



Adult learning and education for global citizenship in Finland

Fingo, Finnish Development NGOs

Helsinki, Finland

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The 2030 Agenda requires active citizens who take the lead and make its objectives a reality. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is the key to the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. As is pointed out in Target 4.7, we need to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

GCED requires the perspective of lifelong learning. As global interdependence increases, GCED grows in importance. Starting from early childhood education, GCED should be offered to learners of all ages. Adult Learning and Education (ALE) is essential to ensure learning opportunities for adults.

The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and the Asia-Pacific Centre for Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) designed a project to improve the provision of GCED for adult learners. To do so, a series of studies, including this one, were commissioned to identify, document and understand the roadblocks and gaps that adversely affect the mainstreaming of GCED in the educational opportunities available to target groups.

1.2. Objectives

This case study provides information and analysis of how GCED is addressed in Finnish adult learning and education. It offers an insight into policies, frameworks and practices and puts forwards a set of recommendations to further develop and promote ALE for global citizenship in Finland.

1.3. Methodology

This case study was carried out by Fingo, a platform for Finnish development organizations. For the case study, we have analysed:

- normative and legislative frameworks for ALE for global citizenship;
- the relevance of ALE for global citizenship in existing educational policies;
- the responsibilities and accountability frameworks of ALE providers in relation to the inclusion/mainstreaming of GCED for adult learners;
- programmes and practice in ALE for global citizenship;
- the tools, materials, support and training provided to ALE practitioners in relation to ALE for global citizenship;
- curricular frameworks and pedagogical recommendations and tools for ALE and the ways in which the objectives and principles of GCED are included.

The information has been collected through a desk study and discussions with key informants in the sector. In addition, a round table meeting was organised to bring all the relevant actors together to enrich and deepen understanding of the delivery of ALE for GCED in Finland.

Key informants contacted included representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish National Agency for Education, the Confederation of Finnish Industries, Finnish Education Employers (FEE), the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions, the Finnish Society for Research on Adult Education, the Finnish Adult Education Association and its member organizations – the Finnish Folk High School Association, the Finnish Association of Adult Education Centres, the Association of Study Centres, the KVS Foundation, Svenska Folkskolans vänner, summer universities in Finland and the Association of Physical Education Centres. Some of the informants were not able to participate in the meeting at short notice; they were offered an opportunity to contribute the study by other means.

2. Adult learning and education in Finland

The field of ALE is wide and can include different kinds of formal and non-formal learning activities targeted to adults. In this case study, adult learning and education covers all the education that is delivered to adults after compulsory training, which is usually given to age groups from 7 to 19 years old. This means that ALE covers basic and upper secondary education targeted at adults, higher education (with or without degree orientation) as well as liberal education in all its forms. It also covers professional in-service or staff training, labour market training and integration training of immigrants.

The tradition of free liberal education in Finland, as in other Nordic countries, is very strong. It has roots in nationalistic movements and nation building that took place in the late nineteenth century. Even today, the principles and goals set for free education reflect this background: self-motivated learning opportunities that support equality, active citizenship and social cohesion, should be available for all. Free education is also seen as an investment in the well-being of citizens (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019a).

Participation in ALE in Finland is some of the highest in the European Union. The average rate of participation in ALE in the EU in 2016 was 10.8 per cent; in Finland 27.4 per cent of 25–64-year-olds participated in ALE in 2017, the second-highest percentage in the EU (European Commission, 2017).

In Finland ale is classified into several categories:¹

- education for basic training, vocational degrees and specialised occupational degrees;
- professional higher education;
- academic education (degree and open university);
- secondary upper school education;
- postgraduate education;
- free education;
- apprenticeship training;

¹ Studyinfo.fi.

- staff/ professional training;
- labour education.

The sections are not regulated and coordinated by a single agent and therefore they differ significantly both in their goals and methods. The content of the education offered is dependent on the organisers and their interests, as well as the various needs of the education/ training itself. For example, liberal education is voluntary and is recognised to be a way to develop oneself, whereas the purpose of staff training is to develop workers' know-how and skills for work assignments.

In 2017 the largest sector of education without degree orientation was liberal adult education. There were 2.7 million estimated class hours devoted to it, of which 28 per cent was in the field of culture and arts, 18 per cent related to sports and 17 per cent to humanities and education (Statistics Finland, 2018). Self-motivated adult education attracted more women than men.

Responsibility for funding of ALE is distributed among many actors. In 2019, employers (including the public sector) allocated approximately 1.2 billion euros for staff training; learners themselves spent somewhat more than 0.3 billion euros for training; ALE organised by the public sector for labour market purposes received around 1.2 billion euros (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019b, p. 19).

Education is studied in universities throughout Finland, and ALE teachers in Finland are often highly educated. A condition for achieving teacher competence in Finland is to have undertaken academic pedagogic studies. Almost without exception, teachers in the public sector in adult education are graduates from university or the university of applied sciences. However, adult trainers and educators who work in the private sector are not necessarily pedagogically qualified – or 'competent'.

2.1. GCED in Finland

Global Citizenship Education in Finland is a feature of much value-based education, directing learners to what UNESCO defines as GCED. There is a long history in Finland of value-based education, starting from peace and solidarity education in the 1960s, continuing as education for internationalism in the 1980s and environmental education in the 1990s. Nowadays intercultural education, human rights education, peace education, diversity education and education for sustainable development all aim to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable societies.

There are some visible implications in both policy and practice of seeing GCED as an umbrella for value-based education. In 2002, civil society organizations set up a Global Education Network that brought together various themes and enhanced cooperation between civil society and other actors. In 2007, at policy level, the Ministry of Education launched a programme called Global Education 2010, which brought together actors with various backgrounds to work together to strengthen global education in Finland (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2007, p. 12).

The implementation of the Global Education 2010 programme, unfortunately, was not wholly successful. In the evaluation report of the programme it was noted that even though a lifelong learning approach was considered necessary, the goal of the programme was too general. In order to succeed, the goal should have been more specific, with defined shared responsibilities and indicators. According to the evaluation report, a similar judgement applies to many other goals of the programme.

Since the Global Education 2010 programme, various actors have advocated a new national strategy. Notably, many of the ALE actors, especially the ones working in the free adult education sector, have been active on the case.

Non-governmental organizations play a remarkable role in Finnish GCED. As the Finnish National Agency for Education has stated, much of the GCED in Finland is carried out by NGOs, especially in the field of formal education (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019b).

2.2. GCED in adult learning and education in Finland

2.2.1. Normative and legislative frameworks

The strongest legislative framework promoting education in Finland is to be found in the Constitution. According to the Constitution, everyone has the right to basic education free of charge and, indeed, basic education in Finland is free and universal, including for adults. The Constitution continues ‘the public authorities shall, as provided in more detail by an Act, guarantee everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship’ (Constitution of Finland, 1999).

There is specific legislation regarding formal education for adults that concentrates on the rights and responsibilities of the learner and the provider. Although GCED is not mentioned in this legislation, at the level of normative frameworks, GCED is well represented in national curricula for basic, upper secondary and vocational education for adults, as well as for children. The basic values of each curriculum underline qualities such as human rights, equality and sustainable development. In basic, secondary and upper secondary education GCED is also present at the subject level and in transversal abilities a national interpretation of skills for the twenty-first century.

Legislation on liberal adult education is strongly linked to GCED. The law states that the purpose of liberal adult education is to support the cohesion of society, equality and active citizenship. It is required to enhance versatile development, well-being, democracy, diversity, sustainable development and internationalism. Liberal adult education highlights self-directed learning, communality and participation. The law applies to agents such as folk high schools, adult education colleges and adult education centres (Law on Liberal Adult Education, 1998).

The latest Youth Act (2017) enhances GCED. It deals with young people under 29 years of age and promotes their social inclusion and opportunities to influence and take an active role in society. The principles underlying the purpose of the Act are: solidarity; cultural diversity and internationality; sustainable development; healthy lifestyles; respect for life and the environment; and cross-sectoral cooperation (Youth Act, 2017). From the GCED point of view, the Youth Act plays an important role in extending education for active citizenship to the non-formal education sector.

The contents of other adult education categories, for example staff training or labour education, are not regulated by legislation and norms.

2.2.2 Educational policies

The Ministry of Education and Culture has a leading role in directing policies on education and learning, including ALE. However, other ministries and governmental agencies have a political interest in ALE. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland is responsible for securing the functioning of the labour market and workers' employability, and integration services for immigrants. The Finnish National Agency for Education works under the Ministry of Education and Culture and is responsible for the development of curricula. It also supports the internationalisation of the Finnish education institutions, and of citizens too. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the leading agency of Finnish development policy, and this can be analysed from an ALE perspective. It funds Finnish civil society organizations, many of them engaged in GCED or awareness raising.

ALE is politically a very topical issue and there were many political processes affecting it going on in 2019. In this case study the central policies relating to ALE and GCED are represented and analysed with reference to the most recent policy developments. It also covers unfinished policy processes: they are reviewed whenever there is available documentation such as reports or recommendations.

The programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's government (Finnish Government, 2019) outlines a general framework for all policy development. Many of the processes mentioned in the programme started during the previous regime and there is now a strong political will to take steps forward to support continuous learning in concrete ways. Even the title of the programme, 'Inclusive and Competent Finland – A Socially, Economically and Ecologically Sustainable Society', emphasises the need for continuous learning as a central resource not only for sustainable well-being in Finland but also for sustainable development on a global scale.

Ministry of Education and Culture

Continuous learning

Discussion of continuous learning is very topical in Finland and there is a strong will to enhance the learning opportunities and education available for adults in order to ease transition to a future working life that will increasingly lean on new technologies and changing employment demands.

One of the major plans government has included in its policy programme is the reform of continuous learning. This reform was to be prepared during 2019, accompanied by a roadmap detailing concrete actions that need to be undertaken to create an enabling environment for continuous learning. A few steps preceding the reform are already being taken.

In its midterm report of May 2019 a working group proposed that a national reform of continuous learning should be carried out. A national strategy of continuous learning extending until 2030 should be drawn up to implement reform and to specify measures. The strategy should include at least the following: explore the possibility of adopting skills mapping for people of working age; modernise and bring together guidance, including digital services and individual study and career guidance; recognise the competences acquired in working life and elsewhere; create a proactive restructuring model; make the benefits and opportunities for continuous learning visible to everyone; and develop concepts for study opportunities that target different audiences (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019b, p. 19).

In its report, the working group further suggested that, in addition to the proposed measures, the funding of continuous learning should also be reformed; however, it did not put forward a clear proposal for a new funding model or models.

There are no GCED-related perspectives included in the analysis nor the measures. Even links to sustainable development and Agenda 2030 are missing. The goals the report sets for ALE are very traditional: an increased employment rate, economic growth and success in international competition. Capacity of labour is seen as an important factor of production. Even from this point of view, global abilities are not mentioned.

One of the notions in the midterm report *is* useful from the GCED point of view, however. The working group proposed that various capacities of individuals should be recognised more widely. In practice this means that, for example, experience gained through voluntary work or in civil society activities would count beside formal degrees (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019b). The practice of recognising individuals' know-how built in liberal adult education was also explored in another working group appointed by Ministry of Education and Culture during the year 2019 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019a).

Preceding the working group on continuous learning, in 2018 the Ministry of Education appointed a group of experts to predict what would be needed to respond to the changing demands of working life and how to create better preconditions for lifelong learning in Finland. The task set for the working group was to suggest recommendations on how to improve opportunities for lifelong learning and ensure a smooth continuous learning path for a variety of learners, with particular emphasis on groups with weaker basic skills and low levels of representation in education.

In its report, *Responses to Changing Work Life and Life-Long Learning*, the working group pointed out that although the opportunities for lifelong learning were accumulating (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018, p. 8), it was notable that the more poorly placed the starting point of the learner was, the less s/he committed to lifelong learning activities after basic and secondary education. This notion was confirmed from the GCED point of view, and it also resonates with the annual Youth Barometer, which reported a similar finding in 2018: youth were becoming more polarised according to their social activism; those who were active were very active, whereas those who were not were not active at all (State Youth Council, 2018).

Many of the recommendations given in the report are concerned with the accessibility of lifelong learning and the matching of abilities to the changing needs of working life, rather than to society more generally. Content of lifelong learning was not referred to and there were no direct links to GCED or to sustainable development.

Academic education and research

The future of academic education and research is explored in *Vision for Higher Education and Research in 2030*, a joint enterprise of decision makers and academics (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). Behind Vision 2030 there was a process that brought together various working groups and produced a collective report that gathered together accounts from the participating groups (Vision 2030, 2017). In 2019, Vision 2030 was clarified by a roadmap that consists of more concrete action steps to move forward (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019c).

The ALE perspective is included in the Vision 2030 reports. The vision set central objectives for the development of academic education: at least 50 per cent of young adults (25–34 years old) should take an academic degree; that lifelong learning was to be possible in different phases of life, and flexibly at the disposal of different user groups (Vision 2030, 2017, p. 6).

One suggestion which the group made was a development programme for an Open and Flexible Learning Platform. The idea was to set up a digital learning environment that would enable anyone to participate in open higher education opportunities. The platform would also provide open access to learning materials (ibid., p. 16).

The working group envisioned a change in forms of financing as a way to increase the importance of, and interest in, lifelong learning for academic education. The government of Finland accepted these reforms for the next contract period commencing in January 2019. Under the new arrangements, the proportion of lifelong learning covered in the financing of academic institutes was increased (ibid., p. 46, 48).

Even though Vision 2030 opened opportunities for ALE, GCED perspectives were not included. The terms ‘sustainable growth’ and ‘sustainable solutions’ are mentioned a few times in the report, but only from the point of view of international competition.

Higher education institutions organise degree-oriented education for adults, but they are also obliged to support lifelong learning as part of their basic mission. This has been included in the law on universities since 2010 and the law on universities of applied sciences since 2015. Rather than an additional task for the universities, it is perceived as something they accomplish through the way studies and teaching are planned and organised.

The regulations do not require universities to provide any specific type of education as part of their lifelong learning activities. However, at the policy level there is a vision of the direction to be taken by academic education and research in general. In the policy programme *Better Together for a Better World – Policies to Promote Internationalisation in Finnish Higher Education and Research, 2017–2025*, global responsibility is mentioned, but GCED is not embedded in the programme as a goal (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2018).

Professional adult learning and education

The legislation on professional education and apprenticeships does not mention GCED or aspects of GCED. The field of professional adult learning and education is heterogeneous and the content of training depends on the employer or the education provider. The professional education and apprenticeships dimension of adult learning and education is focused on the needs of employers and therefore typically focuses on narrow and specific professional skills rather than a broader perspective which might align better with GCED.

However, knowledge and skills developed by GCED have been recognised as becoming important in the future by industry and the private sector too. The National Forum for Skills Anticipation, under the National Agency for Education, has identified knowledge of sustainable development, interaction and communications skills, problem-solving skills, creativity, learning ability and multicultural skills as some of the most important generic skills needed in the future (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019e).

The National Forum notes that sustainable development is already a part of the national curricula and the premises of degree programmes. However, what is new is that understanding the principles of sustainable development is becoming a central citizenship skill, with a role to play in building a balanced, just, equal and environmentally conscious society both nationally and globally. This requires a broad understanding about climate change – for instance, growth thinking and energy issues.

Liberal adult education

The Ministry of Education and Culture supports liberal adult education providers with government subsidies. The roles and responsibilities of actors are guided by law, but there are no particular policy programmes that would give directions to liberal adult education actors. Liberal adult education does not provide a degree or qualification and its content is not governed by legislation.

On its website, the ministry asserts that the purpose of liberal adult education is to promote people's versatile development and provide education and training that supports the cohesion of society, equality and active citizenship. An essential aspect of liberal adult education is that everyone has the right to apply to take part in it. This all flows directly from the legislation and sets the value basis for ALE providers.

Liberal adult education providers comprise local authorities, joint municipal authorities, associations, foundations and limited liability companies. Liberal adult education includes both activities based on various sets of values and those that are neutral. The affiliated organizations can represent various world views or religious beliefs or act on the basis of local or regional civic needs.

Liberal adult education institutions offer studies that improve civic skills, social studies, general education studies and studies for hobby-based or interest-based information and skills acquisition. The goal of liberal adult education is to promote individuals' versatile development and well-being as well as the realisation of democracy, pluralism, sustainable development, multiculturalism and internationalism. Adult education emphasises self-motivated learning, a sense of community and inclusion (Ministry of Education and Culture, N.D.).

There is great potential in the liberal adult education sector to promote and facilitate GCED. Legislation supports the idea of GCED, but as education providers make all decisions on the objectives and content of the studies they offer, it depends on their consideration how and how much GCED is included in their study programmes.

Agenda 2030 in the Ministry of Education and Culture

There is an intention to tie the policies directed by the Ministry of Education and Culture more closely to Agenda 2030 framework. The Agenda 2030 alignment, covering all the sectors of the ministry, was prepared during 2018 by a participatory process and open dialogue with all the relevant stakeholders. According to the information received from the ministry, the alignment is to be published in late 2019. The alignment is an important step on the way to mainstreaming responsibility for sustainable development; in the Ministry of Education and Culture alone it will cover huge policy sectors like youth, art, sport, education and research.

The Agenda 2030 alignment was born from the initiative of civil society actors who have been advocating new national strategy for GCED since the Global Education 2010 programme (2007–2010).

Many ALE actors, especially the ones working in the liberal adult education sector, have been active on the case. Even so, there is a need to bring together all the stakeholders working for GCED issues in different policy sectors in order to get a holistic picture of what is done already and to be able to agree on the next steps together.

In the report delivered by Gaia Consulting that facilitated the participatory process of the alignment in the preparation phase, learning and capacity were identified as the driving forces of change. It is important to ensure that all the people are provided with equal opportunities to develop their capacity to enhance sustainable development. This is the only way that organizations, communities and, in the end, nations will be able to do their share in implementing the SDGs (Gaia Consulting, 2018).

The report recommends that the Ministry of Education and Culture should take a role as pioneer and leader in advancing an ecosocial approach to education in all the sectors of the ministry itself as well as in dialogue with other ministries and stakeholders. Relevant ministries from the GCED point of view are, among others, first, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is responsible for funding the awareness raising and global education activities of CSOs; second, the Ministry of Justice, an active promoter of democracy education and active citizenship.

If the Agenda 2030 alignment of the Ministry of Education and Culture does not address the cooperation and joint cross-ministerial action steps sufficiently thoroughly and enthusiastically, there will still be a need for a cross-ministerial GCED strategy that would ensure action steps for implementing Agenda 2030 Target 4.7.

Finnish National Agency for Education

The core tasks of the Finnish National Agency for Education are to develop education and training, early childhood education and lifelong learning, and to promote internationalisation in Finland. The Agency works under the Ministry of Education and Culture, and its tasks and organization are set by legislation.

From the ALE point of view there are two important tasks that the agency is responsible for: preparing curricula and promotion of internationalisation.

National core curricula

Key tasks of the agency are to prepare the national core curricula for general education and early childhood education, and to draw up the requirements for vocational and competence-based qualifications.

After the recent reform, GCED is now strongly present in all national core curricula from early childhood education to upper secondary education, as well as for adults as a target group. The basic values of the curricula underline qualities like human rights, equality and sustainable development. GCED is also present at subject level, not as a subject on its own, but as an integral part of all subjects.

With regard to GCED, one speciality of Finnish national core curricula is transversal competences, a national interpretation of skills for the twenty-first century. Transversal competences advance so-called meta skills, many of which are closely related to GCED. Among others, transversal competences comprise: learning to learn; intercultural competence and participation; and influencing and

construction of a sustainable future. Transversal competences concretise the value basis of the curricula and are implemented through all subjects and in interdisciplinary learning modules.

The national core curricula strongly encourage schools to cooperate with civil society organizations. CSOs can play an important role, for example as resource providers and partners in various projects. Many teachers invite organizations to the classroom for a visit, which usually means there will be CSO-organised participatory lessons or workshops. CSOs arrange also training for student teachers and in-service training for teachers on GCED themes and pedagogies (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019c).

Cooperation with civil society sector supports the implementation of curricula, for example in realisation of the basic values and transversal competences. CSOs are interested in developing the quality of their work. In 2011 CSOs jointly composed *Improving Quality – Quality Criteria for Global Education School Visits* in order to improve the chances that their visits support the objectives of curricula.

Promotion of internationalisation

The Finnish National Agency for Education supports international competences in working life by channelling funding for international learning opportunities. There are various funding mechanisms that support GCED and active citizenship.

Through the European Solidarity Corps programme, young people (under 30 years old) get an opportunity to participate in a project enhancing solidarity and social cohesion ([see European Youth Portal, European Solidarity Corps](#)).

The Europe for Citizens Programme aims to improve EU citizens' knowledge about the Union, its history, and its values. It also strives to advance civic participation and active European citizenship. Through the programme National Agency for Education is providing funding for public institutions and civil society organizations for international cooperation (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019d).

Ministry of Economics and Employment

Labour market training

The Ministry of Economics and Labour is responsible for services for the unemployed. The goal is to improve access to employment and facilitate the setting up of new businesses.

For the unemployed, Public Employment and Business Services arrange vocational labour market training. This is primarily intended for adults who are unemployed or at risk of losing their jobs and who have completed their compulsory education. Free labour market training is provided by vocational adult education centres, higher education institutions and private educational institutions. The goal is to take a basic degree, vocational examination or special vocational examination or a part of a degree (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2013).

As the aim of labour market training is to assist the unemployed to become employed; the focus is on vocational education not on GCED. However, it is possible for the unemployed to propose self-motivated labour market training, which can be supported by the government if validated by Public Employment and Business Services. In order to be validated the training should support the employment of the job-seeker.

Integration services for immigrants

Integration of immigrants into Finnish society is promoted and supported through a wide range of measures and services provided by the authorities and by other parties. These measures and services are primarily provided as a part of basic municipal services as well as employment and economic administration services.

In integration training, adult immigrants are taught Finnish or Swedish, other social, cultural and life-management skills and skills facilitating access to working life and further training.

Integration training may also include the identification of previously acquired skills and the recognition of degrees, as well as vocational planning and career guidance. If necessary, immigrants are also taught reading and writing skills. Integration training is implemented as labour market training.

Although GCED is not included in integration training, citizenship skills more generally are an important part of the training.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Development policy

Education has not been a priority in Finnish development policy programmes in recent years. The latest programme *Finland's Development Policy: One World – Common Future – Toward sustainable development* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016) highlights women and girls, livelihoods, democracy and food security as focus areas. However, the Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government (Finnish Government, 2019) mentions education as a new additional priority in development policy.

ALE is not specifically mentioned in *Finland's Development Policy Programme* (2016), even though it is included in many programmes or projects supported by official development aid. For example, enhancing stronger civil societies leans strongly on the capacity development of active citizens. According to a recent study (Fingo, 2018) many of the CSOs are working on an area covering peace, democracy and strengthening of civil society. However, this work is not usually linked to GCED even though there might be connections in terms of content.

As part of development policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been the most important authority in providing funding for Finnish CSOs for GCED and awareness-raising work in Finland. This funding has enabled CSOs in Finland to be active promoters of GCED in various ways. It is not known how much of the funding for CSOs is channelled to ALE, but there are and have been some influential activities in this field too.

2.3. Responsibilities and accountability frameworks of ALE providers

There is no holistic accountability framework that would be used by all ALE providers. However, there are some GCED-related frameworks that are worth mentioning.

The Finnish Adult Education Association has, together with the OKKA Foundation and non-formal adult learning institutions, developed Sustainable Development Certification of Educational Establishments – a certification and criteria that help learning institutions to enhance sustainable development systematically. The certificate package includes criteria, evaluation tools and supporting material that

enable educational institutions to self-evaluate and develop their management, teaching and operational culture from the perspective of sustainability. The system involves external audit and applying for the certificate from the OKKA Foundation, certification is based on audits of institutions. Adaptation to criteria takes 1-4 years, and the criteria can be used even in cases where applying for certification is not the main goal. By March 2018, the foundation had awarded sustainable development certificates to 100 educational institutions (OKKA Foundation, N.D.).

Another useful accountability framework used by Finnish kindergartens, schools, learning institutions and organizations working with formal and non-formal education is international Green Flag certification.² It is targeted to actors working with children and youth, and therefore not relevant for all ALE providers.

The quality criteria are an excellent tool for ALE providers to take sustainability and environmental aspects into account in their work. How well and deeply they direct the contents of the education they provide towards GCED in reality is not known, but there is potential in the frameworks to be developed in this direction.

Another, more general accountability framework supporting implementation of SDGs is Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development, promoted by the Finnish government (Prime Minister's Office, N.D.). Companies, corporations, educational institutions, administration, political parties, cities and other actors can make their own concrete operational commitments to contribute to the implementation of the shared goals. This framework does not direct organizations to become activate in GCED but rather in sustainable development more generally.

2.4. Programmes and practice of ALE for global citizenship

There are many interesting programmes and good practices that have delivered GCED to adult learners or promoted GCED in ALE. Some examples are represented In this section and analysed from the GCED point of view. The list is not exhaustive. The examples have been chosen by the following criteria: the approach to promote GCED in ALE is particularly successful, or there are some exceptional elements such as innovative approaches or unusual target groups included.

2.4.1. The Finnish Innovation Fund, Sitra

[Sitra](#) describes itself as a 'think and do tank' that aims for a fair and sustainable future by supporting Finland's role as a pioneer in sustainable well-being. Sitra carries out future-oriented programmes that seek to catalyse transition to a sustainable society.

Lifelong learning has been one of Sitra's themes during recent years. According to Sitra, Finland needs a lifelong learning policy where the development of skills and competences is seen as a long-term investment and a source of well-being. Megatrends such as the development of technology, the transformation of work and the aging of the population are challenging our sources of livelihood and our education system. Current structures such as the boundaries between the areas of responsibility in public administration, the funding systems reflecting these, and incentives do not sufficiently support flexible learning at different stages of life (Sitra, Lifelong Learning).

² [Green Flag](#).

Sitra has facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogue on continuous learning and produced a report that offers solutions on how structures should be changed in order to create better opportunities for lifelong learning. GDEC themes are reflected in various documents. In Sitra's opinion, 'broad-based competence and education strengthen an individual's well-being and competitive edge in the labour market and improve societal cohesion and the participation of citizens – the foundations of our welfare society'.

Another programme related to GDEC is Sitra's leadership training for decision-makers and change-makers on sustainable economic policy (Sitra, Leadership Training). The programme combines everyday well-being, economic realities and the earth's boundary conditions with long-term decision-making and development, as well as with the new leadership required in a complicated world.

Sitra has also developed ways to facilitate open, constructive dialogue in society. The Timeout method has been adopted widely and is used by many educators in formal and non-formal settings. The topics in the discussions can be many, but the method enhances an appreciative, participatory approach that restrains polarisation. In 2019 Sitra handed the Timeout method to a newly established Timeout Foundation that is now continuing the work and supporting constructive, peaceful dialogue of citizens on social issues (Sitra, 2019).

2.4.2. Non-formal and liberal adult education

The diversity of learning activities in the non-formal sector is huge, varying from sport coaching to art courses. The motivations and needs behind the learning activities may vary greatly.

Liberal adult education institutions have been active in integrating GDEC into ALE programmes and trainings. As directed by law, the purpose of liberal adult education is to support qualities linked to GDEC, like active citizenship, democracy, diversity, sustainable development and internationalism.

The School for Self-Sufficiency

The School for Self-sufficiency is a new initiative that supports learning for sustainability with a systemic approach. The school is targeted at adults and will start teaching in 2020. It is the first school in Finland to concentrate on self-sufficiency skills. Studies include gardening, ecological building, handicrafts and other activities, all of which make people more independent of the prevailing destructive lifestyle. The purpose of the School for Self-Sufficiency is to provide a broad range of knowledge and guidance for people interested in living on their own terms and working with their hands, to learn and develop alternative models of living in harmony with the resources nature has to offer (see [Omavaraopisto](#)).

2.4.3. Higher education

Massive open online course: Leadership for sustainable change

The universities of Tampere and Helsinki in cooperation with the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra have developed a massive open online course (MOOC) with the title '[Leadership for sustainable change](#)'. The course was created as a response to the need for interdisciplinary sustainability education. It is open to everyone and the objective is to support and encourage people to take leadership on sustainable development in their own lives. As a part of the course students plan a sustainability change project to be implemented in the real world.

The course supports active global citizenship very well. The aim is to see what kind of knowledge, skills and attitudes are needed in leading sustainability transition and how to best learn them through practising the competencies required in a real-world group project.

2.4.4. Civil society organizations

Many CSOs are active in GCED and facilitate learning among adults too. The following examples of good practice and innovative approaches illustrate the potential of CSOs to support GCED in various fields of society.

[Peace Education Institute: Additional civilian service training](#)

The Peace Education Institute has organised additional civilian service training for those men, who have carried out their military service, but do not want to stay in reserve. They have to undertake additional civilian service training, which currently lasts five days, as a rule. The trainings are commissioned by the Civil Service Centre, which can outsource the implementation of the training to various actors. [The Peace Education Institute](#) has won the tender twice and organised training emphasising GCED-related themes like human rights and civic activism.

[Finnish UN Association and Workers' Educational Association \(WEA\) of Finland: web course on sustainable development](#)

The web course provided by the [Finnish UN Association](#) and Workers' Educational Association promotes understanding on Agenda 2030, including opportunities and challenges in relation to implementation of SDGs. The course is targeted at anyone interested in sustainable development, but is especially useful for teachers, who can take it as an in-service training.

[Finnish Refugee Council: Adult education in Uganda](#)

Finnish CSOs are active in citizenship education as part of their development cooperation. The [Finnish Refugee Council](#) provides GCED-related education as part of its development programme in Uganda, and is the only international organization specialising in adult education for refugees in that country. The ALE programme focuses on supporting functional literacy skills, livelihoods and young civil society activists and provides refugees with the means and skills to manage their own lives and regain their personal agency, as well as raise their income levels. In addition to refugees, training is also provided to locals.

2.5. Tools, materials, support and training

There are some supportive materials and trainings on GCED available. Many of them are produced and organised by CSOs and targeted at teachers and educators. In this section tools, materials, support and training are explored from the point of view of so called 'multipliers' – teachers, educators and other learning activists.

Much of the support provided by CSOs is based on short-term projects. This means especially that trainings are not continually available. Materials and tools, however, are usually available from resource banks, supporting long-term use.

2.5.1. Training

Capacity development of trainers and multipliers has been identified as an effective way to enhance GCED. In spite of this, GCED is not systematically integrated into teacher study programmes in Finland.

There is a huge variety of ways in which the themes are dealt with in public teacher training programmes in different universities. For example, in the University of Oulu there is an international study programme emphasising GCED, and even a professorship for global education. In University of Helsinki there have been two UNESCO professorships since the beginning of 2018, one leading studies in educational ecosystems for equity and quality of learning and one responsible for developing values, dialogue and human rights in education (University of Helsinki, 2017). There is a UNESCO Chair in the University of Turku in learning society and futures of education (University of Turku, 2019), and in the University of Jyväskylä there are two UNESCO Chairs, one focusing on the utilisation of digital platforms as a force to change society and one on inclusive literacy learning for all (University of Jyväskylä, 2019). These initiatives support GCED and are important for development.

Almost all universities have cooperated with CSOs for a long time, in large part to strengthen students' knowledge of GCED. CSOs have created a seminar concept that combines GCED theory and practice. There are approximately 450–650 teacher students participating in the seminars every year. The feedback received from students has been positive, but sometimes frustrated, questioning why there is no more GCED included in the study programmes. What is positive is that some of the teacher students have started to lobby for more GCED. For example, in the University of Turku active students have initiated an additional course on climate change and sustainable development education scheduled to start in 2020.

The big picture is that GCED does not necessarily reach all ordinary teacher students. Those who are interested in it can pick optional courses that support GCED competences, but those who don't understand the cause in the first place inevitably miss these opportunities.

There are occasional in-service training programmes and projects that improve the capacity of trainers. Many of these training opportunities are provided by CSOs, some organised in partnership with other actors, for example academia. The Finnish Agency for Education is the most important funder of in-service training in Finland.

Good example of a recent in-service training on GCED is the *Transformer 2030 – Teachers as Change Agents for Sustainable Change* project (2018–2019) that is providing in-service training for teachers and educators from early childhood education to adult education. With a lifelong learning approach the project assists teachers and educators to understand sustainable development holistically and learn to implement GCED in practice. The project is a partnership between CSOs and researchers studying systemic sustainability, compassion and global competences. It is coordinated by Fingo and an umbrella of development organizations, and funded by the Finnish National Agency for Education.

Educators in the non-formal sector are not easily reachable for training. There are no stable supportive structures or frequent training programmes available for all adult educators. However, there are some actors that specialise in providing GCED trainings to their own target groups. Fingo organises training

and peer learning events for civil society actors on GCED. Training is also available for activists, who want to develop their skills and knowledge on how to influence global development issues.

Liberal education actors are also active in promoting GCED by training. The Finnish Adult Education Association organises training on ecosocial approaches to education for liberal adult education providers. In the training programme *Free adult education as a transformer* (Free Education Association, N.D.), liberal education actors are helped to take stronger roles in transformative, ecosocial education and adopt new pedagogies enhancing active citizenship. The training programme started in 2019 and continues in 2020.

2.5.2. Web-based resources, tools and materials

There are some websites that try to make it easier for educators and trainers to find tools and materials more easily.

Gloaalikasvatus.fi is a website provided by Fingo. It includes a free online resource bank for lifelong global education. The resource bank holds information on learning materials, trainings available and pedagogical tools and methods, and is searchable, e.g. by age group, subject or transversal competences highlighted in the national curricula. Most of the resources were developed by Finnish CSOs.

Maailmankoulu.fi is another web-based resource bank targeted to formal education and youth work. Many of the materials are also relevant for facilitating adult learning.

Ihmisoikeudet.net is a website providing information and tools on human rights and human rights education.

The Association of Folk High Schools in Finland has developed the capacity of folk high schools. Transformative learning and an ecosocial approach to education were studied in an OPPI project, and a platform for online learning was developed with tools for folk high school educators to develop their approaches to education.³

Also, the Finnish National Sustainable Development Certification of Educational Establishments includes a lot of supportive material and self-assessment tools, collected on the website Koulujaymparisto.fi.

2.6. Curricular frameworks and pedagogical recommendations and tools

2.6.1. Basic education and upper secondary education

Curricula in Finland are drawn up by the Finnish National Agency for Education. The processes of writing national curricula have been open and participatory, allowing reference groups to feed in important points of view.

In the curriculum of basic education and the curriculum of upper secondary education for adults, GCED's role is significant through the values that are the basis of both documents. The values are turned to reality both through transversal competences and at the subject level. GCED is not a subject on its own, but found in almost every subject, especially in those addressing social issues (National Board of Education, 2017).

³ [Suomen kansanopistoyhdistys. Ekososiaalisen sivistyksen oppimisolusta](http://Suomen kansanopistoyhdistys.Ekososiaalisen sivistyksen oppimisolusta) (2019).

The concept of an ecological-social approach to education, launched by Finnish scholar Arto O. Salonen, appears in curricula after 2014 (ibid., p. 16). The aim is to challenge the idea of the primacy of material prosperity by defining education, learning and social participation as the route to a meaningful life. It is a conception of well-being based on mutual dependence and equality, ecological integrity, diversity and democracy, non-violence and peace (Salonen, 2016). The ecosocial approach to education combines sustainable development, active citizenship and global citizenship education.

Even though curricula include GCED, it is not self-evident that the issues are featured in teaching. In order to make a difference GCED needs to be an integral part of teacher training programmes at a practical level. At present it's often up to a teacher's individual motivation and interest how much GCED s/he brings to the classroom.

The curricula from basic education to upper secondary education encourage schools to cooperate with civil society actors. The Finnish National Agency for Education (2019c) states on its website that CSOs are active providers of GCED. This is a great initiative in that it does not diminish a teacher's own GCED activities but does help in integrating GCED into the work holistically.

GCED is included at some level in vocational training. There are plenty of different degrees to be chosen, and GCED-related themes are more present in some subjects than in others. In basic studies for all students participating in vocational training, the core areas of society and working-life competences includes perspectives on active citizenship and sustainable development. There is a process in train to define lifelong learning competences for vocational training, based on recommendations of the Council of Europe (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2019b).

2.6.2. Higher education

The regulations do not require universities to provide any specific type of education as part of their lifelong learning activities. The legislative framework does not dictate the content of adult learning and education at universities and does not mention global citizenship education. The extent to which GCED appears in university education thus depends more or less on each university's own strategies and curricula. Universities are sovereign actors, and the contents of teaching cannot be directed by policy guidelines.

Degree-oriented education in universities is now about to change. Universities are reforming their strategies, and sustainable development and global aspects have been identified as important demands for the future. Global megatrends and challenges are strongly affecting the operational environment of higher education institutions and they must be able to provide the students with competences, values and knowledge that support sustainable development.

3. Conclusions

Climate change, new technologies and rapidly changing working conditions, among other factors, make continuous education essential. The political dialogue on continuous education is very lively in Finland, strongly directed by values and goals to boost the employment rate, economic growth and international competition. Sustainability is mentioned, but often only in the context of sustainable growth.

The global challenges are almost universally acknowledged, and education targeted on children and youth is integrating GCED, meaning that it is in the core of education all the way from early childhood to

upper secondary schooling. Adult education, in contrast, has not taken GCED to its heart so systematically, though there are some positive examples, notably liberal education and youth work, that are guided by law to include GCED.

The field of ALE policy is challenging. There is a huge variety of actors, having various roles and interests, and these interests do not necessarily meet at any point. The lack of a multi-stakeholder forum for discussion and debate makes it difficult to set a joint vision for the ALE ecosystem and consider its role in relation to Agenda 2030 and GCED. There is a need for a multi-party discussion on how ALE can meet global challenges, support active global citizenship and transition to a sustainable future. All stakeholders should be invited to join.

One of the biggest challenges in ALE is that those who would most benefit from it are often not reached. Learning is accumulating to those already motivated to develop themselves. The challenge is to find ways to get those people not identifying themselves as global citizens and not motivated to attend educational activities to participate in GCED. It is important to start paying attention to supporting motivation for continuous learning at the beginning of the learning path, starting from early childhood education. Luckily the new national curricula promote strongly transversal competences that are a good basis for continuous learning and global citizenship.

One way to support people's motivation to participate in ALE is developing better mechanisms for recognising the knowledge and skills gained through educational activities, especially in non-formal settings. Liberal education institutions in Finland have established an electronic Open Badge as a response to this need, a very welcome step towards more holistic recognition of competences and skills developed throughout life. The use of the badge should be made more systematic. Another initiative in the same area is the 'learning account, which makes it possible for an individual to register all the education s/he has had.

Most ALE activities serve the interests of employers, who are also the main funders of professional development. GCED is not the main interest of the employers; they tend to emphasise the importance of specific professional skills that support their business. This is reflected prominently in public debate and policy processes taking place in Finland at present.

There are good preconditions for raising active global citizenship among people in Finland. Finland has scored well in Social Progress Index (SPI) ranking together with other Scandinavian countries. In SPI 2018 Finland came in first in the world in terms of the inclusiveness of all members of the society. Finns enjoyed the third-greatest personal freedom and choice in the world and had the fifth-best access to information and communications (Social Progress Index, 2018).

It requires political leadership to integrate GCED in ALE activities. The reform of continuous learning that is in preparation is adding momentum to the drive to put GCED on the agenda. This demands that the Ministry of Education and Culture understands the importance of the issue and starts promoting GCED strongly through all its policy programmes. There is hope that Agenda 2030 Alignment, in preparation in the ministry at the moment, will guide policies in this direction.

Another important reform needed in Finland is the creation of a national GCED strategy that would bring all the stakeholders from various sectors together to set up a road map for mainstreaming GCED and education for sustainable development into all formal and non-formal education.

Civil society organizations and liberal education providers are good forerunners and promoters of GCED for adults. As mentioned earlier, liberal education has a long tradition in promoting active citizenship and a democratic society, and in the globalised world it has found its role in GCED. There are still debates to be had on the extent to which various institutions are integrating, and should integrate, GCED in their course schedules and programmes, but there is active discussion and development work taking place among the providers of liberal education. The sustainable development certification of educational establishments is one good example of self-motivated development work being done in the sector. Sometimes the contents of the training activities already relate to GCED, but it could be made more visible for learners by reframing course descriptions and learning objectives. Fixing one's old clothes can be a hobby, but it can also be an act against climate change and over-consumption. Reframing could support learners to be more aware of their competences in relation to global sustainability, and build their identities as global citizens. By bringing together people of all ages and backgrounds, liberal education creates unique learning spaces that support GCED very well.

Civil society actors are important players in promoting GCED. The thematic expertise as well as the pedagogical support, methods and tools that CSOs are providing for teachers and educators, and for active citizens, are important in mainstreaming GCED in society. Many CSOs have concentrated on children and youth, which are important target groups, but not the only ones. Adults need GCED at least as much; they should be considered as an important target group of their own. There is a need for further reflection on how adults can be reached and engaged effectively.

From learner's point of view it's not always easy to combine working life and education. Creating more flexible mechanisms and funding opportunities for individuals to participate in ALE could encourage people to take more control over their own learning.

4. Recommendations

Based on the analysis on how well GCED is integrated in adult learning and education in Finland, a set of recommendations that support further integration of GCED to ALE activities is listed below.

Integrating GCED into national reform of continuous learning

The Finnish government is committed to carrying out a national reform of continuous learning, led by the Ministry of Education and Culture. One expected outcome of the reform is a roadmap to direct education and learning policies for the next ten years. There is a huge need for skilled people with competences of a global citizen and know-how about sustainable development. It is important to link the reform and the roadmap strongly to Agenda 2030 and especially target 4.7, which highlight the need for GCED that will enable learners of all ages to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to act for sustainable development. The roadmap should include clear targets and indicators supporting the integration of GCED in ALE.

Multi-stakeholder forum for ALE actors

The ALE ecosystem in Finland is wide, and there is a need for forum that enables joint visioning of the future and strengthening the role of ALE providers in relation to Agenda 4.7. The forum would also cultivate mutual learning, sharing of experiences and cooperation among actors. It would support the work of the Ministry of Education and Culture as a leading agency for ALE policies.

Developing national strategy on GCED

The national strategy for GCED should outline the values, objectives and indicators for GCED development in Finland and bring actors together to work for the joint goals. There is a need to build bridges, both between policy sectors and between formal, non-formal and informal education settings. To support equal access to GCED the strategy should emphasise a lifelong learning approach with strong links to ALE.

Systematic integration of GCED in study programmes and curricula for ALE

GCED is embedded to national curricula from early childhood to upper secondary school. The approach should be systematically extended to all adult education programmes and curricula.

Funding for GCED in adult learning and education

ALE providers working with public funding should be encouraged to integrate GCED in their work by making inclusion of GCED a positive criterion in the appraisal of requests for funding.

Support for teachers and educators

Teachers and educators in ALE need support on how to integrate GCED in their daily work in a way that genuinely enhances transformative learning and global citizenship. GCED should be integrated to adult education learning programmes in universities and universities of applied sciences. In-service training should be continuously provided, not only for teachers working with children and youth but also for those working with adults in non-formal sector CSOs and liberal adult education. In addition, peer learning networks and initiatives should be supported to strengthen the commitment of actors to develop GCED by themselves.

Developing holistic recognition of skills and competences

More holistic recognition of skills and competences accumulated by attending non-formal and informal learning activities should be further developed. Mainstreaming the use of digital Open Badges and valuing learning would encourage citizens to build their capacities and participate in various learning events. This would increase the valuation of non-formal and informal learning – which are often the sources of GCED – alongside formal degrees.

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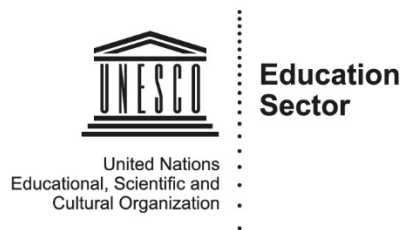
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UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

