

# EMBEDDING DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION IN POST-PRIMARY TEACHING AND LEARNING: LESSONS FROM WORLDWISE GLOBAL SCHOOLS

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**Abstract:** WorldWise Global Schools, the Irish government’s development education (DE) programme for post-primary schools in Ireland, concluded its first phase of operation in May 2016. This article draws from the findings of the final evaluation of the programme conducted by one of the authors. The article outlines the context, progress and recommendations from the programme’s first phase, with a view to incorporating lessons learned into any future support provided for schools. The programme aims to enable schools to embed development education effectively and sustainably into their teaching and learning.

**Key words:** Development education; global citizenship; post-primary schools; WorldWise; principals; continuing professional development.

“What is Development Education? The breaking of the bubble. To rattle the cages. To make the world a better place” (WWGS teacher, 2016).

WorldWise Global Schools (WWGS) is the Irish government’s development education (DE) programme for post primary schools, which is being implemented within the framework of a four-year strategy (WorldWise Global Schools, 2013). It is the key channel through which Irish Aid support for post primary DE is being coordinated, designed as a one-stop shop of training, funding, resources and guidance. WWGS is managed by a consortium comprising Gorta Self Help Africa, Concern Worldwide and the Curriculum Development Unit of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board.

WWGS concluded its first phase in May 2016. The programme has been extended until August 2017, at which time it is expected that a second multi-annual phase will be implemented. However, it is not yet clear what the

shape or content of that future programme will be. It is therefore of critical importance that the impact of WWGS to date, and key learning from its implementation in 2013-16 is examined in detail and shared, so that the momentum that has been created over a three-year period may be consolidated and built on.

## **Background**

WWGS was initiated in late 2012 as the successor to the Irish Aid-funded WorldWide Schools Linking and Immersion Scheme , an initiative managed by Léargas that had run from 2008-11, focusing exclusively on supporting DE through the medium of global school partnerships (Wilkinson, 2011). WWGS, in contrast to its predecessor, was designed to have a broader remit than school linking alone, with a stated aim to increase the quality and quantity of DE taking place in post primary schools throughout Ireland, via a broad range of interventions and supports.

WWGS was, partially, established in response to some of the challenges surrounding DE in Irish post primary schools that had been identified through a number of sources including: the final evaluation of the Schools Linking and Immersion Scheme (Wilkinson, 2011); feedback from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with a long track record in working on DE with schools; and broader research and evaluation on how DE is understood and practised in school settings, most significantly an influential report on how DE is taught in schools by Bryan and Bracken called *Learning to Read the World* (2012).

The challenges to delivering DE in schools identified by these sources included:

- No shared, common understanding by schools of the theory and practice of DE;
- A charity perspective still dominant, rather than a justice/human rights-based approach;

- A disparate and uneven spread of schools actively engaging in DE;
- DE expertise housed primarily within NGOs rather than being successfully transferred to schools via teacher capacity-building;
- No clear definition of what a school's 'active engagement' with DE means or looks like in practice;
- A lack of shared tools to measure the benefit and impact of DE in school settings;
- Teachers lacking the confidence to implement DE in the classroom;
- A plethora of resources available but not spread across the curriculum, nor accompanied with appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers;
- The relatively minor status of DE in schools, albeit with further opportunities identified within the new Junior Cycle Framework (Department of Education and Skills, 2015) [1];
- Mostly the same schools being engaged with year-on-year by multiple NGOs, rather than new schools being reached.

From the outset, therefore, WWGS was tasked with responding to a range of complex issues in order to boost the number of schools engaging with DE nationwide, but also with a key coordination role relating to the various strands that contribute to DE in post primary settings – most significantly support for smaller NGOs collaborating with schools. The quantitative targets set at the outset of the WWGS programme have been acknowledged to be highly ambitious [2], the achievement of which could, in fact, have a detrimental effect on the programme simultaneously reaching its qualitative targets. Therefore, seeking the correct balance between achieving both quantitative and

qualitative growth has been a major characteristic of how the programme has operated to date.

### **WWGS Strategy 2013-16**

The strategic aim of the WWGS Strategy (2013) is to bring about an increased spread, number and mix of post-primary schools engaging in and availing of quality DE, through three key outcomes:

**Outcome 1 (Quantity):** Increased engagement of post primary schools in DE through the promotion of a coordinated approach nationwide;

**Outcome 2 (Quality):** Implementation of quality standards and good practice for DE in post-primary schools;

**Outcome 3 (Sustainability):** Implementation of a whole-school approach to DE in post-primary schools.

Certain key assumptions made at the outset of the programme and articulated through its strategy have not materialised. For example, the anticipated extent of reforms to the Junior Cycle framework was not accurately forecast. Similarly, the emphasis in the strategy on the role envisaged by school networks did not pan out in practice. Conversely, other elements that did not feature as strongly in the strategy have come to the fore, such as the role played by NGOs in receipt of WWGS funding, which has proven to be an effective model in reaching growing numbers of schools, as well as providing a mechanism for those schools to tap into the skills and experience of DE practitioners working in organisations throughout the country.

### **Impact to date**

The recently completed final evaluation of WWGS contains a number of headline findings with clear implications for any future phase of the programme. Principal among these was the finding that, to continually and effectively engage post-primary schools with quality DE, there is a need to maintain all of the current WWGS interventions – grants, CPD, learning events, school visits, resources and the Global Passport Award [3] – all of

which play a significant role in supporting teachers to implement and expand quality DE in their schools. In other words, the programme’s success to date is largely attributed to the combination of interventions and support it offers, rather than any one of these elements in isolation. This indicates that WWGS must maintain the breadth of its programme supports if it is to continue to respond to the DE needs of schools in a meaningful way, but also find a way to ‘scale’ this offering if it is tasked with reaching an ever-increasing number of schools. The final evaluation report highlighted that the diverse support provided by WWGS placed a heavy workload on the programme’s small staff team, with consideration required regarding the capacity available to further develop the programme in any future phase.

### **WWGS final evaluation: Methodology**

The WWGS final evaluation set out to establish the factors that are proving effective in enabling post-primary schools to embed quality DE in their teaching and learning. These factors were identified over an eight-month period of in-depth research and analysis.

#### Established schools

A key element in the process was carrying out evaluation visits to eleven established schools participating in the WWGS programme. These schools were selected to reflect the range of schools which have been grant-funded by WWGS. Considerations in the choice included type of school, DEIS [4] status, gender, geographical area, participation in the Global Passport scheme, and participation in the WWGS conference and teacher CPD. The breakdown of schools was as follows (taken from Gannon, 2016):

<b>School Code</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>DEIS status</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Global Passport</b>	<b>CPD/ Conference Attendance</b>

<b>A</b>	CS	Deis	Coed	Dublin	Yes Diplomatic	Yes
<b>B</b>	CS		Coed	Dublin	Yes Diplomatic	Yes
<b>C</b>	ETB	Deis	Coed	Donegal	Yes Diplomatic	Yes
<b>D</b>	ETB	Deis	Coed	Cork	Yes Diplomatic	Yes
<b>E</b>	ETB		Coed	Meath	Yes Citizen	Yes
<b>F</b>	ETB	Deis	Coed	Sligo	Yes Citizen	Yes
<b>G</b>	Sec	Deis	Coed	Limerick	Yes Diplomatic	Yes
<b>H</b>	Sec		Coed	Westmeath	No	Yes
<b>J</b>	Sec		Girls	Dublin	Yes Citizen	Yes
<b>K</b>	Sec		Coed	Mayo	Yes Citizen	Yes
<b>L</b>	Sec		Boys	Monaghan	No	Yes

Within each school the evaluator met teachers, principals and students. Teachers and principals were questioned about the extent to which WWGS funding enabled them to carry out DE alongside the programme's capacity building interventions, and whether these supports facilitated DE integration into the curriculum. They were also asked about how DE impacted on their students and, in particular, the value of the Global Passport as a framework for a whole-school approach to DE.

Students were asked to describe how they understood global citizenship, what they had done in DE, to identify their learning and the impact DE had had on them, and to provide suggestions for the expansion of DE within their school. A small sample of non-WWGS-funded schools and school networks were also interviewed as part of the process for comparison purposes.

#### Emerging schools

The sixty schools who had received a starter grant in the 2015/2016 grants year were surveyed using a Survey Monkey questionnaire. Of the 60 schools, replies were received from 21, giving a 35 percent response rate, which is a very good return rate from teachers [5]. The survey asked teachers about their experience of the WWGS grants system and key interventions and how likely they were to further expand the DE programme within their school in 2016/2017.

#### NGOs and networks

Of the four WWGS-funded school networks, one was chosen for interview on the basis of experience of DE and WWGS. A non-funded school network was also identified and their coordinator interviewed. The DE NGO co-ordinators that took part in a focus group for the evaluation were a self-selecting group representing eight NGOs, or half of all of the NGOs funded by WWGS.

#### Scope and limitations

As the outcomes of DE are generally qualitative in nature, the evaluation was designed to produce qualitative rather than quantitative data and analysis, the

findings of which provide critical pointers for how DE can be most effectively supported in schools. It included analysis of the effectiveness of the key WWGS interventions, grants, capacity building events, school visits, resources/guidelines, and the Global Passport framework in relation to schools, school networks and NGOs. WWGS also works in strategic partnership with Young Social Innovators (YSI) and the BT Young Scientists and Technology Exhibition (BTYSTE) through its sponsorship of the *Making Our World One World Award* and the *Science for Development Award* respectively. The effectiveness of these partnerships was not investigated as it was outside of the terms of reference for the evaluation, but reference to them was made where relevant.

### **Key findings: what is working well?**

#### (i) Ensuring meaningful student impact

Students are the litmus test of how well DE is working in schools. The findings from the student interviews – conducted with groups of students from 2<sup>nd</sup> year to 5<sup>th</sup> year in each of the eleven schools visited – present a striking illustration of the benefits of the DE programmes in their schools in terms of their learning, increased awareness and commitment to global justice. They demonstrated that they fulfilled the WWGS vision of ‘students with an increased capacity to think critically and creatively to articulate their role as global citizens’ (WWGS Strategy, 2013). They were, in the main, very capable of reflecting on and articulating their learning, and had clearly become passionate about the issues and themes of DE:

“I care a lot more about what’s happening around me, that’s not just related directly to me and my life ... It makes me want to look into what’s going on in the world and to care about things that are happening to other people other than what I’m just seeing around me.”

The students had developed high levels of awareness about global issues, had broadened their perspectives and views of reality, and to varying

degrees, had developed skills of critical thinking, some of them to a really impressive level:

“You develop your skills of taking in information and analysing it, rather than being spoon fed information – that’s what’s right, that’s what’s wrong. You get all angles and all views and you learn to listen. Even if you don’t agree with it, you learn to listen.”

The majority of students had made changes in small ways in their own lives as a result of engaging with DE, notably in relation to fair trade. However, there was a notable lack of campaigning or more political type actions, which is an area that WWGS could constructively support in the future.

The fact that quite a number of students said that DE had influenced their choice of future career was quite significant, demonstrating that the students had been affected at a deep level by their experience of DE and that they wanted to contribute to making the world a fairer and more just place. Also of significance was their belief that all students in their schools should have access to DE. Many of the students interviewed were in 5<sup>th</sup> year and had done a DE module in TY (Transition Year ), but the impact of it was still very real for them:

“I want to go out and do something about how the world is. And not just sit there and go ‘ah that’s terrible.’”

“I wouldn’t be going out just looking for an office job now. I want a job that actually matters, that I’ll be able to look back on if I retire and realise I made a change, even if it was just something small.”

#### (ii) Building teachers’ capacity, understanding and confidence

Twenty teachers from eleven schools were interviewed as part of the evaluation. The teachers who took part in these interviews all articulated a clear understanding of DE as encompassing all of the elements defined by Irish Aid. They were working from a global justice perspective and aimed to

support students to become critical thinkers and active global citizens. The schools had developed this work to varying degrees and the level of critical thinking and action differed between schools. All of the schools engaged in fundraising for global and local charities, but in most cases, this was done in the context of analysis of the causes of poverty and injustice. When asked about the aspects of WWGS that they valued most highly, the teachers singled out grant funding, the provision of CPD and the hands-on support from staff. All of the teachers stated clearly that they could not effectively continue their in-school DE work without the grant from WWGS. They were all committed to continuing some level of DE and if the grants were to cease, DE would continue to a certain extent, but at a much lower and less effective level.

The capacity building events run by WWGS were universally praised and had a significant effect on all of the teachers, regardless of their level of experience. They valued both the variety of workshops and inputs, and in particular the networking with other teachers, from which they gained ideas and encouragement. Many of the teachers highlighted the benefit of having substitution for teachers attending CPD events, and it was clear that the high levels of participation in such events would not have been possible without this support. Similarly, teachers spoke highly of the tailored support available to them through the WWGS team, in particular the project officers. They greatly valued this relationship and felt secure knowing that they had a direct port of call in the event of a query or problem.

The level of integration of DE into the mainstream curriculum varied among the schools, but all of the teachers interviewed had made some progress or were planning to progress this. Curriculum work was generally focussed on TY, but with all schools moving or wishing to move to greater integration and embedding of DE in mainstream curriculum. Cross-curricular work was very evident in a small number of schools with the involvement of several teachers, but in others, DE was still the work of one teacher who experienced difficulty in securing the involvement of colleagues. The level of practice in this respect depended to a large degree on relationships within the staff and the level of interest and commitment of the principal to DE.

### (iii) Providing a combination of supports and interventions

The menu of options that WWGS offers to schools was deemed to be its unique selling point, and the aspect that enabled it to reach schools that were new to DE as well as more established schools, regardless of their location, setting, background or experience in DE to date.

#### *Combination of grants & support*

One clear finding was that schools require both funding and non-monetary forms of support to enable DE to flourish. Grant funding is an enabler of DE, a necessary support in the context of it being largely an optional extra which schools can choose to engage with, but which cannot necessarily be funded through limited school budgets. Cessation of the grants would mean that activities would have to be dropped in most schools, especially in those with DEIS status. However, alongside funding, the essential support that teachers and schools identified was the on-going supportive relationship between WWGS and the school community, including the teachers, the principal and general staff, especially at the early stages of the introduction of DE. Teachers and supportive principals highly valued the personal support of an external programme, as well as the common structure provided by the Global Passport.

#### *Global Passport*

The Global Passport framework is so comprehensive that it might reasonably be expected that teachers would find it overwhelming and not readily buy into it. However, this was not the case from the evaluation findings. The majority of teachers found it very positive and helpful in planning and expanding DE throughout the school, indicating that the framework has, within a short period of time, become a valuable tool for whole-school DE engagement, and one which has even greater potential. The Global Passport could therefore benefit from greater levels of promotion and publicity in order to interest more schools in adopting the framework and applying for the award.

#### *Starter school strategy*

Consultation with emerging schools provided clear indications that the initiation of starter grants (or seed funding) by WWGS in 2015 has been a successful strategy in terms of engaging increasing numbers and a more varied cohort of schools from around the country. Not all of these schools are new to DE; some of them are reviving DE within the school or are accessing the funding for specific DE activities. Significantly, the vast majority of the starter schools indicated that they were definitely or highly likely to continue or expand their DE programmes in the coming year. The comments teachers made about starting slowly and building, on developing a structure for DE, on introducing DE as a TY subject and on working on a cross-curricular basis, all indicated a very strong return on the investment in these emerging schools.

### **Where is improvement needed?**

#### (i) Action component

“You can sit all day in a classroom and talk about this issue and that issue and about how terrible everything is but if you’re not actually doing anything, it isn’t much good. I think action is important” (WWGS student).

The final evaluation found that actions undertaken by students were mainly in relation to raising awareness and/or fundraising. None of them were overtly political in the sense of campaigning for greater justice, or contacting local, national or European representatives. The schools looking at climate change would have been expected to engage in lobbying the Irish government to push for change at the COP21, the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, but none of the schools took their activity to this level. While the students’ awareness had clearly grown, their attitudes had been affected, and they were taking action within the school and/or community, this, significantly, had not yet translated into more political action. The report therefore recommended that WWGS consider designing workshops to provide guidance to teachers on moving from raising awareness to students undertaking more political action.

#### (ii) Principals and school management

The principals from the eleven schools who were interviewed as part of the final evaluation were all supportive of DE, although to very different levels. Some were actively engaged in supporting DE through joint planning with teachers, facilitation of planning and co-ordination time, and support for team building. Others were supportive to the extent that they facilitated the inclusion of DE on the timetable as long as there were teachers interested in teaching it, but they would not have been the main drivers of the initiative. This points to the need for WWGS to use some of their resources to work directly with principals and other school management to help them to develop their understanding of DE and to motivate and support them to actively promote DE within the wider school.

The report highlights that engagement by the school principal is an important element of developing a whole school approach to DE. Endeavouring to increase engagement by principals in the Global Passport could usefully be addressed by WWGS, through bodies such as the NAPD, the ETBI, JMB and ACCS, all of whom sit on the WWGS Education Panel [6]. The report recommends that WWGS should use some of its resources to work directly with principals and other school management to develop their understanding of DE and to motivate and support them.

### (iii) WWGS funding for NGOs to work with schools

A number of clear findings emerged from a focus group conducted as part of the final evaluation with coordinators from eight of the NGOs currently in receipt of WWGS funding to work with schools on a broad range of DE projects. They were very appreciative of the support from and positive relationship with the WWGS team and found the training days that are run twice a year by the programme extremely helpful, not only in terms of information and guidance, but also because it helped build relationships between them as organisations.

The concerns of WWGS-funded NGOs related to their difficulties in having to fit into a highly competitive annual funding system. This hindered them in planning in advance and negatively affected their relationships with

schools. A strong theme that emerged was the desire to develop a more strategic partner relationship with WWGS and to cooperate more closely with each other in targeting schools, and on complementing each other's work. A second area of concern was the relationship between teacher capacity building and direct work with students. While there had been a move to prioritise teacher capacity building through WWGS, the NGO representatives felt that there should also be recognition that working with students is part of that:

“They do go hand in hand. An organisation can be doing both.”

Several of the group talked about the diversity of expertise among the NGOs which are being funded and said clearly that they didn't think teachers can be expected to do all that:

“The voices within the community are often not reflected in mainstream media and all of us would be coming in with critical approaches to issues that affect young people, so I feel quite passionately about student workshops that they're not a symptom of inadequate teacher capacity but they're an integral part of the relationship (with schools) that teachers feel extremely supported by.”

A clear mismatch has emerged between the type of support and relationship that NGOs aspire to have with a programme such as WWGS and the relatively narrow nature of the annual grant funding that is currently available to them. The report therefore recommends that WWGS should assess the possibilities to offer multi-annual funding to well-established NGOs with a good track record in delivering quality DE to schools to enable them to plan for a longer term than one year. The programme should also jointly explore with NGOs the possibilities of developing more strategic partnerships.

## **Opportunities**

The major opportunities identified through the evaluation relate to the curriculum and teacher CPD.

#### Opportunity 1: Curriculum

“I don’t think that development education lives on its own. It’s almost like a lifestyle for me as a teacher, that it flows into every subject, especially with English and Geography.”

In terms of strategic planning for the future, there are opportunities for WWGS to support the integration of DE into the curriculum through the new Junior Cycle and through developments at Senior Cycle as they occur. Ireland’s National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (Department of Education and Skills, 2014) offers opportunities for engagement with the DES and mainstreaming of DE. The new Leaving Certificate Politics and Society course (NCCA, 2016), to be piloted in the 2016/2017 academic year, will offer an opportunity for WWGS to support Strand 4 of the course, which focuses on globalisation and sustainable development. This could be done through annual WWGS CPD events or through specific CPD targeted at teachers teaching this course.

Schools that have begun to expand DE out from TY and to engage in cross-curricular work have found it exciting and rewarding. The curricular steps of the Global Passport can support this expansion, as could the establishment of DE teams in schools, supported by substitution cover for in-school planning meetings. The *Doing DE* series that WWGS initiated in 2014, which consists of a series of guidance notes on how to teach mainstream subjects with a DE lens, can play a key role in helping teachers new to DE to recognise the possibilities within the curriculum. The series of resources produced to date for Junior Cycle English, Business Studies and Digital Media Literacy (WWGS, 2016) have been welcomed by teachers, school leaders and the NCCA. It is crucial to scale up this series so that busy teachers have an instant route into DE in their own subject area. In relation to Science (the next in the series to be developed), resources developed in this area could be a stimulus for teachers to encourage their students to submit projects related to

the Science for Development Award as part of the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition. It could also be of benefit to produce a resource that maps DE onto each curricular area, so that teachers new to DE have an overview of how it relates to their own subject area.

#### Opportunity 2: Nature of CPD and support to teachers

The teacher CPD and on-going support offered by WWGS is highly compatible with the model for teachers' learning outlined in *Cosán: Framework for Teachers' Learning*, published by the Teaching Council in March 2016. As the consultation on the implementation of this framework is carried out, WWGS can continue to contribute to its development and to ensure that its CPD will secure recognition by *Cosán*. It will be essential for any CPD to comply with the criteria set by *Cosán* by the date of its implementation in 2020. Given that schools are working in relative isolation from each other, the provision of additional CPD organised on a regional basis could be of considerable benefit to teachers and schools. It could facilitate the participation in CPD by a greater number of teachers from any one school and help maintain the motivation of teachers, as well as leading to higher quality DE. Regional CPD would also contribute to the maintaining of relationships between WWGS and teachers, without the time demands of visits by the Project Officers to individual schools. The regional CPD could be facilitated either directly by WWGS or by NGOs working on specific themes of relevance to the schools in a particular area.

As increasing numbers of schools begin to engage with WWGS through the Global Passport, it is likely that this engagement will also begin to include requests to attend CPD events, as well as the annual conference. There will be opportunities for WWGS to broaden its range of relationships with schools (beyond those that are grant-funded), but this, in turn will put increased pressure on staff and resources, so will need to be carefully managed.

## **Challenges**

In terms of challenges, the main external challenge to the programme both now and in the future is that of the difficult industrial relations climate between teachers and the Department of Education and Skills, and the resulting delays in the reform of the Junior Cycle. As industrial action looks set to escalate over the next academic year, this may impact on the implementation of any DE initiatives, and in the case of WWGS in relation to teachers attending CPD and schools applying for the Global Passport.

#### Challenge 1: Quality vs. Quantity

Education and the transformation of schools is a long term process, and in order to impact on the educational system, depth rather than breadth is required. Although it is integrated into many curricular areas, DE is not a discrete subject within the current curriculum. It is highly unlikely that all post primary schools, or even a substantial majority, will engage with DE. In the light of the multitudinous demands placed on schools at present, it would seem eminently sensible, and more effective, for WWGS to concentrate on supporting the development of quality DE and a whole-school approach in its existing cohort of funded schools, while at the same time, slowly increasing the number of schools engaging with DE, as the capacity and resourcing of the programme allows.

As schools become more confident in the integration of DE in the curriculum and progress to the Special Global Passport level, it would also be reasonable for WWGS to reduce the level of support provided to them as individual schools and to focus primarily on emerging schools. It may be helpful for WWGS to develop a 4-5 year plan of support based on average progress by schools in establishing DE. This would assist in forward planning and assessment of the number of schools it can reasonably support.

#### Challenge 2: Terminology of development education in schools

An additional challenge (which could also be seen as an opportunity) is that of the terminology of DE. There has been a longstanding discussion of the continued use of the term development education as opposed to global citizenship education (GCE), which is more common in other countries.

UNESCO uses the term GCE and has named it as one of the strategic areas of work for their Education Programme 2014-2017. Within DE circles in Ireland, there are opposing views on the terminology, but there are valid reasons for considering changing it in relation to work in schools.

Development education is not easily understood by teachers or principals who have not encountered it before and it can lead to a misconception that it is purely about development in the global South, rather than about issues of interconnectedness, interdependency, human rights and global justice. During the evaluation consultations, it was evident that principals were much more likely to talk about their students becoming global citizens than about development education. Global citizenship seems to be a more generally accessible concept that fits better with today's world. Interactions with teachers bear this out, with global citizenship seen to be a much more understandable term, and one which can be more easily related to the curriculum, thus facilitating the development of a whole-school approach. It corresponds to the language used in the Junior Cycle statements of learning and additionally incorporates the notion of taking action, which may not be immediately evident in development education.

### **Conclusion: where to next?**

Having successfully met its goal of creating an increased demand for DE, the critical question for WWGS now relates to how it will now meaningfully cater to that demand and consolidate this growth? Significant progress has been made by WWGS within a three-year period in terms of providing relevant and flexible support to schools to enable them to engage with DE in a sustained and qualitative way. It is imperative that this level of progress is maintained and that existing engagement is deepened, in order to build a sustained momentum around DE in our post-primary schools.

The predecessor programme to WWGS, the WorldWide Schools Linking and Immersion Scheme, was mentioned at the start of this article. It operated from 2008-2011, intensively engaging and supporting 68 post-primary schools in their global school partnership projects during that period.

Significant momentum and in-depth engagement was created, only to be lost in the gap that ensued between the conclusion of that programme and the creation, tendering and set-up of its replacement, WWGS. It is vital that this does not happen again, that the clear lessons emanating from this most recent evaluation process are carefully heeded, and that the long-term focus remains on the formation of skilled and empathetic young global citizens.

“We’re looking for a rounded education, educating the whole child. Students have access to information about what’s happening on a global scale and the school needs to deal with it and help them process it. They need to have an understanding of the interconnectedness of the world and their place in it” (WWGS principal, 2016).

## Notes

[1] Significant changes have been introduced in Ireland’s Junior Cycle at post primary level including newly developed subjects, short courses, a focus on literacy, numeracy and key skills, and new approaches of assessment and reporting.

[2] By the WWGS Midterm Review, Steering Committee, and annual reports.

[3] The WWGS Global Passport Award is a self-assessed and externally-audited accreditation for development education that is open to all post primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. It offers a framework of support to assist the integration of DE into schools across seven key areas (or stamps), providing recognition and validation for this work.

[4] Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) is the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, launched in May 2005 by the Department of Education and Skills, which is the main policy instrument to address educational disadvantage.

[5] For web surveys, a 30-40 percent response rate is common, even with populations that are young and have easy access to the web’ (University of Wisconsin, 2010).

[6] NAPD (National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals); ETBI (Education and Training Boards Ireland); JMB (Joint Managerial Body); ACCS (Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools).

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