); Geography & Geology (GR); Biology & Geo (SP_Andalusia) Civic/Citizenship Ed (IE)

When the analysis is brought to a micro – learning outcomes – level, a more nuanced picture is evident. For example, as can be seen in Table 2 (above), on average there is significant evidence of learning about the root causes of climate change in some curriculum documentation. This is the case for Geography in Ireland, Portugal and Poland; for Geography and Geology in Greece, and Geography and History in Central and Northern Spain; for History in Italy; and, for Civics/Citizenship Education in Greece, Portugal and Poland.

As per Table 2, while on average there is limited evidence of the remaining six climate change learning outcomes, in each case there are exceptions to the rule, jurisdictions where the curriculum documentation for specific courses/subjects provide significant opportunities for learning about the impacts of climate change, respect for living entities, values and beliefs associated with climate change, skills for active engagement, about governance structures associated with climate change, and lastly, in undertaking individual and collective actions. Even for the individual and collective action learning outcome, which was attributed with the lowest average ranking of the climate change learning outcomes across jurisdictions/case studies, there were four countries that rated a curriculum case study as providing significant evidence of this learning.



While the emphasis on root causes signifies a scientific approach to climate change across jurisdictions, of note are the following opportunities:

- Andalusia (Spain) – Geography and History is aligned with the SDGs, and facilitates critical analysis of global challenges, including with reference to human rights and governance; in Biology and Geology, there is a focus on climate change, sustainability, ecosystems and biodiversity, and the link between environmental change and migration (e.g. climate-induced displacement) is addressed. Students engage in scientific inquiries such as analysing their carbon footprint and participating in school-based environmental initiatives.
- Bulgaria – Geography and Economics includes the study of climate systems, greenhouse effect, and environmental risks, sustainable resource management, and global patterns of environmental change.
- Central and Northern Spain – in Geography and History, change and sustainability are embedded in physical and human geography; together with a strong scientific focus, Biology and Geography facilitates socio-environmental analysis of climate change and encourages place-based environmental projects that are linked to scientific inquiry.
- Czech Republic – in Geography, students use inquiry to understand the causes and consequences of environmental change, they analyse the interconnections between climate change, lifestyle, economy, and society, and are expected to apply sustainability principles in real-world contexts.
- Greece - Geography and Geology includes content on climate change, environmental issues, and physical processes; Active Citizens Actions integrates climate change and action through experiential and community-based learning.
- Ireland - learning about climate action is explicit in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE).
- Italy - Geography offers a focus on natural systems, resources, and human–environment interaction connected to climate issues.
- Poland - Geography offers opportunities to address sustainable development and environmental issues.
- Portugal - SGD 13: Climate Action, is evident in Geography, where students investigate environmental and social problems using geographical questions (what, where, how, why) and work collaboratively to propose solutions and interventions in real-world contexts.

3.2.2 International inequalities

Table 3: International inequalities– learning outcomes data



GET international inequalities LOs	Av	Significant evidence/emphasis ('3')
LO2 root causes	1.78	Civic/Citizenship Ed (BL, IR, PT, GR), Geography (BL), History (BL, GR, PL)
LO1 equality and inequality, including measurement	1.41	Civic/Citizenship Ed (BL, IR, GR), Geography (BL, PL), History (BL)
LO6 individual and collective action	1.37	Civic/Citizenship Ed (PT, GR), History (GR)
LO7 skills for active engagement	1.37	Civics/Citizenship Ed (CZ), Geography (CZ), Active Citizens Actions (GR)
LO3 interaction of global, national and local governance structures	1.04	Civic/Citizenship Ed (GR, PT), Geography (CZ)
LO5 values and beliefs	1.22	Geography (CZ), Civics/Citizenship Ed (GR)
LO4 respect for difference	1.41	Civics/Citizenship Ed (IE, IT), Geography (CZ), Active Citizens Actions (GR)

After climate change, international inequalities is the most evident challenge in the selected curriculum case studies in the nine jurisdictions. Across the regions/countries, curricula appear to support the development of a comparative knowledge base about international inequalities. However, excepting the contexts mentioned in the table above, there is limited emphasis on the contribution of power structures or critiquing systems that lead to international inequalities, there is limited scope for student engagement or undertaking action on international inequalities, and there is little or no emphasis on the learning in the affective domain for this global challenge.

Of note are the following curricular opportunities:

- Andalusia (Spain) – Geography and History is aligned with the SDGs, and facilitates critical analysis of global challenges, including with reference to human rights and governance, students also explore geopolitics and global conflicts.
- Bulgaria - learning about development, poverty and regional disparities in Geography and Economics offer clear entry points; the root causes of inequalities can be studied in History and Civilisations, through content on war, exploitation and colonisation; and Citizenship Education offers potential to consider inequalities using a rights-based approach.



- Central and Northern Spain – Geography and History support critical analysis – in History, through study of colonisation, industrialization and globalisations, and in Geography through a focus on North/South relations and economic systems.
- Czech Republic – in Geography, students can learn about international inequalities through their study of globalisation, inequalities between regions and the impacts of development; in Citizenship Education international inequalities can be addressed through content related to human rights; in History, international inequalities can be encountered through the study of colonialism, industrialisation, extremism, and conflict, and History also supports an analysis of root causes and long-term consequences of global challenges.
- Greece - Geography and Geology provides an entry point through population, resources, and development topics; Active Citizens Actions integrates learning about inequalities and relevant SDGs through experiential learning.
- Ireland - learning about international inequalities is supported through a focus on human rights and development in CSPE; in Geography, students can learn about international inequalities through development; in History, international inequalities can be addressed through content related to war, colonialism, and human rights.
- Italy - History offers potential to address international inequalities through colonialism and North–South relations; in Civic Education, international inequalities can be encountered through the SDGs and social justice themes.
- Poland - in History, international inequalities can be encountered through learning about colonialism, conflict, and historical change; in Geography, students study interdependence of regions, and contrast development levels and resource distribution.
- Portugal – in Geography, students can engage in analysis of inequality via both development and the Sustainable Development Goals; in History, there are opportunities to learn about historical international inequalities.

3.2.3 Migration

Table 4: Migration – learning outcomes data



GET migration LOs	Av	Significant evidence/emphasis ('3')
LO2 root causes	1.70	Civics/Citizenship Ed (BL, GR), Geography (BL, CZ), History (BL)
LO3 respect for difference	1.67	Civics/Citizenship Ed (IE, IT), Geography (IE), Spanish (SP_Central/Nth)
LO1 types and processes	1.44	Civics/Citizenship Ed (BL), Geography (BL, CZ, PL), Geology & Geography (GR), Geography & History (SP_Andalucia), History (BL)
LO5 values and beliefs	1.26	Geography (CZ), Geography & History (SP_Andalucia)
LO4 interaction of global, national and local governance structures	0.78	-
LO7 skills for active engagement	1.00	Civic/Citizenship Ed (CZ, GR, IE, IT)
LO6 individual and collective action	0.70	Civic/Citizenship Ed (GR)

As with international inequalities, the focus across jurisdictions is on factual understanding of migration. Learning about policy and governance related to this challenge is limited, and while in some jurisdictions there is an opportunity to view migration through a human rights lens, in others this is not a consideration. Although there are a few exceptions, as with other global challenges, the curriculum documentation across jurisdictions is generally inattentive to providing opportunities for students to undertake action related to migration.

With reference to migration, learning opportunities of note include:

- Andalusia (Spain) – Geography and History is aligned with the SDGs, and facilitates critical analysis, including with reference to migration flows and contemporary migration patterns.
- Bulgaria - demography in Geography and Economics covers different types of migration and the causes of each; History and Civilisations include historical examples of migration and population movements; and Citizenship Education offers potential to consider migration using a rights-based approach.
- Central and Northern Spain – in Geography and History, migration is addressed through historical and contemporary lenses and can be linked to local data and family histories and media representations; Spanish language learning allows for consideration of migrant narratives.



- Czech Republic – in Geography, students study the causes and processes of migration and the link between globalisation and migration; in Citizenship Education, migration can be addressed through content related to citizenship, human rights, democracy, and legal frameworks; in History, migration can be encountered through the study of colonialism, industrialisation, extremism, and conflict, and History also supports a historical analysis of root causes and long-term consequences of global challenges.
- Greece - Geography and Geology provides an entry point through population, resources, and development topics; Active Citizens Actions integrates learning about migration through case studies on climate-induced migration, exploring migration policies and analysing media narratives.
- Ireland - learning about migration is supported through a focus on human rights in CSPE; in History, migration can be examined in the context of Irish emigration and settlement patterns.
- Italy - in History, migration is acknowledged as a feature of historical change and development; in Citizenship Education, migration is framed through human rights, interculturality and respect for diversity and inclusion.
- Poland – in Geography migration can be addressed through demographics; in History, migration can be encountered through learning about colonialism, conflict, and historical change.
- Portugal – in Geography, students look at the causes and consequences of migration.

3.2.4 Gender equality

As the global challenge with the least emphasis/evidence across all jurisdictions/case studies, it is useful to look at the micro level picture for gender equality.

Table 5: Gender equality – learning outcomes data



GET gender LOs	Av	Significant evidence/emphasis ('3')
(LO3) respect for difference	1.26	Civic/Citizenship Ed (GR, IE, IT, SP_Andalusia)
(LO2) root causes	1.22	Civic/Citizenship Ed (GR), History (PL)
(LO1) in/equality, equity and power	1.00	Civic/Citizenship Ed (PT, GR), History (GR)
(LO7) skills for active engagement	0.74	Civic/Citizenship Ed (CZ)
(LO6) individual and collective action	0.70	-
(LO4) interaction of global, national and local governance structures	0.52	Civic/Citizenship Ed (GR)
(LO5) values and beliefs	0.48	-

As can be seen in Table 5, of the selected curriculum case studies, most of the opportunities for significant learning related to gender equality lies in Civic/Citizenship Education curricula in Ireland, Italy, Andalusia (Spain), Greece, Portugal and the Czech Republic; although History, in both Poland and Greece, also offers significant opportunities.

A comparison of the gender equality data (Table 5) to the climate change data (Table 2) reveals that the average ratings for each learning outcome is lower for gender equality, and there are fewer jurisdictions with courses/subjects that were attributed with significant emphasis/evidence rating for the seven gender equality learning outcomes.

With reference to gender equality, of note are the following curricular opportunities:

- Andalusia (Spain) – Geography and History is aligned with the SDGs, and facilitates critical analysis, including with reference to human rights and governance; in Civic and Ethical Values, students explore intersectionality, identity and discrimination.
- Bulgaria – in Citizenship Education, students engage with human rights principles, equality and non-discrimination.



- Czech Republic – Civic Education provides comprehensive opportunities for engagement with gender equality, particularly in terms of building empathy, skills of critical reflection and practical engagement; in History, gender roles are addressed using historical examples.
- Central and Northern Spain – in Geography and History, where teachers take initiative, women can be made visible in history, students can be supported to question traditions around gender roles and the division of labour.
- Greece – in Active Citizens Actions, student engage in data-based analysis of inequality and engage in anti-stereotype initiatives.
- Ireland - learning about human rights, equality and anti-discrimination legislation supports engagement with gender equality in CSPE.
- Italy - gender equality can be addressed through rights and equal opportunities in Civic Education.
- Poland – in Civic Education, students encounter values like justice, equality and solidarity.
- Portugal - gender equality is integrated into Citizenship and Development through a human rights framing.

3.3 GET Learning Outcomes

Table 6: Evidence/emphasis of GET learning outcomes in curriculum case studies



An analysis of the prominence of the GET project learning outcomes across the four global challenges in all case studies reveals that the action verbs in the learning outcomes are aspirational (too advanced or insufficiently scaffolded), that content learning focused on root causes and interconnections are the most evident, followed by learning related to definitions or concepts associated with the global challenges. Next are opportunities for learning associated with respect – for living entities, for those experiencing gender or other inequalities, or for who have experience of migration. Learning related to governance on these challenges, those focused on engendering positive values/beliefs, and skills for active engagement are equally evident. The learning outcomes least evident in the curriculum case studies are those associated with students undertaking individual and/or collective actions linked to the global challenges. Where evidence for these learning outcomes did exist, there was often a recognition that they were not always enacted or are restricted by assessment practices that prioritised factual knowledge.

Findings related to the emphasis/evidence for GET learning outcomes in the selected curriculum case studies (Table 6) contribute to conclusions about the nature of the visibility of the four global challenges in curriculum documentation. For example, it is important to note that although climate change is the most consistently embedded global challenge, its strong scientific grounding (causes) is counterbalanced by limited attention to climate justice, governance, and individual and collective agency to take climate action. In some contexts, the research reveals that national sustainability commitments have impacted on the attention to climate change in curriculum documents. Where this is not evident, it may be a function of the frequency or pace of curriculum reform rather than a reflection of a lack of national policy commitment.



Where international inequalities are evident or emphasised in the curriculum documentation, this typically happens in the context of development related topics. The focus tends to be on describing and comparing disparities (impact or consequences), with a lesser consideration of causes, related ethical or political issues and limited connection to the learners' social realities.

Migration is present in the curriculum case studies, but as a topic it tends to be narrowly framed with a focus on facts, and demographic and historical perspectives dominating. There is often little attention paid to related issues of human rights, identity and belonging and only weak links to the role of climate change and inequalities in causing or contributing to human movement.

Gender equality represents the least visible global challenge in the study, with uneven emphasis (often implicit) across jurisdictions. Where it does appear, the focus is abstract rather than based on lived experiences. There are limited opportunities to explore gender equality through the concept of power, and intersectionality with other factors or issues is largely neglected. Gender as a non-binary concept is not addressed in the selected case studies. While these inconsistencies point to the need for a more systematic curricular integration of gender, it is important to note that in some contexts, such as Ireland, gender identities and equality at intrapersonal and interpersonal levels is addressed in a mandatory area of the curriculum that was referenced but not included as a case study (Social, Personal and Health Education), while in several other jurisdictions gender equality was reported as politically sensitive to the extent that teachers do not feel empowered to address this challenge even when there are implicit opportunities to do so in the curriculum.

Across all jurisdictions, evidence suggests that global challenges receive different treatment in curriculum documents. That is, in the context of foundational knowledge, climate change receives the most attention, while gender equality receives the least. Additionally, there is an issue with continuity – where global challenges might be evident in the curriculum for one year and then disappear. Across the four global challenges, there is a consistent gap, in relation to critical analysis, student agency and undertaking action related to these real-world challenges. These imbalances point to policy choices (about the importance/relevance of specific global challenges, or the age/stage appropriateness of learning about specific global challenges), issues with curriculum structure and/or disciplinary traditions.

3.4 Subjects/courses

As the three most frequently selected curriculum case studies in the nine jurisdictions, this section provides synthesis of research findings concerning Civic/Citizenship Education (standalone and interdisciplinary), Geography (including interdisciplinary subjects such as Geography and Economics in Bulgaria, Geography and Geology in Greece, Geography and History in Spain), and History (including Geography and History in Spain). Since Biology and Geology (both Spanish regions), and Spanish language and literature (Central/Northern region), were selected by Spain only, a summary of the findings relating to these cases are available [here](#).



3.4.1 Civic/Citizenship Education

At a conceptual level, Civic/Citizenship Education is central to GCE. Especially in jurisdictions where these curriculum documents include a human rights focus, the course/subject/interdisciplinary theme can offer a vital ethical foundation to GCE learning. However, despite offering the strongest normative foundation for GCE, Civic/Citizenship Education varies widely in structure and status. In jurisdictions where Civic/Citizenship Education is studied as a standalone course or subject, although not challenge-free in terms of implementation, there are greater opportunities. For example:

- In Andalusia (Spain), Education in Civic and Ethical Values is a standalone course for 12–16-year-olds, which, depending on the school, is studied for between 25–40 hours per annum. As the name of the course suggests, it incorporates a values-driven approach. It is also explicitly competency-based which contributes to active and participatory pedagogies. There are some possibilities for action, and assessment is based on discussion and reflection.
- In Ireland, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) is studied by all students for 100-hours in the three years of lower secondary. This curriculum document incorporates a human-right foundation, it encourages active and participatory pedagogies and skills development, and includes assessment linked to active, reflective citizenship. However, the research reveals that in many schools CSPE suffers from structural barriers, including a low status and teacher capacity.
- In Portugal, Citizenship and Development is a standalone course for students aged 12–15 years, with flexibility for schools to timetable for 45 minutes per week during one semester or 45 minutes fortnightly per annum. The curriculum is student-centred, envisaging participative pedagogies and includes project-based assessment. However, despite this strong policy coherence, Citizenship and Development experiences uneven implementation in schools. This is partly attributed to a lack of binding essential learning outcomes and guidelines for teachers.

In several jurisdictions, recent or planned curriculum reform in Civic/Citizenship Education present GCE opportunities. For example, at the time of the research, Poland was looking forward to the introduction of a new Citizenship Education subject (from 2025/26). It was anticipated that this curriculum would include a module on global civic perspectives, emphasise active and participative pedagogies and offer the possibility of students undertaking civic actions. In the Czech Republic, a new Civic Education course was undergoing pre-national implementation testing.

When considering jurisdictions that have a cross-curricular or interdisciplinary approach to Civic/Citizenship Education, an even more nuanced picture emerges. In Greece, Active Citizens Actions, a recent curriculum innovation, was selected as the preferred Civic/Citizenship Education case study. This 50-hour interdisciplinary and thematic approach (supplemented with skills workshops) which seeks to embed Sustainable Development Goals through project-based learning is in the early stages of enactment but appears to offer GCE potential.

Where interdisciplinary approaches are the norm, challenges identified through the research include:



- limited or under-utilised instructional time across courses/subjects;
- reliance on regional or school-based curriculum adaptation leading to uneven implementation;
- lack of coherence across age/stages of education;
- lack of coordination between teachers from the disciplines responsible for GCE;
- lack of monitoring of GCE teaching and learning;
- no coherent nationally defined assessment guidelines;
- no distinctive assessment of GCE learning (in some contexts) or insufficient monitoring of school-based GCE assessment practices (in others).

In Italy, a revised 2025 Civic/Citizenship Education curriculum, was found to have moved away from a global framing while giving increased attention to national identity and cultural roots.

A common theme emerging from the research is the challenge of implementation, regardless of whether Civic/Citizenship Education is standalone or cross-curricular. Together with those identified above, in some jurisdictions political contestation and political stability/continuity were identified as important factors impacting successful enactment. Across all nine jurisdictions, it appears that Civic/Citizenship education carries the most responsibility for GCE, but there is limited system level investment and support to realise this responsibility in practice.

3.4.2 Geography

Across the nine contexts, Geography emerges as a consistent space for GCE challenges, particularly in relation to climate change, international inequalities and migration. Climate systems, environmental risks and sustainability are explicitly addressed in every curriculum analysed (see sections 3.2.1-3.2.4). By its nature, Geography is interdisciplinary, drawing on natural and social sciences. Where Geography is visibly combined with other disciplines, e.g. Geography and Economics in Bulgaria, Geography and Geology in Greece, and Geography and History in Spain, there are additional opportunities to address global challenges in a more holistic way.

Despite GCE related strengths, evidence from the jurisdictional research point to the fact that Geography curriculum documents can:

- privilege descriptive or scientific knowledge over learning about governance and policy, critical ethical, political or justice-oriented analysis and student engagement and action;
- ignore or give limited attention to climate justice, Global South perspectives (beyond as aid recipients or conflict zones), and colonial legacies;
- either frame international inequalities from a Eurocentric perspective or fail to explicitly reference international inequalities, thereby relying on teachers to interpret implicit opportunities to address this global challenge;



- treat migration primarily as a demographic phenomenon or as a problem, without reference to structural causes, human rights, policy or media narratives; limit learning about migration to a particular stage of formal education;
- neglect the structural causes of gender inequality and fail to consider gender as an analytical category.

In jurisdictions where the curriculum itself emphasises active, inquiry-based learning and assessment of skills/competencies, there is a stronger potential for pedagogy and assessment to support the integration of GCE skills, values and attitudes. In systems that focus more on acquisition of knowledge, the GCE potential is lessened. The research highlighted that the effectiveness of Geography in terms of GCE is heavily dependent on the interpretation of curriculum documents, on pedagogy and assessment, meaning that it is dependent on teacher agency, support and resources.

3.4.3 History

Across the nine jurisdictions, History tends to be core, mandatory and timetabled, factors which contribute to its importance as a potential GCE curriculum space. However, while History has significant latent potential to foster GCE through, for example, the study of power, conflict and social change, in general, it is the least developed GCE curriculum area. Despite this, there are examples of curriculum opportunities in history education in various jurisdictions (see sections 3.2.1-3.2.4).

Except for some implicit opportunities to teach and learn about climate change through the topic of industrialisation, this global challenge is entirely absent from History curriculum documents. International inequalities can be addressed indirectly via topics such as colonialism, industrialisation, conflict and war, but making links between historic causes and present-day realities and systems are rarely meaningfully encouraged. Where gender is evident the focus tends to be on gender roles in the past and similarly where migration is evident, it is most often treated as a historic phenomenon, with minimal explicit linkage to current debates about diversity, interculturalism, justice, human rights or equality.

The research points to a myriad of factors that can contribute to undermining GCE in the context of history education. These include:

- where curriculum opportunities are not explicit and therefore are ignored or marginalised;
- an excessively patriotic or Euro-centric focus;
- an emphasis on the global challenge in the context of national histories only
- where chronological learning is prioritised;
- where the history course does not extend to contemporary events, that is, where the potential of the study of the past to inform the present and future is lessened;



- where political sensitivities serve to undermine explicit global framing and intersectional perspectives in history education.

It is notable that jurisdictions with History curriculum documents which include an emphasis on inquiry-based pedagogies and skills or competency-based assessments are the most open to GCE content and approaches. As with other subjects/courses, where curriculum documents are predominantly focused on the acquisition of content knowledge, the contribution of History to GCE good practice with reference to skills development and action is limited.

3.5 Discussion of shared challenges and opportunities

3.5.1 Context matters

An important finding related to the jurisdictional research is that curriculum policy and approaches to the development of curriculum policy are shaped by broader cultural, historical and political conditions or traditions which influence how global issues are framed, the balance between local, national and global, and the emphasis placed on content/active, participative learning. For example, some jurisdictions place a strong emphasis on national history and identity, and this can limit the visibility of the global level in curriculum documents. Elsewhere, membership of the European Union, and global and national sustainability commitments are explicit in the documentation. In other contexts, the influence of long-standing GCE (or Development Education) traditions and active GCE sectors have, over time, strengthened GCE in the education system.

Regardless of jurisdiction, GCE is not treated as a consciously coherent, cross-cutting framework or national educational project that informs and underpins all courses/subjects and levels. In fact, the research highlighted uneven integration of GCE between jurisdictions but also between subjects/courses/interdisciplinary themes within countries. This situation arises for a variety of reasons, including those related to historical legacies, subject traditions, political priorities, the frequency and pace of, and approaches to, curriculum reform and enactment, assessment pressures, and levels of regional, school and teacher autonomy. This finding points to the need for a nuanced consideration of GCE in each jurisdiction.

3.5.2 Centralised/decentralised systems

In more centralised systems (Bulgaria, Greece, Poland), while students encounter a more universal curriculum experience, the curriculum documentation can be somewhat prescriptive with more constrained opportunities for local innovation. In more decentralised systems (Spain, Czech Republic), while regions, schools and teachers have more autonomy to adapt from national frameworks and innovate at an enactment level, there can be significant variation in student experiences. Autonomy to adapt can be both an enabler and a source of fragmentation. Despite regional or national divergences, consideration of the nine jurisdictional reports reveals a broadly consistent pattern: while all systems provide a knowledge foundation about global challenges, there are limitations in terms of depth, coherence and transformative potential of GCE.



3.5.3 GCE approaches

Across the nine jurisdictions, GCE is recognised either explicitly or implicitly within national curriculum documentation. Jurisdictions vary in how and where GCE is made visible. In some, global themes are embedded in one or more key skills or competencies (related to citizenship, sustainability, critical thinking, global awareness and/or participation in society) applicable across the entire curriculum, elsewhere GCE is restricted to specific courses/subjects. In some places, GCE appears at both cross-cutting competency/skill level, in a standalone course and in a cross-curricular manner across subjects. At times, the value of GCE is recognised at a general aim, values or competency level but lacks follow-through visibility in course/subject curriculum documentation. For example, curriculum frameworks can reference the importance of, or a commitment to, democracy, inclusion, interdependence or sustainability but this can then become less visible in the curricular requirements for specific ages/stages, and/or in specific courses or subjects. The gap between ambition and explicit visibility creates a tension and potentially impacts on enactment.

A related finding from the analysis of the twenty-seven curriculum case studies relates to the inclusion of global challenges across multiple curriculum areas, that is, an opportunity for cross-curricular GCE learning. This can be an opportunity for students to learn about climate and sustainability, inequalities, and migration through a diverse range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses, supporting an understanding of the interconnected and complex nature of global challenges. At the same time, the effectiveness of this cross-curricular integration varies. In some systems, interdisciplinary approaches are present in curriculum documentation but can lead to a deficit amongst teachers in terms of ownership and a lack of coherence in enactment. Links can exist but be fragmented and dependent on individual teachers. This highlights the need for greater coordination and clearer structures to ensure that GCE is implemented in a consistent manner in schools.

The jurisdictional research highlighted the existence of a range of curriculum models, with some context favouring discrete disciplinary approaches (e.g. Geography or History), others pursuing interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. Biology and Geology, or Geography and History). Evidence suggests that discrete subjects can be effective when combined with strong pedagogies, while interdisciplinary subjects can support a more holistic understanding of global challenges. Discrete or standalone subjects which retain a focus on traditional pedagogies tend to place emphasis on the acquisition of content knowledge. There is some evidence that a discrete subject approach can lead to a situation where GCE themes are resisted or limited as not being relevant to the specific discipline or as contributing to curriculum overload and examination pressures. In addition, where GCE is present as a standalone course or subject, the burden of GCE responsibility lies in this curricular space, with the effect that students may not have the advantage of viewing these challenges through multiple disciplinary lenses.

3.5.4 Knowledge and skills

The research highlighted gaps in critical GCE knowledge, particularly in relation to power, governance and policy processes. Across many jurisdictions, students have limited opportunities to engage with questions of global governance, institutional decision-making, or the political dimensions of global challenges. As a result, GCE in many contexts remains descriptive rather than critical, limiting students' ability to understand and challenge injustices and systemic inequalities.



While curriculum documents can and do create important opportunities for learning about global challenges, in contexts where memorialisation of content dominates, attention needs to be given to skills development and the application of learning. Learning that is excessively content-driven and teacher-led, with limited possibilities for students to engage critically or apply their learning is problematic from a GCE perspective. While students might have a conceptual grasp of the global challenge, they may not be supported to analyse, to question, and to respond in meaningful ways. As an essential dimension of GCE, student participation, voice and action are relatively weak in many of the jurisdictions included in this study. This lessens the possibility that students will be supported to emerge as solutions-focused, reflective and active citizens.

Although this situation might arise less frequently in jurisdictions where curriculum documents are student-centred, participative, inquiry- and competency-based, it can be a familiar reality in any jurisdiction. This dynamic is evident in multiple jurisdictions. For example, in Central and Northern Spain, classroom implementation varies significantly depending on teacher initiative and engagement with external programmes. Similarly, in Ireland and Portugal, strong curriculum policy documents coexist with uneven enactment at school level. This suggests that even where GCE knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are visible and emphasised in a curricular sense, translation into meaningful learning experiences is not secure.

3.5.5 Assessment

In some education systems, GCE-related assessment is mainly formative, including project work, portfolios, action etc. These skills or competency-based approaches are considered more likely to support critical thinking, reflection and student engagement. Situations exist where GCE is not directly assessed as a distinct area of learning. Especially in assessment-driven contexts, teachers will prioritise high-stakes, examined factual content. If assessment structures do not prioritise GCE, this can result in neglect of global challenges because of time pressure. While competency-based assessment provides indirect opportunities, the absence of explicit assessment criteria for GCE limits its visibility and reduces the likelihood of consistent implementation across schools. Elsewhere, assessment is largely summative and knowledge orientated. In these contexts, learning tends to focus on content acquisition. Across all jurisdictions, assessment plays a role in driving teaching and learning, and the nature of assessment can influence the quality of GCE.

3.5.6 Teacher capacity and professional learning needs

The jurisdictional reports repeatedly identify teacher agency and professional capacity as a decisive factor in determining the quality of GCE teaching, learning and assessment. This was raised as an implementation issue regardless of whether the jurisdiction was characterised as centralised or decentralised. This points to a recurring policy-practice gap, or a breakdown between the intended and enacted curriculum. So that even in jurisdictions that appear to have GCE advantages at a curriculum policy level, there is no guarantee of consistent or strong practice. This highlights that GCE effectiveness is shaped not only by curriculum design, but by the interaction between policy, pedagogy and assessment, regional/school context and teacher agency.



The research suggests that effective enactment is closely linked to the capacity, interest levels of motivations of teachers. In some contexts, teachers face GCE challenges linked to professional learning, such as:

- Knowledge-related challenges, where teachers need support:
 - to be able to 'see' and actively draw out connections to climate change, gender equality, international inequalities, and migration, especially when the curriculum opportunities are implicit rather than explicit;
 - to develop a broad understanding of curriculum, beyond their own subject(s), so that they have the capacity to make interdisciplinary links;
 - to develop awareness about how to access existing relevant GCE curriculum resources.
- Skill-related challenges:
 - where teachers have limited exposure to a diversity of relevant pedagogies, e.g. facilitation of critical discussion and debate, inquiry-based learning, supporting student actions, formative assessment approaches. Professional learning is particularly needed to build pedagogical skill to address sensitive, emotive or contentious GCE topics, which in some contexts may be politically contested e.g. migration, gender equality or civic activism.

Without sustained and targeted professional development, curriculum intentions can remain aspirational. Teacher capacity is not simply a support, but a determining element for the enactment of GCE. This is especially true in jurisdictions where there is no official support for GCE professional learning and instead, as a type of 'bottom-up' model, where enthusiastic and motivated teachers voluntarily collaborate with CSOs as a means of developing professionally.

While teachers have a responsibility to develop professionally throughout their careers, a focus on teacher autonomy should not be manifested into burdening teachers with the sole responsibility for their professional learning. Sustained systemic support, at school, regional and national levels, for teacher professional learning from initial teacher education onwards is key to realising GCE potential. Without this, curriculum intentions are unlikely to translate into consistent or meaningful classroom practice.

3.5.7 Equality of access

Although WP2 focused on curriculum, findings from the various jurisdictions provide insight into the implementation of intended student learning experiences. Across all systems, students have opportunities to develop awareness of global issues, however opportunities for critical discussion, ethical reflection and actions in response to real-world issues vary significantly. Students' experience of GCE is shaped by the intended and the enacted curriculum, including pedagogical and assessment approaches.

The importance of sustained systemic investment in GCE relates to issues around equality of access to this type of learning. Even in jurisdictions with stronger GCE traditions, opportunities for active, participative learning and student action can vary depending on school resources, for



example, digital access. Uneven exposure to quality GCE may inadvertently reinforce rather than reduce educational inequalities.

3.5.8 Development of curriculum policy

The research highlights the need for curriculum development that allows for responsiveness to rapidly changing global contexts and challenges. However, drawing on examples where curriculum changes occur in line with changes in government, this responsiveness should be tempered by the challenges that occur when teacher confidence is undermined by curricular uncertainty. Depending on the jurisdiction, future curriculum developments should focus on strengthening encouragement of innovative and creative teaching and learning related to critical global literacy, inquiry, real-world problem-solving, as well as student voice, participation, reflection and action.

Across multiple contexts, there is limited evidence of systematic inclusion of stakeholder voices in the curriculum development process. Ironically, this is often the case in situations where CSOs (including NGOs) are a central or the only support in enactment – producing resources, supporting teacher professional learning and engaging with schools in GCE related programmes, initiatives and actions. It is clear from the jurisdictional reports that researchers have a range of views about what constitutes an ‘ideal’ curriculum document. Some researchers want more detailed and specific documents, whereas others prefer a broader and more open approach to curriculum development. Both approaches have merits and drawbacks. Being clear what these are is an important first step if/when advocating for curriculum change. With a few exceptions, students and teachers also typically have a limited say in curriculum development and evaluation. Prioritising voices in curriculum consultation processes may contribute to lessening the gap between intended and enacted curricula.

In Section 3, findings relating to the twenty-seven curriculum case studies in the nine jurisdictions were discussed: firstly, the findings relating to the four global challenges, followed by the findings at course/subject level. Section 3 also included a discussion of shared challenges and opportunities and the nuances of these across different jurisdictions.

Consideration of the nine jurisdictional reports supports insights in and between systems, facilitating the identification of shared patterns and system level variations. These insights provide the basis for strategic policy-level recommendations presented in Section 4 (below).



4. Conclusion

This synthesis report brings together findings from an analysis of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in nine jurisdictions, examining how curriculum opportunities and challenges are reflected in selected curriculum case studies for learners aged between 11–16 years. It aims to provide a coherent overview of the extent to which GCE is embedded in curriculum policy and practice, with particular attention to four global challenges: climate change, international inequalities, migration, and gender equality. By mapping these themes to selected curriculum documents and educational contexts, the report identifies both common patterns and context-specific variations, highlighting the strengths, limitations, and systemic factors that shape how GCE is conceptualised and potentially enacted in schools.

Section 4 begins with an overview of key findings, articulates a set of recommendations based on these findings and then presents the limitations of the study, with a view to highlighting possibilities for future research.

4.1 Key findings

This synthesis report highlights that GCE is present across the nine jurisdictions, but its integration remains uneven, fragmented, and is often limited in depth. Evidence suggests that the selected curriculum documents generally provide a knowledge foundation, particularly in relation to climate change, and to a lesser extent, international inequalities and migration. Gender equality is notably the least visible challenge across curriculum documents.

Civic/Citizenship Education, Geography, and History offer important entry points for GCE, with Geography emerging as the most consistently aligned with global challenges. However, across the curriculum documents, there is a recurring imbalance: greater emphasis on knowledge acquisition than on skills, values, and active participation. Opportunities for students to critically engage with global issues, understand systems of power and governance, and take informed action are, in general, somewhat limited.

A key finding is the gap between curriculum intention at a policy level and enactment in schools. Even in jurisdictions with curriculum documents where GCE is more visible, implementation is inconsistent due to factors such as content transmission orientated pedagogies, assessment practices, subject traditions, teacher capacity, and structural constraints like coordination, timetabling and a perceived curriculum overload. In jurisdictions where GCE has a weaker presence in curriculum documents, GCE is particularly dependent on individual teachers, and external CSO coordinated initiatives. In every jurisdiction there are concerns about uneven student experiences and equity of access to meaningful GCE learning. Ultimately, while the potential for GCE across the participating jurisdictions is clear, realising this potential requires greater coherence and better system support.

4.2 Recommendations

Analysis of the curriculum case studies across Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain highlights context specific and shared strengths, but also consistent gaps at, and between, GCE related curriculum intention and enactment. The following



recommendations are derived directly from the research findings and are structured to reflect both country-specific needs and international priorities.

Enhance critical global perspectives and policy literacy

Across all jurisdictions, there is a gap in teaching and learning related to global governance, power structures, and policy processes.

Policy responses should include:

- Strengthening curriculum learning related to global institutions and policy frameworks, especially in context where curriculum reform is currently happening or planned;
- Supporting teachers to facilitate critical discussions about real-world issues.

Ensure integration of gender equality

Gender equality is the least consistently integrated of the four GET global challenges.

To address this:

- Introduce explicit gender-related learning outcomes across relevant subjects;
- Ensure integration of gender perspectives into topics such as climate, migration and inequality;
- Support teacher capacity address gender equality;
- Promote inclusion of student voice, allowing young people to explore issues of identity, equality, and discrimination from their own perspectives.

Strengthen implementation of Civic/Citizenship Education

Regardless of the approach to Civic/Citizenship Education, inconsistencies can arise in implementation. It is therefore recommended that:

- Curriculum development processes involve consultation with teachers and school leaders, to lessen the gap between intended and enacted curriculum;
- Clear coordination mechanisms and accountability structures be established;
- Regular stakeholder feedback (teachers, students, inspectors, community actors) is used to monitor implementation and refine practice;
- Mechanisms for capturing student experiences of Civic/Citizenship Education are supported to ensure curriculum reforms reflect lived classroom realities.

Strengthen active and participatory pedagogies

Across several jurisdictions, teaching approaches remain predominantly content-driven and teacher-led, with limited opportunities for student participation. While these systems demonstrate



strong coverage of factual knowledge, they often lack the pedagogical approaches necessary to foster critical thinking and agency.

From these contexts, it is recommended that:

- Ministries prioritise the systematic adoption of discussion-led, inquiry- and project-based pedagogies, especially in Civic/Citizenship Education, Geography and History;
- Student voice is embedded in classroom practice through structured opportunities for dialogue, co-design of projects and civic actions, and reflection on learning;
- Teacher voice is actively incorporated into reform processes through consultation, pilot programmes, and feedback cycles, ensuring pedagogical change is realistic and supported.

In systems with a curriculum policy record of encouraging participatory learning approaches, innovation should be enacted in a sustainable manner through systemic support and resources.

Embed active citizenship

A consistent gap across many jurisdictions is the limited emphasis on student action, and civic engagement. This is particularly evident in systems where learning remains largely knowledge focused. A central challenge therefore lies in translating curriculum intentions into concrete and assessable student actions. While curriculum documents in systems that are competency-based emphasise applied learning, this does not always lead to an experience of action, highlighting the need for more structured pathways from learning to practice.

Policy action should therefore focus on:

- Ensuring that student voice informs the design of action-based learning, enabling young people to identify issues relevant to their own contexts and lives;
- Integrating structured opportunities for student-led action, focused on engagement with real-world issues;
- Professional learning to support teachers to facilitate action;
- Recognising the value of student collaboration with communities and CSOs.

Even in contexts where the curriculum documents demonstrate strong practice in this area, there is a need to support and monitor enactment to ensure equitable access.

Improve alignment between learning and assessment

Many systems rely on summative, knowledge-based assessment, limiting development of key GCE competencies.

It is therefore recommended that:

- Assessment incorporates competency-based and formative approaches, including project work, portfolios and action;



- Teachers are supported through professional learning to effectively implement these assessment strategies;
- Student feedback on assessment practices is systematically collected to ensure assessment supports meaningful learning.

Embed stakeholder voice in curriculum reform processes

Across many jurisdictions, there is limited systematic inclusion of stakeholder voice in curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation.

To address this, it is recommended that:

- Curriculum reform processes include structured consultation with students, teachers and school leaders;
- Community and civil society stakeholders and NGOs are involved in curriculum development and delivery;
- Continuous feedback loops are established, allowing stakeholders to contribute to ongoing curriculum refinement.

This recommendation is particularly relevant in centralised systems or systems planning curriculum reform, where top-down change risks widening the policy-practice gap.

While the recommendations outlined above focus mainly on the intended curriculum, policymakers, CSOs and other stakeholders also have a key role in strengthening GCE through the actions related to enactment. Depending on jurisdiction, these could include:

- Development or improved activation of policy or strategy anchors, for example, national strategies or action plans relating to Global Citizenship Education, the Sustainable Development Goals, or Development Co-Operation;
- Strengthening GCE-related teacher education, across a continuum of initial teacher education and in-career professional learning;
- Supporting whole-school GCE approaches;
- Supporting the provision of concrete curricular guidance and resource materials (exemplars, stimuli etc).

Feedback from researchers across the nine jurisdictions indicated the value of this study as a means of making GCE visible and actionable within their contexts. This was especially the case in jurisdictions that were undergoing or planning curriculum reform, where the analysis facilitated CSOs to better understand their current or proposed curriculum context. These observations are the basis of the final recommendation, which is to plan and implement effective GCE interventions in schools, CSOs should develop a comprehensive picture of the curriculum context, both as intended and enacted.



4.3 Limitations

The research findings about curriculum opportunities and challenges for GCE across nine jurisdictions are constrained by methodological and contextual limitations, which must be accounted for in considering this synthesis report.

- The jurisdictional research was desk-based, and limited to an analysis of select curriculum documents, the effect of which is that findings are primarily focused on the intended rather than enacted curriculum. Although the discussion considers systemic barriers, such as assessment, teacher capacity and systemic support, are addressed, these were a secondary focus in the research.
- The selection of three curriculum case studies per jurisdiction was based on the courses/subjects or thematic areas that were considered to have most strategic GCE opportunities. Findings are therefore limited to these case studies and cannot readily be generalised to the curriculum programme levels relevant for the target age range. Because the research focus was on the curriculum for students aged 11-16 years, findings have limited value in terms of understanding progression and continuity across the formal education system.
- The nature of curriculum documentation differs depending on jurisdiction. Some places have richer and more detailed documentation. This can be a function of when they were written, related to the tradition of curriculum development or indeed can be because of the required technical elements within the document template. This variation influenced the depth and detail provided across jurisdictional reports.
- The synthesis treats regions (Andalucia and Northern Spain) on par with countries. This potentially disadvantages other participating countries where education systems are decentralised (e.g. Czech Republic, Italy) because regional variations are not visible in the findings.
- Although all researchers used the same mapping tool, based on the GET global challenges and learning outcomes, this relied on interpretation and some judgements are inevitably context dependent. As a mitigating strategy, the coordinating researchers read and gave feedback on draft jurisdictional reports, including making suggestions to try to bring ranking of curriculum documents in line across the nine contexts, however, it was not possible to completely neutralise subjectivity.
- The four global challenges which formed the basis of the mapping tool, while very important, do not represent the full scope of relevant GCE themes. In addition, issues with the learning outcomes (e.g. the quantity – 28, lack of learning outcomes focused on intersectionality, age/stage appropriateness of some learning outcomes) does not align with the GCE emphasis on systems thinking and interconnected understanding and may have had a limiting effect on the research findings.
- All jurisdictional reports were produced in both native and English language. This synthesis report relied on the English language versions of the jurisdictional reports. Translation of GET learning outcomes into native language and of extracts from curriculum documents from native language may have impacted a more nuanced understanding of opportunities and challenges within the case study documentation. Lack of in-depth familiarity with the



various education systems on behalf of the co-ordinating researchers could be similarly limiting of the synthesis report.

- The GET curriculum mapping research provides insights based on analysis GCE across nine jurisdictions in eight European member states, offering evidence of curricular intentions and systemic patterns. While it identifies strengths and gaps in curriculum at a policy level, it does not claim to provide an empirical evaluation of implementation and impact. Its limitations highlight the need for more empirical, practice-based and longitudinal approaches to fully understand how GCE is experienced and enacted in classrooms across European member states.
- The research does not address whole school approaches to GCE, thereby excluding the important potential of the likes of school ethos and policies, leadership, extra-curricular activities, and community partnerships. This is especially relevant in jurisdictions where GCE is mainly supported by CSOs and is somewhat absent at a curricular level.
- Although the jurisdictional research did interrogate how curriculum change happens at a policy level, these processes and the resultant curriculum documents can change with time. Research to track the frequency and pace of curriculum change vis-à-vis GCE, and the stakeholders who have a voice in curriculum policy decision-making would support CSOs and other actors to understand where and how they can have an influence.

In conclusion, while this synthesis report demonstrates that GCE has a foothold across participating jurisdictions, it also reveals significant gaps in curriculum documentation and between policy ambition and classroom reality. Addressing these challenges requires curriculum reform, including the integration of participatory pedagogies, and assessment innovation, together with sustained investment in teacher capacity and enactment supports. Greater coherence, stronger alignment between intended and enacted curriculum, and the inclusion of stakeholder voice is critical in ensuring the security and effectiveness of quality GCE. Moving forward, practice-based research is needed to deepen understanding of how GCE is experienced by learners and to support the development of education systems that genuinely empower young people to become critical and reflective learners who are equipped to act on global challenges.



Appendix 1: GET learning outcomes

The GET learning outcomes derive from the learning outcomes articulated in the Get up and Goals (GUAG) project and have been further aligned to the UNESCO Global Citizenship Education Topics and Learning Objectives (2015) and the Council of Europe and Global Education Network's Global Education Guidelines (2018), which are based on The Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. Alignment with these international frameworks ensure that the GET Learning Outcomes contribute both to learning for the United Nations Sustainability Goals and European commitments to Global Citizenship Education in age-appropriate, learner-centred, developmental ways.

	Climate change
	Students should be able to:
LO1	discuss root causes of climate change from historical and scientific perspectives and the interconnectedness of local and global consequences
LO2	assess society's impact on the natural world in terms of resource consumption and climate change
LO3	discuss how global governance structures interact with national and local structures in relation to climate change
LO4	express respect for all living entities and cultivate empathy and solidarity towards other individuals, social groups and the entire natural world
LO5	critically reflect on a range of values and beliefs in relation to climate change
LO6	assess the benefits and challenges of individual and collective action in relation to climate change in different times and locations throughout the world
LO7	demonstrate skills for active engagement and take climate action

	International inequalities
	Students should be able to:
LO1	discuss equality and inequality and ways in which these are measured
LO2	identify the root causes and consequences of inequality in different local, national and global contexts
LO3	discuss how global governance structures interact with national and local structures in relation to global equality

LO4	express respect for difference, empathy and solidarity towards other individuals and social groups who are subject to stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination in relation to inequality
LO5	critically reflect on a range of values and beliefs in relation to international inequality
LO6	assess the benefits and challenges of individual and collective action on international inequality in different times and locations throughout the world
LO7	demonstrate skills for active engagement and promotion of international equality

	Gender equality
	Students should be able to:
LO1	discuss gender equality, gender inequality, gender equity and the power dynamics and assumptions that underpin these concepts
LO2	identify the root causes of gender inequality in different local, national and global contexts, including the role of stereotypes and prejudice in processes that lead to discrimination (and violence)
LO3	express respect for difference and empathy towards individuals and social groups who are subject to stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination in relation to gender inequality
LO4	discuss how global governance structures interact with national and local structures in relation to gender equality
LO5	critically reflect on a range of values and beliefs in relation to gender equality
LO6	assess the benefits and challenges of individual and collective action on gender inequality and gender inequity in different times and locations throughout the world
LO7	demonstrate skills for active engagement and promotion of gender equality, gender equity and social justice

	Migration
	Students should be able to:
LO1	discuss types and processes of migration
LO2	identify the root causes of migration in different local, national and global contexts

LO3	express respect for difference, empathy and solidarity towards other individuals and social groups who are subject to stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination in relation to experiences of migration
LO4	discuss how global governance structures interact with national and local structures in relation to migration
LO5	critically reflect on a range of values and beliefs in relation to migration
LO6	assess the benefits and challenges of individual, collective and national responses to migration in different times and locations throughout the world
LO7	demonstrate skills for active engagement and take action to promote the common good

Glossary of action verbs in the GET learning outcomes

Action verb	Students should be able to:
Assess	make an appraisal based on evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, different points of view; use knowledge to recognise trends and draw conclusions
Critically reflect	consider how evidence supports or does not support a conclusion; identify the limitations of evidence; make judgments about information, solutions, methods or validity of ideas
Demonstrate	illustrate with examples or practical applications
Discuss	provide a considered, balanced review based on evidence and including a range of arguments
Express	show through linguistic, affective and behavioural indications of attitudes and feelings
Identify	recognise and state a distinguishing fact or feature; exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, terms, concepts



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