

Curriculum case studies

Case study #1:

Lower secondary (11–14 years) – Geography, 35–40 hours per year. Geography enables students “to interpret and analyse spatial systems at different scales, using geographical tools and representations” and to “recognise changes over time and evaluate human impacts on territorial systems.” It also promotes “the comparison of one’s own reality with the global one.” (Indicazioni Nazionali 2012, p.47)

Case study #2:

Lower secondary (11–14 years) – Civic Education (Educazione Civica), 1-2 hours per week. Civic Education, introduced as a compulsory cross-curricular teaching by Law No. 92/2019, is framed by the Linee guida per l’insegnamento dell’Educazione civica (DM-Ministerial Decree, 7 Sept 2024). It aims “to promote knowledge of the Constitution, the institutions of the State and the European Union, the fundamental principles of law, sustainable development and environmental education, in order to form responsible citizens aware of their rights and duties.” The document emphasises “experiential and laboratory teaching, cooperation and participation,” and identifies three main themes as key dimensions of civic competence: sustainability, digital citizenship and inclusion.

Case study #3:

Lower secondary (11–14 years) – History, 1/2 hours per week. The study of History “fosters understanding of change, permanence and diversity through sources, narratives and chronological tools.” It helps students “connect past, present and future” and “develop critical and civic awareness.” (Indicazioni Nazionali 2012, p.68–70)

Note: This poster focuses on lower secondary education (11–14 years), based on the Indicazioni Nazionali 2012 and the 2024 Civic Education Guidelines.

Main findings Climate Change

Civic Education shows the strongest alignment with GET Climate Change learning outcomes, followed by Geography and History:

- **Civic Education:** The curriculum explicitly promotes “sustainable development and environmental education” to foster “responsible and active citizenship.” Environmental protection is a key value, though the focus is mainly ethical and civic, with limited reference to global or scientific dimensions of climate change.
- **Geography:** Students are expected “to analyse territorial systems and evaluate human impacts on the environment.” Sustainability is a cross-cutting theme, and the 2025 draft strengthens interdisciplinary and ecological awareness. However, learning remains largely descriptive rather than action-oriented.
- **History:** Climate-related issues are addressed indirectly through industrialisation and human–environment interactions. There are no explicit references to climate change or civic engagement, and teachers would need support to identify relevant opportunities

Main findings Gender inequality

Civic Education offers the strongest alignment with GET Gender Equality learning outcomes, followed by History and, lastly, Geography:

- **Civic Education:** The Linee guida include “equality between women and men” within the broader framework of human rights, respect, and inclusion. Learning objectives promote “responsible and respectful behaviour” and “rejection of all forms of discrimination.” However, the focus is civic and ethical rather than structural or intersectional, with no explicit reference to gender equality or empowerment.
- **History:** References to women’s experiences and social change appear when addressing 20th-century history, the Italian Constitution, and citizenship rights. Gender issues can be explored through human stories and the evolution of civil rights, although they are not explicitly framed as learning outcomes.
- **Geography:** Gender equality is largely absent. Some indirect opportunities exist in topics related to population, work, and social inequalities, but they are not clearly connected to gender perspectives.

Main findings International inequality

Civic Education shows the strongest alignment with GET International Inequalities learning outcomes, followed by History and, lastly, Geography:

- **Civic Education:** The Linee guida include references to “social justice, solidarity and equality,” and encourage awareness of poverty, inclusion and human rights. However, the perspective is mainly national or European, with limited explicit focus on global or structural inequalities.
- **History:** There are indirect opportunities to address international inequalities through topics such as colonisation, industrialisation and migration. Discussions on the Italian Constitution and post-war reconstruction can foster reflection on social justice and citizenship, although the global dimension remains marginal.
- **Geography:** The term “international inequality” does not appear in the curriculum. Some connections can be made when studying globalisation, resources and population, but engagement with global disparities is limited and not systematically developed.

Main findings Migration

Civic Education shows the most alignment with GET Migration learning outcomes, followed by History and, lastly, Geography:

- **Civic Education:** Migration is not explicitly mentioned, but the curriculum includes related values such as inclusion, respect for diversity, and solidarity. The Linee guida promote “recognition and respect for the dignity of every person” and civic responsibility toward social cohesion. The topic can be approached through human rights and citizenship education, but without a global or historical framing.
- **History:** The curriculum refers to population movements and human transformations of the environment, allowing migration to be addressed indirectly through the study of industrialisation, colonisation and social change. However, there are no explicit learning outcomes devoted to migration.
- **Geography:** Migration is referenced briefly within population and demographic themes. While students analyse human settlements and mobility, the concept of migration is treated descriptively, with no link to global interdependence or contemporary migration challenges.

Conclusion and recommendations for education stakeholders

The Italian lower secondary curriculum shows an uneven and fragmented integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) themes. Environmental sustainability is the most visible dimension, while gender equality, global inequalities and migration remain marginal or implicit. Across Geography, History and Civic Education, global challenges are mainly addressed through ethical and civic values framed within national and European identity. Concepts such as social justice, power relations and global interdependence are rarely developed. The 2024 guidelines for Civic Education and the draft Indicazioni Nazionali 2025 strengthen references to sustainability and interdisciplinarity but maintain a nationally centred and sometimes prescriptive vision, with limited openness to global and intercultural perspectives. The Guidelines also redefine the concept of sustainability, shifting from environmental and social perspectives to an emphasis on economic growth and entrepreneurship. Advancing GCE in Italy requires a collective commitment from institutions, schools and the teaching community to:

- Reorient curricula towards explicit global citizenship aims, connecting civic, historical and geographical learning to global systems and justice-oriented competences;
- Invest in teacher education and professional development to equip educators with the knowledge and tools to integrate global, intercultural and sustainability perspectives across subjects;
- Develop learning and assessment approaches that foster reflection, participation and critical awareness rather than moral conformity or rote learning;
- Promote policy dialogue and collaboration among ministries, universities and civil society to ensure a coherent and transformative vision of global citizenship education;

Only through such shared engagement can Italian education move beyond ethical rhetoric toward a critical and globally connected model of citizenship learning.

