

Department of Education and Skills

Education for Sustainable Development

Call for submissions for new Statement of Strategy 2015-2017

Submission from the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA)
10 October 2014



IDEA, the Irish Development Education Association, welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the call for submissions to the new Department of Education Statement of Strategy 2015-2017. We welcome the emphasis in the Statement of Strategy on taking a whole system view of the Irish Education and training sector, the emphasis on reform, supporting inclusion and diversity, learning for life, improving quality and accountability and building the right systems and infrastructure. We also welcome the emphasis on Irish students' and the education system's role in contributing to creating a more equitable society. We would encourage a greater emphasis in the strategy on the social role of education, the enhancement of skills and values of citizenship, and enabling learners to play a constructive role in the global community which we are part of. To this end, we would recommend amending 'our Mission' to:

To enable learners in Ireland to achieve their full potential and contribute to the *just* economic, social, political and cultural development of Ireland, the European Union and the Global community.

We believe the strategy should expressly recognise the centrality of justice and equity globally as central values of education in Ireland, and as essential for the sustainable development of our country and our planet.

It is important that the strategy recognises the interdependent global community in which we live, and that it strongly emphasises the skill needed for global citizenship, active contribution to the global community, and custodianship of the shared resources of our planet.

These points should be included in the "Priority area for action", the "Benefits of service delivery and reform" and should be incorporated into the strategy actions, in particular the "learning for Life " section.

To this end, the Statement of Strategy should include specific reference to three additional interrelated areas; Education for Sustainable Development, Education for Global Citizenship, and Development Education.

Education for Sustainable Development.

The Statement of Strategy should specifically refer to the Department of Education and Skills National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, published in July 2014. This states:

This National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has been developed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), in consultation with key stakeholders. It provides a framework to support the contribution that the education sector is making and will continue to make towards a more sustainable future at a number of levels: individual, community, local, national and international.

And outlines key principles:

ESD in Ireland will aim to:

- balance environmental, social and economic considerations;
- promote lifelong learning;

- be locally relevant while also linking the local to the national and international;
- engage all sectors of the education system, as well as the non-formal education sector;
- be interdisciplinary and recognise interdependence and interconnectivities across other sectors;
- use a variety of pedagogical techniques that promote active and participatory learning and the development of key dispositions and skills;
- emphasise social justice and equity;
- focus on values and promote active democratic citizenship and inclusion as a means of empowering the individual and the community.
- be an agent for positive change in reorienting societies towards sustainable development.

The Statement of Strategy 2015-2017 should specifically reference the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and should incorporate the key principles above.

Education for Global Citizenship.

The Statement of Strategy should include reference to Education for Global Citizenship and should incorporate the values and benefits of global citizenship education into the actions outlined. Education for Global Citizenship will be a significant element of the UN post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. It will therefore be an important element of the international policy infrastructure for education in the coming 15 years. Inclusion of Education for Global Citizenship in the Statement of Strategy will signal the Department of Education's and the Irish Government's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and reflect the global leadership role played by Ireland in sustainable development, global justice and education.

United Nations member states, including Ireland, are currently developing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which will replace the current Millennium Development Goals in 2015. It is envisaged that these goals will be universal and will apply to all UN member states who will be required to put in place policies and practices to address the goals and targets.

The UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, has called for the inclusion of Global Citizenship in the Education goal. Global Education First, the UN Secretary-General's Global Initiative for Education, highlights fostering global citizenship among its three priorities.

The world faces global challenges, which require global solutions. These interconnected global challenges call for far-reaching changes in how we think and act for the dignity of fellow human beings. It is not enough for education to produce individuals who can read, write and count. Education must be transformative and bring shared values to life. It must cultivate an active care for the world and for those with whom we share it. Education must also be relevant in answering the big questions of the day. Technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone cannot achieve sustainable development. It requires transforming the way people think and act. Education must fully assume its central role in helping people to forge more just, peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies. It must give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st Century.
(<http://www.globaleducationfirst.org/priorities.html>)

Education for Global Citizenship has been included in the outcome document and draft goals which have been produced by the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

4.7 by 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-

violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

UNESCO, Global Education for All and an international coalition of education and global justice bodies have endorsed the inclusion of Education for Global Citizenship as a target in the Sustainable Development Goals. Key policy documents are (<http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/muscat-agreement-2014.pdf>) and the Brussels Proposal (http://deEEP.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/The_Brussels_Proposal.pdf).

The UNESCO Muscat Agreement articulates the post-2015 target for Education for Global Citizenship as follows:

Target 5: By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies, including through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

The Brussels Proposal has developed this to outline the concept, monitoring, and target for Education for Global Citizenship. This has the involvement and backing of UNESCO, Global Campaign for Education, the UN Secretary General's Global Education First Initiative, Council of Europe, DEEEP and was drafted by an international group which includes IDEA and Irish Aid. As part of this process, IDEA would be happy to share further information with the Department of Education and Skills.

Development Education.

One World, One Future, Ireland's policy for International Development, a whole of government policy, should be reflected in the Statement of Strategy, and in particular, the commitment in this policy to Development Education. *One World, One Future* commits to supporting and promoting Development Education in Ireland. As a whole of government policy, *One World, One Future* provides a policy mechanism for inter-departmental cooperation on Development Education, Education for Sustainable Development and Education for Global Citizenship.

The Statement of Strategy should refer to Development Education and acknowledge the essential role played by Development Education in the Irish education infrastructure.

Development Education works to build the capabilities and competencies of educators and also directly with learners of all ages and walks of life in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings. IDEA members have developed innovative approaches to integrating global justice and sustainability issues into a range of curriculum subjects at primary and post-primary levels. The Statement of Strategy should draw upon cross-curricular approaches in Development Education as examples of good practice, for example the IDEA Good Practice Guidelines for Formal Education (http://www.ideaonline.ie/sites/default/files/idea_good_practice_schools_full_report_144dpi_spreads.pdf). It should also be noted that the Development Education sector in Ireland has a wide experience of social learning in the Irish context and has been recognised at the European level as a leading example of educational practice and social engagement (See "DE Watch" report, http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/DE_Watch.pdf).

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