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Meeting Educational Challenges:

The Case for Global Learning in the UK

This paper puts forward a clear and urgent message from more than 30 educational organisations from across the UK: educators are struggling to address a growing roster of complex and global issues, and swift action is required to help them equip learners with the skills and knowledge they need to develop as global citizens. We are calling for a national strategy on Global Learning, to bring the UK back to the forefront of the practice of this transformational educational approach.

Endorsed by: 18 hours, Aberdeen for a Fairer World, CADA Northern Ireland, Centre for Global Education (Belfast), Christian Aid, Craven Development Education Centre, Cumbria Development Education Centre, Devon Development Education, DEED, Development Education Centre South Yorkshire, Dolen Cymru, Fairtrade Foundation, Fir Vale School (Sheffield), Friends of the Earth, Global Learning Association, Global Learning London, Global Link, Highland One World Global Learning Centre, IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education & Society, Leeds DEC, Liverpool World Centre, One World Centre Dundee, OASES, Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists, Oxfam GB, Reading International Solidarity Centre, Research Centre for Global Learning (Coventry University), Sazani Associates, ScotDEC, Scotland's International Development Alliance, Scottish Fairtrade Forum, Students Organising for Sustainability UK, TEESNet, The Geographical Association, The GLADE Centre, The Global Learning Network, Tide Global Learning, Welsh Centre for International Affairs, WOSDEC. Available at: <http://bit.ly/Case4GL>



Meeting the Moment at a Time of Great Change

The acute domestic and global challenges that we collectively face demand a transformation of our approach to education. It is clear that young people, and other learners of all ages need a greater understanding of the complex political, economic, environmental, and social issues that drive these challenges, allowing them to develop a sense of active global citizenship, and the skills and values that enable critical engagement with the realities of 21st century global economies and societies.

At the same time, policy makers and educators are also grappling with the interconnected nature of these global issues to find the best way to support learners to understand the world, and, crucially, the interconnections with their day to day lives and their communities here in the UK.

Young people's thirst for this knowledge is evidenced in every major consultation of their views, as well as through their prominent activism on the climate emergency. Their mental health and well-being is tangibly affected by global issues and what it might mean for their futures. They rightly demand that political leaders take urgent and decisive action and honour promises that have been made to these potentially existential threats.

A Call to Arms

A key policy response must be a renewed focus on global learning (global citizenship education). This paper highlights the value that this multi-disciplinary approach has already delivered for learners, giving them the values and skills to under the rapid and simultaneous changes to the world of work and society driven by new technology, economic turmoil and the climate emergency.

It calls for more support for teachers and educators to embed this at the heart of future learning – global learning approaches at the heart of an education system fit for the future.

99%

Of teachers believe the DfE's vision of the UK being "a world leader in sustainable education by 2030" is unachievable if we carry on as we are.

+

85%

Of teachers doubt the current education system is adequately preparing pupils for the future.

+

What is Global Learning?

Global Learning is a powerful and well established educational approach that enables pupils to reflect critically on the world and their place in it; to open their eyes, hearts and minds to the reality of the world, both locally and globally. It empowers them to understand this interdependence and imagine, hope, and act to bring about a world of:

- social and climate justice,
- peace,
- solidarity
- equity and equality,
- planetary sustainability, and
- international understanding.

It requires respect for human rights, diversity and inclusion, and a decent life for all, now and into the future.

Global Learning crosses all types of education: formal, non-formal and informal; life-long and life-wide.

Global learning already brings several clear benefits:

- Improved motivation of learners and teachers
- Improved behaviour & attendance
- Improved social and community cohesion
- Higher academic standards

Global Learning improves the Quality of UK Education

School exclusions are rising across the UK, behaviour is a constant concern for teachers & leaders, attendance is continuing to decline, employers express concern that school leavers are ill equipped for employment. At the same time, young people themselves are frustrated by an education system that does not seem designed to meet their needs, now or for their future lives.

There is considerable evidence, here and internationally, evidence that Global Learning supports the overall quality of learning. It tackles all these issues by empowering and motivating both teachers and learners, addressing problem behaviours and supporting development of values and skills that employers most value.

It provides real world learning, making connections between traditional subjects and giving a clearer purpose for learning in subjects such as science, geography, history & languages. It also directly encourages young people to make a more positive contribution to their community, country, & the world, now & in the future.

98%

of teachers agree
the education system
needs to change.

+

Children said that
their biggest worry
was a healthy
environment.

*

Case studies and evidence

Global Learning approaches have made huge impacts in the UK in the past. Read the main document or visit our website to view many more case studies and review further evidence.

Climate Change Northern Ireland – a powerful community-based climate action project.

The World We Want – a multi-disciplinary project developed in Wales enabled pupils to work with peers globally to take positive action for a better future.

Global Teachers Award – a nationwide programme of in-service training for teachers.

Seeds for Change – Developing Global Citizens through Play in Early Years in Scotland.

“As defined by the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050, or ‘Dublin Declaration’.

Find out more: <https://www.gene.eu/ge2050-congress>

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Report by Reboot
the Future 2023 +

Children's Commissioner
for England Report
Big Ask 2022 *



A New Framework

For many years the UK was seen as a leader in Global Learning so there are many case studies of world-class practice already in existence. This is supported by research and Ofsted. However, the UK now provides no funding or policy support for any form of Global Learning.

It's time for a properly funded national strategy for Global Learning that includes all the key stakeholders in education, and which takes account of the differences in all four nations of the UK.

The
Global Learning
Programme engaged
33%
of schools in
England



A Clear National Policy on Global Learning:

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, as the key focal point for UK engagement with pressing global issues, must take a lead in developing a clear direction and strategy to deliver this vital pillar of education.



A policy for all ages across all communities:

The development of this strategy must take account of the differing approaches and separate educational systems across the UK nations and include the key educational stakeholders across all levels of formal education & life-long learning.



Invest in existing expertise to support teachers:

Vulnerable but valuable CSO, and of course by extension teachers, must be given appropriate support and resource to build capacity and share knowledge and expertise to bring the most value to a shared UK-wide approach. This can build on existing wider sustainable development initiatives but requires its own source of funding nationally and locally.



Align with the international community:

A new strategy must be aligned with wider international efforts to meet the key SDG 4.7 target, with particular reference to the latest actions from UNESCO and the European GENE network. This should also reflect developing attitudes to decolonial and anti-racist practise.