

## Feedback on Curriculum for Wales 2022

The Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA) inspires people in Wales to learn about and act on global issues so everyone in Wales can contribute to creating a fairer and more peaceful world. Global citizenship education<sup>1</sup> for all ages is one of our fundamental approaches to achieving this vision and we have decades of experience delivering global citizenship education in schools, including pupil experiences, professional learning and whole school approaches. We also recognise and incorporate the links between human rights and peace education and global citizenship education.

We chair the Wales Alliance for Global Learning (WAGL) and have submitted a detailed response to most questions via the WAGL response and endorse all of the points therein. This letter summarises and reinforces some key points and illustrates how we can support delivery of the new curriculum but doesn't repeat all the feedback in the WAGL response.

We would also like to offer our endorsement of responses from WAGL members including Oxfam Cymru and Natural Resources Wales.

### The overall approach in the new curriculum

Overall, we are supportive of the direction of the new curriculum. We are pleased to see:

- a cross-curricular approach rooted in skills and experiences
- the prominence given to creating ethical informed citizens of Wales and the world
- the cross-curricular international perspective
- the cross-curricular wider skills that incorporate global citizenship skills
- the frequent inclusion in What Matters statements and progression steps of identifiable global citizenship skills and values – something which has developed positively as the various drafts of AOLEs have emerged

The new curriculum takes a cross-curricular approach and there are several case studies highlighting how [global citizenship education can facilitate this](#). There is also evidence that global citizenship supports the delivery of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act<sup>2</sup> and it can certainly be of huge value as Wales seeks to reinforce its position in the world, whatever Brexit might bring. Global Citizenship education takes a specific focus in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (indicator 4.7) and Wales has highlighted the new curriculum in its [Voluntary National Review as being well-positioned to deliver 4.7](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC), Development Education or Global Learning. When we refer to global citizenship education we are talking about skills (e.g. critical thinking, empathy, self-awareness, reflection, communication, problem solving, cooperation, ability to manage complexity, informed and reflective action); values and attitudes (strong focus on identity and building self-esteem, respect for people and rights, valuing diversity) and empowering learners to be agents of change as active global citizens.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wcia.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/WAGL.pdf> - briefing note prepared by the Wales Alliance for Global Learning

We would be happy to continue to offer our expertise in global citizenship and peace education as the curriculum is finalised and is implemented and welcome continued opportunities to engage.

### **ESDGC, international perspectives, wider skills and ethical citizens**

We can see that many elements of ESDGC present in the new curriculum as mentioned above. However, it is unclear as to whether the [current cross-curricular ESDGC framework](#) is still to be applied. It is explicitly mentioned in the Health and Wellbeing AOLE, but nowhere else (although many of the skills are covered elsewhere, particularly in the Humanities AOLE).

We would recommend clarifying the applicability of the ESDGC framework in the curriculum guidance. We think it would be acceptable to not use the framework so long as ESDGC was fully embedded across AOLEs and it was made clear to the education sector that ESDGC is so essential that it has been embedded directly into the curriculum across AOLEs and What Matters statements.

In addition to clarity relating to the ESDGC framework, there are several issues that occur throughout several of the AOLEs which would need addressing prior to implementation.

- **Welsh and international dimensions:** to develop as **ethical citizens of the world**, it is essential that the curriculum consistently balances the Welsh and international dimensions – in some AOLEs, the international dimension is a short add on, given somewhat less thought than the Welsh dimension. While it is valuable to root learning in the local, unless wider dimensions are explored, there is a risk of becoming more inward looking/insular and valuing what is Welsh over anything else, and failing to recognise the interaction across local, regional, national and international dimensions. It is also vital that the local, national and international are explored from first progression steps.
- To develop as **healthy, confident individuals**, each child must feel their identity is equally respected and valued, wherever they are born. On occasion, being born in Wales/Welsh is given priority/preference which may feel exclusive to those students born elsewhere or with multiple identities – AOLEs must be consistent in highlighting Welsh culture, cultures from elsewhere and recognizing how those interlink and overlap and change over time, and be clear that there is no implication that those born in Wales are more valued than those who are not. We also need to recognise that the international dimension is present in the local, in the form of genuinely diverse and multi-cultural communities. We think that culture in Wales and internationally is complex and multi-faceted, and that the curriculum should value a broad approach, involving all aspects of culture, not just national emblems and middle-class voices.
- We welcome the attention given to **gender and gender stereotypes** throughout the curriculum, but would also like to see a recognition of the impact of other stereotypes (for example, disability/ability, socio-economic group) and intersectionality. It's also useful to set the equalities agenda in an international context, comparing the similarities and differences between Wales and the world and

looking at global trends (see [Gapminder](#) for instance). Teachers will need to support learners to understand how stereotypes arise and how they can be addressed.

- To have the **critical thinking skills essential** to achieve the four pillars, all What Matters statements must be robust and defensible – occasionally there are statements given as fact that are open to debate and critique. This also needs to be considered when exploring the Welsh dimension, international perspectives and exploring cultures – it is important to look at these dimensions and cultures with an open mind but also critical thinking skills – not all that is Welsh is inherently good (all nations have episodes from history and current times they are not proud of); exploring our own and other cultures is essential. We must also recognise that cultural practices can also be harmful – respectful critical debate and critique in all these areas should be encouraged and teachers trained to handle controversial conversations and debates in the classroom.

### **Conditions for success**

While we believe the new curriculum can deliver a broad global citizenship education, there are several conditions for successful implementation:

- **Appropriate professional learning:** It has been identified that leadership and curriculum development skills will be absolute priorities during the implementation of the new curriculum. In addition, those delivering the curriculum must be equipped with a deep understanding of what it means to be an ethical and informed citizen of Wales and the world – how to demonstrate and apply the skills and values throughout school, not just in the classroom. This means all professional learning must pay due regard to appropriate global citizenship pedagogy to enable experimentation, critical thinking and reflection. There must be opportunities to take an action learning approach where teachers can experiment and learn, with a sensible approach to mistakes and growth. In addition, sufficient time for professional learning must be given to teachers, with appropriate levels of funding to cover supply. Teachers must also be fully confident in handling challenging topics and conversations about identity, race, culture, migration and similar, recognising that there are rarely ‘right’ answers and ‘single solutions’ to shared global challenges but that all young people can make a difference in their own way.

We would highlight the value of Philosophy for Children methodologies in delivering the new curriculum and have a series of resources to support

The WCIA offer fully funded Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning and (with Oxfam Cymru) ChangeMakers professional learning which is tailored to the What Matters statements in the new curriculum. We are also interested in working with partners to develop accredited global citizenship leadership professional learning to meet the needs of the new curriculum.

**Access to a wide range of appropriate resources and experiences:** We welcome the opportunities in the new curriculum to involve local, national and

international experiences, individuals, resources and organisations. We recently mapped resources for the International Perspective across AOLES for the Learned Society. This revealed a large number of opportunities available including online resources, experts and experiences. However, schools are often reluctant to take learners out of the classroom due to other pressures which will need to be addressed if this new curriculum is to be successful by providing sufficient resources, including for supply cover and transport.

We would also recommend that resources are searchable by What Matters statements on the Hwb, and that resources are updated and translated where this hasn't already been done.

### **How we can support Areas of Learning and Experience (AOLEs)**

We run a number of cross-curricular programmes with our partners that have already been used by pioneer schools to deliver the cross-curricular approach in the new curriculum.

*I was inspired by the idea and it fitted ideally with the work on critical thinking we wanted to do as a school. It is super for a cross curriculum project – history, geography and maths and looked at the Syrian conflict from different angles.*

#### ***History teacher, Ysgol Dyffryn Aman about WCIA's Peace Schools' Scheme***

These include

- **ChangeMakers:** This programme run by WCIA and Oxfam Cymru supports learners to learn about a global issue (currently refugees, fast fashion or mobile phones), develop global citizenship skills and plan and take action on the issue. Learners develop empathy, critical thinking skills, research skills and media literacy, and are empowered to take social action on issues that matter to them. The sessions incorporates looking at shared global challenges through Welsh and international dimensions, before planning and delivering action from peer learning to campaigns. Overall, this supports empowerment and agency of young people of informed and active Welsh and global citizens.
- **Peace Schools:** A whole school approach, co-produced with teachers in Wales that is particularly relevant to the Humanities and Health and Wellbeing AOLES. Learners lead schools to achieve peace schools accreditation by exploring Wales' peace heritage, creating a warm and welcoming school community, developing skills and attitudes for critical thinking and respectful discussion and engagement with what peace means locally and globally.
- **Professional learning:** Sessions include how to effectively engage with international partnerships with a global citizenship lens, handling controversial topics (with Oxfam Cymru) and introductions to ESDGC.
- **Debating and Model United Nations:** Particularly relevant to Humanities and Literacy, Language and Communication AOLES, these programmes enable learners to develop negotiation and debating skills involving developing empathy for other viewpoints, media literacy, critical thinking and public speaking skills.
- **MockCOP:** Partnered with Size of Wales, we deliver model climate change conferences to young people and then support them to become 'climate champions', where they can take and lead climate action in their schools and communities.

We are happy to give further evidence or information as it would be useful to continue to develop the ESGC aspects of the new curriculum.



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*The WCIA is a registered charity that enables the people of Wales to understand and act on global issues.*

*Elusen gofrestredig yw WCIA, sy'n galluogi pobl Cymru i ddeall materion byd-eang a gweithredu arnynt.*

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