
NATIONAL REPORT

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Referenced Documents

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1	2020-1-UK01-KA204-079145	Rural GCE Proposal
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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

In Scotland – as distinct from the UK as a whole – the government definition of “rural” is evaluated based on postcodes. Where a given set of postcodes are high density and contain at least 500 people, this is considered a settlement. A high density postcode is a postcode that meets one of these conditions: more than 2.1 residential addresses per hectare, more than 0.1 non-residential addresses per hectare, or the estimated population per hectare exceeding five people. A settlement based on this definition is only considered a rural if it has a population of under 3000. Areas that do not meet these density or population requirements (and are therefore not settlements) are also considered rural.

It is interesting to note that rurality itself is also subdivided into two categories: accessible rural, meaning an area that is rural but from which it takes less than half an hour to drive to a settlement of over 10,000 people; and remote rural, where such a journey would take more than half an hour.

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

This is something of a difficult question to answer in Scotland’s case, as global citizenship is not generally imparted through a single class or subject (the closest we might come to this is the “social studies” curriculum area) but is rather implemented as a cross-cutting theme that should be linked to all subjects and classes. In this way of thinking, it is one of four “capacities” that students are expected to gain across all subjects and throughout their education:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals

- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

The “responsible citizens” capacity could be said to fit relatively neatly with the goals pursued by this project. This capacity, when examined in detail, is split into attributes and capabilities. The attributes that children and young people are expected to gain as part of this capacity include “respect for others” and a “commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life”. The capabilities include:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland’s place in it
- Understand different beliefs and cultures
- Make informed choices and decisions
- Evaluate environmental, scientific, and technological issues
- Develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

Rather being taught directly as a single subject, as mentioned, these principles and goals are intended to be woven across the whole of a child’s education, into every one of the eight curriculum areas. For example, guidance for the “Expressive Arts” curriculum area suggests that the responsible citizens capacity in this subject could be designed to produce “responsible citizens who can explore ethical questions, respond to personal and social issues, and develop stances and views, who have deepened their insight and experiences of cultural identities and who have come to recognise the importance of the arts to the culture and identities of Scotland and other societies”. Similarly, guidance for the “modern languages” area suggests that this capacity might produce “responsible citizens, who have a growing awareness of life in another society and of the issues facing citizens in the countries where their new language is spoken.”. Given this methodology, it is difficult to pin down a single set of particular lessons or facts that are taught as part of global citizenship education.

Where, as again previously mentioned, citizenship is closest to being taught as a subject in and of itself is within the social studies, or potentially the religious and moral education curriculum area. These areas contain ideas for students to learn such as Scottish culture, history, and heritage, both in its own right and in a broader context; being able to understand their own values and beliefs and those of others; respect for the beliefs and practices of others; putting their values and beliefs into practice in society; democracy and citizenship; global religions such as Christianity and others, including in a Scottish context; and entrepreneurial attitudes.

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?

While, as mentioned, citizenship is generally taught as an overarching concept rather than a specific class or lesson, it is possible to elicit certain approaches to teaching it that are recommended. Most generally, the General Teaching Council for Scotland carried out research asking children and young people what makes a good teacher. The results were reported to be consistent across most demographics in the study, and were sorted into four categories. These categories of what makes a good teacher were nurturing (a teacher who is

kind, offers praise, and creates a happy and friendly atmosphere), rights-respecting relationships (a teacher who respects boundaries and rights of their students as well as taking into account their individual differences), professional teaching knowledge and skills, and positivity – encompassing passion, inspiration, and enthusiasm in terms of both having these attributes and helping foster them in students. It is interesting to note that this was seen as being the most important, and included an emphatic disapproval of shouting.

On a similarly broad level, there is a strong focus at the moment on interdisciplinary learning and whole school approaches in Scottish education. Interdisciplinary learning is an approach involving several different subjects being woven together and taught at once, potentially through a project of some kind. It is distinct from multidisciplinary learning, which refers to several different subjects being taught as part of a common theme, but whose lessons and delivery are nonetheless separate.

Whole school approaches are broader still. Indeed, some resources recommend a whole community approach, involving even stakeholders outside the school. In this approach, the whole school, including the building and grounds for example (and in the case of whole community approach, external community organisations), become part of teaching tools. This approach has been specifically highlighted as useful for certain citizenship lessons, giving a greater sense of context to the citizenship concepts and real-life practical examples.

Finally, there are recommended approaches for teaching social studies, which as previously mentioned is arguably the closest single curriculum area to teaching global citizenship directly. These include discussion and debate, use of technology, collaborative and independent learning, outdoor learning, and involvement of external contributors. Active learning, involving students being able to explore and play learn this way.

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?

This was a more difficult question to find a response to, but it was possible to identify factors that distinguished global citizenship education in rural areas from their urban counterparts. The main factor, supported by both case studies and more generalised reports, is that rural schools do seem to have a greater focus on involving their immediate community. This takes place through the involvement of parents, but also of the broader outside community, with students sometimes using their work to feed into the local community as responsible citizens as much as drawing knowledge and skills from it.

It is important to note that this local community emphasis was not necessarily mutually exclusive with a focus on a global community. There are plenty of reports of rural schools engaging in international citizenship programs and drawing global implications from lessons alongside, or even as part of, this local community involvement.

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?

It proved difficult to identify evidence showing difficulties inherent in teaching global citizenship education specifically in rural Scotland, but there is information available about the attainment gaps between urban and rural areas more generally, as well as the barriers that contribute to it.

Statistics and studies suggest that rural and remote areas generally underperform in educational terms, compared to more urban and accessible schools. At almost every age group for literacy and numeracy, remote rural students performed less well than any other demographic. It is interesting to note that by contrast, accessible rural students performed consistently near the top of the different area classifications for these measures, suggesting that it is perhaps not just rurality but also remoteness that is a factor in educational performance.

Experts speculating on the divide suggested that internet connectivity could be part of the issue, along with depopulation of these areas, shortages of teachers and staff, and the mixing of age groups that often necessarily occurs in rural schools. On this last point, it has been noted that the small size of schools and necessity of mixing different ages and stages of pupils limits the opportunity for collaborative learning. Related to this, the lower numbers of staff and pupils both contribute to concerns about the curriculum being too narrow, particularly at secondary level. There have been plenty of reported instances of either too few teachers or too few interested pupils to make teaching a given subject viable in rural areas. This is of particular relevance to global citizenship because of the significant focus given to interdisciplinary learning approaches, and the way in which citizenship is integrated across all subjects. Given this, a narrowing of the curriculum is tantamount to a limitation on the teaching of global citizenship. As such, it can be reasonably assumed that all these factors will be among the difficulties for global citizenship in rural schools too

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

As mentioned above, it has been noted that global citizenship education in rural areas in Scotland has a particularly strong local focus and involvement in the local community. This significantly strengthens the sense of citizenship that can be instilled and explored in young people, and is often supplemented by a more global outlook and approach.

Furthermore, perhaps unsurprisingly, reports suggest rural education in Scotland makes good use of outdoor spaces as a learning space, and in facilitating a more active teaching approach. These lessons, case studies indicate, are not exclusively about nature, or sometimes even the environment, but a different, more active approach to engaging with the broader world and community outside the classroom.

2.4 Conclusions

There is certainly scope for a project of this nature to be of use in teaching global citizenship education in rural areas in Scotland. The research undertaken as part of this report shows that citizenship is a key part of the curriculum, but at times difficult to quantify, making the prospect of supporting materials on this perhaps more attractive.

This has also been a drawback of the research, however, and something to bear in mind when digesting the report. Firstly, most references to citizenship in the curriculum are to citizenship alone rather than to global citizenship per se, meaning that inference is sometimes required when examining how it is treated as a concept. Secondly, citizenship features most prominently as a cross-cutting concept, rather than as part of a specific class or subject area that is taught directly. This means that it is difficult to pin down how citizenship is taught in a sufficiently direct way, given that it is meant to be integrated into all lessons of all types.

With that being said, we do now have some concrete information as a result of this report with which we can move forward in this project.

3. References

Rural Scotland: Key Facts 2018

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/rural-scotland-key-facts-2018/>

Experiences and Outcomes

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/scottish-education-system/policy-for-scottish-education/policy-drivers/cfe-building-from-the-statement-appendix-incl-btc1-5/experiences-and-outcomes>

The Four Capacities

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ab/sali/files/2014/09/Four-Capacities-Audit.pdf>

The General Teaching Council For Scotland

<https://www.gtcs.org.uk/News/teaching-scotland/75-what-makes-a-good-teacher.aspx>

Interdisciplinary Learning: ambitious learning for an increasingly complex world

<https://education.gov.scot/media/mkomulen/interdisciplinary-learning-thought-paper.pdf>

Opening Up Great Learning

https://education.gov.scot/media/qcmmw0m3/sci17_openinguplearningsust.pdf

Rural Schools in Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/rural-schools/>

Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education

<http://gtcsnew.gtcs.org.uk/web/FILES/about-gtcs/dual-reg-consultation-report-delivery-rural-education.pdf>

Conversations about learning for sustainability

<https://education.gov.scot/media/ruacm2rp/res1-conversations-about-lfs.pdf>

Commission on the Delivery Of Rural Education: Report

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/commission-delivery-rural-education-report/pages/6/>

School Children in Remote Areas Do Worse Than Elsewhere

<https://theferret.scot/remote-attainment-gap-schools-scotland/>