

The DICE Project

Development and intercultural education in initial teacher education at primary level



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The DICE project is a national education initiative that promotes the integration of development education and intercultural education in initial teacher education across four partner institutions. This article outlines the project's work, aims, and values, and describes some of its recent events and activities.

The DICE project is a national education initiative that promotes the integration of development education and intercultural education in initial teacher education (ITE) at primary level in Ireland. Formed in 2003, it is a collaborative project between Marino Institute of Education, Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education in Maynooth University, the Institute of Education in Dublin City University, and Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, with support from Irish Aid.

The DICE project works to build the capacity of lecturers and student teachers so that teachers graduating will have an understanding of development education and intercultural education and will be motivated and equipped with the pedagogic skills and values to teach these topics effectively. Through this ongoing work, student teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, ideas, and capacities necessary to integrate development education and intercultural education across the primary school curriculum.

We believe that developing global citizenship is achieved most effectively through engaging diversified perspectives; building evidence through research; sharing ideas, discussion, and debate; building an engaging and inspiring community of practice based on trust and collegiality; and being guided by the fundamental values of equality, social justice, and sustainable development.

Supporting a network of four lecturers working in development and intercultural education, the DICE project draws on a wider community in each institution who support the work of DICE. In addition to planning and delivering courses, DICE provides continuing professional development for teacher educators, resource development in Irish and English, and other networking opportunities.

By targeting the skills, knowledge, and values of people involved in education, DICE seeks to promote global solidarity, human rights, and sustainable development, and to support people to recognise and challenge discrimination and inequality, both locally and globally.

Development education, intercultural education, and global citizenship education

There are many and varying definitions of development education that practitioners avail of in Ireland. Some development educators suggest that using a rigid definition anchors it in a specific point of history, whereas it is more appropriately considered a fluid process operating in a shifting economic, social, and political context. What is common to the definitions is that development education is a dynamic and participatory process that aims to deepen people's understanding of global inequality and the interconnectedness of people and events around the world.

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For teaching and learning to have a development education focus, it should include multiple perspectives, critical thinking, and a link between local and global, and it should encourage action towards a more just and equal world. Development education questions political and unequal power relations between developing and developed nations and encourages us to consider our complicity in global injustice.

Recent events

Our aims are achieved through the four strands of work in our strategic plan: Teacher Education, Evaluation and Research, Spaces for Collaboration, and Engagement with Schools and Children.

- DICE Conference 2022:
This hybrid event considered 'Global citizenship education in a changing policy landscape'. Taking place in four locations over four days, it included 25 presentations and 400 participants from 32 institutions and organisations. The programme saw guest speakers, teacher educators, and practitioners provide a platform for meaningful discussions on global citizenship education currently, with reference to the Céim standards and the new Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy. Summary videos and graphical representations of each day can be viewed on our DICE project YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/DICEConf22>.
- DICE Project Video Series:
This collection of 32 short videos introduces various topics and experiences of global citizenship education at primary level. The videos are freely available for use via our YouTube page. They are 3–6 minutes long and are presented by students, teacher educators, teachers, and DICE supporters. They address key topics such as:
 - Education for sustainability
 - Use of picture books in classrooms
 - Exploring circularity
 - Climate change

- Multilingualism
- Léann an chomhionannais agus litríocht na nóg
- Teaching resources.

Irish Aid

The DICE project is one of Irish Aid's strategic partners in the formal education sector and is funded on a multi-annual basis. Irish Aid is the Irish government's programme for overseas development. The programme is managed by a division of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

A Better World, Ireland's policy for international development, provides the framework for Ireland's expanding development cooperation programme. It charts a clear way forward to achieve our ambition of a more equal, peaceful, and sustainable world, shaping and protecting our stability, our prosperity, our shared interests, and our common future.

Contact us

We'd love to hear from you. If you want to know more about the work the DICE project does, please contact the DICE coordinator at helen.concannon@dcu.ie. The DICE Project is currently hosted by Dublin City University on the St. Patrick's Campus.

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- Continuing professional development for teacher educators,
 - Resource development in Irish and English,
 - Other networking opportunities.
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