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# NATIONAL REPORT

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## Referenced Documents

ID	Reference	Title
1	2020-1-UK01-KA204-079145	Rural GCE Proposal
2		

## Applicable Documents

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1		

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Context

Countries and regions across the world are going through a period of dramatic change, encompassing aspects of culture, politics, economy, and society, broadening horizons and internationalising outlooks. This makes it all the more important that citizenship education is comprehensive, clear, and that it equips learners to understand and function as comfortable and effective global citizens. This is particularly important in rural areas, which, some studies have found, are often left behind in the implementation of global citizenship education initiatives and agendas.

## 1.2 Project Objectives

Given the issues and context set out above, the aim of the Rural GCE project is to develop and disseminate a set of tools and materials that educators in particular can use to improve the uptake and implementation of global citizenship education in rural areas in particular. As a broader objective, the project hopes in the longer run to be able to facilitate greater citizenship participation in rural areas through this citizenship education and the development of more and better global citizens.

## 1.3 Project Target Group

There are a few main target groups, mostly centred around being rural, but reaching a number of different demographics nevertheless. These include employees and supporters of civil society organisations in rural areas, activists for NGOs based in rural areas or concerned with rural issues, local government and municipalities in rural areas, and of course educators and teachers in rural areas. It should be borne in mind that this is not a finite list, and that others with links to rural issues, or citizenship and education may be valid target groups also.

# 2. National Report

## 2.1 The Objectives of the Report

The national report concerns the identification of the current state of play rural global citizenship education in each partner country, and in particular the needs that must be met in each country to sufficiently improve the state of global citizenship in rural areas. Following a process of validation to ensure the veracity of these needs with stakeholders, the “TO-BE” situation will be identified in a common, overall report, defining what exactly it is that should be focused on to go from the current status quo to the desired, optimal situation.

As such, this report will form the foundation for the body of work that this project hopes to accomplish by establishing the parameters and rough aims of the content to be developed going forward.

## 2.2 The methodology

Partners will conduct desk research on the current situation around rural global citizenship education in rural areas and needs to be met in their own country. They will identify qualitative and quantitative data to describe their national “AS-IS” situations, and may present good practices in the field that will be used as examples to provide motivation and ideas to the project participants.

These will be verified through a validation survey that will be distributed to a number of stakeholders in the relevant area, then a final overall report produced, describing the ideal situation for rural global citizenship education and the gaps that must be bridged to reach this situation.

## 2.3 The results

### 2.3.1 Set out the most commonly used, useful, and effective definition of “rural areas” that are used in your country

Bulgaria, unlike most EU countries, does not have long experience in planning and implementing a special policy aimed at rural development in general. The main issues and problems related to these regions are considered as part of the overall territorial planning and development of the country. The concept of rural area gains more specific content with its entry into the official documents, after the rural areas became the object of state policy. The formulation of an official definition is necessary in connection with the negotiations of the country for EU membership.

The application of the OECD definition and typology in the delineation of rural areas in Bulgaria unrealistically determines their scope. Using this methodology, 98.8% of the country's territory and 84.3% of the population belong to the predominantly rural and intermediate regions, and the only exception is the capital Sofia. That is why for the purposes of the rural development policy Bulgaria applies its own definition, which is used under the pre-accession program SAPARD.

For the implementation of this program, the National Plan for Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas (2000–2006) adopts a working definition, in which the **rural areas in Bulgaria are defined as “municipalities whose largest city has a population of less than 30,000 people and a density of the population is less than 150 inhabitants per square km.”** This definition has been slightly changed in the Rural Development Programs (2007-2013

and 2014-2020), which define rural areas as "**municipalities (LAU1) with no settlement inhabited by more than 30,000 people**".<sup>1</sup>

### **2.3.2 What sorts of topics and issues are generally covered by global citizenship education in your country?**

Unfortunately, global citizenship education is not widely covered topic in Bulgarian schools. There are several classes that very superficially cover some of the topics, but there is a general lack of focus in the area. Students are taught basic concepts, mainly connected with the Bulgarian membership in the EU.

Just recently (2020) the high school education introduced the "global citizenship" specialized class, which is teaching the students several key concepts:

- **Citizenship, politics and democracy**
  - o Freedom, citizens and power
  - o Politics, democracy and the rule of law
  - o Civil society and civic participation
- **Citizens, rights and responsibilities**
  - o The idea of justice - rights and responsibilities of citizens
  - o Me and my civil position
- **Identities and differences in society**
  - o Origin and development of identities
  - o Minorities and civil society
  - o Constructive communication and interaction<sup>2</sup>

Up until now global citizenship education was mainly carried out by non-governmental organizations, but their programs lacked common structure, consistency and sustainability, as most of them were financed by European programs.

### **2.3.3 Are there any particular skills or approaches to teaching global citizenship education in your country that are considered particularly useful, effective, or widely used?**

Considering the novelty of the Global citizenship education program, introduced in 2020 in high schools, no meaningful results can be extracted at this point. The GCE education, carried out by the non-governmental sector, is very limited in scope, doesn't include large portions of the students or adults, and is relevant for a fraction of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of Rural areas (2018). Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Retrieved on 08.03.2021. [https://geoproblems.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018\\_12/3\\_georgieva.pdf](https://geoproblems.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018_12/3_georgieva.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Curricula for XI grade. Ministry of Education - Bulgaria. Retrieved on 08.03.2021 [https://www.mon.bg/upload/16247/UP\\_XI\\_GO.pdf](https://www.mon.bg/upload/16247/UP_XI_GO.pdf)

### **2.3.4 What is the attitude towards global citizenship issues and education in rural areas in your country? Does it significantly differ to the attitude in urban areas?**

Global citizenship education program has been only recently (in 2020) introduced in Bulgarian high school's curriculum. In fact, only 5 schools from 4 cities in Bulgaria were awarded the Global School Prize for achievements in the implementation of Global Citizenship Education in their curricula.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is yet to be seen what the attitude of the students and parents towards the subject will be. However, several non-governmental organizations have already created platforms for Global citizen education, but since these organizations are predominantly based in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, the foundation of Global citizen education is laid in the cities, leaving the urban areas with a lot of catching up to do. Since Bulgaria has very centralized economy and political life, it is natural to assume that students in rural areas are behind on topics regarding identities, fighting racism and accepting differences in society.

### **2.3.5 What are the main barriers or disadvantages to effective global citizenship education, in terms of teaching, learning, and broader participation, in rural areas your country?**

Considering the fact that until recently Global citizenship education program wasn't taught in schools, no main barriers or disadvantages can be named at the moment. Moreover, 2020, the year the subject was introduced in the curriculum is the year when the Covid-19 lockdown began and all schools began implementing distance learning. It was also then when schools urgently try to adapt to the new teaching method and many challenges in schools in rural areas appeared, such as internet connection and also mobile devices and laptops to access the online classrooms.

### **2.3.6 What are the particular strengths or advantages of the way global citizenship education is implemented in rural areas your country?**

The first advantage will be that Global citizenship education in rural areas in Bulgaria is now taught at schools. Students can learn about politics and democracy and the rights and responsibilities we all have. Learning about accepting the differences in society will also help fight racism and social discrimination and will bridge the gap between cities and rural areas in Bulgaria.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

The situation with Global citizenship education in Bulgarian schools is urgent, since the country is lagging far behind other EU countries in this area of education. Rural areas are particularly

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<sup>3</sup> GCE event in Sofia, Bulgaria. Bridge 47. Retrieved on 08.03.2021 <https://www.bridge47.org/news/06/2019/gce-event-sofia-bulgaria>

affected, as they lack not only qualified teachers and lecturers, but also modern tools and basic infrastructure like internet and computer rooms. With the centralized organization of Bulgarian education, there is hope that GCE will have widespread coverage, since the curriculum doesn't change region-wise. However, it is still too early for prediction about how the program will be accepted and absorbed by the students. Not definitive conclusions can be made at this point either.

On the other hand, many NGOs are developing GCE courses around the country for at least a decade, but they cannot cover large parts of population, their curricula are lacking structure and sustainability, but the main problem is that they are operating predominantly in the big cities, and rarely cover rural areas.

Based on all those facts, projects like Rural GCE can be beneficial for the coverage of this specific type of education, because it can help small rural schools to adopt flexible and/or new approaches in teaching.

### 3. References

1. Curricula for XI grade. Ministry of Education - Bulgaria.

[https://www.mon.bg/upload/16247/UP\\_XI\\_GO.pdf](https://www.mon.bg/upload/16247/UP_XI_GO.pdf)

2. Definition of Rural areas. Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

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3. GCE event in Sofia, Bulgaria. Bridge 47

<https://www.bridge47.org/news/06/2019/gce-event-sofia-bulgaria>