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

STUDIES

GCE
in textbooks

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November 2026

Global Education 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 project undertook jurisdictional specific research focused on two main areas:

- Work Package 1 (WP1): identifying opportunities and challenges in the implementation of GCE strategies and related public policies
- Work Package 2 (WP2): mapping select curriculum documentation to assess where and how GCE can be integrated.

The aim of the curriculum mapping study was to uncover the evidence for GCE through four interconnected global challenges (climate change, gender inequalities, international inequalities, and migration) in a selection of curriculum case studies aimed at learners aged between 11–16 years. Building on this research, the study at the centre of this synthesis report, known within the GET project as Work Package 3 (WP3), turns attention to educational textbooks. This study was undertaken by researchers in nine jurisdictions using an agreed report template and sought to examine the representation of GCE in textbooks for learners aged 11 to 16 years in the nine participating jurisdictions. Textbooks act as an important intermediary between the intentions of curriculum policy and classroom enactment. In a diversity of contexts, textbooks are the principal tool or support for interpreting and organising the enactment of curriculum. They contribute to shaping how global challenges are framed, whose perspectives are represented, and whether or what forms of knowledge, skills, values, dispositions and actions are considered legitimate or important.

In several of the jurisdictions included in this study, textbooks are officially evaluated or approved by national authorities as the principal vehicle for curriculum enactment (Greece, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal). In other contexts, textbooks are selected by schools or teachers, sometimes from officially approved lists (Ireland, Italy, Spain). Depending on jurisdiction, there can be flexibility for teachers to engage with digital resources and materials produced by non-governmental organisations.

While WP2 examined the intended curriculum through selected official curriculum documentation, WP3 investigates how those intentions are interpreted and communicated through educational textbooks. In doing so, it becomes possible to identify areas of alignment, areas where textbooks mirror curriculum intentions, and areas where Global Citizenship Education opportunities are underdeveloped or absent.

In terms of GCE content knowledge, the research sought to investigate the extent to which textbooks support learning related to the four global challenges of the GET project:

- climate change
- gender inequality
- international inequalities
- migration.

In line with the GET project's understanding of GCE as extending beyond the acquisition of knowledge towards critical understanding, reflection, participation and action, the textbook research also sought to analyse the GCE pedagogical opportunities afforded by textbooks. That is, to examine whether textbooks encourage pedagogy that builds capacity to think critically, to engage with multiple perspectives, to collaborate, to participate and exercise voice, to reflect on their learning, and to plan and undertake relevant individual and/or collective actions.

The purpose of this synthesis report is to provide a cross-jurisdictional interpretation of how GCE is represented within selected textbooks and resources. Drawing on the nine jurisdictional reports, this synthesis report examines the ways in which the selected materials mediate curriculum intentions; the extent to which they support learning about climate change, gender inequality, international inequalities and migration; and the pedagogical approaches embedded in the textbooks.

The synthesis is not intended as a comparison or ranking of the nine contexts. Nor is it intended to evaluate individual textbooks, or textbook quality in a general sense. Rather it seeks to identify common patterns of strengths and challenges, and emerging trends. Based on insights from identification of shared experiences, recurring challenges and promising practices, the report seeks to provide actionable recommendations for key stakeholders, including textbook authors and publishers, policy makers, teacher educators, and civil society organisations, with a view to contributing to discussions concerning textbook and resource development, curriculum implementation, teacher education, while also informing the future work of the GET project and its partners.

Following this brief introduction, the synthesis report details the methodology employed in analysing regional/national curriculum documentation (Section 2). A synthesis of research findings is discussed in Section 3. The conclusion (Section 4) acknowledges limitations and provides recommendations arising from the research.

2. Methodology

This synthesis report is grounded in the separate jurisdictional textbook 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).

These jurisdictions represent a diverse range of educational traditions, curriculum structures, textbook governance models, and GCE approaches. As with the WP1 policy research and WP2 curriculum mapping study, Andalusia and the Central and Northern regions of Spain were analysed separately because of variation across Spain's autonomous regions. This approach serves to provide insights into regional variation within the same national education system.

Jurisdictional research was carried out by researchers in these regions/countries,[1] either those employed directly in GET partner organisations, or commissioned by the GET project following a tender process. In compiling their jurisdictional reports, researchers conducted a systematic desk-based analysis of education materials. 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 2025-26, the international research team met online to develop criteria for the selection of textbooks, a report template; and, to share progress and challenges. This collaboration supported consistency in the selection of textbooks, the interpretation of findings and the production of jurisdictional reports. It also supported researchers to discuss emerging insights in a shared community of practice. The research coordinators provided feedback on the using the template outlined below. This feedback was integrated and final national/regional reports were published in October 2026 (available here).[2]

[1] Bulgaria, Iva Boneva; Czech Republic, Lenka Pánková, Martin Stodůlka, David Lopaur; 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, Elisabet Padial García; Spain - Central and northern region, Marta Ruiz and Rafael Moreno.

[2] The jurisdictional report from the Central and Northern regions of Spain was updated in October 2026. This synthesis report is based on the findings outlined in an earlier edition of the Central and Northern regions (Spain) report.

Jurisdictional textbook research: Outline of the report template

- Section 1: Brief description of education textbooks in the specific jurisdiction
- Section 2: Selected textbooks
- 2.1 General description of three selected textbooks, each aligned with one of the curriculum case studies included in Work Package 2 (curriculum mapping research)
- 2.2 Rationale for inclusion of the selected textbooks
- 2.3 Audit methodology
- 2.4 Alignment between the selected textbooks and:
    - the relevant official curriculum documents (linked to WP2 – curriculum mapping research)
    - GCE pedagogy
    - the four GET global challenges – climate change, gender inequality, international inequalities and migration
- Section 3: Main findings and recommendations
- References

Working within a shared analytical framework meant that there was a common language which enabled systematic examination of the selected textbooks and resources. The agreed template also supported sensitivity to jurisdictional nuances, such as through non-prescriptive prompts in each section. For example, the prompts for section 1 were as follows:

- Are textbooks mandatory/compulsory for each of your curriculum case studies?
- Who are the authors? Do they self-select or is there a selection process?
- Who are the publishers? Are they commercial entities, the ministry itself or approved by the ministry? Are publishers obliged to ensure that the textbooks are aligned to the curriculum? How is this monitored? Are the textbooks in any way funded by the government?
- Does the ministry have a role in approving the textbooks before publication? If so, please provide a brief description of the process.
- Do schools have a choice of textbooks? Do they have the autonomy to choose textbooks?
- Do teachers have the choice whether to use textbooks in each curriculum case study?
- Do textbooks exist for each of the WP2 curriculum case studies?

The researchers were asked to identify three textbooks (minimum) per jurisdiction. Selection was left up to the researchers, although the report template asked that they provide a rationale for their selection. In addition, it was expected that each of the selected textbooks would align to one of their three WP2 curriculum case studies (Geography, Civic/Citizenship Education, and History in most jurisdictions). WP2 focused on these curriculum case studies because these were identified as particularly significant for GCE.

It was agreed that resources, rather than textbooks, would be included only in cases where it was not possible to identify textbooks. For example, in jurisdictions where recent or ongoing curriculum reform meant that textbooks were not yet available, or where teachers of the specific subject typically do not use textbooks. It was agreed that supplementary curriculum resources produced by the GET project, or its' predecessor project – Get up and Goals – could not be included. In most jurisdictions, the analysis focused exclusively on textbooks. However, in Poland, official online resources for History and interdisciplinary resources from an NGO formed part of the evidence base because they are regularly used by teachers alongside textbooks. This variation reflects wider differences in educational systems and textbook cultures across participating jurisdictions.

In recognition of potential differences in the systems for producing and selecting textbooks, each research team was prompted to explain the methodological approach to auditing these for alignment with curriculum, GCE pedagogy and the four global challenges. For example, in Andalucia (Spain), Greece and Ireland the methodology involved three phases: structural analysis, textual analysis and pedagogical analysis. For other jurisdictions, such as the Czech Republic and Portugal, the starting point was the WP2 (curriculum mapping research), with a focus on identifying and analysing the content and pedagogy in sections of the textbook aligned to the intersections between the national curriculum case study documents and the GET project learning outcomes (see Appendix 1). In Italy and several other jurisdictions, the analysis involved thematic coding of both text and images in textbooks, and in supplementary digital resources. In some jurisdictions, findings focused on what was present, whereas in others, like Bulgaria, consideration was also given to depth of treatment and absence of GCE pedagogy, and global challenges.

3. Findings and discussion

Section 3 begins with an overview of the systems for producing and selecting textbooks in the nine jurisdictions, before moving on to consider the range of selected textbooks. The findings relating to alignment between official curriculum documents and the textbooks are then presented, followed by a discussion of findings about the four GET global challenges and GCE pedagogy. 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 Textbook system

Broadly speaking, the participating jurisdictions have three differing approaches to the production and selection of education textbooks. These approaches range from centralised, to mixed, to decentralised.

- Centralised system (Greece)

Until the 2026-27 academic year, the education textbook system in Greece was highly regulated. A state body (Institute of Education Policy - IEP) and the Ministry for Education, Religious Affairs and Sport established a committee to evaluate the submitted textbooks. Approved textbooks – one for each subject – were included on an official registry.

Schools/teachers selected textbooks from the official registry and did not have the autonomy to use other learning resources. The state publisher printed and distributed the textbooks, which were state funded. In 2026-27, following a change in legislation, Greece began a transition to a multi-textbook model. In practice, this means school councils can choose from a menu of textbooks, but the state maintains quality assurance control.

- Mixed system (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland and Portugal)

In mixed systems, authors are contracted by commercial publishing houses. Publishers have responsibility for the alignment of textbooks with the national curriculum, relevant national education standards, and sometimes with relevant laws. The evaluation and approval process is under the remit of a state body or the ministry for education. Approved textbooks are included on an official registry or list. Schools/teachers must select from this list, but they have the autonomy not to use textbooks at all or to use other resources. The state funds textbooks for public schools and/or private schools receiving a state subsidy.

- Decentralised system (Ireland, Italy and Spain (Andalucía; Central and Northern regions)

In decentralised systems, authors are contracted by commercial publishing houses. Textbooks are expected to support the curriculum but there is no official pre-publication evaluation/approval. A list of textbooks declared by publishers as curriculum aligned is published by a state body in Italy and in Andalucia (Spain). Schools/teachers have autonomy to select, partially use or not to use textbooks. There is no restriction on the use of other learning resources. Except for in Italy, the state funds textbooks for public schools or private schools in receipt of state subsidies.

Of the nine jurisdictions, Ireland is the most decentralised. In Ireland, schools/teachers have free choice of commercially produced textbooks. There is no official list or registry. Schools are free not to use textbooks in any or all subjects, however, in practice, textbooks are commonly used. Although the state recently introduced fully funded textbook provision, there is no state oversight of the textbooks, although there is an agreed code of practice signed by most commercial publishers.

The findings from the jurisdictional reports suggest that no single approach to textbook governance inherently produces stronger GCE outcomes. Rather, the integration of GCE in textbooks appears to depend on the interaction between curriculum expectations, textbook development processes, pedagogical traditions, teacher autonomy and wider educational cultures.

3.2 The selected textbooks/resources

Across the nine jurisdictions, Geography, History, Civic/Citizenship Education textbooks were the most commonly selected for the textbook research, although textbooks for Biology and Geology (Andalucia, Central and Northern region - Spain), Spanish Language and Literature (Central and Northern region - Spain), and supplementary interdisciplinary resources (Poland) were also

included. For the most part, the subject orientation of the selected textbooks aligned with the case studies in the WP2 curriculum mapping study, following identification of these subjects as offering the strongest opportunities for engagement with global challenges and GCE pedagogies. Reflecting jurisdictional nuances, the combined selection includes state-produced textbooks, commercially published textbooks, government-supported digital educational materials and resources developed by a civil society organisation. The materials examined within each jurisdiction are summarised in Table 1.

Jurisdiction / selection	Subject	Grade/Age	Rationale for inclusion
Bulgaria (3 textbooks - two of which are Geography and Economics textbooks selected to support interrogation of progression from Grades 7 to 9)	Geography and Economics	Grade 7 13-14 yrs	Grade 7 curriculum corresponds to the introduction of global challenges – population and migration
		Grade 9 16 yrs	Grade 9 curriculum has GCE potential; Textbook is regarded by some teachers as innovative
	History and Civilisations	Grade 5 11-12 yrs	According to WP2 findings, Grade 5 curriculum offers GCE potential
Czech Republic (3 textbooks)	Geography	9th Grade 14-15 yrs	Has official clause (meets requirements of Framework Education Programme and is age/stage appropriate); Part of a series of books from the same publisher; Stable on the market; Widely adopted
	Contemporary History	9th Grade 14-15 yrs	New since 2022; Has official clause (meets requirements of Framework Education Programme and is age/stage appropriate); Widely regarded as innovative
	Civic Education	6th Grade 11-12 yrs	Has official clause (meets requirements of Framework Education

			Programme and is age/stage appropriate)
Greece (3 textbooks)	Geology and Geography	2nd Grade 13-14 yrs	According to WP2 findings, 3rd Grade curriculum provides the most opportunities for global challenges; textbook was produced under supervision by a pedagogical institute as part of a national reform initiative; Grade 2 offers the greatest instructional time for Geology and Geography
	Modern and Contemporary History	3rd Grade 14-15 yrs	According to WP2 findings, 3rd Grade curriculum provides the most opportunities for global challenges; this is the only textbook available to schools
	Social and Political Education	3rd Grade 14-15 yrs	Published by the Institute of Education Policy/Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sport; the only textbook available to schools
Ireland (3 textbooks)	Geography	1st-3rd year 12-15 yrs	Author team includes the President of the Geography Teachers Association of Ireland; 2nd edition was developed for the latest curriculum; Widely adopted
	History		Author team includes two well-known History teachers who are involved in one of the leading history teacher associations, one of these has a strong online presence; 3rd edition

			was written for latest curriculum; Widely adopted
	Citizenship Education		2nd edition by the same author; written for the latest curriculum; Widely adopted
Italy **(2 textbooks – Civic Education is transversal (or interdisciplinary) and findings come from relevant sections of the Geography and History textbooks)**	Geography	Grade 8 13-14 yrs	Grade 8 is the most conceptually demanding curriculum; Produced by one of the three main publishers; Included on the Ministry's 2024 register of textbooks; Includes multimedia elements; Widely adopted
	History	Grade 7 12-13 yrs	Grade 7 curriculum provides GCE opportunities; Produced by one of the three main publishers; Publishers is recognised for quality history textbooks
	Civic Education (relevant sections of Geography and History textbooks)	Grades 7-8 12-14 yrs	See Geography and History (above) Poland (1 Geography textbook; set of 6 official History resources, available online; set of 3 NGO resources)
Poland **(1 Geography textbook; set of 6 official History resources, available online; set of 3 NGO resources)**	Geography	Year 2 16-17 yrs	The publisher is the market leader; the textbook was revised in 2024 in response to core curriculum changes; accredited by experts from the Ministry of Education at the central level.

	History	Years 2-4 16-19 yrs	Available on the official platform managed by the Ministry of National Education; widely used by teachers and young people (exam preparation)
	Interdisciplinary – Civic Education, Geography and History	Year 2 16-17 yrs	Textbooks for the global interdependencies elements of the new Civic Education curriculum are not yet publicly available; there are no Civic Education materials available on the Integrated Educational Platform. The Amnesty resources are recent and funded by the Ministry of National Education.
Portugal (2 textbooks, as Citizenship and Development is transversal and there is no associated textbook)	Geography	8th Grade 13-14 yrs	From one of the two main publishers; WP2 research findings indicated that 8th Grade presented the most GCE opportunities; one textbook from the two major school textbook publishers
	History		
Spain – Andalusia (3 textbooks)	Geography and History	4th ESO 15-16 yrs	Leading publisher – popular because of focus on regional culture and heritage; regarded by teachers as a key resource
	Values, Citizenship and Ethics	2nd ESO 12-13 yrs	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach; Popular teacher choice because focuses on real learning situations and active teaching, learning and assessment methodologies

	Biology and Geology	4th ESO 15-16 yrs	Regarded as having a real-life focus; specifically designed for the region
Spain – Central and Northern regions **(3 textbooks)** **NB: The jurisdictional report from the Central and Northern regions of Spain was updated in October 2026. This synthesis report is based on the findings outlined in an earlier edition of the Central and Northern regions (Spain) report.**	Geography and History	4th ESO 15-16 yrs	4th ESO curriculum is most relevant to global challenges; Widely used in public schools in the region
	Spanish Language and Literature	4th ESO 15-16 yrs	Perceived as complying with legislation; Widely used in public schools in the region
	Biology and Geology	4th ESO 15-16 yrs	4th ESO curriculum is most relevant to global challenges; Widely used in public schools in the region

In total, the nine jurisdictional reports involved research on twenty-five textbooks, as follows:

- Ten Geography (four of these are for subjects entitled Geography plus a second discipline area, e.g. Geology and Geography in Greece)
- Eight History (one of these is for a subject entitled History plus a second discipline area, i.e., Geography and History in Central and Northern Spain)
- Four Civic/Citizenship Education (with two additional Civic/Citizenship Education cases where, because of an interdisciplinary curriculum, the focus is on the Geography/History textbooks– Italy and Portugal)
- Two Biology and Geology (both Spanish jurisdictions)
- One Spanish Language and Literature (Central and Northern Spain).

In Poland, researchers examined both history materials hosted on the Integrated Educational Platform (ZPE) and a suite of educational resources produced by Amnesty International (Poland). Most jurisdictions reported that textbooks are increasingly accompanied by digital learning platforms, student workbooks or activity books and teacher books offering support and guidance. Although, beyond the Polish examples, these supplementary resources were not analysed in-depth, their existence reflects wider trends towards blended and multimedia forms of educational provision. The Polish NGO materials provide a useful contrast between traditional textbooks and resources explicitly designed to foster human rights education and global citizenship. The inclusion of NGO resources also highlights the important role that NGOs can

play in complementing textbook provision. It serves as a reminder that textbooks should not be viewed in isolation, but as part of wider ecosystems that include digital resources, teacher-created materials and civil society contributions.

While the materials analysed vary in terms of format, most broadly correspond to the 11-16 age range targeted by the GET project, although some of the Polish resources extend beyond this range. Collectively, the selected textbooks and resources outlined in Table 1 provide the empirical foundation for the findings presented in subsequent report sections. Through their analysis, it is possible to explore the extent to which selected materials across diverse European contexts support learners in understanding contemporary global challenges and developing GCE skills.

3.3 Curriculum alignment

In the nine jurisdictions, researchers considered the extent to which selected textbooks reflected the official curriculum documentation. This element of the research is explicitly linked to WP2, particularly the GCE opportunities and gaps identified in the curriculum case studies.

This section of the jurisdictional report template was accompanied by the following prompts:

- Is the textbook aligned to the relevant curriculum document(s)?

Consider with reference to your WP2 curriculum case studies.

- Provide short summary evidence from the textbook in your response.

In general, curriculum alignment was strong across the nine jurisdictions, mirroring both the strengths and limitations described in WP2 findings. In jurisdictions where the textbook system involves a level of state oversight, coherence with curriculum is unsurprising. However, even in more decentralised systems, publishers and authors were found to align with the curriculum.

The evidence provided ranged from a coherence between the structure of the curriculum and the textbooks (Bulgaria, Spain), to the inclusion of curriculum themes, to examples of content designed to support the realisation of specific learning outlined in curriculum documents, including relating to supporting students to undertake citizenship actions (Greece, Ireland, Andalusia - Spain). In several jurisdictions, it was remarked that the emphasis on competences in the official curriculum, itself a relatively recent development, appears to be impacting positively on the pedagogical approaches employed in textbooks (Spain – both jurisdictions), and on the provision and nature of supplementary digital resources that accompany textbooks (Italy). While the Portuguese textbooks closely align with curriculum expectations, they also incorporate some innovative pedagogical features, including inquiry activities, debate and citizenship-oriented tasks.

Strong curriculum alignment does not necessarily result in strong GCE. Where WP2 identified GCE related gaps in curriculum documents, the selected textbooks rarely appear to compensate for these limitations. For example, the relatively weak treatment of gender inequality and climate justice observed in some textbooks appears to be closely connected to similar treatment of these topics in the associated curriculum documents.

In only one or two instances, textbooks were critiqued for falling short of the GCE curriculum opportunities identified in WP2. For example, in one case, a selected textbook appeared not to capitalise on an opportunity in the curriculum to address international inequality. In another, the

alignment between curriculum aims and competencies were judged to be weak. In one jurisdiction, all three textbooks were found to be only partially relevant to the learning outcomes in the curriculum document. However, this limitation was a result of the publication of the curriculum following the publication of the textbooks. As already stated, in Poland, when textbooks or official resources were not yet available for a recently developed Civic Education curriculum, resources produced by an NGO were included instead.

3.4 Alignment to GCE pedagogies

In line with the GET project learning outcomes (see Appendix 1) and in recognition that GCE is about more than content knowledge, researchers considered the extent to which textbooks use participative and creative pedagogies to support critical engagement with global challenges and support the development of relevant GCE skills, including the exercise of voice, reflecting on learning, planning and undertaking relevant actions. The evidence presented in the jurisdictional reports further elaborated the list of desirable GCE skills and commonly included:

- critical thinking
- inquiry-based learning
- collaborative learning
- multi-perspectivity
- media literacy
- student voice and agency
- participation
- undertaking action
- reflection.

The jurisdictional reports reveal insights into how GCE is conceptualised and enacted in textbooks. Some reports suggest that textbooks do not simply communicate information about global challenges; they also potentially shape how learners understand their relationship to our world, the extent to which they are encouraged to think critically about global challenges, and whether they are positioned as active participants in addressing those challenges.

Across the jurisdictions, textbooks demonstrate varying levels of alignment with the recognised quality GCE pedagogies. Some encourage inquiry, critical thinking, participation and action, while others focus primarily on knowledge acquisition. In several jurisdictions, teacher mediation was identified as an important factor in supporting or extending the GCE pedagogical potential in the selected textbooks.

Although there are some exceptions, many of the selected textbooks prioritise disciplinary knowledge over critical engagement with power relations and social justice dimensions. These textbooks tend to adopt more traditional pedagogical approaches characterised by exposition, recall and comprehension tasks, map work and data interpretation, source analysis, and written responses to structured questions. The exceptions (Andalusia, CZ, Italy, IE) support students to

analyse evidence, compare perspectives, engage with case studies, consider ethical questions and debate alternative responses to global challenges. They frame learning as an ongoing process of investigation and interpretation, helping students to recognise complexity, uncertainty and contestation within contemporary global debates.

A significant finding emerging from the jurisdictional reports concerns student agency and voice and support for undertaking action. Across most jurisdictions, textbooks are better at supporting students to know about global challenges than at helping students to act in response to these challenges. Where opportunities for participation, engagement, collective problem-solving and action exist, they are commonly aligned to similar opportunities in curriculum documents. These textbooks include activities that encourage discussion and deliberation, local investigations, engagement with community, collaborative projects, and reflection. This mirrors one of the key findings of the WP2 curriculum study, which identified a persistent gap between knowledge-focused learning (transmission) and opportunities for democratic engagement and citizenship actions (transformation). As a result, students are positioned as observers of global challenges rather than as potential contributors to change.

3.5 Alignment to the four global challenges of the GET project

For each of the four global challenges of the GET project (climate change, gender inequality, international inequalities and migration), the jurisdictional reports considered the visibility within the textbook content. In some reports, depth of coverage and representations and narratives were also analysed and discussed. Common strengths and weaknesses emerged from across the participating jurisdictions, particularly in relation to the uneven visibility of the four challenges.

3.5.1 Climate change

Climate change is the most consistently represented of the four GET global challenges across the selected textbooks. However, substantial jurisdictional variation exists regarding the depth of treatment, and the extent to which learning progresses beyond scientific knowledge. Across the subjects included in this study (see Table 1), climate change is most frequently encountered in Geography and science-related subjects, while its presence in History and some Civic/Citizenship Education textbooks is less evident.

Most textbooks provide opportunities for students to learn about environmental degradation, resource use, sustainability and the consequences of climate change. In many cases, learners are introduced to concepts such as renewable energy, pollution, biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions and sustainable development. This reflects official curriculum priorities identified in the WP2 analysis, where climate change emerged as the most visible of the four GET global challenges.

Examples of good practice with regards to climate change identified in the jurisdictional reports include:

- **Andalusia - Spain**: The Values, Citizenship and Ethics textbook includes comprehensive treatment of climate change, including causes and processes, the significance of the threat, the role of humans. The textbook explicitly addresses climate justice. Student debates on anthropocentric and biocentric perspectives are supported through the 'Ethics workshop' feature in the textbook. The Geography and History textbooks emphasise the link between

climate change and human development. Climate justice and climate migration are referenced. The precautionary principle is explained, as are the importance of individual and collective actions. The Geography and Biology textbook stresses scientific consensus on human induced climate change. Students are supported to calculate their ecological footprint, to discuss the impact of the economic system on consumption and to carry out a local environmental audit

- **Bulgaria**: The Geography and Economics textbooks (grade 9) present a clear scientific explanation of climate change, with some local and global links
- **Central and Northern Spain**: The Geography and History textbook includes data on emissions and environmental degradation. Students are supported to interpret this data and consider who is responsible and who has the capacity to act. The Biology and Geology textbook emphasises the observable effects of climate change, includes data from international bodies and explains adaptation and mitigation
- **Czech Republic**: The History textbook introduces climate-related ideas through a dedicated lesson on the Anthropocene
- **Greece**: The Citizenship Education textbook book focuses on responsibility for climate change by citizens, the Greek state and the international community
- **Ireland**: The Citizenship Education textbook includes a substantial chapter dedicated to sustainability. This includes a brief explanation of global warming, together with a wide range of activities and suggested actions at individual and collective (including state level) related to carbon footprints, food waste in school, and plastic water bottles. The scientific explanation of climate change in the Geography textbook includes consideration of the contribution of human activities. The environmental effects of climate change in Ireland and globally, solutions at governance, policy and individual are referenced
- **Italy**: In the Geography textbook, climate change is integrated into thematic and regional content and is encountered as a topic throughout. The History textbook includes a Civic Education laboratory on ecological transition which connects sustainability with industry, institutions, infrastructure innovation and equitable access to resources.
- **Poland**: In the Geography textbook, Climate change, ecology and environmental protection are described in relation to agriculture, industry, tourism, mining and other sectors of the economy. Amnesty International (Poland) resources address climate justice through a human rights framing of climate change
- **Portugal**: The Geography textbook presents extensive content relating to causes of and solutions for climate change. '+Citizenship' sections detail activities that encourage learners to consider actions that can be undertaken individually and collectively in response to environmental challenges.

Common climate change related limitations identified in jurisdictional reports included:

- isolated, rather than integrated, treatment of the topic

- absent or limited references, especially in History textbooks despite opportunities to integrate it into discussions about industrialisation, colonial expansion and economic development
- the presentation of climate change only through scientific and/or economic lenses - i.e. focus on causes of environmental degradation, impacts on ecosystems, sustainable resource management, and technological solutions
- limited opportunities for critical discussion of underlying social, political and economic dimensions of climate change
- limited or no attention on the unequal impact of climate change and the resultant justice issues
- limited exploration of governance or institutional responsibility
- lack of support for student action in response to climate change.

These findings mirror the conclusions of the WP2 curriculum mapping study, which identified strong attention to climate change related knowledge, but weaker emphasis on governance, agency and action. Across the textbooks analysed, opportunities for students to understand climate change as a question of justice remains comparatively limited. Overall, while climate change is visible across most of the selected materials, there remains scope to further strengthen this topic.

3.5.2 Gender equality

Gender inequality is the least visible and least systematically developed of the four GET global challenges across the selected materials in this study. This aligns with a similar WP2 curriculum mapping research finding. While examples of good practice exist, gender inequality is frequently absent, marginal, implicit or treated as an isolated topic.

Civic and Citizenship Education materials generally provide the strongest opportunities for engagement with gender inequality, and it is usually encountered through human rights framing. Geography and History textbooks, with some exceptions, give limited attention to gender as an analytical category. Where gender is addressed in these subjects, it is frequently through examples of individual women, isolated references to discrimination, or in the study of demographics, rather than through examination of the social, political, economic and cultural structures that produce and maintain inequality.

Examples of good practice with regards to gender inequality identified in the jurisdictional reports include:

- **Andalusia - Spain**: the Civic and Ethical Values textbook integrates gender equality throughout. Students encounter explanations of gender identity and roles, gender stereotypes and prejudices. Gender-based violence is explained as a problem associated with patriarchy and the intersectionality of gender inequality and other types of discrimination are considered. In the 'Ethics workshop' feature, students are introduced to the idea of education as a way of ensuring gender equality. The Geography and History textbook considers the role of women in nineteenth century Spain. Also included is a

timeline of gender equality detailing legal discrimination, social movements and current equity policies. Students are supported to undertake a project on women as agents of change. In Biology and Geology, students learn about the differences between sex, gender, and gender identity. They learn about great figures of science, including women, and analyse how gender discrimination interacts with poverty/place of origin

- **Bulgaria**: The History and Civilisations textbook includes some references to the domestic lives of women in history

- **Central and Northern Spain**: The Geography and History textbook includes a specific section that describes the women's suffrage movement, women's changing labour role in the twentieth century, and the feminist movement. The Biology and Geology textbook mentions gender equality with reference to health and reproduction

- **Czech Republic**: Gender is visible in several places in the History textbooks, for example, family life during the war, and sections on the feminist movement, protest culture, changing roles and media representation in the 1960s. The Civic Education textbook includes topics with content related to interpersonal relationships, and introductions to key concepts like stereotypes, equal opportunities, feminism, sexism. These concepts are accompanied by participative activities

- **Greece**: The Citizenship Education textbook presents gender equality in a constitutional/legal frame and includes data to illustrate the gender pay gap and gap in political representation. Positive action measures, such as political quotas in municipal elections, are referenced. The History textbook mentions the neglect of women's rights in the French revolution, the status of women in the industrial revolution, and the women's 'question' in nineteenth century Greece

- **Ireland**: The History textbook integrates references to women and girls throughout. For example, on the lives of women in ancient Rome, in early Christian Ireland, during the medieval period, in Soviet Russia and in Nazi Germany. Irish women's sporting teams are included in a chapter on sport in the nineteenth century. There is a chapter on the changing experience of women in 20th century Ireland, while the women's liberation movement is included in a discussion of the 1960s as an important decade. Although the images of people in the textbook are largely of men in history, on occasion girls and women are included even where the text does not demand that this should be the case. Assessment is largely focused on comprehension tasks and source analysis, but includes some from female sources. Project ideas related to the profiling of a person of interest include some female suggestions, such as Irish saints, and the renaissance artist Sofonisba Anguissola

- **Italy**: The Civic Education materials and aspects of the History textbook provide opportunities for engaging with gender issues. The History textbook includes relevant content, for example, Olympe de Gouges' Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen, women's roles in revolutionary societies, their experience as workers in the industrial revolution, and their treatment and social conditions in the nineteenth century. In Civic Education, students are asked to identify stereotypes, analyse media representations of women, and discuss institutional mechanisms to protect gender equality. The Geography textbook includes a case study of the gender gap and social conditions of women in India

- **Portugal**: Gender inequality is represented through references to exceptional women ('heroines') in the History textbook. There are some opportunities in 'side sections' and research proposals to engage with this topic

- **Poland**: The Amnesty resources references gender equality in a discussion about the fact that women and girls are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Common gender inequality related limitations identified in jurisdictional reports included:

- uneven treatment across subjects
- limited treatment in in Geography, where references tend to be restricted to demographical statistics
- historical references often appear as isolated biographical examples
- opportunities to engage with gender are often implicit and depend on teacher initiative rather than textbook design
- structural issues related to power and justice, such as sexism, patriarchy, gender-based economic inequalities and political representation receive little explicit attention
- limited exploration of intersectionality
- limited opportunities for sustained civic action could be developed.

A recurring theme across many jurisdictions is that women are encountered primarily as exceptional historical figures, reformers, scientists, political leaders or activists. While such inclusion is important. This tendency can create a situation where gender inequality is understood through individual achievements rather than through examination of unequal power relations, discrimination, legal restrictions, labour inequalities, social norms; and political exclusion. It also conveys the idea that the achievements of women are limited to the notable figures included in textbooks. A significant limitation common across several jurisdictions is the lack of engagement with gender inequality as a question of power and social structures. This limits opportunities for students to understand gender inequality as a systemic issue that intersects with other global challenges. Students are rarely supported to consider how they might challenge gender stereotypes, support equality or contribute to gender-related social change within their communities. These findings suggest a need for more systematic integration of gender perspectives, stronger attention to structural inequalities and greater opportunities for students to engage critically with, and take action for, gender equality.

3.5.3 International inequalities

As a topic, international inequalities receive good coverage in most jurisdictions, particularly in Geography and History textbooks when topics like development, poverty, globalisation, economic systems, demography and colonialism offer natural entry points. However, the depth and criticality of treatment vary across jurisdictions and textbooks.

A common finding is that textbooks try to make students aware of the existence of inequalities between countries and regions. This is achieved through the inclusion of comparative data relating to wealth and living standards, development, education, health, demographic characteristics and access to resources. However, there is often a tendency to describe

inequalities, rather than critically examine the historical, political and economic causes of these inequalities.

Examples of good practice with regards to international inequalities identified in the jurisdictional reports include:

- **Andalusia - Spain**: In Values, Citizenship and Ethics, students encounter international inequalities through an economic and human rights frame. They analyse the concentration of wealth in the Global North, examine historic and systemic causes of inequalities and historic movements against disparities. In an 'Ethics workshop', they consider a debt cancellation campaign. The Geography and History textbook considers the roots of international inequalities and explains how trade and financial systems favour industrialised countries. Intersectionality and the role of the UN are included. The SDGs are referenced in the Biology and Geology textbook and students calculate their eco-footprint

- **Bulgaria**: The Geography and Economics textbooks engage with facts through development indicators, regional disparities and economic comparisons between countries, and in the context of European integration, providing a solid knowledge foundation. The History and Civilisations textbook considers labour structures (including slavery) and the hierarchy of ancient states

- **Central and Northern region - Spain**: The Geography and History textbooks provide engagement with colonialism, industrialisation, development and globalisation, and critical analysis of economic systems and interdependence

- **Czech Republic**: International inequalities are visible in the Geography textbook with a focus on facts. In the History textbook, students are encouraged to explore the structural causes of contemporary disparities through an analysis of colonialism, using the DR Congo as a case study. They can also engage in this topic through their study of the Cold War. A lesson on chocolate links student consumption to working conditions in, and trade with, the Global South

- **Greece**: The Citizenship Education textbook references international inequalities in the context of poverty, hunger, employment, racism, and environmental degradation. The role of the international community, NGOs and the welfare state are considered. Activities include opportunities to analyse relevant data. The History textbook references inequalities with regards to class, labour during the industrial revolution, colonial oppression and challenges faced by Global South countries. Historical movements to address inequalities are considered, for example, trade unions and anti-colonial movements. The Geography textbook compares economic and social development in Europe and between continents, for example, through a map-based activity and comparative analysis of the Human Development Index (HDI)

- **Italy**: The Geography textbook includes content related to Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil and China, thereby providing concrete examples of structural inequalities. In the History textbook, topics such as the impact of European colonialism, transatlantic slave trade, labour exploitation in the industrial revolution, and nineteenth century global power imbalances link with international inequalities. The Civic Education section of the History textbook includes a module on the protection of minorities and there is a focus on the linguistic and cultural diversity in Italian society. In general, the interdisciplinary approach to Civic Education ensures a connection between historical and contemporary inequalities

- **Ireland**: The physical geography section of the Geography textbook offers multiple case studies from the Global South, for example, Haiti (earthquakes), Nepal (fold mountains), India (landslide), Sahara Desert (desertification), Brazil (impact of human activity on soil) and these are balanced with relevant case studies and examples from the Global North. Students also compare population change and life chances for young people in Tanzania and Ireland. There are dedicated chapters on development assistance and on globalisation. The History textbook includes a chapter on the age of exploration that briefly interrogates the impact of colonialism, including on indigenous people and on the colonising countries. A section on the 1960s as an important decade explores decolonisation in Africa and Asia

- **Northern and Eastern Spain**: The Geography and History textbook considers the historical roots of international inequalities, including colonialism, the international division of labour and political decisions. The Biology and Geology textbook considers the topic from an environmental perspective, through discussion of access to food, water and healthcare

- **Poland**: One of the history resources correctly defined the concept of neocolonialism, explaining that formal independence did not mean the end of economic and political dependence. The lesson on the origins of geographical discoveries labels colonialism as exploitation, an important distinction for understanding the origins of economic differences between the Global North and South. The Amnesty resources include an explanation of the roots of modern global inequalities, including colonisation. The dominance and profits of large corporations over the privacy, security and data of people around the world is also considered

- **Portugal**: The Geography textbook provides an opportunity for students to consider international inequalities through demographic data.

Common international inequalities related limitations identified in jurisdictional reports included:

- when relevant entry points (colonial expansion, slavery, development, socio-economic disparities) are treated as peripheral or are not integrated throughout

- when the topic is only implicitly evident and therefore reliant on teacher's interpretation and pedagogical choices

- a primarily descriptive engagement with the topic and focus on analysing data or maps

- limited explicit support for critical discussion of historical and current systemic barriers and power relations

- underdeveloped ethical, rights and justice-oriented dimensions of international inequalities

- representation of Global South countries through indicators of deprivation

- lack of Global South perspectives and voices

- tendency to reproduce simplified development narratives and Eurocentric frameworks.

A common pattern across multiple jurisdictions is the use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and/or HDI indicators and demographic measures as the primary means of discussing international inequalities. While these provide valuable opportunities for comparison and analysis,

they can also encourage simplified understandings of development and progress if not accompanied by critical discussion. Several jurisdictional reports highlighted concerns that textbooks sometimes present development through a binary 'developed' and 'developing' lens, often using Western models of economic and social progress as implicit benchmarks. In such cases, textbooks are not encouraging critical examination of how these categories are constructed or how historical and contemporary power relations contribute to global inequalities. In several textbooks, Global South countries are represented through narratives of poverty, underdevelopment, conflict or instability. While these issues are undoubtedly important, such representations can risk reinforcing deficit perspectives if not balanced by examples of resilience and agency, creativity and innovation, and diversity.

One of the strongest opportunities identified across jurisdictions lies in the potential of selected History and Geography textbooks to connect historical processes (colonialism, imperialism, industrialisation, trade, slavery) with present-day inequalities. However, the extent to which textbooks make explicit the connection to contemporary global inequalities varies. For example, in several instances colonialism is discussed as a historical phenomenon with insufficient exploration of its continuing social, economic and political consequences. As with other global challenges, opportunities for student engagement and action relating to international inequalities are somewhat limited. Most textbooks focus on knowledge acquisition and analysis, with less emphasis on enabling students to consider what responses to global inequalities might look like in practice. While international inequalities represent one of the most visible global challenges in the selected textbooks, opportunities remain to deepen treatment of this topic.

3.5.4 Migration

Migration is widely represented across the selected materials. However, important differences emerge regarding how migration is conceptualised, the perspectives adopted, and the extent to which textbooks support critical engagement with the topic as a historical, social, political, and human rights issue.

In most jurisdictions, migration is included in Geography, History and Civic/Citizenship Education textbooks, meaning that students encounter the topic from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Students learn about human movement, demographic change, emigration and immigration. Migration is frequently described using facts and statistics, with less attention given to lived experiences, identity and belonging or human rights. In this way, textbooks mirror the findings of the WP2 curriculum mapping, which found that the focus of official curriculum documents is on knowledge about migration rather than approaching the topic from a systemic or human perspective.

Examples of good practice with regards to migration identified in the jurisdictional reports include:

- **Andalusia - Spain**: The Values, Citizenship and Ethics textbook highlights freedom of movement as a human right and considers the role of the media in prejudice and discrimination. Government strategies for controlling and encouraging migration are considered. The History and Geography textbook presents migration as an intrinsic feature of human existence and an ongoing global process. Climate and inequalities are considered drivers of migration, with data to suggest that migration to the Global North is a consequence. Students engage with media representations of migration and consider how media distortions can be exploited by politicians. In the Biology and Geology

textbook, human mobility is presented as a biological, evolutionary and environmental process. Students have the chance to discuss the argument that migration from the Global South to the Global North is as a result of economic and social disparities

- **Bulgaria**: The Geography and Economic textbooks provide opportunities to engage with a clear factual and demographic and economic understanding of migration patterns, especially in the European context. The History and Civilisations textbook presents migration as a long-standing human practice, thereby implicitly offering a counterargument for present discourses about migration as abnormal or exceptional

- **Central and Northern Spain**: The Geography and History textbooks support exploration of migration trends through data analysis. Causes of migration are detailed as conflict, poverty, and environmental disasters. Some migrant testimonies are included. The impact of natural disasters, desertification and livelihood security on migration is covered in the Biology and Geology textbook

- **Czech Republic**: The Geography textbook focuses on the relationship between natural conditions and human movement. The History textbook provides a nuanced treatment of migration through an exploration of forced displacement, wartime migration, the Holocaust, post-war population movements and contemporary migration within Europe. These historical case studies enable students to examine migration through multiple perspectives and to connect contemporary and historical migration experiences. The Civic Education textbook further supports understanding by situating migration in discussions of citizenship, democracy and human rights

- **Greece**: In the Civic/Citizenship Education textbook migration is linked to poverty, inequality, xenophobia and racism. A range of stimuli are used to highlight migration experiences and promote respect for human rights. A constitutional focus underscores the need for protection and inclusion. The Geography textbook includes a lesson on European demographic characteristics. The causes, consequences and impacts of Greek migration are discussed. The History textbook covers Greek migration in the nineteenth and twentieth century, the socio-economic causes, integration and challenges

- **Ireland**: In the Geography textbook, a chapter on migration focuses on the types of migration, the factors affecting migration and the impacts of migration. The two case studies are of historic migration from English to Ulster (now Northern Ireland) and migration because of Spanish and Portuguese colonialisation of South America. The Citizenship Education textbook approaches migration through the lens of refugees and asylum seekers and includes a focus on the loss of human dignity using a case study of a young person who has experienced forced migration. In the History textbook, while the focus on migration is on the Irish Diaspora, the role of the EU in promoting rights includes a case study of the EU responses to migrants and refugees (2015-16)

- **Italy**: The treatment of migration is extensive in the Geography textbook, including a dedicated section that explains migration processes and patterns, and a reference to climate (water scarcity) related migration. Migration is explicit also in the History textbook, with the examples making it clear that migration is shaped by economic, political and social forces. In the Civic Education sections of the two selected textbooks, migration is approached through questions of rights, diversity and social cohesion. The associated activities support students to consider media representations and the responsibilities of institutions

- **Portugal**: The '+Citizenship' section in the 'mobility' theme in the Geography textbook provides some opportunities for engagement with this topic
- **Poland**: The Geography textbook supports students to understand migration concepts and patterns. The Amnesty resources introduce the concept of climate refugees and explain the invasive migration of colonising Europeans as leading to the displacement of indigenous peoples.

Common migration related limitations identified in jurisdictional reports included:

- uneven treatment of the migration across textbooks (in one jurisdiction, the selected Geography textbook was found to underrepresent the curriculum focus on this topic)
- insufficient exploration of migration governance and relatively weak emphasis on international cooperation
- reliance on teacher mediation
- too much focus on types and causes, concepts, population distribution and labour mobility through statistical data and demographic trends
- limited attention to human rights, discrimination, interculturalism, identity and belonging
- Important concepts such as 'refugee' and 'economic migrant' are introduced, but the treatment often remains technical and depersonalised. Migration is not encountered through lived experiences
- little connection to contemporary migration debates
- Limited attention given to structural causes
- Absence, limited or unsystematic treatment of climate migration
- Limited exploration of governance and international cooperation
- limited focus on rights, identity and inclusion.

One of the most significant differences between jurisdictions concerns the extent to which textbooks frame migration through human rights. In the strongest examples, migration is explicitly linked to human dignity, human rights, citizenship, inclusion, cultural diversity, anti-discrimination, and democratic participation. These approaches encourage students to reflect on values, assumptions and social responses to migration, rather than simply learning about migration as a demographic process.

Several textbooks successfully connect migration to conflict, poverty, inequality, environmental degradation and climate change, development, and globalisation. However, missed opportunities to explore these interconnections in greater depth were also evident. For example, despite its relevance to current public discourse, climate-induced migration remains underdeveloped in most selected textbooks, and some treat migration as a separate rather than interconnected global challenge.

Some textbooks humanise migration, for example, through the use of personal stories or empathy-building activities. Elsewhere migration is framed primarily as a challenge to be managed, a demographic issue or a matter of national concern. In these cases, students encounter migration as an abstract phenomenon rather than as a human experience. As with the three other global challenges, opportunities for student action on the topic of migration remains limited across many of the selected textbooks. Overall, migration is relatively well represented across the textbook sample. Nevertheless, there remains considerable scope to deepen the treatment of this topic.

3.5.5 Four global challenges - Conclusion

The findings point to the fact that a topic appearing in a textbook is not enough. The perspectives presented, the narratives employed, the causes identified, and the solutions proposed are equally important.

Across the jurisdictions, global issues are generally represented in one of the following three ways:

- descriptive and factual
- analytical and critical
- participatory and transformative.

Most textbooks fall within the first two categories, while transformative representations are evident in a small number of selected textbooks.

A common limitation is the tendency for textbooks to present global challenges separately rather than as interconnected phenomena. These topics appear in distinct chapters, units or thematic areas, providing relatively few opportunities for students to explore how they interact and influence one another. Although some of the strongest materials make such connections explicit, intersectionality is underdeveloped across much of the sample.

3.6 The subject focus of the selected textbooks

3.6.1 Civic/Citizenship Education

Civic/Citizenship Education materials carry the greatest responsibility for learners to engage with quality GCE. Quality Civic/Citizenship Education materials provide opportunities to engage with human rights, values, multiple perspectives and democratic processes. They connect local and global issues, model interdisciplinary and participative learning approaches and encourage empathy, critical thinking, civic engagement, action and reflection. **However, as a subject/course, Civic/Citizenship Education can face challenges including lack of status compared to other disciplines**, limited instructional time or lack of coordination, weak links between learning and action, and teacher capacity issues. These challenges suggest that while Civic/Citizenship Education materials offer the strongest GCE foundation, this potential is not always fully realised in practice.

3.6.2 Geography

Across the nine jurisdictions, Geography emerges as the subject where the selected textbooks provide the most visibility of the four GET global challenges. However, there are differences in the ways global challenges are framed, the pedagogical approaches employed and the extent to which students are encouraged to engage critically with these challenges.

The strongest contribution of the selected Geography textbooks relates to climate change. Geography provides opportunities to examine environmental processes, climate systems, ecological challenges and human-environment interactions. The best examples integrate sustainability, environmental responsibility and citizenship throughout rather than treating climate change as an isolated topic. However, climate change is often framed primarily through scientific and environmental perspectives. While students develop understanding of causes and consequences, opportunities to explore climate justice, governance and political responses, or to plan and undertake action are less common. As a result, the selected Geography textbooks provide environmental literacy without fully developing the citizenship dimensions of climate change.

Geography also provides a curricular space for engagement with international inequalities. Textbooks commonly introduce development, poverty, globalisation, population growth, resource distribution and economic disparities between countries and regions. Development indicators including GDP and HDI feature prominently across the selected materials. Some textbooks offer particularly strong opportunities for examining the causes and consequences of global inequalities. These resources frequently encourage exploration of global interdependence and the ways economic, political and environmental factors contribute to uneven development. A common challenge is that inequalities are often presented descriptively or neutrally. Learners may be asked to compare levels of development between countries without being encouraged to investigate the underlying historical and political processes. Colonialism, power relations and global economic structures are frequently underdeveloped; and are instances of inadequate representation of the Global South and Global South perspectives.

The selected Geography textbooks provide opportunities for learning related to migration patterns, population movements, urbanisation, demographic change and refugee movements. From a GCE perspective, the best examples link migration to diversity, inclusion, sustainability and human rights. Students engage with lived experiences of migration, are encouraged to explore

both historical and contemporary migration processes and to consider the connections between migration, inequality and globalisation. However, many Geography textbooks primarily treat migration as a demographic phenomenon, explored through statistics, population trends and movement patterns.

Gender inequality is relatively invisible in the selected Geography textbooks. Where it does appear, it is often treated briefly in demographic data, educational access or labour participation statistics. Few textbooks encourage examination of how geographical processes are experienced differently by women and men, or how gender intersects with poverty, migration, environmental change and development. Since Geography is uniquely positioned to explore the spatial dimensions of gender inequality, this is a missed opportunity.

Some of the selected Geography textbooks support inquiry-based learning, data-interpretation, critical questioning and project-based learning. They include case studies, local-global comparisons, and problem-solving activities. These encourage investigation of real-world issues and the development of informed perspectives. In contrast, other selected Geography textbooks are restricted to knowledge acquisition, map skills and statistical analysis. While these skills are valuable, they often provide fewer opportunities for discussion, action-orientated learning, or reflection. In these cases, a GCE approach depends on teacher interpretation and capacity.

3.6.3 History

Across the nine jurisdictions, the main contribution to developing understanding of global challenges in the selected History books comes through the study of the industrial revolution, colonialism, imperialism, conflict, inequality, human movement and social change. The best GCE examples encourage critical analysis of sources, multi-perspectivity, analysis of historical processes and change, and connection to contemporary global challenges. Where History is combined with another discipline, this benefits the interdisciplinary nature of GCE. Many History textbooks increase the visibility of women through biographical examples, but relatively few engage with structural inequalities, power relations, sexism, gender-based violence, and intersectionality. Some jurisdictional reports refer to instances of over-emphasis on national or Eurocentric histories and perspectives, weak links between the past and present, and little or no support for students to undertake action in relation to contemporary challenges with historical roots.

3.6.4 Additional subjects

Additional subjects amongst the selected textbooks include Biology and Geology in both Spanish jurisdictions, and Spanish Language and Literature in Central and Northern Spain. The jurisdictional reports suggest that these textbooks can contribute to students' understanding of global challenges, particularly when supported by appropriate pedagogical approaches and interdisciplinary connections. For example, Biology and Geology contribute scientific understanding of environmental systems, while Spanish Language and Literature contribute critical literacy, empathy and analysis of representation in media and other texts. The inclusion of these additional subject areas reinforces a WP2 and WP3 finding that GCE is effective when it is distributed across multiple subjects thereby offering a range of disciplinary perspectives.

3.7 Supplementary resources

3.7.1 Digital materials

In many of the participating jurisdictions, textbooks are accompanied with digital versions of the students' book and additional resources with interactive, multimedia materials, student workbooks and teacher guidelines. The digital elements are viewed as improving inclusion of all students and of strengthening GCE practice through up-to-date information and data. They enable teachers to supplement textbooks with resources that address emerging global issues more effectively than printed materials. However, access to digital resources raises questions regarding technological infrastructure, school resourcing, including access to devices, connectivity and support services, and teacher digital competence. In the absence of these new forms of educational inequality can emerge. Although these issues were not the primary focus of the research, they were identified as important contextual considerations for future GCE implementation.

3.7.2 NGO/CSO resources

The inclusion of Amnesty International resources in the Polish jurisdictional report highlights the important role that NGO/CSO resources can play in complementing and extending mainstream textbook provision and in strengthening student engagement with GCE. These resources show that global challenges can be explored through human rights frameworks that encourage students to consider ethical dimensions and possibilities for action. Compared with many mainstream textbooks, these materials place greater emphasis on student voice agency, engagement and action.

The Polish jurisdictional report also highlights a common challenge with NGO/CSO resources, that access to such resources depends on awareness, motivation and support. Unlike official textbooks, NGO resources may not be available to all students or may be used inconsistently across schools. Students' access to enriched GCE experiences can vary according to local circumstances, school priorities and available partnerships.

3.8 Teacher capacity

Across the jurisdictional reports, teacher agency and mediation of textbooks and resources emerged as a crucial factor in the enactment of GCE at a classroom level. Textbooks often contain 'latent' GCE opportunities. For example, a chapter on colonialism in a History textbook may provide opportunities for exploring contemporary international inequalities, but such connections are not always explicitly developed. Consequently, the extent to which textbooks contribute to transformative GCE can depend on teaching, learning and assessment. The result is that the impact of textbooks and resources depends largely on teacher confidence, expertise, interpretation and pedagogical practice. Consequently, initial teacher education and professional learning is a critical factor in successful enactment.

Teachers require support to:

- identify GCE opportunities within curriculum and textbooks
- make connections across subjects

- understand GCE topics such as climate justice, migration and human rights, globalisation and economic inequality, the contemporary legacies of colonialism, gender inequality and intersectionality, global governance and international institutions
- create classroom environments where complex, sensitive, emotive and controversial issues can be explored respectfully and critically
- challenge stereotypes and deficit narratives
- integrate Global South perspectives
- support media literacy, inquiry, participation and action
- share practice with peers.

3.9 Section conclusion

This synthesis report examined twenty-five textbooks across nine European jurisdictions with the aim of understanding how GCE is represented in educational materials and how effectively textbooks support learning related to the four GET global challenges: climate change, gender inequality, international inequalities and migration. The findings reveal both encouraging developments and significant challenges.

GCE **visibility** is evident in selected textbooks from participating jurisdictions. All textbooks contain some opportunities for engagement with one or more of the four GET global challenges. However, the visibility, depth and quality of this engagement is variable. Where substantive content knowledge is combined with critical inquiry, reflection and opportunities for student participation, there is a strengthened opportunity for quality GCE practice. Textbooks that explicitly address rights, inclusion, equality and dignity provide students with tools for understanding contemporary global challenges. They also create stronger opportunities for reflection and engagement. There is also evidence that greater interdisciplinary links in some jurisdictions support GCE. In contrast, where selected textbooks focus on knowledge transmission, while providing information about global challenges, they offer fewer GCE opportunities. Overall, the findings suggest that textbook provision in the nine jurisdictions currently reflects a continuum ranging from descriptive forms of global learning to transformative GCE.

Across the nine jurisdictions, **alignment between the curriculum and selected textbooks** is generally strong. However, strong alignment with the curriculum does not always translate into quality GCE. In many cases, textbooks reproduced both curriculum strengths and gaps. Where curriculum documents are limited, with a few exceptions, textbooks rarely compensate.

Although traditional approaches centred on content transmission remain influential in many curriculum and textbook contexts, in several jurisdictions there appears to be a recognition of the need to support the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions associated with GCE. This is characterised by greater emphasis on sustainability and competency-based learning.

The growing visibility of sustainable development in curriculum documents in some jurisdictions is evident in textbook content where themes such as the SDGs, climate change and environmental

stewardship are embedded across different subjects. Reflecting a broader European trend to embed competence-based learning in curriculum documents, some of the selected textbooks encourage students to acquire knowledge and to ask questions, investigate real-world issues, analyse evidence, communicate arguments, collaborate, and critically reflect.

Climate change emerged as the strongest and most consistently represented of the four GET global challenges. It is especially visible in the selected Geography textbooks. The strongest examples integrate climate change throughout rather than confining the topic to specific chapters. However, climate change is often framed as an environmental and scientific issue. Considerably less attention is given to climate justice, unequal global impacts, governance and policy responses, historical responsibility, or climate action.

Gender inequality emerged as the least visible and least developed of the four GET global challenges. While some good examples were identified, gender inequality is often absent, implicit, fragmented, or treated as isolated examples. Gender inequality is most likely to appear in History textbooks, through biographical examples, but relatively few engage with structural inequalities, power relations, sexism, gender-based violence, or intersectionality.

International inequalities are widely represented in the selected textbooks and constitute one of the strongest areas of alignment between the curriculum and textbooks. The selected History and Geography textbooks provide important opportunities for engagement with this topic. However, some of the selected textbooks present inequalities descriptively rather than critically. Development indicators such as GDP and HDI are used to compare countries/regions, but insufficient emphasis is given to power relations, colonial legacies or the structural causes of inequality.

Migration is visible across the selected textbooks from the participating jurisdictions. Where there is potential for quality GCE practice, migration is explicitly connected to human rights, diversity and inclusion, intercultural understanding, and social justice. However, some textbooks frame migration in a narrow fashion, using statistical and demographic perspectives. Human experiences, migrant voices and questions of belonging receive considerably less attention. Furthermore, intersectional links between migration and climate change, international inequalities and gender are generally underdeveloped.

Across the selected textbooks, there were a few instances where countries and communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America appear primarily in discussions of poverty, underdevelopment, conflict, environmental crises, and migration. This can create deficit-based **representations of the Global South** that obscure resilience and agency, creativity and innovation, and diversity. In several jurisdictions, Global South voices and perspectives were absent in the selected textbooks. Across many resources, perspectives from the Global South remain underrepresented and global issues are frequently viewed through European lenses. Similarly, migrant voices, youth perspectives, experiences of marginalised communities, multiple interpretations of historical and contemporary events, examples of innovation and leadership from the Global South are often missing. In a few cases, textbooks present a problematic deficit view of the Global South.

Across most jurisdictions, textbooks are substantially more successful at supporting students to understand global challenges than support **agency and action**. Thus, while there are opportunities for discussion, inquiry and reflection, these often do not extend to an exploration of how change might be achieved, participation and engagement, community participation, advocacy and action. Some of the most innovative textbooks analysed incorporate opportunities for discussion and debate, collaborative projects, investigation of local issues, reflection on

personal and collective responsibility. However, student participation remains inconsistent across the selected textbooks. As a result, students are frequently positioned as knowledgeable observers rather than active citizens.

Many of the GCE opportunities identified in the selected textbooks require active interpretation and extension by teachers. Consequently, **teacher capacity**, confidence and professional expertise play a decisive role in determining whether textbook content becomes transformative learning. This finding signals a significant need for initial teacher education and professional learning.

4. Limitations and Recommendations

This final section outlines the main limitations of and key recommendations arising from the WP3 textbook research into the representation of GCE in the selected textbooks and resources across the nine participating jurisdictions.

4.1 Limitations

Several methodological and contextual limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the WP3 findings.

- The participating jurisdictions represent a diverse range of educational systems, with varied arrangements for the governance of textbooks. These contextual differences influence the nature of the materials selected for analysis and the role those materials play in enactment. Consequently, findings should be interpreted with sensitivity to local educational contexts.

- Although all researchers worked with a shared report template, textbook analysis inevitably involves professional judgement and interpretation. The use of a common template, collaborative discussion and cross-jurisdictional review processes mitigated against but does not eliminate interpretation.

- The study included analysis of a range of material types, including conventional textbooks, a set of government-supported online resources, and a set of NGO-produced resources. This diversity enriched the analysis but also precluded for direct comparison. For example, NGO resources designed to promote human rights may reasonably be expected to demonstrate stronger GCE characteristics than textbooks designed for broader educational purposes.

- The fact that the study included a selected sample of textbooks and resources means that the findings cannot be generalised to all textbooks and resources used within participating education systems.

- During the study, several jurisdictions were experiencing curriculum reform. In response, textbooks and resources are revised or newly developed. The findings should therefore be understood as reflecting contemporary practice rather than a fixed or permanent picture of textbook or resource provision.

- The study is concerned with the selected textbooks and resources, rather than how these materials are used in classrooms. The study therefore does not provide evidence of impact on teacher practice or on student learning outcomes.

- The conceptual framework for the study was intentionally and largely centred on the four GET global challenges. While these are highly relevant, they do not encompass the full breadth of GCE. Other important themes include peace and conflict, democracy, media literacy, human rights, digital citizenship, sustainable consumption and intercultural dialogue, were only considered insofar as they intersected with the four priority challenges. It is therefore possible that some textbooks contribute to GCE in ways that were not fully captured in this study.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable evidence about alignment with curriculum documents, and the representation of GCE pedagogies and global challenges in textbooks and resources, identifying cross-jurisdictional strengths and challenges.

4.2 Recommendations

This synthesis report demonstrates that across the nine jurisdictions the selected textbooks provide GCE foundations, but that there are substantial opportunities for strengthening depth, coherence and transformative potential.

The recommendations presented below are directed towards a range of stakeholders. They are grounded in the shared strengths and challenges identified across the jurisdictional reports and are intended to support the development of future GCE materials.

Policy makers should:

- strengthen GCE in curriculum documents, making global challenges explicit so that they are more likely to appear in textbooks
- promote cross-curricular / interdisciplinary coherence as a means of supporting learners to develop more comprehensive and integrated understandings of global challenges
- embed stronger expectations for student agency, participation and action in curriculum documents.

In centralised and mixed systems where the state has a role in the selection of textbooks, the evaluation and approval criteria should be reviewed for GCE relevance.

Authors and publishers should ensure that future textbooks should:

- systematically integrate global challenges, including their interconnections and intersectionality, across the textbooks for relevant subjects and educational stages
- extend beyond a descriptive approach to provide greater opportunities for students to explore root causes, power structures, governance systems, connections between historical legacies and current affairs
- challenge deficit-based narratives and provide balanced representation of the Global South by including diverse voices, testimonies and case studies, and highlighting agency, innovation and leadership
- incorporate more participatory and action focused pedagogies.

Teacher educators should:

- strengthen the provision of initial teacher education and professional learning for teachers to address both GCE content knowledge and pedagogy, including developing teacher capacity to engage critically with textbooks and resources, to capitalise on interdisciplinary links, and to address sensitive and emotive issues, and support student agency and action.

The **GET project** should:

- develop and disseminate teaching and learning materials that prioritise the gaps identified in the jurisdictional reports. That is, materials that address climate justice, gender inequality, Global South perspectives, interdisciplinary focus, and student action
- continue to support initial teacher education and teacher professional learning (see recommendations for teacher educators, above)
- engage in continuous critical dialogue about the integration of GCE in education materials, providing examples of good practice in textbooks and resources in communications with teachers, authors and publishers, funders and policy makers
- seek to publish articles based on the research in recognised journals.

The overarching recommendation arising from this research is that educational systems should move beyond treating GCE as the transmission of information about global challenges and towards supporting students to become informed, critical and active participants in addressing those challenges. Textbooks are widely used educational tools, and their greatest contribution occurs when they work in combination with curriculum documentation, with motivated, confident and skilled teachers, using participatory pedagogies and supporting students to engage in meaningful participation and active, reflective citizenship. Strengthening GCE through these connections should therefore be a priority for policymakers, educators and all stakeholders committed to advancing Global Citizenship Education.

Appendix 1: GET learning outcomes

The GET earning 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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Co-funded by the European Union

This document was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of the project partners and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.