

Global Competence in Teacher Education in Belgium Flanders

ADVOCACY FOR A WAY FORWARD

The current situation

For student teachers in Pre-primary and Primary school, there is currently no formal guidance towards including global competence in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). Higher education institutions (HEI) create their ITE curricula based on what must be taught in pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. These programmes are created in close cooperation with both formal and informal partners, including teachers.

GCE is being provided by a number of formal and non formal education organisations as part of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), however teachers in Flanders are not required to follow CPD courses.

Schools and HEI are free to decide how much they want to include GCE in the curriculum, but those that are interested in its inclusion struggle with tight funds and structural teacher shortages.

The way forward

The secondary education curriculum is under pressure right now (2023) as the Constitutional Court has rendered a decision regarding the curriculum's core components. Its verdict will determine whether the curriculum satisfies societal demands for education, and therefore there might be space for reform. In addition, teachers need support for implementing the curriculum based on the 16 core components, and many of them touch on aspects of global competence (eg.Civic competences including competences related to living together).

Now is a key moment to advocate for ensuring that GC is included in the curriculum of teacher education to ensure quality implementation of the school curriculum based on the 16 attainment goals!

We call on KULeuven and VLOOR, among others, to support the proposal of including a short compulsory training on global competence in Initial Teacher Education at all levels.

When including Global Competence in Teacher Education, consider the main lessons learnt within the Global Competence in Teacher Education project:

- **Have a definition of Global Competence education.**
 - include a reference to the existing frameworks by the [Council of Europe](#) (Reference Framework for Competences for Democratic Culture, and Global Education), [UNESCO](#) (Global Citizenship Education), [OECD](#) (Global Competence).

- Refer to the latest international initiatives in the field:
 - [Global Education by 2050 Declaration by Global Education Network Europe \(GENE\)](#) - calling on to national governments to *develop adequate structures of support for educators in Global Education, in order to incrementally bridge the gap between the willingness to integrate Global Education, and the confidence, skills, competencies and support to do so.*
 - [UN Transforming Education initiative](#) - focusing on *learning to live together and teacher being agents of change.*
- **Promote stakeholder alignment and cooperation, and more specifically cooperation between formal and non-formal education for the provision of GCE.** It is essential to build the ownership of educators at all levels and in different sectors, and ensure the cooperation between them.
- **When designing courses on Global competence for teacher education, a specific attention should be given to:**
 - Teaching multiperspectivity
 - Cultural and gender sensitive language
 - Tackling global issues in any subject of the curricula
 - Implementing a whole school approach to global competence education
 - Applying a participatory approach in the process and in the goals, intentionally directed towards transformative learning
 - Decolonising education: incorporating different cultures and world views in the curriculum, while respecting what is taught and acknowledging how much it frames the thinking of teachers, learners and society.

The Global Competence in Teacher Education project

The [Global Competence in Teacher Education](#) project developed a Training Programme to support teachers and non formal education practitioners as they learn to both become globally competent themselves and learn how to develop Global Competence of young people.

Project partners are Universities of teacher education and international non-formal education organisations expert in intercultural learning. Partners were actively involved in research, review and development of content on global competence, development and testing of learning designs on 12 different topics within the topic of Global Competence.

The training was based on Learning Designs built around the 12 competencies of the Globally Competent Learning Continuum. The Globally Competent Learning Continuum (GCLC) identifies the dispositions, knowledge, and skills that educators need to teach students from diverse backgrounds and prepare all students to thrive in a global society. The GCLC is a tool for self-reflection, used by educators wishing to reflect on their own level of global competence and to learn the characteristics included in higher levels to advance along the continuum.

These 12 competences are:

- Empathy and valuing multiple perspectives
- Commitment to promoting equity worldwide
- Understanding of global conditions and current events
- Understanding of the ways that the world is interconnected
- Experiential understanding of multiple cultures
- Understanding of intercultural communication
- Communicate in multiple languages
- Create a classroom environment that values diversity and global engagement
- Integrate learning experiences for students that promote content-aligned explorations of the world
- Facilitate intercultural and international conversations that promote active listening, critical thinking, and perspective recognition
- Develop local, national, or international partnerships that provide real world contexts for global learning opportunities
- Develop and use appropriate methods of inquiry to assess students' global competence development

The Learning Designs were piloted for the first time in autumn 2021, mostly online due to the pandemic, and in June 2022 at an in-person training co-organised by the University of Hull and the University College Leuven-Limburg, and involved:

- teacher educators
- trainee teachers from each of the university partners
- non formal educators from the AFS and EFIL networks