RESEARCH ON THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING GCE STRATEGIES (AND RELATED STRATEGIES AND POLICIES) IN GREECE

ΣΠΟΥΔΕΣ

GCE
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Project: It's Global Education Time (GET). From School Programs to Youth Actions for Sustainable Development

Glossary
ESD: Education for Sustainable Development
SDGs: 17 Sustainable Development Goals
EE: Environmental Education
VNR: Voluntary National Review
HLPF: Forum on Sustainable Development
IEP: Institute of Educational Policy
EEC: Environmental Education Centers
CES: Centers of Education for Sustainability
GENE: Global Education Network Europe
CSOs: Civil Society Organizations
SPE: Social and Political Education
NGO: Non-Governmental Organizations (ELIAMEP, ARKTOUROS)

Brief contextualization
Key Concepts-Terminology-Definitions

Global Citizenship Education is not a common concept used in the Greek context.
In the Greek legislation, it is possible to identify the following ones:

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Sustainability Education is often referred to as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which has been defined as: "Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future" (UNESCO, 2014). ESD is essential for the achievement of a sustainable society and is therefore desirable at all levels of formal education and training, as well as in non-formal and informal learning (Council of the European Union, 2010). Greece defines environmental sustainability or sustainable development as a cross-curricular theme with detailed instructions on its inclusion in Greek National Curriculum, as a project-based integration of sustainability-related themes.

Environmental Education (E.E.)

Environmental education (E.E.) is a process that helps individuals, communities, and organizations learn more about the environment, and develop skills and understanding about how to address global challenges. It has the power to transform lives and society. It informs and inspires. The inclusion of Environmental Studies as a curriculum in the Greek Elementary and Secondary School Curriculum, from the outset, was not limited to an "addition" to existing educational and pedagogical structures, but brought about changes in the epistemology of educational thinking and practice, with a view to educating active citizens and advocates of sustainable development. In Greece, the term of "Environmental Education" (henceforth, E.E.) has been used since 1976. Since 1990, E.E. has been recognized as a part of the school curricula to this day. According to the Government Gazette (C7 / 105087 / 5-10-2005), the development of E.E. and the development of corresponding action plans for the decade 2005-2014 tend to "cultivate attitudes that characterize the active citizen and at the same time promote our students the opening of the school to society through the joint implementation of actions with social actors".

Global Education[1]

Is a form of and approach to education that prepares students for this rapidly interconnected new world. It is believed that being globally educated will allow students the opportunity to not only gain a prestigious education but also a uniquely multifaceted academic experience. Through exposure to diverse systems, perspectives and cultures, globally educated students understand the inextricable links between the lives of individuals across the world. They also understand the way each nation's economic, cultural, political and environmental changes influence one another. Hence, globally educated students possess the skills, attitudes and values needed to thrive in this new rapidly changing world. Global education will continue evolving and expanding as we become more and more interconnected and transform into a harmonious globalized society. The next generation deserves to be a part of this phenomenon and utilize the knowledge they' ve gathered to take the world to new heights.

Citizenship Education [2]

Can be defined as educational theory and practice concerned with promoting a desired kind of citizenship in a given society. Whenever we refer to S.D.E, we classify it in a broader context. From this perspective, Political Literacy makes students well-informed and refine their critical-thinking skills which in turn will enable them to actively participate in solving environmental and development problems. Citizenship education has to cultivate the deliberative engagement which is the ability and willingness to make judgments, think of other considerations and think of as a member of the community. Citizenship education is part of the primary-level course (ages 6-12) on social and political education (SPE). At the fifth level, it includes a chapter on "Me and my neighbors" and another on "Me and my village/town". Ministry of Education guidance envisages 25 hours and a further 5 hours for related activities per year. At the sixth level, the course addresses "State and democracy" and "Greece and Europe", where topics covered include the setting up of the EU, the EU Institutions, Member States competences, the interaction between Greece and the EU, EU citizenship, and human rights. The Ministry of Education instruction envisages 26 hours per year and further optional hours for activities related to citizenship. SPE continues at the lower secondary level (ages 12-15). The 2023 Ministry of Education decision envisages 3 hours weekly at the third grade (last year of lower secondary school). The curriculum was piloted in all schools during the 2022-2023 school year. The three axes of social and political education in Greece are: a) The individual as a member of a social group, b) The individual as a citizen, and c) The individual and the wider world.

Key Actors

Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Athletics[3]

It is the main ministry that institutes, documents scientifically and pedagogically and implements the individual policies for the promotion of the 17 goals of Sustainable Development. For the realization of its objectives, it has the following addresses:

- **Directorate of Program Support and Education for Sustainability**, with responsibility for Environmental and Sustainability Education, School Education and Health Promotion, Cultural Issues and Support Structures and Educational Radio and Television and Digital Media.
- **Directorate of Lifelong Learning**, responsible for the Organization and Implementation of Adult Education, Support Lifelong Learning and Educational Support of special population groups.

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[1] https://rm.coe.int/prems-089719-global-education-guide-a4/1680973101

[2] https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/747459/EPRS_BRI(2023)747459_EN.pdf

[3] https://www.minedu.gov.gr/

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- **Youth Directorate**, in charge of Social Participation, Volunteering and Youth Structures as well as European and International Youth Issues.

Supervised bodies of the Ministry of Education

With the responsibility of planning and implementing educational programs and actions to achieve the goals of Sustainable Development and education for citizenship are:

- **Institute of Educational Policy (IEP)[4]:** The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP) is a staff scientific and research body that supports the Ministry of Education, Religion and Sports (YPAITHA) and its supervised bodies in matters related to primary and secondary education, teacher training, with the aim of ensuring the right of all children to education. IEP is responsible for revising the Syllabus and Curriculum for each level of education and to determine their basic horizontal orientations, in combination with a series of other actions aimed at improving the quality of Primary and Secondary education.

- **Centers of Education for Sustainability (CES)[5]:** Are a network of decentralized sustainable public educational structures of the Ministry of Education and Religion, with the aim of environmental education and its support at local, national and international levels. The CES network was consolidated and developed, counting 58 centers operating today throughout Greece. Through their action standard education methods are developed, promoted and implemented with a view to the preservation of the Environment and Sustainable Development.

- **Responsible for Environmental Education, Health Education, Cultural Issues and School Activities[6]:** They are located in each of the Directorates of Primary Education (Directorates of Primary Education) of A' Athens, B' Athens, C' Athens, D' Athens, East Attica, West Attica, Piraeus, East Thessaloniki, West Thessaloniki and Achaia as well as in the respective Directorates of Secondary Education (Directorates of Secondary Education). They monitor, support and evaluate the multi-month Environmental Education, Health Programs and Multicultural programs of the school units in the area of responsibility of their Administration. They can participate in the coordinating groups of thematic networks, in the organizing committees of seminars and conferences and undertake proposals related to their content.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs [7]

At the national policy level, Greece has drawn up and adopted the following Action Plans / National Strategy texts on a number of specialized areas of human rights protection, such as Action Plan for the Rights of the Child. Also collaborates with both public and private entities to align with the 17th Sustainable Development Goal by 2030, thereby fostering the engagement of schools in diverse networks.

Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family [8]

Following the update of the National Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy of 2018, establishes, coordinates and supervises the "School Meals" program. The program has been implemented since 2017 and provides school meals to students of public primary schools in order to cover, as much as possible, the feeding needs of this group of the population. It aims at the socialization of the students, at the prevention of school

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[4] https://www.iep.edu.gr/el

[5] https://kpe.inedivim.gr/

[6] http://users.sch.gr/organopoulos/kathikonta_ypeythinon_pe.htm

[7] https://www.mfa.gr/exoteriki-politiki/pagkosmia-zitimata/anthropina-dikaiomata/

[8] https://minscfa.gov.gr/

leakage phenomena, at the development of a participatory table, with the aim of cultivating a spirit of cooperation and solidarity in the school community. It is also good practice to develop a healthy way of eating through the Mediterranean diet.

NGO's - Civil Society and Youth Platforms:

- The **Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)**[9] is an independent, non-profit organization producing research, ideas and policy proposals, founded in Athens in 1988. It contributes to the creation of a Network of Civil Society Organizations and Groups in the Framework of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN.
- **Hellenic Platform for Development**[10] is an umbrella organization that operates as a "national platform", leads a network of Greek Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) active in the fields of sustainable development education, humanitarian aid, global citizenship action, and developmental social support.
- **Hellenic National Youth Council**[11] is an independent, non-government, non-profit federation of youth organizations, targeting directly young people by implementing workshops, conferences, cultural and other programs, seminars and activities.

Timeline of national policies

In this section a timeline of the main national policies that influenced the field will be proposed.

The information is organised by issuing actors, by colors, as explained as follows:

- **Red**: Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family actions
- **Green**: The establishment of Environmental Education, its fields of application and its evolution into Education for Sustainable Development.
- **Gold:** Environmental Education Centers, the establishment, development, operation and their evolution
- **Blue:** Curriculum reform and pedagogical, didactive changes and teaching approaches.
- **Brown:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Navy blue:** Active global citizenship educational programs
- **Black:** National Growth Strategy of Greece
- **1977:** Environmental Education begins in Greece and K.E.M.E. was responsible for its promotion (current Institute of Educational Policy). The first phase is characterized by the effort to train executives and train teachers, as well as the implementation of experimental programs in selected schools.
- **1990:** Environmental Education (E.E.) has been recognized as a part of the school curricula to this day. According to the corresponding Circulars, Environmental Education is part of programs of Primary and Secondary Education schools. From the school year 1991-92 the E.E. is integrated into school programs. The promotion of the programs is undertaken by the E.E. responsible in each prefecture.
- **1990:** The Environmental Education Centers were established by law 1892/90. Environmental Education Centers (ECCs) are decentralized educational structures of the Ministry of Education with multiple roles. They are aimed at students (Environmental Education/Education for the Environment

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[9] https://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/
[10] https://gcap.global/coalition/greece/
[11] https://www.esyn.gr/en/about-esyn/principles-and-objectives-of-h.n.y.c/

and Sustainability) and adults (training of teachers in Environmental Education, information - raising awareness of members and bodies of local society on environmental issues).

- **1993:** The Ministerial Decision C2/1242/19.3.93 (F.E.K. 175 t.B'/93) on the subject: Establishment and operation of Environmental Education Centers, taking into account the need for further development of the Environmental Education institution (E.E.) at local, regional and national level, determines the terms and conditions for the operation of Environmental Education Centers. The first Environmental Education Center (EEC) in Greece was founded in Kleitoria of Achaia in the Peloponnese.

- **1995:** With the Ministerial Decision C2/3219/11.5.95 (F.E.K. 451 t.B'/23.5.95) on the subject: Establishment and Operation of Environmental Education Centers, six (6) new Environmental Education Centers are established, including the E.E.C. of Kastoria.

- **2001:** IEP, processed the drafting of the Interdisciplinary Unified Curriculum Study Programs (D.E.P.P.S.), introducing the interdisciplinary approach to knowledge. The concept of environment in Environmental Education is treated with its holistic dimension and includes the following aspects: Natural, Artificial/structured, Socio-Economic and Historical environment. Every subject/problem is studied in an interdisciplinary and in a cross-thematic way.

- **2001:** The programs of the flexible zone for compulsory education as well as the innovative actions for the High School are determined by circulars Φ.12.1/739/Γ1/675/17-07-2001 and Υ.Α. Γ2/5814/30-10-2001. in these two circulars there is a complete implementation framework for these programs, the institutional framework as well as the entire theoretical framework with applications and examples. These circulars constitute a complete pedagogical.

- **2003:** With the Official Gazette 303B/13-03-2003 and Official Gazette 304B/13-03-2003, the application of the New Interdisciplinary Unified Framework of Study Programs becomes mandatory in all compulsory Education (Kindergarten, Elementary, High School). The area of interdisciplinary activities (the innovation of the "Flexible Zone"), includes Environmental Education, which is treated with its holistic dimension and includes the following aspects: Natural, Artificial/structured, Socio-Economic and Historical environment. Each topic/problem is studied interdisciplinary and Cross-thematic.

- **2005:** According to the Government Gazette (C7 / 105087 / 5-10-2005), the development of E.E. and the development of corresponding action plans for the decade 2005-2014 are determined.

- **2011:** Within the implementation framework of the Action "NEW SCHOOL" (21st century school) in 2011, New Curricula of Compulsory Education were developed and functioned in a complementary manner. A new didactic learning field was introduced, concerning Environment and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

- **2011:** Environmental Education is renamed as Education for the Environment and Sustainability (E.S.D.) The general principles of the E.S.D., refer to knowledge, skills and abilities, attitudes and behaviors. In particular, students as responsible active citizens understand and apply knowledge and procedures.

- **2016:** Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals by Greece (2016-2030). With a starting point in the current year many different sectors of the Public Administration participate and coordinate with each other, as well as other bodies, such as the Hellenic Statistical Authority, the private sector, civil society, etc.

- **2017:** The Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family according to article 12 of n. 4455/2017 (Government Gazette A' 22), establishes, coordinates and supervises the "School Meals" program. The program has

been implemented since 2017 and provides school meals to students of public primary schools in order to cover, as much as possible, the feeding needs of this group of the population. At the same time, it aims at the socialization of the students, at the prevention of school leakage phenomena, at the development of a participatory table, with the aim of cultivating a spirit of cooperation and solidarity in the school community. It is also good practice to develop a healthy way of eating through the Mediterranean diet.

- **2018:** The National Growth Strategy of Greece, which was adopted in May, aligns with the overarching themes and stipulations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes a focus on SDG 4, particularly SDG 4.7, which pertains to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Eight National Priorities are addressed that emphasize in "Providing high-quality and inclusive education".

- **2018:** Environmental Education Centers were converted into Sustainability Education Centers (ECEs), in accordance with paragraph 1 of article 12 of Law 4547/2018 (A' 102).

- **2020:** The Flexible Zone activities are renamed as "Skills' Workshops" and focus on cultivating Social Life Skills (Self-care, Social skills, Empathy and sensitivity, Citizenship, Adaptability, Resilience, Responsibility). Topics of focus include gender equality, global citizenship, and the inherent rights of all individuals to dignity and respect.

- **2021:** Sustainability Education Centers are transformed into Education Centers for the Environment and Sustainability (KE.PE.A.) (Article 18 / Law 4823 (2021).

- **2021:** Pilot application of the new revised curricula in the Pilot schools. These new curricula aim to prepare students for future challenges by addressing critical topics such as sustainability, citizenship, and the implications of rapid technological advancements and evolving social dynamics.

- **2021:** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes the involvement of school units of all levels in local, regional, national and international networks. To enhance awareness and understanding of sustainability among students and educators, the Directorates of Education, through their Health Education, Cultural Affairs, and Environmental Education Departments, implement educational initiatives and programs that have received approval from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs.

- **2023-2024**: Academic year: New study programs will be implemented, coinciding with the introduction of the "multiple book" approach, that enables teachers to choose the book from which they wish to teach in the classroom, among the approved books included in the Register of Teaching Books (TBR), while at the same time all approved books will be available in a digital library, so that students can combine sources and thereby further cultivate their critical thinking.

- **2024:** The Institute of Educational Policy tasked the University of Peloponnese with the creation of a "Teacher's Guide for programs designed to promote active citizenship among students". Additionally, the Institute organized related seminars in collaboration with the Global Education Network Europe (GENE).

- **2024:** The decision on the Study Program (PS) "Active Citizen Actions" has been published, which promotes a holistic approach, integrating the 17 SDGs and cultivating giving students the opportunity to deal with complex social, economic and environmental issues.

Context and development of policies and plans around the implementation of GCE

The global significance of **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** is widely acknowledged by the international community. In response to this recognition, UNESCO initiated the declaration of the period from 2005 to 2014 as the "Decade of ESD"[12]. In September 2015, during the New York Summit, a significant international commitment was made by 150 heads of state representing 193 United Nations member countries, leading to the establishment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[13]. This initiative marked a pivotal moment in laying the groundwork for global prosperity and development across social, economic, and environmental dimensions for the subsequent 15 years, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda[14]. Greece places significant importance on the pursuit of sustainable development and is deeply dedicated to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development along with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[15].

A key political priority for Greece is to ensure that "no one is left behind," particularly in the realm of education[16]. The journey from Environmental Education (EE) to the SDGs emphasizes the importance of fostering active citizenship as a foundational principle. Beyond the aims, objectives, and attributes of the SDGs, their core mission is to cultivate citizens who possess the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation to engage actively in addressing current challenges and preventing future ones. This entails nurturing individuals who exhibit critical thinking, can anticipate the repercussions of their decisions and actions, and embody a sense of solidarity, responsibility, and commitment, all while striving to create a future grounded in social and environmental sustainability.

The **National Growth Strategy of Greece**, which was adopted in May 2018[17], aligns with the overarching themes and stipulations of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes a focus on SDG 4, particularly SDG 4.7, which pertains to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Additionally, the strategy is consistent with other education-related SDGs, such as SDG 12.8.

In July 2018, Greece delivered its inaugural **Voluntary National Review** (VNR)[18] during the 2018 UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). This report addresses all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, by outlining eight National Priorities that align the SDGs with the country's specific needs and circumstances, consistent with the National Growth Strategy. The formulation of these eight National Priorities

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[12] https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/education

[13] https://sdgs.un.org/goals

[14] https://bit.ly/4dR7nTg

[15] https://unece.org/DAM/env/esd/Implementation/NIR_2018/Preface_final_GR.pdf

[16] https://bit.ly/3BLysdr

[17] http://www.mindev.gov.gr/greece-a-growth-strategy-for-the-future/

[18] https://bit.ly/3Y9HtEq

was achieved through extensive dialogue among various government entities and the engagement of a diverse range of stakeholders, complemented by a comprehensive mapping exercise conducted in 2017. One of these National Priorities emphasizes "Providing high-quality and inclusive education", which is associated with SDG 4 and encompasses various elements of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as detailed in Chapter 4.5 of the aforementioned VNR report.

The Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs plays a pivotal role in the promotion of Global Education and sustainability efforts. In this regard, the Ministry is actively advocating for policies and strategies across all educational tiers to incorporate the fundamental tenets of sustainable development, aligning these initiatives with the broader national education framework. Furthermore, the Ministry is executing specific actions aimed at enhancing educational practices at every level[19].

A **new legislative framework for Education for Sustainable Development** (ESD) has been established, which consolidates various thematic areas, including Environmental Education, Health Education, and Cultural Issues, into a cohesive whole-school approach. This framework is intended to offer schools a comprehensive and unified structure that is uniformly applicable across all educational sectors, facilitating the coordinated implementation of specific activities.

Greece demonstrates a robust commitment to education that includes Citizenship Education, Environmental Education, and Education for Environment and Sustainable Development, with the aim of cultivating informed and responsible citizens. The coordination of these educational areas is managed by the **Directorate for Education for Sustainability, which was established by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs** in 2018. This newly formed Directorate is tasked with overseeing the **"Support of School Programs and Education for Sustainability"**, thereby enhancing the coordination of related initiatives across all educational levels and further promoting the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) within the country.

The Institute of Educational Policy (IEP)[20] operates as a scientific body that provides support to the Minister of Education and Religious Affairs concerning issues pertinent to primary and secondary education, as well as the transition from secondary to higher education. Its primary focus encompasses research, analysis, policy assistance, teacher training, and curriculum development tailored for primary and secondary education. In this context**, IEP has initiated a Skills Cultivation Program as part of the Action: "Training of teachers in Skills Through Workshops"** (MIS 5092064). The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outlines various educational activities, which include live or synchronous/asynchronous distance teaching, experiential learning opportunities, activities grounded in thinking routines and dialogue tools, initiatives that foster collaboration and teamwork, experiences that introduce scientific methodologies, context-based learning derived from real-life situations (such as case studies and problem-solving), activities that offer diverse representations of reality, and those that align with students' interests and abilities while leveraging technology and digital literacy[21].

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[19]http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/handle/8547/249

[20]https://iep.edu.gr/el/
[21]https://bit.ly/3BohSjv

In June 2018, **the enactment of law 4547/18[22] introduced the "Centers for Education of Sustainability," representing an advancement from the former "Environmental Education Centers"**. This new framework encompasses a comprehensive approach to sustainable development, extending beyond a mere emphasis on environmental concerns. As a result of this legislative change, the previously distinct and frequently overlapping entities of the "Environmental Education, Health Education, and Cultural Issues Coordinators" and the "Environmental Education Centers" have been consolidated into a singular organization, now known as the **"Centers of Education for Sustainability"** (CES).

The recently enacted legislation[23] stipulates that the CES is responsible for assisting educational institutions in the formulation and execution of their strategic plans, offering professional development for educators, fostering partnerships with the local community, initiating projects aimed at local sustainable development, and encouraging research collaborations with universities and research institutions.

To facilitate this process, new **"Coordinators for Sustainability"** have been appointed within schools to aid the CES's efforts. These coordinators may be assigned to a general school class, a general school class with additional support, or specially organized Integration Teams that are adequately staffed and operate within both general and vocational schools. These measures are designed to improve equitable access and participation for all students within the educational framework, combat early school dropout rates, and promote equality and social cohesion[24].

At the school level:

In the realm of **kindergarten education**, the concept of the **"Flexible Activity Zone"** is presented[25] as detailed in the referenced document. This initiative allows educators to design and implement projects aimed at enhancing the abilities and skills of students, thereby equipping them to navigate the complexities of the "information and knowledge society" that they will encounter in their future lives.

In the realm of **Primary Education**, Global Citizenship Education is integrated into the national framework for Education for Sustainable Development, which is executed through the **"Flexible Zone of Interdisciplinary and Creative Activities**"[26]. This initiative, detailed on the website provided, constitutes a segment of the weekly curriculum, allocating a minimum of two hours to its implementation. Its approach, characterized by thematic freedom and active learning methodologies. The suggested subject areas for primary education encompass a variety of topics, including Environmental Issues - both social and natural - familiarity with the local environment, culture with an emphasis on intercultural communication and interaction, Gender Equality, and other contemporary issues. Additionally, thematic sections derived from the Multitopic book, the application of natural sciences in everyday contexts, literature, and active participation in both school and extracurricular events are also included.

In **secondary compulsory education**, specifically within high school, the implementation of the **Flexible Zone of Creative Activities**[27] is designed to foster an interdisciplinary approach to learning. This initiative, which

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[22] https://www.kodiko.gr/nomothesia/document/372828/nomos-4547-2018

[23] https://unece.org/DAM/env/esd/Implementation/NIR_2018/Preface_final_GR.pdf

[24] http://users.sch.gr/organopoulos/kathikonta_ypeythinon_pe.htm

[25] http://ebooks.edu.gr/info/cps/28depps_EveliktiZoni.pdf

[26] http://www.pi-schools.gr/download/programs/EuZin/books/odigos_eveliktis_daskalos.pdf

[27] http://ebooks.edu.gr/info/cps/28depps_EveliktiZoni.pdf

encompasses a two-hour weekly session, utilizes project-based methodologies that engage students' interests while promoting collaboration and critical thinking. It aims to equip students with the essential knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for navigating contemporary Greek society, while also nurturing their individual inclinations, skills, interests, and initiatives. Suggested subject areas for exploration within this framework include Intercultural Communication and Interaction, the European Dimension, Environmental Education with a focus on local environments, as well as the practical applications of Physical and Social Sciences in everyday life. Additionally, themes such as gender equality and content from the multi-thematic book "Exploring Today We Prepare Tomorrow" are also incorporated.

The **"Guide for the Development of Interdisciplinary Environmental Education Activities"**[28] is designed for educators across various disciplines and seeks to enhance their understanding and awareness of environmental challenges. It also aims to equip them with the necessary skills to create and execute Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development initiatives. These initiatives address critical environmental, social, and cultural concerns that are particularly relevant to local communities and must be approached with sustainability in mind. The guide encompasses a wide range of topics, including human rights, children's rights, issues of racism and xenophobia, democratic education, contemporary social challenges, the plight of refugees and immigrants, social cohesion, migration, active citizenship skills, volunteering, solidarity, cultural diversity, and essential life values such as respect, love, peace, cooperation, responsibility, tolerance, freedom, honesty, and kindness.

Additionally, it addresses the prevention and management of violence among students in educational settings.

In October 2018, the **Hellenic Ministry of Education, Research, and Religious Affairs initiated the creation of an inter-ministerial Working Group focused on Education for Sustainable Development**. This group, which was initially established on an ad-hoc basis, is intended to be officially formalized, allowing it to function as a regular coordination platform that promotes horizontal collaboration among various ministries.

In 2021, the **Institute of Educational Policy** (IEP) introduced 166 new curricula for various educational levels, including Kindergarten, Primary, Middle, and High School of General Education[29]. Among these, 123 are entirely new, while 43 are revisions of previous curricula developed between 2011 and 2014 as part of the **"New School" initiative**. This reform not only focused on curriculum innovation but also emphasized the professional development of teachers and the practical implementation of these curricula in real educational settings, specifically through pilot programs conducted in Model and Experimental schools during the 2022-2023 academic year. These new curricula aim to prepare students for future challenges by addressing critical topics such as sustainability, citizenship, and the implications of rapid technological advancements and evolving social dynamics. A key focus is also placed on inclusion, ensuring that the diverse identities, languages, special educational needs, abilities, skills, and attitudes of all students are acknowledged and embraced without discrimination. Additionally, the IEP is developing a digital repository for the "Skills Workshops" programs, which will cover various themes, including Ecology, Climate Change, Civil Protection, Cultural Heritage, Human Rights, and Inclusion, with a strong emphasis on mutual respect, diversity, and active citizenship[30].

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[28] http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/handle/8547/249
[29] http://iep.edu.gr/el/nea-programmata-spoudon-arxiki-selida
[30] https://iep.edu.gr/el/psifiako-apothetirio/skill-labs

The Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, in partnership with the Institute of Education Policy, launched an initiative titled "Skills Workshops: 21st-century skills workshops". This program introduces new thematic areas into the existing curricula, emphasizing a global perspective[31]. The educational initiative known as the "Skills Workshops" within the didactic unit encompasses a diverse range of comment-units, including Kindergartens, Elementary Schools, and Gymnasiums. This program is characterized by its innovative and dynamic approach to teaching, aiming to provide engaging and effective educational experiences[32].

Since February 2020, **the Greek Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Greek Institute of Education Policy (IEP), has implemented a pilot program in compulsory education titled "Skills Workshops: 21st Century Skills Labs"**[33]. This initiative focuses on the development of 21st-century skills while addressing themes of equality, equity, and equal opportunity. The program is designed to provide a secure environment where young individuals can engage in discussions about justice within diverse and intercultural democratic societies, as well as other pressing contemporary issues. Topics of focus include gender equality, global citizenship, and the inherent rights of all individuals to dignity and respect. Notably, this study was recognized as one of the seven exemplary Global Education initiatives selected by GENE and received a grant of €10,000[34].

The concept of "Global education" holds significant importance as an objective within the framework of contemporary school curricula. A primary focus of the development of the entire Study Programs is to empower students to identify values and understand principles that foster a sense of responsibility, thereby preparing them to become engaged citizens. This preparation includes active participation in initiatives and practices aimed at addressing the pressing challenges of our time[35].

In February 2024, the **Institute of Educational Policy tasked the University of Peloponnese with the creation of a "Teacher's Guide for programs designed to promote active citizenship among students"**. Additionally, the Institute organized related seminars in collaboration with the **Global Education Network Europe (GENE)**[36].

This particular guide is an integral component of a broader initiative aimed at equipping primary and secondary school students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for active citizenship. It encompasses a comprehensive range of behaviors that enable future citizens to engage effectively and positively in societal affairs. Within this framework, there is a call to create a Guide for Educators that will feature action programs designed to enhance students' active citizenship. This guide will cater to learners from kindergarten through the third year of Lyceum and will be aligned with the New Study Programs of various subjects as well as the Skills Workshops.

The **Teacher's Guide** will include the following elements:

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[31] https://www.iep.edu.gr/el/espa-2014-2020/14-anabathmisi-programmaton-spoudon-dimiourgia-ekpaideytikou-ylikou-mis-5035542

[32] https://www.esos.gr/sites/default/files/articles-legacy/ergastiria_dexiotiton_athmiavthmia.pdf

[33] http://iep.edu.gr/el/psifiako-apothetirio/skill-labs

[34] https://knowledge.gene.eu/countries/greece/

[35] https://bit.ly/3YmuhgV

[36] https://bit.ly/4dV0r7W

- The general philosophy and the basic pedagogical and psychosocial principles.
- Coverage of at least the following subject areas:
  - social solidarity - support of vulnerable groups
  - coexistence in the community (e.g. inclusion actions with other schools, joint projects with others
  - community agencies/different types of schools/vulnerable population groups, third age)
  - networking through participatory actions and initiatives to help those in need
  - situations (natural disasters, humanitarian crises)
  - promotion of the quality of life of the general population (health, education, rights)
  - protection and promotion of the natural and cultural environment
- The methodology for implementing basic indicative types of active citizenship activities of the students per thematic field for all solar groups (indicative Kindergarten - A & B Elementary, C & D Elementary, E & F Elementary, Middle School, High School).
- The methodology will be described based on a specific example of Action (e.g. volunteering) for each thematic field and age group.
- Ideas (epigrammatic) for other related actions by subject area and age group.
- Sources relevant to the program (external bibliographic references).

The upcoming school year, commencing on September 11th, 2024, will implement 11 changes aimed at enhancing the educational experience, as discussed in a meeting between the Prime Minister of Greece and the Minister of Education. One significant modification involves the integration of **Active Citizen Actions** into the curriculum, which aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This initiative aims to equip students with skills related to healthy living, environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and innovative thinking[37].

On September 22, 2024, the Minister of Education outlined the following priorities for the execution of active citizenship initiatives within educational institutions. **Greece has become the pioneering nation to align its educational curriculum with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**. The initiative aims to equip students with knowledge and skills related to healthy lifestyles, environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and innovative thinking. Skills Workshops enhance the curriculum by incorporating activities that address issues such as intra-school violence, bullying, environmental conservation, and community support, while also promoting dedicated school days focused on animal welfare, sports, and mental health.

In all educational levels from kindergarten through the third year of high school, a new component titled "group voluntary actions of an active citizen" will be incorporated into the curriculum. This initiative will emphasize education focused on environmental issues and sustainability. Within this framework, the contribution of the 58 Education Centers for the Environment and Sustainability will be enhanced to promote voluntary activities. The topics addressed by the "Centers of Education for Sustainability" (CES) are closely aligned with the unique characteristics of the local natural environments, addressing critical issues such as climate change, waste management, conservation of natural resources, protection of water resources, recycling, the circular economy, and air pollution. This initiative will transcend the notion of a mere lesson, as it will encompass structured group activities scheduled throughout the academic year, integrated within the curriculum, during

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[37] https://www.iefimerida.gr/politiki/aytes-einai-oi-11-allages-poy-erhontai-sta-sholeia

excursions, and at various school events. For each activity undertaken, documentation will be maintained in the form of an e-portfolio, reflecting the contributions and efforts of each class or department. This will serve as a systematic record of the program's advancement and achievements.

In elementary education, designated instructional hours will be allocated for activities related to environmental studies and civic education, in addition to skills development workshops.

In high school, voluntary activities will be incorporated into the scheduled hours of Skills Workshops, regardless of individual choice. In both General and Vocational High Schools, these activities will be integrated into the curriculum of political education and philosophy (Apostolos Lakasas, Daily (Kathimerini) Newspaper)[38].

Already at the beginning of November 2024, the decision on the Study Program (PS) "Active Citizen Actions" has been published, which promotes a holistic approach, integrating the 17 SDGs and cultivating giving students the opportunity to deal with complex social, economic and environmental issues[39]. The decision includes a Detailed Description of the Study Program "Actions of an Active Citizen", and defines the subject areas, general objectives and expected learning outcomes, giving the opportunity to the students to investigate the content of knowledge objects, searching for links to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Various pertinent Ministries and Agencies actively encourage the participation of educational institutions at all levels in local, regional, national, and international networks. Among these is the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs[40]** which collaborates with both public and private entities to align with the 17th Sustainable Development Goal by 2030, thereby fostering the engagement of schools in diverse networks.

The National Ministry of Foreign Affairs has proceeded with the preparation and adoption of the following Action Plans:

- National Strategy texts on a number of specialized areas of human rights protection: Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction for the period 2021 – 2027.
- National Action Plan for the Rights of the Child.
- National Strategy and National Action Plan for the Social Integration of Roma for the period 2021 - 2030.
- National Action Plan for Gender Equality for the period 2021 – 2025.
- National Action Plan for the protection of Children from sexual abuse and exploitation for the period 2022 – 2027.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** promotes the involvement of school units of all levels in local, regional, national and international networks. To enhance awareness and understanding of sustainability among students and educators, the Directorates of Education, through their Health Education, Cultural Affairs, and Environmental Education Departments, implement educational initiatives and programs that have received approval from the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs[41].

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[38]https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/563229259/mathimata-ethelontismoy-apo-to-nipiagogeio/
[39]https://search.et.gr/el/fek/?fekId=773114
[40]https://www.mfa.gr/exoteriki-politiki/pagkosmia-zitimata/stochoi-viosimis-anaptyxis/
[41]https://bit.ly/4eIZRLE

The new **National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction** was prepared by the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty, of the **Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family,** following the update of the **National Social Inclusion Strategy** of 2018. The National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction is not limited and not exhausted exclusively to the fulfilment of the necessary expedient condition. It extends beyond this by recommending the national strategic planning text that attempts to respond to the vast majority of the already identified or emerging needs of the special and vulnerable groups of the population, after a difficult and prolonged period of economic and health crisis. The Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family according to article 12 of n. 4455/2017 (Government Gazette A' 22)[42] establishes, coordinates and supervises the "School Meals" program. The management of the program has been entrusted to the Organization for Welfare Benefits and Social Solidarity (OPEKA). The program has been implemented since 2017 and provides school meals to students of public primary schools in order to cover, as much as possible, the feeding needs of this group of the population. At the same time, it aims at the socialization of the students, the prevention of school leakage phenomena, and the development of a participatory table, with the aim of cultivating a spirit of cooperation and solidarity in the school community. It is also good practice to develop a healthy way of eating through the Mediterranean diet. The program is implemented in 1,620 schools in the country, according to the joint decisions of the Ministers of Education and Religion and Labor and Social Affairs. The expansion of the program is a dynamic process in which new school units are gradually added to it.

Furthermore, **NGO's In Greece**, operate key role in the organization and implementation of related activities and projects with ESD in collaboration with schools and others educational institutions (Ministry of Education and Religion Affairs, 2015). They work with schools and other educational institutions for the organization and implementation of EBA activities and projects, in order to have a wider impact and larger audience. For instance:

- **The Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)** is an independent, non-profit organization producing research, ideas and policy proposals, founded in Athens in 1988. It contributes to the creation of a Network of Civil Society Organizations and Groups in the Framework of the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN[43]. The "Climate and Sustainability" Program[44] covers and combines a wide range of research fields linked to the challenges arising from the acceleration of climate change, the degradation of the natural environment, the need for sustainable development and resilience to crises. It includes actions for children, such as the Exhibition "Climate Change and the Institutional Framework for Children in Greece" and T4T Toolkit: Learning about climate change and simulation techniques at school.

- Since 1995, **"ARKTOUROS"[45]**, a civic, non-governmental and non-profit environmental organization, has been successfully implementing Environmental Education actions in Primary and Secondary schools. Every year thousands of elementary, middle and high school students are trained by the specialized Pedagogical Team of ARKTOUROS with the aim of informing and raising their awareness about the wildlife and biodiversity of our country. ARKTOUROS hosts and guides schools at the

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[42] https://minscfa.gov.gr/scholika-gevmata/

[43] https://www.eliamep.gr/eliamep/

[44] https://www.eliamep.gr/program/klima-kai-viosimi-anaptyxi/

[45] https://www.arcturos.gr/gr/organismos/organismos/

ARKTOUROS International Environmental Center throughout the school year. Teachers and students have the opportunity to see bears, wolves and lynx up close and learn about wildlife and biodiversity.

Civil Society and Youth Platforms are promoting SDG and Citizenship, such as:

- **The Hellenic Platform for Development**[46] serves as a comprehensive organization functioning as a "national platform" that coordinates a network of Greek Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). These organizations are engaged in various areas, including sustainable development education, humanitarian assistance, global citizenship initiatives, and social support for development.
- **The Hellenic National Youth Council** is a self-governing, non-profit federation comprised of various youth organizations. Its primary focus is on engaging young individuals through the execution of workshops, conferences, cultural initiatives, seminars, and a range of other activities. The council aims to directly address the needs and interests of the youth demographic[47].

Research on the opportunities and challenges of implementing GCE strategies (and related strategies and policies) at a national level

Brief description of the methodology

This study is based on two different methodologies:

a) Research using interviews

For this research, the semi-structured interview method was used as a tool, with predefined open questions, which served as guidelines. Sixteen interviews were conducted, using remote tools, during which the data were recorded by the researchers, with the consent of the participants. After transcribing the data, the research team conducted a 'content analysis' of the interviews, following a fully qualitative interpretation of the data. The participants come from different positions of responsibility in the education sector, thus offering a rich and diverse perspective. In particular, they are classified as follows, according to their job title.

Position Title	Number of participants
Regional Directors of Primary and Secondary Education	2
Substitute Regional Directors of Primary and Secondary Education	1
Secondary Education Directors	1
Education Consultants	7
Headteachers	1
Primary teachers	1
Secondary teachers	1
Educator at the Center for Education for the Environment and Sustainability	1
European Project Coordinators	1
TOTAL	**16**

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[46] https://gcap.global/coalition/greece/

[47] https://www.esyn.gr/en/about-esyn/principles-and-objectives-of-h.n.y.c/

The average educational experience of the participants is 32.7 years, the average length of service in their position of responsibility is 7.4 years and the vast majority of them state that they have been involved in Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship issues.

b) Research using a focus group:

The data from the Focus Group survey were analyzed based on thematic content analysis. The thematic analysis of the text presented reveals several key themes related to education, global citizenship and sustainable development.

To support the assessments and to conduct a deeper analysis of the perceptions, suggestions and concerns expressed by the research participants through interviews, the focus group tool was utilized. Through the group discussion, the exchange of views and ideas between participants was allowed, offering valuable information and perspectives, for the understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to global citizenship and sustainable development, for the strengthening of cooperation and the exchange of ideas between educators, policymakers and citizens, promoting interaction, as well as for the development of educational programs and materials that respond to the real needs and preferences of students and communities and for the development of policy proposals that promote global citizenship and sustainable practices at the local and international levels.

The focus group established for the research needs included education executives and executives of educational institutions as well as teachers with responsibility for the implementation of educational programs and actions, as shown in the table below:

Position title:	Number
Director of Secondary Education	1
Director of Primary Education	1
Education Consultant	1
Primary School Principals	2
Secondary School Principals	1
Primary education teacher	1
Head of the Center for Environmental Education and Education for Sustainability	1
TOTAL	**8**

The average educational experience of the participants is 27.5 years and their average service in a position of responsibility is 11 years. They have all dealt with issues of sustainable development and Global Citizenship, both from the position of classroom teacher and within the framework of the role and responsibilities arising from their position of responsibility.

Regarding their duties and responsibilities, it is specified that:

- **Regional Directors of Primary and Secondary Education and Substitute Regional Directors of Primary and Secondary Education:** They hold positions of responsibility at the regional level, with responsibilities related to the administration and supervision of educational processes in wider areas, offering support and alternative approaches to education administration.

- **Primary/Secondary Education Directors:** Responsibility and experience in the organization, administration and management of all primary/secondary education school units. They are responsible for the administrative and educational work produced by the school units under their responsibility, as well as the management of human resources in the Regional Unit they serve.

- **Education consultants:** having the most participation in the research, education consultants enhance the research with specialized knowledge and suggestions for the improvement of educational practices, as they have the pedagogical and teaching responsibility of the schools, the responsibility for

the implementation of innovations by teachers, as well as the responsibility for the implementation of the Curriculum and the training of teachers. They supervise and evaluate the educational and pedagogical work produced by all the teachers in the schools under their responsibility, as well as the actions implemented in the schools.

- **School directors** (primary and secondary schools): with experience in administration, they are responsible for the administrative, organizational and pedagogical operation of the school units they serve, as well as for the organization of activities with the cooperation of the wider community and the parents of pupils, as well as for in-school training with the assistance of experts. They supervise and evaluate the administrative and pedagogical work produced by all the school's teachers.

- **Primary School / High School Teachers**: they offer their perspectives from each level of education on the implementation of the curriculum, the organization and implementation of educational activities, the didactic application of subjects and activities, and real problems throughout the educational process.

- **Environment and Sustainability Education Centre Educator/head**: he/she is a specialist in environmental and sustainability issues and contributes to the debate by presenting important dimensions for the implementation of educational programs on sustainable development and global citizenship.

- **European project coordinators:** they contribute with knowledge about European initiatives and projects related to education.

The analysis of the participants' responses in both research methods on **the role and responsibility of their employing organization with regard to Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship**, highlights the following as main points:

- **Supporting Policies and Programs:** the institutions in which the research participants work is responsible for supporting educational policies that promote sustainable development and supporting and promoting the corresponding programs in schools as well as promoting awareness of sustainable development and global citizenship through the use of creative tools and participatory approaches to empower the community by developing partnerships to promote collective action.

- **Information and Support for Teachers:** It concerns information and support for teachers on the implementation of sustainable practices and the monitoring and evaluation of educational activities.

- **Implementing Sustainability Principles in School:** Implementing sustainability and inclusion principles in the curriculum and creating a culture of sustainability through school operations. In addition, they are involved in the production of educational material incorporating sustainable development principles, as well as in the development and implementation of programs promoting education for sustainable development.

- **Design and Implementation of Actions:** mainly concerned with the design and organization of training and innovative actions, as well as the implementation of programs related to sustainable development and global citizenship. The development of partnerships with national and international organizations and the establishment and coordination of school networks to promote sustainability are also mentioned.

This variety of roles and experiences of the participants ensures that the research covers a wide range of views and approaches, contributing to the overall understanding of the educational work produced in each sector (education policies, implementation and evaluation of innovations, implementation concerns and difficulties, etc.).

Terminology

To the question **"What is the term used by the employment agency you represent when referring to the concept of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship?"** the majority of participants state that both the terms environmental education and education for sustainable development and sustainability are used, as well as the terms inclusive education and education for equity, education for social and civic education, culture and heritage. Few people refer to the term's global education and active citizenship, probably because this terminology was recently introduced with the relevant legislative initiatives of the Ministry of Education and the implementation of the relevant circulars for the implementation of the relevant thematic and active citizenship action plans within the framework of the implementation of the curriculum 'Active Citizenship Actions' by schools and teachers at all levels. But they all recognize the importance of education in fostering active citizenship and social responsibility.

Integration of GCE in formal education - policies

The analysis of the responses highlighted **the main strategies and policies that promote the integration of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in formal education**, and identified the main areas of intervention to improve the educational process, as follows:

1. **Curriculum Reform and Implementation:** They refer to the reform of curricula in which the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, which is the main policy direction supporting the content of curricula, was adopted. The strengthening of their content was mentioned with the introduction of programs such as "Environment and Education for Sustainable Development" and the systematic integration of the issues at stake through the environmental education programs which were integrated into the curricula. Special reference is made to Law 4823/2021, Article 18, on the mission and responsibilities of the Centers for Environmental and Sustainability Education, regarding the support of school units in matters related to environmental education, with an emphasis on ecology and sustainable development, and the linking of the educational community and the local community to ensure sustainable management of the environment and the promotion of sustainable solutions to local issues. Incorporation of Sustainability into Curricula is considered as a very important issue, and they express the opinion that education must integrate sustainability into all subjects, aimed at developing critical thinking and social sensitivity. They consider it the reform of curricula should adopt a holistic and interdisciplinary methods and approaches across the curriculum for all levels of education and to link lessons to students' everyday experiences and interests. Continuous review and adaptation of curricula to include sustainability and global citizenship concepts is considered of great importance.

2. **Teacher Education and Training:** Ongoing education and training on new practices and approaches is proposed, as well as support for the Offices of Environmental Education/School Activity Managers, through the strengthening of all structures that support environmental education. It is also proposed to develop partnerships with university institutions to link higher education with the education and training of future and existing teachers in sustainable development and global citizenship.

3. **Teaching strategies and approaches:** The development of Laboratory Activities in schools with the introduction of skills workshops, from which practical training is provided to enhance students' skills, as well as the development of action plans and programs that encourage active student participation, and the use of digital tools to support teaching, are valuable strategies and education for global citizenship. The establishment of thematic weeks dedicated to sustainable development and global citizenship issues, as well as the development of international partnerships through participation in

programs such as UNESCO ASPnet and Erasmus+ and the organization of school networks are also educational policies and practices that reinforce the promotion of good educational practices.

4. **Strengthening Social Participation:** Encouraging students to actively participate in social events, participating in local events, collaborating with local social, professional and scientific institutions by engaging in activities that connect students to the local community are policies and priorities, and promoting critical thinking and creating active citizens.

Integration of GCE in formal education - implementation

With regard to the **categorization of the ways of implementing the policy of promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship** in formal education, the following are mentioned in order to identify the themes and strategies used in formal education:

1. **Linking the Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship themes to the curriculum:** Their integration into the curriculum can be done through horizontal integration in the humanities, such as in subjects such as Social and Civic Education and Civic Education, or through an interdisciplinary approach in all subjects (Language, Science, Social Science, etc.), with appropriate age adaptation and for different levels of education, as well as differentiation in relation to the individual needs of students. It is proposed to use digital tools and educational technology to create e-portfolios to record actions. Development of mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors through experiential learning is of great importance, as the creation of materials that are adaptable to regional needs and personalized for individual students. Integration of digital material and utilization of digital resources enhance teaching related to global citizenship and sustainability.

2. **Cooperation and participation:** Participation in international competitions and actions, cooperation with international organizations, as well as the development of thematic activities also make a positive contribution. Indicatively proposed are School Activities and Environmental Education programs on sustainable development, the creation of "green" schools as well as actions related to recycling and energy. Student's Participation in Community Actions that encourage students to engage in experiential actions related to the community and society.

Supporting Structures

Regarding the **Categorization of Supporting Structures**, it is considered that this can help to better understand the role and activities of each structure in promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship. For example, the Ministry of Education formulates the policies and guidelines, while the School Units implement the activities. In addition, the structures mentioned cooperate with each other, e.g. the Regional Directorates interface with the Directorates of Education to support the educational programs. At the same time, impacts and outcomes are also considered, i.e. how these structures influence the educational process and the development of students on the values of sustainability and global citizenship. The following structures are reported by the participants:

1. State Structures and Ministries:

Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport

- Directorate for Supporting Programs and Education for Sustainability

- Directorate for Physical Education

- Directorate for European Programs

- Regional Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education

- Directorates of Primary and Secondary Education

- Education advisers
- Centers for Education for the Environment and Sustainability (CESE)
- Institute of Educational Policy

2. School structures

- School Units
- Environmental Education and Volunteering Groups
- School networks (e.g. Eco-Schools Network)

3. Local and International collaborations

- Local and international networks and programs
- NGO's
- Collaborations with local communities, municipalities, neighborhoods

4. Educational Institutions and Research Centers

- Higher Education
- Research Institutions

5. Digital Structures and Technology

- Digital World of the Internet - Digital Platforms and Technology
- Using STEM workshops for sustainable solutions

It is found that the policy of promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship is carried out through a network of state, educational and local structures, which cooperate to design and implement educational activities, taking advantage of both traditional and digital platforms. Interoperability and collaboration among these structures is critical to the success of the policy and its integration into formal education.

Practices

Focusing on **examples of good practice**, participants consider that integrating environmental issues into science and social studies lessons promotes students' understanding and awareness and therefore the inclusion of sustainable development and global citizenship issues is a key strategy. They give indicative examples, such as:

1. The **"Eco-Schools" program**, which promotes the active participation of students in environmental activities and the development of ecological awareness. Schools participating in this program have developed initiatives such as recycling and energy saving.

2. **Skills workshops on sustainable development**, which provide students with practical training on sustainable development. Examples include workshops on making recycled products or creating eco-gardens

3. **Participation in international activities through UNESCO ASP net,** as participation in networks such as UNESCO ASP net allows schools to exchange good practices and participate in international projects, enhancing cooperation and understanding at a global level.

4. **Participation of schools in the European Erasmus+ programs**, which provide opportunities for transnational cooperation and exchange of experiences on sustainable development, enhancing intercultural understanding.

5. **Actions of the Environmental Education Centers and Sustainability Education Centers (EECCs)** include educational programs and training seminars that promote the awareness of students and teachers on sustainability and active citizenship issues.

6. **Simulations of international institutions (Model UN)**, participation which encourages students to understand global challenges and develop negotiation and cooperation skills.
7. **Operation of school networks** for education for sustainable development.
8. **Student activities** for social awareness, such as visits to nursing homes or assistance to vulnerable groups, enhance students' social awareness, promoting solidarity.
9. **Programs such as the "Green School"**, which promotes sustainability through the development of green practices at school, such as the use of renewable energy and water conservation. There are also recycling programs to foster responsible attitudes towards the environment, and the **"School as a Democratic Community"** program, which encourages student participation in decision-making processes, promoting active citizenship.

These examples demonstrate the importance of education for sustainable development and global citizenship in formal education, raising students' awareness and involvement in critical issues concerning the future of the planet.

Limitations and obstacles for the introduction and implementation of GCE in formal education

Regarding the **limitations and barriers to promoting Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship** in formal education, the following are mentioned:

1. Structural and Institutional Barriers, such as lack of political will and a clear institutional framework, fragmented policies and overloaded curricula, as well as various bureaucratic procedures. Time and resource management issues, i.e. the fragmentation of actions and time in the timetable and the lack of funding for actions, are also highlighted to a high degree. Insufficient time in curricula to address new topics.

2. Cooperation and Communication, such as the lack of cooperation between teachers, but also between teachers and administration, as well as the absence of a culture of linking knowledge to real life and insufficient relations with local communities.

3. Educational Practices and Methodologies, such as the way curricula are designed and implemented, the reluctance of teachers to change traditional ways of teaching, the lack of spaces suitable for active methodologies. In addition, the lack of willingness on the part of teachers to undertake activities outside their specialized subjects, which is attributed to the lack of comprehensive teacher education and training programs. Resistance to change and hesitance from the educational community regarding proposed innovations, as well as evaluation challenges, such as difficulty in measuring changes in attitudes and behaviors, lead to the need for continuous and systematic education. There is also a negative attitude on the part of parents, which is linked to specific attitudes and perceptions of the role and contribution of schools in developing skills for active citizenship.

The analysis of the above evidence shows that the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in formal education faces multiple and complex obstacles. These constraints stem from structural problems in the education system, lack of cooperation and support, as well as from attitudes and perceptions prevailing in the educational community and society at large. The need for integrated and coherent programs that integrate these actions is imperative for the effective implementation of education for sustainable development.

Opportunities for the introduction and implementation of GCE in formal education

The analysis of the responses provided focuses on **the possibilities of integrating and implementing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship (GC) in formal education.** The table below lists the most important possibilities recorded, with relevant examples of implementation, which emerged from the analysis:

Possibilities	Implementation examples
Teachers need to be trained to integrate the principles of ESD and GCE into their subjects	Training seminars focusing on sustainable practices and educational strategies.
The interdisciplinary approach can be integrated into curricula, allowing the linking of different fields of knowledge	In science teaching, climate change can be linked to social issues such as poverty and social inequalities.
Experiential learning enhances students' participation in practical activities and the development of skills	Organizing environmental campaigns or recycling activities at school.
Creating partnerships with Environmental Education centers and local communities, as well as participation in international projects.	Participation in programs such as eTwinning and Erasmus+, which promote cooperation at European level.
Capacity to implement ESD and GCE programs require support from central policy.	Creating an institutional framework that allows their integration into curricula.
A holistic approach to sustainability in the school environment may be the most effective way to implement	Operating the school as a "sustainable school", where all processes and practices promote sustainability.
Engaging students in decision-making and creating student councils	Creation of a Youth Council that will be informed about the problems of the region and express opinions.
Implementing programs that connect students with local and global actions.	Participation in actions that identify problems in the community and plan intervention.

Integrating Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship into formal education requires a combination of teacher training, cross-curricular approaches, experiential learning and strong political will. Through the implementation of programs and collaboration with local actors, students can develop the necessary skills and knowledge to become active, responsible citizens.

Importance given to GCE and global issues and its relationship with the curriculum

The recognition of **the central issues that concern the curricula and the importance of their approach by teachers** in the reality of the classroom allows the determination of the priorities and strategies followed to address global challenges. Based, therefore, on the issues listed, the trends and approaches that teachers may use in the classroom were grouped and analyzed:

1. **Environmental Issues**: Climate change/crisis, Environmental education - Degradation and protection of the natural environment - Environmental awareness, Sustainable consumption, Circular economy, Global health and well-being, Renewable energy sources, Energy efficiency and energy saving, Forest

protection, Pollution, Sustainable resource management, Food security, Recycling and reuse of materials

2. **Social Issues**: Violence, Multiculturalism, Immigration - Refugee issue, Human rights, social equality, Racism, Gender equality. Social justice, School bullying, Addictions, Stress management

3. **Political Issues:** Active citizenship, Democracy, Global cooperation, Global peace, social solidarity and social justice, Humanitarian crises - Crisis management and disaster response, Health and human rights awareness campaigns, Technology and digital citizenship

Teachers, within a multidimensional perspective, seem to approach a wide range of issues related to the environmental, social and political dimensions of education. This suggests a multidimensional approach that encourages learning processes to include all three spheres.

Issues related to social justice, human rights and social solidarity show that there is a clear preference for promoting social responsibility and student participation in society.

Environmental issues are also dominant, indicating the need for active student participation in issues related to climate change and environmental protection.

The integration of issues such as world peace and democracy promote the cultivation of a climate of peaceful coexistence and democratic participation.

The analysis of these issues can be a tool for identifying and promoting best practices in school education, while strengthening students' ability to become active and responsible citizens of the world.

Regarding **which school subjects are appropriate for the integration and promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship**, the participants' responses identified the following subjects, in order of priority, as offering the most appropriate content and approaches for cultivating knowledge, attitudes and skills related to sustainability and global responsibility.

1. **Natural Sciences (Physics, Chemistry, Biology**), as they provide the basic knowledge for understanding the physical and chemical processes that affect the environment and directly addresses sustainability issues. Education in these subjects can incorporate topics such as climate change, pollution, and sustainable resource management.

2. **Geography**, as it is a crucial subject for understanding global challenges. Through geography, students can explore topics such as sustainable development, natural resources, and human impacts on the environment.

3. **Social and Political Education, Sociology, Economics**, as they analyze social structures and political processes, promoting student participation in civic life and understanding of global justice, human rights and democracy. It explores global citizenship, social responsibility, and community involvement.

4. **History**, as understanding historical events and processes can help students understand the roots of contemporary problems and their impacts on society and the environment.

5. **Arts and Humanities:** Can foster empathy and understanding of diverse perspectives, important for global citizenship

6. **Environmental Studies**, as it is a specialized course that focuses on human-environmental relationships and is directly linked to Education for Sustainable Development. Students can learn about ecology, sustainability, and environmental protection practices.

7. **Skills Workshops**, which offer opportunities for practical application of knowledge and the development of skills essential for global citizenship, such as critical thinking and collaboration.

8. **Language and Literature, Foreign Languages,** as through literature and language, students can explore different cultures and perspectives, promoting empathy and understanding of global issues.

9. **Technology and ICT**, as technology education can promote innovation for sustainable solutions and help students understand their digital responsibility.

A holistic approach to education for sustainable development requires the collaboration of different subjects. Each subject can offer unique insights and perspectives that, when combined, can enhance students' understanding of sustainability and global citizenship. Integrating them into the curriculum is critical for developing responsible and informed citizens.

Recommendations of the participants on GCE policy

The analysis of the **proposals** of the research participants regarding the national strategy for education for sustainable development and global citizenship highlights the following proposals for upgrading the strategy as a priority:

1. **Strengthening Education**, by Continuous Professional Development for Educators and creating a strong training framework for teachers, with mandatory and certified seminars and the creation of digital platforms for continuous support to effectively integrate GCE and ESD into their teaching.
2. **Continuous Evaluation**, by establishing regular evaluations and feedback of policies, creating mechanisms for regular evaluation of the implementation of policies and the continuous improvement and adaptation of programs.
3. **Creating Partnerships** by strengthening networks of cooperation with institutions and organizations, ensuring partnerships with NGOs, local bodies and international networks, while simultaneously informing and networking school units to address social issues collectively. Additionally, interconnection with European Systems and adoption of good practices from other educational systems are required.
4. **Implementation of Cross-Curriculum Programs and the holistic approach to sustainability:** Integrating sustainable development into all subjects, while responding to contemporary challenges and needs, enriching educational materials and improving procedures. In addition, it is recommended to avoid fragmented implementation and create a unified framework, as well as the development of digital tools and the use of technology to enhance learning.
5. **Enhance Parental and Community Involvement:** Encouraging families and communities to support education about global citizenship.

The above analysis can serve as a basis for further developing and improving the national strategy for education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Regarding **the priorities of a future national strategy** for the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, these should focus on the development of an integrated educational framework that integrates citizenship and sustainability, teacher training, community participation and collaboration with organizations, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness of programs. Promoting awareness and ensuring the necessary resources and infrastructure are crucial for the success of the strategy.

To analyze the proposals of the research participants related to the **"It's Global Education Time (GET)"** project, a systematic approach was applied to categorize and evaluate the development directions of its activities, which yielded the following:

Thematic areas, directions and activities of the GET program	Suggestions
Active participation and citizenship	Encouraging student participation in local communities through activities that promote social participation

	Creating student groups that will organize awareness-raising events
Interdisciplinary learning and integration of GET topics	Developing educational programs that integrate issues such as climate change and international inequalities into different academic subjects. Creating interactive learning experiences that connect theory with practice.
Digital education and tools	Developing digital tools and platforms that will facilitate collaboration and access to educational materials Creating online games and virtual tours that will educate students on global issues.
Evaluation and improvement	Development of evaluation tools to capture the impact of GET activities. Collection of data that will support continuous improvement of programs.
Multilingualism and intercultural cooperation	Translating educational materials into multiple languages to ensure wider access. Creating content that will promote intercultural understanding and cooperation.

The above themes and proposals could guide the development of strategies and actions for the GET project in the next two years, promoting a holistic and lifelong education that will encourage active student participation and awareness of global issues.

General Considerations

By utilizing the research method of content analysis, we proceeded to the systematic study of the answers to the open-semi-structured questions of the interviews with the aim of outlining all the parameters and data that emerged regarding Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in Greek Hope. In summary, we can highlight the following points:

The high quality of the proposals and the influence that these proposals can have on the implemented educational policy were recorded, and a wide variety of relationships and interactions between teachers, educational executives, the state and local communities were highlighted, and their role in the development of sustainable practices was outlined.

The urgent need for education on sustainable development and global citizenship, due to the climate crisis and social justice, was highlighted. The message is that we all have a responsibility to raise awareness among the new generations.

Strengthening education for sustainability can have positive consequences for society. The critical importance of education in developing responsible citizens, in collaboration with the local community, is highlighted. Education is considered the foundation for active citizenship.

Education for sustainable development is not limited to knowledge alone but extends to the formation of values and attitudes that promote awareness of environmental issues. It is necessary to create initiatives that will encourage sustainable thinking and action in schools, such as experiential workshops, good practice exchange programs and participation in research projects.

The continuous education and training of teachers on issues of sustainability and global citizenship is a necessary prerequisite for the successful implementation of relevant educational programs.

It is crucial that students are involved in activities that promote their participation in the community, such as volunteering, active citizenship activities, and environmental awareness programs.

The importance of creating a platform for recording and disseminating good practices, as well as the need to provide incentives to teachers, is highlighted. This shows the importance of cooperation at the level of teachers and schools for the development of European programs.

In summary, education for sustainable development and global citizenship is crucial for addressing contemporary challenges and developing responsible citizens, with state support and community participation. The analysis of the data from the Focus group highlights the multidimensional relationship between education, global citizenship and sustainable development. Participants highlight the need for an education that promotes active citizen participation and integrates the principles of sustainability at all levels. The discussion highlights the need for renewal of curricula and teaching methods in order to respond to contemporary challenges, such as climate change and social inequalities.

The importance of experiential learning, interdisciplinary approaches and active student participation is emphasized, aiming to develop skills such as social responsibility and solidarity. However, the challenges associated with implementing these programs, such as lack of time and resistance to change from the educational community, are also recognized.

Finally, the key importance of collaboration between school, family and society in strengthening students' social awareness and participation in global issues is underlined. Education is called upon to become a collective effort that will ensure that young people are ready to face the challenges of the future as active and responsible citizens of the world.

Conclusions

The findings that emerge from the combination of the two research methods highlight the need for a holistic approach to education, which will incorporate the principles of sustainability and global citizenship at all levels. In detail, the following are highlighted:

- **Importance of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship:** Education for sustainable development and global citizenship is considered critical for addressing contemporary challenges, such as climate change and social inequalities.

- **Quality of Proposals:** The proposals recorded from the interviews are of high quality and have the potential to influence educational policy.

- **Interaction of Different Agencies:** There is a significant variety of relationships and interactions between educators, the state, and local communities, which are necessary for the development of sustainable practices.

- **Urgent Need for Holistic School Education:** The need for education on sustainable development and global citizenship is urgent, as everyone has a responsibility to raise awareness among the new generations.

- **Taking Initiatives:** It is necessary to develop initiatives that will encourage sustainable thinking and action in schools, such as experiential workshops and good practice programs.

- **Continuous Teacher Training:** Continuous education and training of teachers on sustainability issues is essential for the success of relevant programs.

- **Importance of Student Participation:** Student participation in volunteer activities and environmental awareness programs is critical for the development of responsible citizens.
- **Creation of a Platform for Dissemination of Good Practices:** The need for a platform for recording and disseminating good practices, such as the GET (It's Global Education Time) program, is imperative, underlining the importance of collaboration between schools and teachers.
- **Challenges in Implementation:** Challenges associated with implementing educational programs are recognized, such as lack of time and resistance to change.
- **Collective Effort:** Education is called to become a collective effort between school, family and society, in order to ensure that young people are ready to face future challenges as active and responsible citizens of the world.

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