



Out of the Comfort Zone?

Global Citizenship Education and Cross-Sector Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Kerstin Wittig-Ferguson
and Harm-Jan Fricke

July 2021





Bridge 47 – Building Global Citizenship is a joint project of 14 European and global partner organisations, co-funded by the European Union. The project aims at mobilizing and strengthening civil society worldwide to innovate for more transformative Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and advocate for the realization of target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Bridge 47 Network brings people of various backgrounds together to learn from each other and collaborate across sectors. Get more info and join the network on: www.bridge47.org

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Introduction

This publication

This publication provides examples of partnerships involving civil society and a wide range of actors in different sectors: from policy makers to academia, from media to health services, from businesses to museums. The partnerships, initiated by Bridge 47, promoted learning about and for sustainable development using a variety of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) methods. Their experiences form the basis for **suggestions that aim to encourage further explorations of cross-sector collaborations.**

During the past four years, Bridge 47 investigated the development of 36 partnerships involving GCE organisations and actors in other sectors. 21 of these investigations led to practical collaborations. To illustrate the range of these collaborations nine case studies are presented in this publication (see Fig. 1.1).



Fig. 1.1: Examples of Cross-Sector Partnerships explored by Bridge 47

Case studies from the Bridge 47 partnerships are included in the report and placed in wider contexts that give attention to:

- how **issues of sustainable development** can be dealt with through cross-sector partnerships,
- how **Global Citizenship Education** can be used as an approach in such partnerships,
- how cross-sector partnerships can explore their contribution to **transformative, systemic change**.
- how **cross-sector partnerships can be organised**: a guide to their initiation, implementation and development.

Sustainable development challenges for GCE organisations

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹ provides a challenge for governments, civil society, businesses, institutions and authorities alike - including for GCE organisations. Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focuses that challenge on education. It aims to ensure that:

“... all learners acquire the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development ...”,

thereby contributing to SDG 4 Quality Education which aims to:

“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”²

For those involved in GCE, the scale and ambition of Target 4.7 requires thinking outside the box: exploring the world beyond existing partnerships and involving new participants through work with actors who have not previously been engaged with GCE – including those who may not have heard of Global Citizenship Education.

Exploring such cross-sector partnerships raises many questions for GCE organisations, including:

- how to break out of a familiar working landscape to one that is, as yet, unknown,
- how to work with actors who have not previously been engaged through GCE,
- how to work with those whose practices contradict, or may seem to contradict, the values and approaches that underpin GCE,
- how to create the time and resources for a venture whose benefits may not be immediately clear,
- and last but not least: how to relate all this to the aims of the organisation and its interpretation of GCE.

¹ UN (2015)

² UN (2020), emphases added.



GCE organisations

‘**GCE organisations**’ is the term used in this report to describe a variety of organisations and initiatives that are concerned with:

- education and learning,
- investigating and promoting attention to sustainable development,
- using a perspective in which local phenomena are placed within a wider, global, context,
- applying a questioning, reflective and action-oriented approach in considering the issues.

The organisations themselves may describe their work as Development Education, Global Learning, Global Education, Human Rights Education, Peace Education, Education for Sustainable Development or another form of ‘adjectival education’. What unites them is a global orientation in pursuing personal or societal transformation, using communication or education approaches.

Bridge 47

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Goals aims to address the challenges we all face by calling for a transformation of vision about our relationships with each other and with nature. It argues that transformation is required since business as usual is unable to meet the needs of all people within the means of the natural environment.

Through its emphasis on Target 4.7, Bridge 47 addresses this challenge by mobilising civil society to contribute to global justice and eradication of poverty through Global Citizenship Education. The work of Bridge 47 focuses on:

- the development of a global network in support of global citizenship,
- advocacy in support of national, EU and global policies that recognise and actively support the role of GCE in achieving the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- the development of cross-sector partnerships in support of GCE,
- the development of civil society capacity and innovation to improve the reach, effectiveness and impact of GCE.



Global citizenship

For many GCE organisations **'global citizenship'** is a term that applies to *'all human beings ... in virtue of rights and duties which we all have as human beings'*³, incorporating the notion that *"individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local and non-local networks rather than single actors affecting isolated societies"*⁴

How that global citizenship, or indeed the concept itself, is practically interpreted varies from country to country and from organisation to organisation. The focus may be on, for instance, moral, political, critical, economic, cultural, environmental or spiritual aspects of (global) citizenship.⁵ For Bridge 47 *"the essence of global citizenship is built upon the involvement of different groups within decision making"*.⁶

Opportunities

During the past four years Bridge 47 has supported various initiatives that explore how cross-sector partnerships can be developed beyond existing collaborations which typically involve the formal and nonformal education sectors. As the following pages aim to illustrate, these initiatives make use of GCE organisations' experiences, approaches and methods and relate them to opportunities that exist beyond partnerships with 'the usual suspects'. GCE organisations have contributed to such 'unusual' partnerships through:

- a values-based approach: one that relates well to the stated principles (if not the practices) of many governments, authorities, institutions and businesses,
- an education approach: developing understandings and skills that are relevant to the partners,
- awareness raising approaches: for example, using stories that assist in familiarisation with different experiences,
- enquiry based methods: creating an engagement with multiple ideas, opinions and understandings,
- participatory approaches: enabling active involvement of the partnership in exploring the issues – and thereby often enthusing partners who may be more used to receiving top-down briefings,
- processes that use learning as a stimulus to consider and plan change.

3 Dower (2002) quoted in Fricke, Gathercole and Skinner (2015)

4 <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/global-citizenship>

5 Oxley and Morris (2003)

6 <https://bridge47.org/global-citizenship#concept>, also see: <https://concordeurope.org/2013/11/15/towards-a-world-citizen-movement-the-johannesburg-compass/>

Although the benefits of each partnership are likely to be unique, from a GCE organisational perspective, two advantages appear to be common to all partnerships:

- introducing the principles, intentions and approaches of GCE to a new audience - thereby contributing to SDG Target 4.7, and
- learning how a particular (non-GCE) sector relates to, views, experiences and considers acting on sustainable development – learning that can add to the GCE organisation’s own experiences, perspectives and future work.

The experiences gained from the Bridge 47 partnerships offer an insight into how partnerships can be started, the pitfalls to avoid and how opportunities can be made use of: addressing the challenges of sustainable development through education and learning, thereby contributing to the aim of enabling all people to lead fulfilling lives within the ecological means of the planet.



Things to keep in mind

As the guide makes clear, developing partnerships takes time and effort, and developing partnerships so they contribute to systemic transformation takes longer. The examples given in this publication only begin to scratch the surface. They aim to contribute to reflection, dialogue, and the sharing of knowledges and experiences within the GCE sector and beyond: advancing the intentions of GCE through addressing opportunities and challenges of cross-sector partnerships. In working towards that, the following experiences and learning from Bridge 47’s partnerships work are worth bearing in mind:

- All partnerships are unique,
- Research into a particular sector and potential partners is crucial,
- Investigating, developing and presenting a proposition that is of interest to a prospective partner takes time and other resources – but resources that are well spent in the end,
- Adjust the language: using GCE terminologies and related jargon does not work – and can be a major turn-off,
- Personal contact, a professional approach and time for relationship building is key to launching and maintaining a partnership,
- Consistent contact with the partner is important in maintaining momentum – changes in staff break the continuity, therefore aim to develop organisational level connections and not only personal ones,
- Flexibility is central to building solid partnerships.

Case Study 1

Bridging Global Health and Poverty – Making a Local GCE-informed Impact with a Global Perspective



Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IDEAS Scotland together with Scotdec• NHS Scotland
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health Sector• Civil Society Development Education/GCE organisations
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partnership around strengthening global citizenship education across the NHS Scotland
How did it start?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following an encounter at a conference, Bridge 47 provided the opportunity and resources to offer something specific and turned the encounter into a partnership
Sustainable development issues and themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global Health, Poverty & Inequality• In 2018, the Scottish Global Health Co-ordination Unit was established through the NHS Scotland Global Citizenship Programme to co-ordinate health partnership work within the NHS.• The partnership and the resource produced focus on the SDGs in their entirety.
Global Citizenship Education links	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GCE methodologies used in needs analysis workshop with NHS staff• NHS Scotland has their own GCE Programme – many NHS members volunteer overseas and want to contribute to the community upon return, others may not have a chance to volunteer, thus GCE offers a ‘global’ experience connected to local reality• SDG resource developed, tailored for NHS staff, based on GCE approaches – encourages critical reflection on the determinants of health, power dynamics and assumptions• The GCE approach used in the resource explores the interconnections between local actions in Scotland and global impacts, particularly in relation to the SDGs.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two needs analysis workshops for NHS staff• SDG resource published, tailored to NHS staff• One online workshop for NHS staff and further GCE workshop materials for in-house professional development
Benefits	<p>Benefits for NHS Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of very practical and relevant resource to advance GCE within NHS (in line with policy recommendations)• Partnership brought fresh ‘outside’ element, a different expertise, different way of thinking <p>Benefits for IDEAS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wider engagement of citizens into GCE• Tapping into a ‘new’ sector with wide outreach to citizens (around 10% of Scottish population)• Turning challenges of working with a different sector into learning opportunities for IDEAS
Learning from partnership development and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The importance of personal relations between the partners as a driving force for the partnership• The importance of highly committed key persons within the partner institution that really understand the issue and advocate for it internally• The importance of carrying out comprehensive research and getting to know the other sector, their way of working, potential hierarchical structures and ways of operation• Allow time for the partnership to develop
Further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://www.scottishglobalhealth.org/resources/• https://www.scottishglobalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/NHS_SDG_Booklet_DIGITAL.pdf• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlWHOSbFu9A

1. Sustainable Development and Cross-Sector Partnerships

There are few public or private institutions that cannot contribute to sustainable development. However, neither civil society, nor businesses, nor public authorities or policy decision makers will be able to do this successfully on their own. To contribute effectively and with lasting impact will require collaboration across different sectors, bringing together different ‘actors’ each with their own needs, opportunities, priorities and perspectives.

This chapter focuses on sustainable development issues raised by Bridge 47 sponsored partnerships. The chapter, including two examples of partnerships, illustrates the range of themes such partnerships address, gives examples of how partnerships have introduced them and provides opportunities and challenges for GCE organisations in promoting sustainable development through this work. Chapter 2 continues the discussion by looking at the unique contribution of Global Citizenship Education in organising such cross-sector collaboration.



Sustainable development and sustainability

Sustainable development: “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”.⁷

Or, to put it differently, **a process of change** in how people make use of, organise, respond, contribute and relate to natural environments, economic activities, social organisation, cultures and politics **aiming to lead to ‘sustainability’**: the earth’s biosphere and human civilisations co-existing without undermining both current and future human needs and ambitions.⁸

The consequences of climate change, biodiversity loss, Covid-19, the 2008 financial crisis, to name only some of the recent crises in human and planetary affairs, illustrate what happens when sustainable development does not occur. Increasing inequalities combine with growing ecological pressures to create societies where poverty is rising, more people go hungry, where conflicts about access to resources escalate, and where society fragments.⁹ The result is societies in which both current and future human needs and ambitions are undermined, particularly affecting marginalised and poor people, but with repercussions across humanity.

⁷ Brundtland Commission (1987)

⁸ This description of sustainable development may be felt to be too limited. It does not, for example, include any reference to issues of economic, social or political equity and justice: issues that are of prime concern to many GCE organisations. The description is used here however since 1) it is generally recognised as a good starting point, including by the sectors with which GCE organisations may wish to develop partnerships, and 2) it is sufficiently broad to enable different perspectives to be discussed and acted on.

⁹ See, for example, UNDP (2020), Shafak (2020), Rowe (2021)

Business as usual is no option if environmental, economic, social and political emergencies are to be countered. ‘Business as usual’ would involve the prospect of ongoing crisis management – addressing the symptoms but not the underlying systemic problems. Instead, sustainable development will require a transformation in lifestyles, in the way in which we do business, in the manner of our politics and the way in which we value people and planet. In other words, it will require a systems change in how we operate, how we value our shared humanity and natural environment. Where better to start than in working with those who are involved in aspects of the current system: businesses, authorities and civil society?

Why cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development?

Transformation (“*a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that thing or person is improved*”¹⁰) raises numerous issues and questions about the environment and about current and possible futures. For example, transforming our existing ‘growth ideology’, which underpins much of our current European and global way of thinking and living, into one that is compatible with sustainable development, creates fundamental questions about environmental, economic, social and political values.¹¹

Transforming what we value, developing relevant skills and re-organising our way of living touches on multiple aspects of life. The connections between the natural environment and public, private, and civil entities are so entwined that no-one sector on its own will be able to create the transformation that is needed. Transformation through single-sector responses, although they too will be needed, will be inadequate to develop the values, capabilities and agency needed for sustainable development.¹²

As this publication illustrates, partnerships between actors from different sectors can provide added value to the work of each actor. However, as the experiences of Bridge 47 partnerships make clear, the benefits of partnerships do not appear overnight. Establishing effective partnerships takes time: developing mutual trust, engaging with different (possibly uncomfortable) perspectives, experiences, needs, and creating shared understandings – all that typically happens slowly. For those GCE organisations that want to explore the development of cross-sector partnerships in promoting their aims to a wider audience, the Sustainable Development Goals offer a good starting point.

10 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/transformation>

11 See, for instance, Raworth (2017) and UNDP (2020)

12 See, for example, CCF (2020), Stibbe and Prescott (2020), Prescott and Stibbe (2020)

The SDGs as an entry into cross-sector discussions

For many of the cross-sector partnerships described here, the starting point or hook for discussions about sustainable development has been the existence of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a set of interconnected aims for global and local development informed by discussions and inputs from governments, businesses, academia and civil society organisations and agreed by the United Nations in 2015.¹³

None of the individual Goals say anything that hasn't been said before, but what is (or was in 2015) new is that the Goals express a commitment by all UN members to work towards the Goals and its multiple targets - and an encouragement to private enterprise and civil society to do so too. Apart from a sense of universal applicability, design of the SDGs is explicitly based on attention to the interconnected nature of the Goals – in other words there is a relationship between them that attempts to provide a systemic perspective.

The SDGs provide a connecting opportunity for GCE organisations to bring different interests together in partnerships:

- discussing how people, organisations, authorities or businesses have an impact on people and environment globally,
- exploring how the work of each partner can feed into systemic changes that support sustainable development.

¹³ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



Fig. 1.2: Potential thematic collaborations on the basis of the SDGs

Source: McKiernan (2017)

Individual organisations, businesses and authorities are likely to have a connection with one or more of the SDGs (see Fig. 1.2). For example:

- A broadcaster, in programmes about human rights, may focus in particular on * SDG 16 Peace and Justice. Collaboration with a GCE organisation can provide the broadcaster with story lines, contacts, interviewees and different perspectives that enliven the TV programmes and place them in a broader sustainable development context (see for example case study 2).
- Given its concerns, a trade union network may specifically focus on issues to do with conditions of work, equality, or the globalisation consequences on employment. Partnership with a GCE organisation can support framing such issues in relation to e.g. * SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, * SDG 6 Gender Equality, * SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, or * SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities, supporting the design of appropriate actions that address the union's issues but within the context of the SDGs;
- A workshop, facilitated by a GCE organisation, with representatives of a business may give attention to all SDGs – as a means of enabling participants to identify those that their business particularly relates to (see for instance Case study 3).

From both an SDG and a GCE perspective it is establishing the connections between the different SDG themes that provides a challenge and a task (see Fig. 1.2): exploring system-wide issues and the potential contributions that a single Goal can make to transformation in support of sustainability.

In working in partnership with others, one of the prospects for GCE organisations is to encourage and enable such a wider, systemic, exploration in a manner that leads to meaningful change. ‘Meaningful’ in the sense of practical, rather than only verbal, responses to the issues.

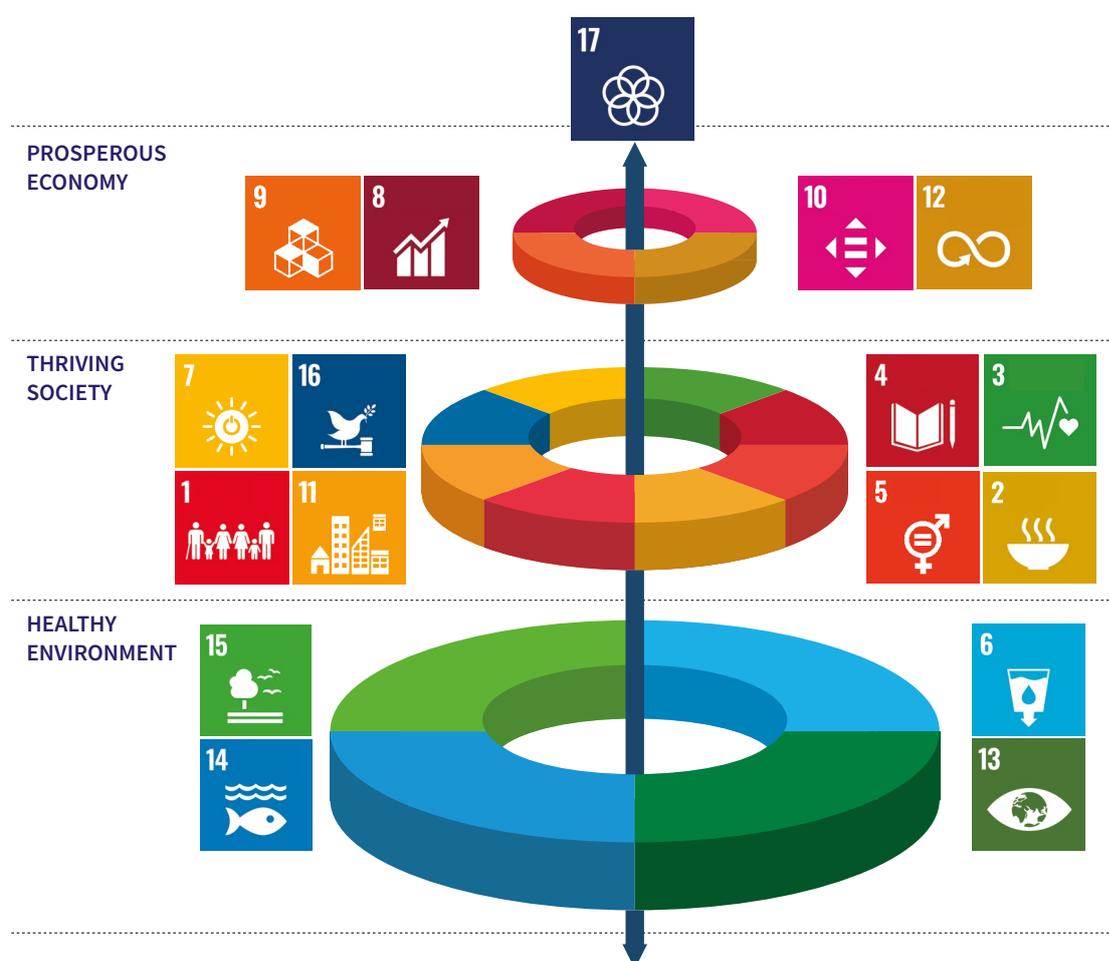


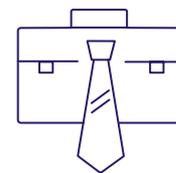
Fig. 1.3: The interconnected themes of the Sustainable Development Goals

Source: based on Stibbe and Prescott (2020)



Reaching a Wider Audience: Perspectives, Contacts and Ideas for a Broadcasting Partnership

Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AKÜ (Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation: a network of 34 NGOs) with • ERR (Estonian National Broadcasting Company)
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Citizenship Education, and • Media (ERR's ETV2 channel)
What?	A series of media programmes and clips, broadcast via TV and cinema
Origin/Initiation	The broadcaster approached AKÜ for suggestions on information and contributors to a programme on sustainable development.
Sustainable development themes	An initial collaboration (as part of ETV2's 'Environment month') involved development of a TV programme that included a focus on the SDGs. Collaboration continued as part of 'Human Rights month' which led to TV clips and programmes on: Children's rights, Living in conditions of war, Migration and Refugees, Mine clearance.
Global Citizenship Education approaches	<p>AKÜ provided ETV2 with story line suggestions, local-global perspectives and inputs from relevant informants and interviewees.</p> <p>The approach of the programmes and clips was focussed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public awareness raising, • development of public understanding of the issues and of GCE.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the programmes and clips also developed collaborations with, amongst others, the police, Estonian ambulance service and the Estonian Rescue Board (fire brigade and related emergency services, including bomb disposal). • The programmes and TV clips were watched by an estimated 280,000 viewers in total – a significant number in the context of Estonia.
Benefits	<p>From the media partner's perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacts with and involvement of a trusted network to inform and develop future programmes on (sustainable) development, GCE and related issues. As ERR ETV2 put it: "Cooperation with AKÜ helps us to create a bigger picture, which is our mission as a media channel." <p>From the Estonian Rescue Board's perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We will use this clip as a teaching tool in our classroom since this documentary shows people how things are done 100% in development countries" <p>From AKÜ's perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacts with a broadcasting organisation enable a wide dissemination of sustainable development issues and of Global Citizenship Education concerns.
Learning from the partnership	<p>The importance of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal, effective and mutually supportive contacts between partner representatives • Providing added value to the partner • The value of introducing (and explicitly taking account of) multiple perspectives • Diversifying the range of speakers/interviewees (e.g. male/female, local/national/international, different cultural/national backgrounds) • Avoiding GCE jargon, instead choosing content and words that are used, and can be related to, by the audience.



Facilitating Understanding and Responses to the SDGs in a Business Environment

Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEA (Irish Development Education Association), with support from members Global Action Plan and Development Perspectives • Deloitte Ireland
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Education and • Business Consultancy
What?	<p>Workshops for Deloitte staff during their Community and Environmental Impact Weeks and two workshops involving in total 100 new Deloitte Ireland audit team staff as part of their induction. Workshops enabled participants to reflect and think critically about the SDGs, exploring their relevance and opportunities for action in business and personal contexts. Previous to these, Deloitte had already identified a number of SDGs that were of particular interest to the company's concerns. This offered IDEA a useful basis on which to develop the partnership. The workshops will be followed up through further collaboration between the partners in future events.</p>
Origin	<p>Initial contacts were made at an event¹⁴ organised by IDEA in partnership with Business in the Community Northern Ireland (BITCNI) in which Deloitte representatives were invited to take part.</p>
Sustainable development themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One workshop (led by IDEA together with its member Development Perspectives) explored the concepts of 'sustainability' and 'development' and their relevance to local communities. It placed these concepts within the context of the SDGs and then explored in more detail four SDGs prioritised by Deloitte. • Within the context of all of the SDGs, a different workshop explored in more detail the targets of SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities within and between Countries: obtaining suggestions from participants on actions that would be relevant and opportune * personally, for * Deloitte, for * the government and for * civil society.
Global Citizenship Education approaches	<p>The workshops used participatory methods and explicitly gave attention to * the use of a global perspective (placing local phenomena in a global systemic framework), * the use of enquiry, dialogue and discussion, * an exploration of the relevance of issues to participants' situations, * opportunities to reflect on and design actions in response to the discussions.</p>
Benefits	<p>For Deloitte Ireland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to empower participants "to take action and make positive change within both the professional and personal lives", placing "the SDGs in the context of a real-life, everyday crisis that needs to be solved both within our communities and globally." <p>For participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance and process of the workshops raised awareness, understanding and further interest in the SDGs – both at personal and professional levels. <p>For IDEA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the principles and concerns of Development Education/GCE to an audience that plays a key role in initiating attention to sustainable development in the business sector
Learning from the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal contacts play a crucial role • Important to start where the partner 'is at' and avoid GCE jargon • Maintain the partnership through regular contact and, where appropriate, participation in each other's events • Explicitly explore collaboration in further events to build on work done so far
Further information	<p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFwtKPh9xOE</p>

¹⁴ Video of IDEA's networking forum in partnerships with BITCNI: <https://youtu.be/b10wHcjltsU>

The SDGs: challenges for GCE organisations

As an internationally agreed set of aims the SDGs have a status whose significance is recognised by different actors and sectors. This gives GCE organisations a ready-made opportunity to approach other sectors about various sustainable development issues.

However, GCE organisations would not be living up to their intention of promoting critical engagement with global development if they didn't scrutinise the SDGs. That there is a need for scrutiny of the SDGs and of the progress towards achieving the aims is clear from both UN reports and from commentary of researchers and the public in North and South.¹⁵

In addition to statements about the SDGs being overambitious, unattainable or lacking dedicated finance, criticism has also been voiced relating to core sustainable development themes such as poverty, economic systems, inequality, power and human rights, including:

- Although Goal 1 is headlined 'No Poverty', structural reasons for the existence of poverty are not explored and the targets linked to poverty focus on a reduction rather than an elimination;
- Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth includes a target relating to "*global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour[ing] to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation*" but other economic targets could easily be treated as 'business as usual';
- Although the 2030 Agenda refers to the collective responsibility of government, enterprise and civil society to achieve the SDGs, reference to power and how it is wielded and who makes the decisions about people and planet are absent;
- Human rights are largely invisible in the aims and targets of the SDGs;
- The (historical and current) reasons for inequality are ignored, and although various targets focus on aspects of inequality, the fundamental reasons for economic, social, political and environmental disparities are not explicitly addressed.

15 An internet search on 'criticism of the sustainable development goals' and the latest SDG progress reports gives ample food for thought about the shortcomings of the SDGs and of progress towards them. See for example: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/progress-report/#:~:text=Five%20years%20since%20the%20adoption%20of%20the%20Sustainable,to%20electricity%20and%20increasing%20women%E2%80%99s%20representation%20in%20government,> and <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2015/09/23/five-reasons-to-think-twice-about-the-uns-sustainable-development-goals/>. (both accessed 19th May 2021)



Before looking at how GCE organisations can work with other sectors, it may be useful to take a step back: reflecting on the GCE organisation's own perspectives on sustainable development and the SDGs.¹⁶ The following exercise, best carried out together with a group of colleagues, may help in this:

The SDGs and your organisation's values, themes and issues:

1. Which values does your (GCE) organisation consider to be centrally important in how it works as an organisation, and in how it works with others? (Suggestion: identify your organisation's top five values.)
2. Which economic, social, natural environmental and political themes or issues is your organisation particularly concerned with? (Suggestion: identify your organisation's top five most important themes or issues.)
3. In the SDGs, which of your values, themes/issues appear to be particularly well represented and which ones not? (For the text of each Goal and Target see the SDG Global Indicator Framework¹⁷.) Do a word search in the Framework to find out which of your organisation's values, themes/issues are particularly addressed by the SDGs and which ones less so or not at all.)
4. Do your answers to the previous question give any suggestions for the kind of public, private or civil society sectors and actors you may wish to explore a partnership with?

Sustainable development beyond the SDGs

Although the SDGs provide a useful approach for discussion in cross-sector partnerships, they do not cover the whole of sustainable development or what various partners may wish to bring to that debate. For example, the absence in the SDGs of explicit attention to power relationships and decision-making will, for many GCE organisations, be a shortcoming that they may want to remedy in any discussions about sustainable development.

To overcome this the use of the Development Compass Rose may help: exploring the SDGs or a sustainable development issue and identifying possible causes, consequences and relationships between nature, economy, society and polity (see Fig. 1.4).

¹⁶ This exercise is partly based on Murphy (2020) – see there also for additional suggestions for GCE organisations to consider in their work on the SDGs.

¹⁷ https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/Global%20Indicator%20Framework%20after%202020%20review_Eng.pdf



The Development Compass Rose is a helpful approach in identifying and categorising topics and concerns and in raising questions about:

- how a particular locality, organisation, business or authority relates to a (sustainable) development issue,
- or alternatively
- how a particular sustainable development issue relates to, affects and is affected by natural, economic, social and political factors.

Instead of North, South, East and West the four main points of the compass rose represent Nature, Society, Economy and Who decides? (politics), with a further four points between these illustrating connections/relationships between them:

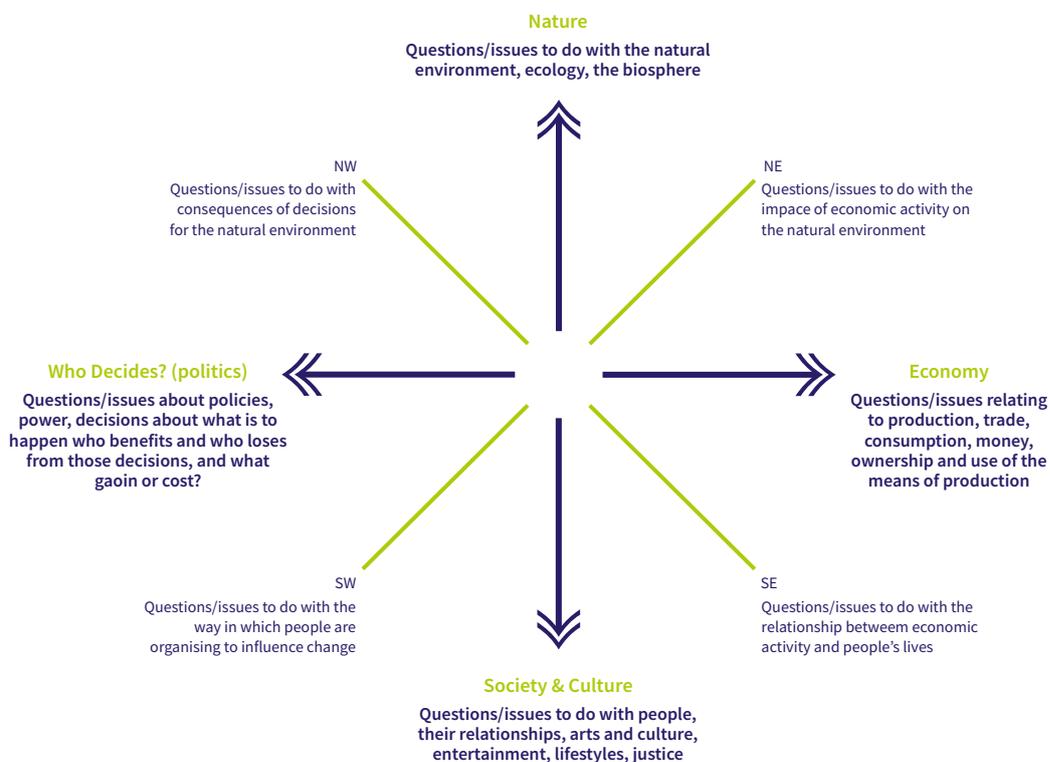


Fig. 1.4: The Development Compass Rose

Source: adapted from Tide-global learning (1995)

By including attention to decision-making and power, the Development Compass Rose gives a structure to questions and discussions about sustainable development and how it is exemplified at a local or global level or in a particular sector. In relation to ‘sustainable development’ the kind of issues that were raised and discussed in different Bridge 47 sponsored partnerships are shown in figure 1.5.

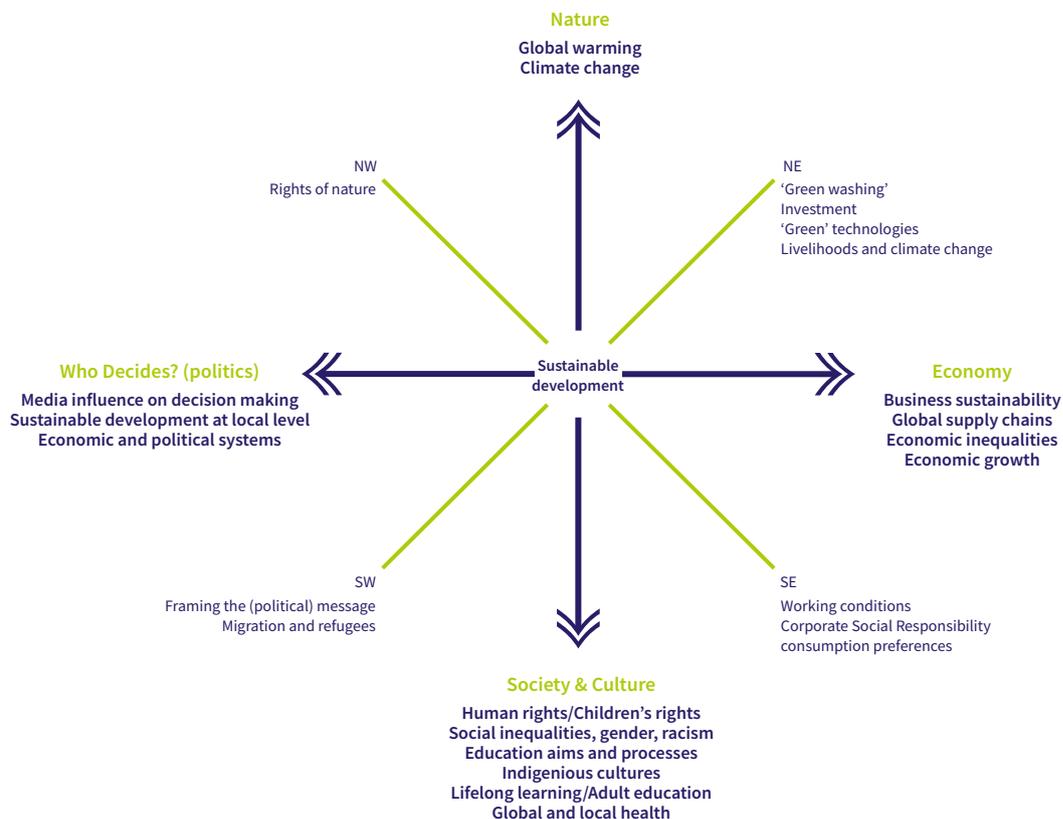


Fig. 1.5: Examples of sustainable development issues raised in selected Bridge 47 partnerships



Placing the specific sustainable development issue(s) that are of concern to a partnership in the middle of the Development Compass Rose gives an opportunity to identify questions to ask about the issue(s) in relation to each of the compass rose’s cardinal points.

This could then lead to enquiries into about how those questions could be addressed through the partnership and by its members.¹⁸

¹⁸ For further ideas on using the Development Compass Rose see: <https://www.tidegloballearning.net/primary-early-years/development-compass-rose-consultation-pack>

2. Global Citizenship Education as an Opportunity for Cross-Sector Partnerships

Global Citizenship Education as a way towards Sustainable Development and the SDGs

“By 2030 ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.” (Target 4.7 of the SDGs)

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the only way to achieve sustainable development is through a transformative approach – business as usual is no longer an option. There is a need for transformative learning, which would help *“learners to resolve persistent challenges related to sustainable development and peace that concern all humanity”*.¹⁹ Global Citizenship Education offers exactly this transformative angle in that it encourages critical reflection of existing structures and existing connections, of assumptions and biases that underpin our work, whilst encouraging practitioners to take action for positive change. GCE inspires practitioners to look deeper, to explore global issues and their interlinkages, and consequently identify entry points for their own actions.

One of the key strengths of GCE is that it encourages us to see the interconnectedness of the individual sustainable development goals, as well as the interconnectedness of the sustainable development issues on a local and global level. In this way, GCE enables us to explore the sustainable development issues from a local perspective, and at the same time encouraging critical reflection on how local action affects the global picture.

Global Citizenship Education can provide the space for the uncomfortable questions, for the challenges and the learning that can then lead to newly informed decisions and contribute to a transformative journey. Being a holistic and life-long learning approach, GCE has the potential to encourage us to re-examine our perceptions and beliefs, question and explore the systemic structures and develop creative and critical responses.

¹⁹ UNESCO (2014)



Exchanging and Building Knowledge between Higher Education and Civil Society Sectors

Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EADI European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes • Higher Education institutions • Civil society organisations
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academia and Research • Civil Society
What?	<p>Regional partnerships (Iberia, Northern Europe, South Eastern Europe) involving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • networking activities and • joint projects <p>focussed on transformative learning for sustainable development and active citizenship in Europe.</p>
Sustainable development themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 4 Quality Education and Target 4.7: the promotion of transformative education as life-long and value-based learning, promoting global citizenship, sustainable development, human rights and gender equality.
Global Citizenship Education approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquiry: into experiences of applying GCE and into theory and practice debates in the field of GCE, • Reflection and action: in relation to the application of approaches in different higher education, civil society and policy settings.
Outcomes and Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of new networks leading to ongoing exchanges, mutual learning and development of collaborative projects • Improvements in research into GCE, taking into account the limitations and characteristics of work in the field of work towards Target 4.7 • Improvements in, and new ideas for, the practice of GCE as a result of research, enabling GCE activities to be more effective
Learning from the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased mutual understanding of knowledge(s) and experience(s) relevant to GCE, from both a theoretical-academic and a practical-fieldwork based perspective
Further information	<p>EADI (2020): <i>Building knowledge exchange partnerships - dialogues across Europe</i>, available at: https://www.bridge47.org/resources/06/2021/building-knowledge-exchange-partnerships-dialogues-across-europe</p>

Defining Global Citizenship Education

Global Citizenship Education offers a critical and transformational learning approach, aiming to explore global interconnections and interdependencies, while at the same time encouraging learners to reflect on their own assumptions, their own habits and to take action for a more just and equitable world locally. There are various definitions in a variety of different institutional contexts, as well as various terminologies used to express the essence of Global Citizenship Education across different countries.

In the context of the Bridge 47 project, GCE is understood as a concept encompassing the notions of Global Education as defined by the Maastricht Declaration,²⁰ as well as Global Citizenship Education as defined by UNESCO.²¹ Furthermore, it includes the definition of the Johannesburg Compass.²²

²⁰ NSC (2008)

²¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>

²² <https://concordeurope.org/2013/11/15/towards-a-world-citizen-movement-the-johannesburg-compass/>



Global Education according to the Maastricht Declaration (2002):

“Global Education is an education that opens people’s eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all. Global Education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimension of Education for Citizenship”

Global Citizenship Education according to UNESCO (2014):

“Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aims to empower learners of all ages to assume active roles, both locally and globally, in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies.

GCED is based on the three domains of learning - cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural.

- *Cognitive: knowledge and thinking skills necessary to better understand the world and its complexities.*
- *Socio-emotional: values, attitudes and social skills that enable learners to develop affectively, psychosocially, and physically and to enable them to live together with others respectfully and peacefully.*
- *Behavioural: conduct, performance, practical application and engagement.*

The key learning outcomes, key learner attributes, topics and learning objectives suggested in GCED are based on the three domains of learning mentioned above. They are interlinked and integrated into the learning process.”

Global Citizenship according to the Johannesburg Compass (2013):

“...Global Citizenship means that all people have access to participate and influence in a world democracy. The essence of global citizenship is built upon the involvement of different groups within decision making. Global Citizenship means that rights should be the same for all peoples and responsibilities that are proportionate to their possibilities. The right of freedom of movement and settlement for everybody has to be respected”

As noted in the Introduction, other terminologies, used across different countries and in different contexts, refer to very similar concepts. For the purpose of this publication, they can be viewed as included within the wider notion of Global Citizenship Education. These include particularly the concept of Development Education (widely used in, for example, Ireland, the UK and the EU through its Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) Programme), as well as Global Learning (used in, for instance, Germany, Austria, UK). There have been long discussions and debates about their

definitions, their overlaps and their different understandings.²³ Being aware of the different terminologies and their overall common aims allows us to utilize the terminology of ‘Global Citizenship Education’ as an overarching concept.

In addition, there are a number of other educational approaches, that can be included in the wider notion of GCE. These include, for example, Human Rights Education, Active Citizenship and Democratic Citizenship Education, Peace Education, Intercultural Education, Anti-Racist Education, Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development. All these educational approaches are value-based, some, however, have a more transformative approach than others. Out of these, Education for Sustainable Development is probably the one that is most relevant to the discussions around Global Citizenship Education. In some countries, Global Citizenship Education and Education for Sustainable Development may even be competing for recognition from policy makers or for inclusion into national strategies, as well as competing for funding for their practitioners. While Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education developed differently, they do share a substantial overlap, which suggests that practitioners might want to work towards their common goal – a just and sustainable world.



Definition of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by UNESCO:²⁴

“ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society.”

With all the varying definitions above, the key elements of Global Citizenship Education can be summarised as follows:

- GCE encourages a global outlook – it promotes knowledge and understanding of global interconnections and interdependencies by exploring multiple dimensions of a particular issue (social, economic, environmental dimensions, power structure and their interconnectedness)
- GCE is a learner-centred approach based on interactive, explorative and experiential learning;
- GCE invites learners to examine own assumptions, world views and power relations in mainstream discourses and consider the perspectives and voices of those that are systematically underrepresented/marginalised;
- GCE stipulates exploration, problem solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, questioning of facts and representations;
- GCE has its basis in the universal values of social justice, solidarity and equity.

²³ GENE (2019). Also: CONCORD (2018)

²⁴ <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/what-is-esd>

Case Study 5



A Partnership towards Embedding a GCE-informed Approach in Policy Making

Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government National Performance Framework (NPF) Team • IDEAS (and partners), Scotland • SDG Network Scotland • Scotland's International Development Alliance
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Makers • Civil Society
What?	Strategic partnership with the aim to embed a GCE approach into policy making, especially with regards to the SDGs within the Scottish government. This was achieved by developing an outcome-focused guide to policy making, which is now available to all policy makers in Scotland.
Sustainable development issues and themes	All SDGs have been addressed, including existing SDG-related frameworks
Global Citizenship Education links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy guide is centred around Global Citizenship Education, encouraging policy makers to look at the bigger picture and consider the coherence of policies with the SDGs
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A policy-making resource that centres the SDGs and a GCE approach at the heart of Scottish Government policy (see link below)
Benefits	<p>Benefits for NPF Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new guide for internal use • A new perspective informing policy decision with a local and global impact <p>Benefits for IDEAS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCE now underpinning policy making in Scotland; • The partnership and its outcome raised the profile of the entire GCE sector and of their expertise <p>Benefits of the partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCE now informs Scottish policy making – the policy guide is available to around 10.000 civil servants
Learning from partnership development and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having two civil society allies on board, who had their connections within the government, helped identify the right person for the partnership pitch and also strengthened the partnership team. • The importance of personal relations between the partners as a driving force for the partnership • The importance to do research and get to know the other sector, their policy frameworks etc • Allow time for the partnership to develop • An enabling environment can make a positive difference to the partnership – if similar conversations are happening at national level, within the media, then the momentum for the partnership will be created by these surrounding developments • It would have been better to involve a larger team, so as to ensure continuity when a staff member leaves
Further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://bridge47.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/outcomes-focused_policymaking_sdg_npf_final_0_1.pdf • https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/sites/default/files/documents/NPF_A4_Booklet.pdf

‘Soft’ vs ‘Critical’ Global Citizenship Education

Many GCE practitioners see their activities on a continuum ranging from *soft* to *critical global (citizenship) education* – a concept first introduced by Vanessa Andreotti in an article published in 2006.²⁵

Soft GCE in this context is understood to encompass those approaches that are based on an understanding of a common humanity and on the need for citizens to be empowered through GCE so as to take action for a better and more equal world. Awareness raising actions and campaigns would be considered *soft GCE*. Through increased awareness and through increased skills, knowledge and understanding, the assumption is that citizens would be able to change existing structures and thus become part of the desired solution. It is often portrayed as a superficial approach responding to a perceived situation of helplessness that needs fixing with the right GCE tools.

The more *critical approach to GCE* is based on the assumption that global social injustice is perpetuated by a complex system of interconnected power relations, assumptions and attitudes, of which we are all a part. Rather than moving straight to action, *critical GCE* would encourage citizens to reflect and challenge their own biases and assumptions, to imagine different futures and to engage with and challenge existing power structures, otherwise reinforcing the injustice we are trying to fight.

In a more recent take on this, Andreotti suggests a rather fluid model of various spaces from where GCE can speak, ranging from a *soft reform space*, a *radical reform space* to a *beyond reform space*.²⁶

This approach suggests that GCE actors can speak from different spaces depending on the context they are working with. A GCE organisation might speak and act from a radical reform space when it comes to climate change and addressing global food systems but might be rooted in a soft reform space when addressing issues related to racism. When engaging in a cross-sector partnership, it can be very helpful to meet prospective partners where they are – and this might mean starting from a softer GCE space and moving towards a more critical space as the partnership develops.

While the soft vs critical GCE discussion is a useful one to have, as it encourages us to reflect on our position within this debate, our own assumptions and our own imagined solutions to the complex challenges of our interdependent world, it does not mean that all GCE practitioners will identify with this categorisation of GCE approaches. Depending on the issue and context, the experience for any GCE practitioner is likely to be moving along the continuum between a rather ‘soft’ and a rather ‘critical’ approach.

²⁵ Andreotti (2006)

²⁶ Andreotti (2015)



Before entering into a partnership with a different sector, it would be a useful exercise to reflect on our own position – on our assumptions and on our expectations as to how we think GCE can facilitate bridging sectors and developing a shared understanding – or a shared commitment to a specific issue.

- Is there a specific sector that raises tension within your organisation? Where might these tensions stem from?
- What assumptions do you have about the other sector? What are these based on?
- What biases do you have about the sector? What is the implication of these biases?
- How could these biases and assumptions be overcome?
- Would you be willing to challenge your own assumptions and biases and engage in a partnership with the particular sector, even though it might bring feelings of discomfort to you and your colleagues?
- To what extent are you willing to consider this partnership journey a GCE learning experience?

GCE as an approach to develop mutual understanding and learning between partners

How do we engage with a sector that is different from our own? How do we engage with a sector that is based on values different to ours? How do we start a conversation with an organisation or institution that is structured entirely differently from ours? Where do we find common ground to connect?

Global Citizenship Education offers a great starting point to this, perhaps uncomfortable, initial outreach and initial request for collaboration. At the very heart of GCE is the idea of identifying and challenging assumptions and existing structures; exploring interconnections and the multitude of perspectives and voices to do with an issue. This may be an opportunity to develop mutual understanding between GCE/development/justice/environment focused CSOs and other sectors. GCE is about providing a safe space to explore and discuss, to question and challenge without the pressure to reach a specific agreement or a specific result. It is a learning process that aims to challenge ourselves as much as it aims to expand our thinking and explore other perspectives. The partnership between NHS Scotland and IDEAS/Scotdec offered this safe space for discussion and exploration through their needs analysis workshops at the beginning of their partnership journey – which were crucial in identifying the next steps of the partnership and in ensuring the outcomes of the partnership would be relevant and beneficial (case study 1).

With this in mind, the GCE background and context can be very helpful in providing an environment to embark on a new journey, which might lead to a successful partnership. It is this core element of GCE that can give us, the GCE practitioners, the ‘push’ to get out of our comfort zone and create this space for dialogue, for interaction and exploration. These (perhaps somewhat uncomfortable) conversations with other sectors are in themselves an opportunity for experiential, participatory learning – both on an individual level, but also in terms of learning together and from each other.

This means that even if we are engaging with a potential partner organisation that is based on very different values than our own (for example a business whose prime objective is to enhance growth and is working towards SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth), it is helpful if we do not judge the ‘other’ but rather consider this an opportunity to broaden our own perspectives and discover where common goals align and where potential transformation could take place.

When looking at the partnerships that have been developed within the framework of the Bridge 47 project, sustainable development and the SDGs appear to be the ‘red thread’ throughout all of them. The SDGs concern everybody, and most sectors are already having conversations and possibly their own strategies about one or more of the SDGs internally – or at least about the topics and issues related to the global goals.

Although all partnerships described in this report relate to the SDGs and to sustainable development in the wider sense, some have made explicit use of GCE methodologies and approaches as a way to connect to their partner:

- Some partnerships might start off using GCE methods, for example in a workshop setting, in order to stimulate thinking about the interconnectedness of the SDGs for example.
- A partnership journey could start with open conversations and exploratory meetings and workshops based on GCE methodologies to explore connections, possible future scenarios and stimulate reflection on current ways of addressing sustainable development.

GCE as an approach to issue-based discussions in a partnership

GCE can provide a safe space in which uncomfortable and challenging discussions can take place and in which these discussions, regardless of their outcome, can be valued as a learning experience in themselves. The Bridge 47 partnership between IDEA and Women for Election in Ireland utilized GCE methodologies to provide a safe space for these initial conversations (case study 6). Interactive workshops based on GCE methodologies constituted the main partnership activities, and while the methodology was new to the partner, it worked very well to capture the engagement of the participants.

Partnerships to engage a new and larger audience through GCE

On the other hand, some partnerships might not rely on GCE methodologies so much in their partnership process, but rather focus on mainstreaming GCE as the goal of the partnership itself. This seems to be the case when forming a partnership with a sector that shares similar values, perhaps a similar educational approach and/or working with a similar target audience. In such a scenario, the partnership process itself might be less uncomfortable and partners might be able to reach a shared understanding rather quickly.

Such a partnership could amplify the impact of Global Citizenship Education in terms of outreach to citizens, as well as create a stronger team that could take on new roles in promoting GCE through new channels. The Bridge 47 partnership between SLOGA and the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) have achieved exactly this (case study 8). The two partners discovered their shared core principles quickly and through their collaboration managed to reach a very wide audience through lifelong learning festival activities, training local coordinators across the country in GCE methodologies and forming a strong team that has since taken on a new advocacy role in discussions with the Ministry of Education regarding mainstreaming Global Citizenship Education throughout the education system.

Partnerships to mainstream GCE in policies

Advocacy-based partnerships would likely focus on Global Citizenship Education as the goal rather than the means to reach a goal, with the aim of a partnership being to mainstream GCE across national policies, or to develop a national strategy that would include GCE. In such a partnership, the approaches and processes themselves might not be based on GCE methodologies, however the outcome would offer a much wider outreach/engagement of actors in Global Citizenship Education.²⁷ The Bridge 47 partnership between IDEAS and the National Performance Framework team in Scotland has managed to successfully mainstream Global Citizenship Education across Scottish policy making (case study 5). While the framework for the SDGs existed already, the partnership managed to anchor the GCE approach within the Scottish government, and by doing so, it managed to raise the profile of Global Citizenship Education as such and the profile of the GCE sector as a whole.



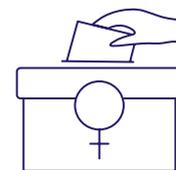
Most common GCE approaches in the Bridge 47 partnerships

- Interactive workshops and trainings based on GCE methodologies (used for example in the partnership with the NHS Scotland, Deloitte and Women for Election, case studies 1, 3 and 6)
- Space for conversations and exploration (used for instance in the partnership with EADI as well as the partnership with Women for Election, case studies 4 and 6)
- Development of GCE resources for use within partners' institutional context (for instance, resources were developed for use within the NHS Scotland and for the National Performance Framework team in Scotland, case studies 1 and 5)
- Creation of learning environments for varied age groups (as developed by the partnership between SLOGA and SIAE as well as the Latvian Museum Association, case studies 8 and 9)

²⁷ Bridge 47 has also enabled a wider partnership approach involving policy makers, academics and civil society. More details can be found at https://www.bridge47.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/envision_4.7_roadmap.pdf

Case Study 6

Exploring the SDGs through a GCE Lens as Part of Political Leadership Training



Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women for Election • IDEA (Irish Development Education Association Ireland)
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Sector • Civil Society
What?	A partnership using GCE approaches to engage future (potential) women councillors in GCE-informed discussions and exploration about the SDGs and ways to address them through local policy making
Sustainable development issues and themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDGs on the level of local politics and policy making • Localising the SDGs through local politics
Global Citizenship Education links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCE methodologies as part of the workshops for women councillors
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three workshops for women councillors and candidates in local authorities, belonging to a wide spectrum of political parties • GCE training manual on how to engage with local politicians to empower them to implement the localised SDGs (see link below)
Benefits	<p>Benefits for Women for Election</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future and current politicians became familiar with the SDGs and are much better equipped now in integrating them into their political agenda <p>Benefits for IDEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to a new audience • New contacts within the political sphere • SDGs became part of local politics • Future women councillors will be able to include the GCE perspective and possibly advocate for GCE <p>Benefits of the partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women who then run for local political positions and are members of opposing political parties came together to have conversations about how to tackle the SDGs through local politics
Learning from partnership development and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial meeting and initial pitch for the partnership is crucial. Thorough research about the partner, as well as using language that is easily understood by the target audience are fundamental to achieving a successful pitch • There is a lot of learning for GCE organisations in venturing out of the bubble, in adjusting the way we tell our story and in engaging with different audiences
Further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://bridge47.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/political_leadership_for_sustainable_development_training_manual.pdf

3. Partnerships for Transformation?

For the Bridge 47 partnerships attention to sustainable development is framed within the context of Target 4.7: “... *all learners to acquire the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development ...*.” In making a contribution to that target, Global Citizenship Education can empower us and others to transform ourselves and the world: a transformation that is needed if we want to eradicate human deprivation and environmental degradation. In creating that transformation cross-sector partnerships can play a positive – and needed – role.

This chapter aims to give some food for thought on how (cross-sector) partnerships can go beyond awareness raising and discussion of the issues to formulating actions that start to explore systemic transformation. Building on this, the next chapter, with its focus on practical steps of developing cross-sector partnerships, includes discussions on the different types of partnerships and transformations that are worth considering.

Transformation: the need to go beyond awareness raising and developing understandings

Research suggests that transformation entails two key features - crisis and unpredictability²⁸:

- ‘crisis’ not only because transformation is a direct response to an urgent situation, but also because the process itself is, from the start, unsettling: by exploring and discussing different understandings it challenges existing thought patterns, structures and processes,
- ‘unpredictable’ because it is unclear which systems, practices, and norms will prevail as a result of the transformative process: although the principles on which the new situation is based may be clear, how those principles practically work out in economy, society, polity or environment is not.

Those challenges - to thought patterns, structures and processes and the unpredictability of the ‘answers’ - can be highly uncomfortable to participants, including for those whose work involves promoting ‘learning for change’. Dearly held beliefs about progress towards justice or environmental sustainability or about practices of learning or action may be questioned as a result.

Exploring transformation – and particularly systemic transformation - requires more than raising awareness and developing understanding. On their own, awareness and understanding are unlikely to create significant behavioural change or other forms of action – and indeed in some cases raising

28 Krause (2014). On ‘transformation’ and how organisations (and partnerships) can respond to and initiate it also see, for example, Bahadur and Tanner (2012)

awareness and understanding might even be counterproductive to the creation of action.²⁹ So how can GCE organisations work towards cross-sector partnerships that not only explore systemic transformation but also develop practical actions that contribute to it? The following gives no definitive answers but instead provides two suggestions that aim to give food for thought to partnerships that want to explore how they can contribute to systemic change.

Human life between two boundaries

In response to the economic crises of the 1930s and the need for reconstruction after the second World War, emphases in economics, politics and society were placed on the growth of the economy measured as Gross National or Gross Domestic Product. Even after the consequences of the Great Depression and World War had largely been overcome in the late 1950s and 1960s, economic growth as a goal in itself continued to be the mainstay of policies and practices, and – in most cases - the key indicator for assessing a country's economic success.

Despite warnings that such a focus on growth was severely detrimental to the world's environment³⁰ and that economic growth per se did not address existing – and indeed regularly created new – inequalities,³¹ economic growth, expressed as an annual percentage increase in GDP, was seen as the means by which the world's ills (including poverty, inequality, personal fulfilment) could be cured.

Against such a view, a global realisation that the biosphere is under threat has slowly been growing (the first UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in 1972). And similarly slowly, a global recognition has grown that there is more to human welfare than can be measured through GDP (the first UNDP Human Development Report came out in 1990).

Awareness raising, education and advocacy work by development and environmental organisations and other civil society initiatives has contributed to the growth of new perspectives on economic, social and environmental values. As part of this (slow) process a rethink on how economic success can be measured has also been developed: not necessarily doing away with GDP, but instead setting objectives for economic activities to do with human welfare and stewardship of nature (see Fig. 3.1).

29 See, for example, Christiano and Neimand (2017)

30 For example Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring' in 1962 and the Club of Rome's 'Limits to Growth' in 1972.

31 For example the Brandt Commission's report 'North-South: a programme for survival' in 1980 and the Brundtland Commission's 1987 report 'Our Common Future'



The consequences of the 2008-09 financial crisis, the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic have intensified attention to issues of human deprivation and environmental degradation, not least because of civil society initiatives such as Fridays For Future and Extinction Rebellion.

Part of those initiatives has been the development of an economic model that has as its purpose not growth for its own sake, but instead meeting the needs of all people within the means of the planet.³²

Shown as a diagram it looks like a doughnut, with inside the hole of the doughnut the essentials to be met for all people, and outside the doughnut the planetary limits that make human life on earth possible.

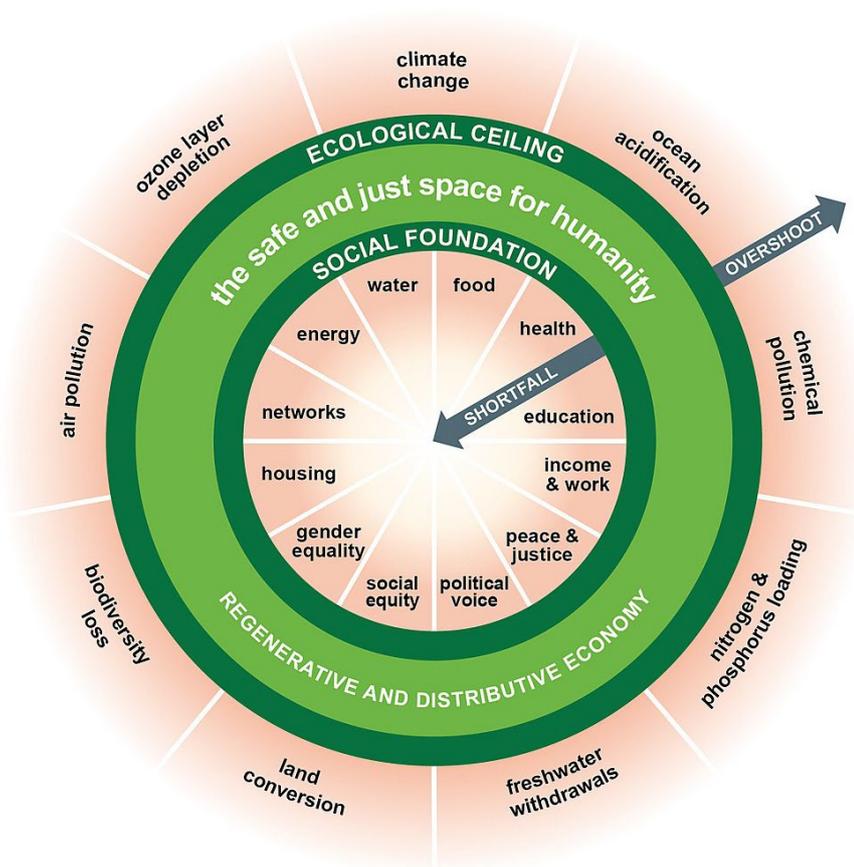


Fig. 3.1: Doughnut economics

Source: <https://doughnuteconomics.org/about-doughnut-economics>

³² Raworth (2017), also see discussion about 'Measuring Human Development and the Anthropocene' in UNDP (2020) chapter 7.



In this model the aim of economic activity, shown by the 'doughnut', is to deliver on the needs of all people whilst staying within environmental boundaries. The model tries to represent when economic activity falls short for humans through the twelve areas shown within the hole of the doughnut: key conditions that need to be met for people to be able to lead a just and fulfilling life. In addition, the model shows where economic activity is detrimental to the natural environment, indicated through nine areas outside the doughnut where human activity negatively affects the biosphere.



Discussion within a partnership about the value of Doughnut Economics could be a stimulus for further planning in a partnership:

- What contributions can the partnership - and each partner - make to the 'safe and just space for humanity'?
- What benefits would partners gain from the existence of such a 'safe and just space for humanity'?
- What limits do internal organisational structures and processes place on making use of and contributing to the 'safe and just space for humanity'?
- What would need to be done to overcome those limitations and what or who might help in this (inside and outside the partnership)?
- Hence: what might be the next steps for the partnership and its individual partners in taking practical steps that enable all people to lead fulfilling lives within the ecological means of the planet?³³

Values, skills and agency

GCE organisations are well used to expressing their work in terms of values, skills and actions.

Taken together these aim to contribute to transformation at personal, systemic and societal levels.



Fig. 3.2: Values, Skills and Agency for Sustainable Development

³³ The Doughnut Economics Action Lab provides a range of tools and suggestions to explore the Doughnut and its use in the work of individual organisations, companies and networks. See <https://doughnuteconomics.org/tools-and-stories>

The three legs of the stool in figure 3.2 are inseparable in deciding on work that a GCE organisation or a cross-sector partnership might carry out in support of sustainable development. The type of values, skills or agency that a particular partnership may wish to consider will depend on the focus of that partnership. The following lists some of values, skills (capabilities) and components of agency that are supportive of sustainable development based on various references to them in the ‘Human Development Report 2020’.³⁴



Example Values, Skills and Agency supportive of Sustainable Development

Values

“the principles that help you to decide what is right and wrong, and how to act in various situations”

Values to do with **Stewardship of nature**: what it means to maintain or (re-)create a healthy ecosystem for nature and people, including:

- Love for the beauty of nature (enjoyment, feeling and emotions)
- Utility of nature
- Environmental justice (‘the rights of nature’)

Values to do with **Living well**: what it means for people to live well, so they can lead fulfilling lives, including:

- Human dignity (respect for self and others)
- Equity (fairness, justice, equality)
- Human rights
- Identity and belonging
- Collaboration
- Compassion and solidarity
- Valuing experiences and learning

Skills/Capabilities

“an ability to do an activity or job well, especially because you have practised it”

“the ability to do something”

- Skills to do with seeing **Connections and Complexity**, for instance the ability to:
- Place specific phenomena in a wider context (systemic analysis)

Skills to do with **Innovation**, for example the ability to:

- Apply critical thought
- Think outside the box to explore solutions to problems

34 UNDP (2020)

- Plan and adjust plans at short notice when required

Agency

*“the ability to take action, or to choose what action to take”*³⁵

Being able to pursue **Quality of Life** through:

- Health and health care
- Education and lifelong learning
- Work
- Leisure

Being **able to make choices**, particularly at a personal and communal level in addressing challenges and seizing opportunities — including through:

- Participation in political and environmental decision-making
- Lobbying for or protesting against (proposed) decisions or actions
- Consumption
- Collective actions of social or cultural movements, grassroots and interest groups and organisations



The lists in the box are far from complete and there are likely to be other values, skills and aspects of agency that are specifically relevant to a particular partnership.

Given the thematic priorities of a partnership:

- Which * values, * skills and * agency could a partnership (and its individual partners) help to develop a) for themselves, and b) through their work with the public?
- How could such developments practically be supported through the work of the partnership and in the work of individual partners?

³⁵ Definitions taken from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/>, accessed 4th June 2021

A Cross-Sector Network in Support of Sustainable Development



Who?	The Estonian Coalition for Sustainable Development involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-governmental organisations,• Private businesses,• Government ministries, departments and agencies,• University and research institutes.
What?	The Coalition aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• raise the awareness amongst members of each other's work• create public awareness of sustainable development,• provide inputs into public, private, and civil society policy development,• contribute to development monitoring,• establish effective cooperation among the members leading to joint work.
Origin/Initiation	Initiated by AKÜ (the Estonian NGO Development Cooperation Network) and the government as part of developing Estonia's response to the 2030 Agenda
Sustainable development themes	The Coalition has led to the various initiatives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Upcycling' of textile waste in the fashion industry: a partnership between industry, design and environmental research,• The development of SDG national monitoring indicators,• Design of multi- and interdisciplinary modules at university level, investigating real life sustainable development issues,• Support for start-up companies in developing 'Cleantech' approaches in their work.
Global Citizenship Education approaches	Other activities of the Coalition have included public campaigns, training sessions, workshops, debates and movie and TV programmes (see for example case study 2 on a broadcasting partnership). Most of these have used GCE methodologies to inform and develop understanding, combined with an encouragement to act in relation to sustainable development.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bringing together different actors who would otherwise unlikely have had contact with each other• Reaching a wider audience than coalition members would be able to reach individually• Mutual, supportive criticism of each other's intentions and programmes helps to develop new ideas and approaches
Learning points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal contacts between members are crucial• Awareness and understanding of each other's interests, roles, needs and limitations is important in developing successful joint projects
Further information	AKÜ (2020): Building Cross-Sectoral Cooperation – Estonian Coalition for Sustainable Development: https://bridge47.org/resources/07/2020/building-cross-sectoral-cooperation-estonian-coalition-sustainable-development

4. Developing Partnerships: a Guide to Opportunities, Organisation and Pitfalls

In the previous chapters, attention has been given to:

- the opportunity that sustainable development, and in particular the SDGs, gives to GCE organisations in exploring and developing cross-sector partnerships,
- the unique contribution that GCE organisations can contribute through their values, intentions and approaches to such partnerships,
- the challenge of considering how partnerships can contribute to systemic transformation.

This chapter builds on those discussions and on the experiences of Bridge 47 cross-sector partnerships. It suggests processes and ‘things to think about’ for GCE organisations in promoting Target 4.7 through collaboration with other sectors.

Benefits of a cross-sector partnership

There are many benefits of working in a cross-sector partnership. They range from gaining new knowledge and understanding, to reaching new audiences, generating new ideas and scenarios for local and global communities, to funding, new opportunities and possibly increased credibility.

When looking at entering a new cross-sector partnership, it is important to consider the specific benefits that this very partnership can offer. A successful partnership should benefit each partner individually, so that each partner has a reason to join and maintain the partnership but should also have its own added value as the partnership as such. By combining our resources, a partnership should be able to deliver far more than each partner organisation would be able to do alone.



It is useful to reflect on the expected benefits before entering into a partnership, so that they can be clearly communicated and discussed with the potential partner:

- What would be the added value of this partnership to my organisation?
- What would be the added value for the potential partner?
- What can the partnership offer that its members alone cannot?

The following illustration highlights some of the core benefits of working in partnership:

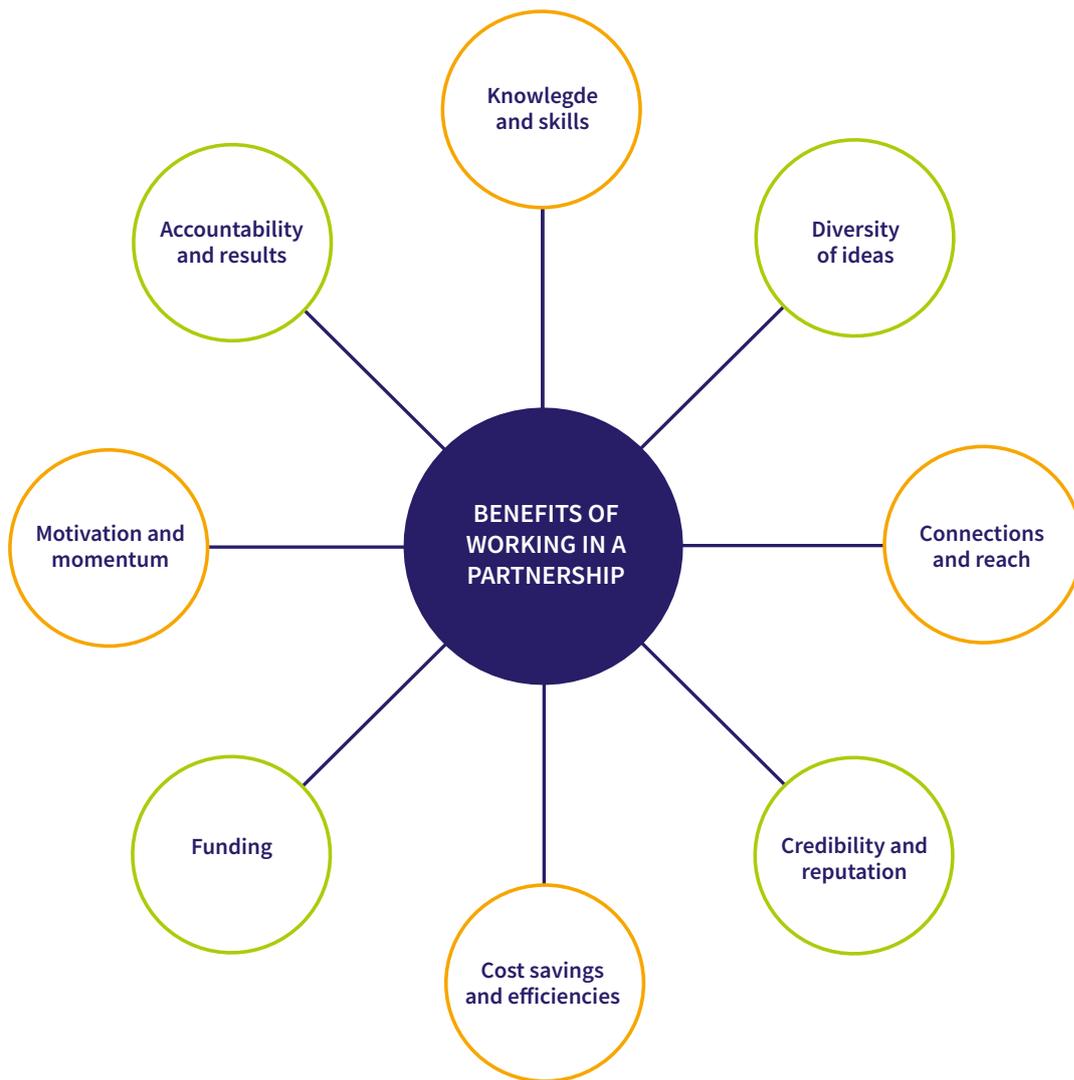


Fig. 4.1: Benefits of working in partnership
Source: McKiernan (2017)

Types of cross-sector partnerships

There are many typologies of partnerships, starting with the question of where a collaboration turns into an actual partnership, and what form or interaction constitutes a partnership. For the purpose of this publication, ‘partnership’ is understood as a collaboration of at least two organisations/ institutions that decide to work together for a common goal, which may be very concrete, but may also be as general as the common aim of contributing towards sustainable development. The following gives a categorisation of partnerships against four different types of choices.³⁶

³⁶ Based on McKiernan (2017), pp 7-9

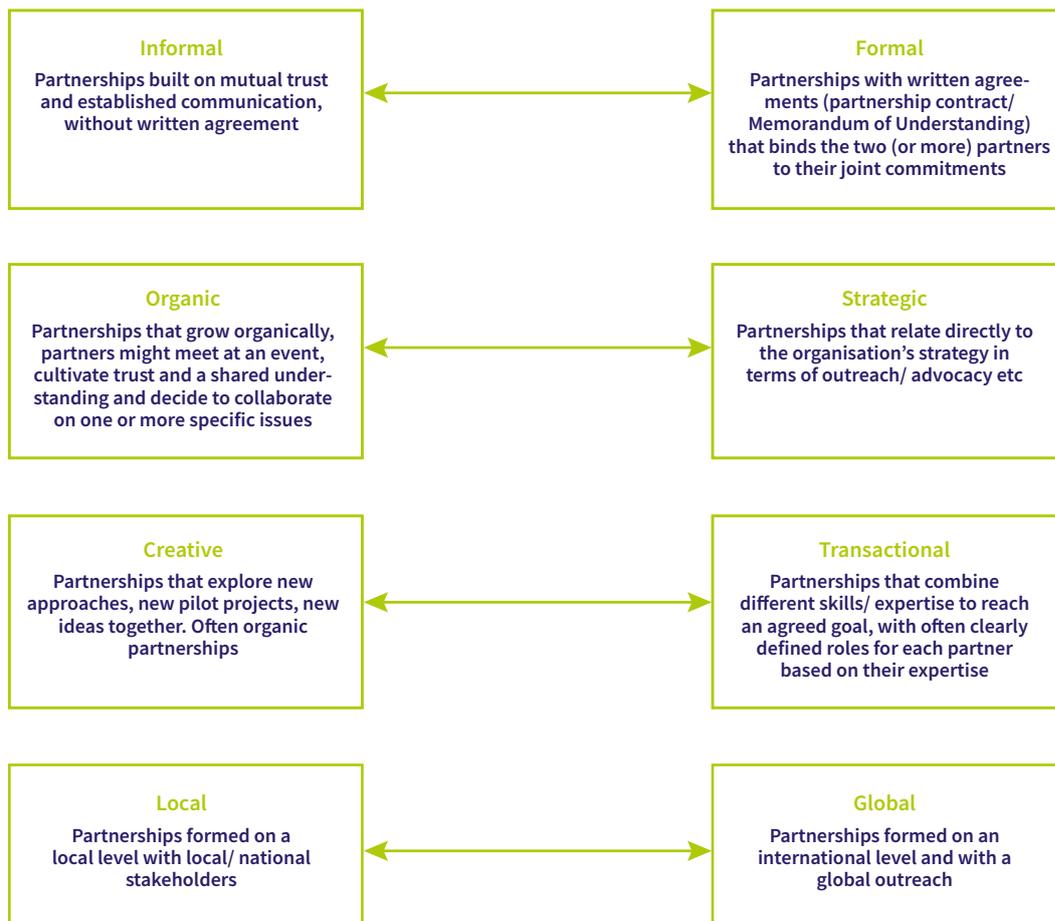


Fig. 4.2: Categories of partnerships

These categorisations are not meant to be absolute, in many cases they can be seen as continuum lines, where a partnership can have elements of both ends, or move along the line as the partnership progresses. For example, a partnership can start off very organically – maybe through an encounter at a conference – and develop into a strategic one. In much the same way, informal partnerships may very well become formalised once properly established. Many partnerships contain both creative and transactional elements. And finally, local cross-sector partnerships might work on a very local (or perhaps regional/ national level), but due to the nature of partnerships within the context of sustainable development/ GCE, may very well have a global impact.

A different typology³⁷ categorises cross-sector partnerships as follows:

- **Leverage/ Exchange Partnerships:**

Partners are the main beneficiaries of the partnership.

- **Better Traditional Development Partnerships:**

Partnerships deliver more than the sum of their parts and thus increase the impact of ‘traditional’ development.

- **Transformational Development Partnerships:**

Partnerships which undertake system transformational development.

This categorization is focusing on Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in the context of sustainable development. It can be just as useful in the context of GCE cross-sector partnerships, especially when considering the overall aim of social transformation. The majority of cross-sector partnerships are likely to fall into category 1 and 2, where partners exchange resources that will allow both partners to benefit from the partnership. Combining their skills and expertise will lead to new and better outcomes and outputs, so that the partnership itself will add a value that the partners individually would have been able to achieve.



Following such a categorisation, one of the key questions would then be how to achieve a partnership that would fall into the third category, one that would create the necessary levers to facilitate system transformation:

- What skills and resources are needed in this partnership in order to have a transformative impact?
- What sector can offer these elements while also pursuing the same goal as we do?

This is where GCE pushes us to get out of our comfort zone and engage with those sectors that bring a different set of tools and resources to the table.

³⁷ Stibbe and Prescott (2020) p.24

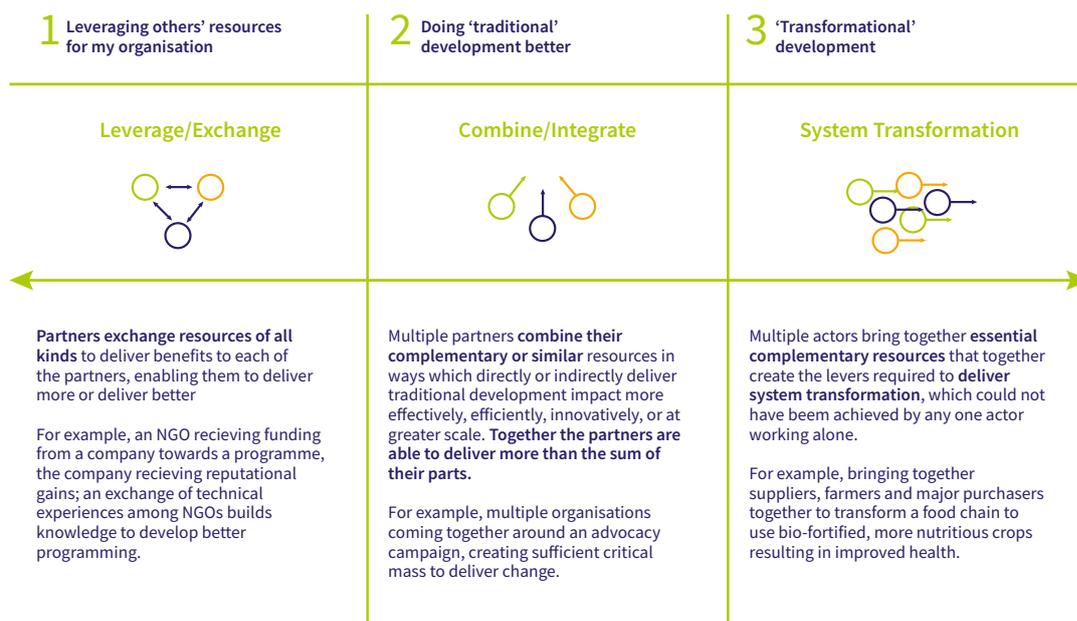


Fig. 4.3: Types of partnerships for the SDGs

Source: Stibbe and Prescott (2020), p.24

Core-to-Core and Edge-to-Edge Partnerships

In the *'Global Citizenship Education (GCE) for Unknown Futures'* report,³⁸ Rene Suša draws attention to two different partnership set-ups: core-to-core partnerships and edge-to-edge partnerships.

When seeking out a partner for a joint project or intervention, it is much easier to reach a shared understanding and agree on a joint approach with a partner that shares the same values and the same core principles. Even in cases where partners are representing a diversity of backgrounds, a good amount of time is spent on reaching a shared understanding and a shared foundation of the partnerships. These core-to-core partnerships, while having a strong common ground, risk not challenging *"the sameness or similarity of core assumptions, beliefs, norms, and understandings"*.³⁹

Core-to-core partnerships are unlikely to create something very new – or to be transformative in their partnership journey. They do, however, have the potential to engage a wide audience in GCE activities, and in fostering GCE related skills among those generally already interested. Core-to-core partnerships are more likely to develop among organisations from the same or a very similar sector, where overall principles are rather alike, and a shared understanding and shared core foundation is reached fairly easily among the partners.

Edge-to-edge partnerships on the other hand might be more challenging to set up. They do not require a joint understanding nor a joint base of core principles. Edge-to-edge partnerships are built on the shared commitment to the same task. These partnerships might be pushing us out of our comfort

38 Susa, R. (2019)

39 Susa, R. (2019): p.12

zone, they might challenge our own assumptions and principles – but they have the potential to create something innovative, something different. In fact, these somewhat uncomfortable partnerships may provide the “*spaces, where the (previously) impossible can happen*”.⁴⁰

As a GCE organisation that is looking into developing cross-sector partnerships under the overarching goal of sustainable development, an edge-to-edge partnership with a different sector might just be the way forward – provided the set-up allows for mutual recognition of (potentially) diverging values or core principles and provided it can focus on maintaining a shared commitment to the specific goal. This might require more work and a longer timespan than a core-to-core partnership where convergence is easily achieved, and collaboration established easily within spaces relatively familiar to all partners.

Bridge 47 partnerships

Bridge 47 partnerships touch on several of the above categories. While most of them fall within the category of informal partnerships, the partnership between SLOGA and the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE) has formalised their relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) (see case study 8). This partnership is perhaps also one of the few that would fall within the category of a strategic partnership, with the SIAE identified as a strategic potential partner through stakeholder mapping. Similarly, Women for Election was identified as a strategic potential partner by IDEA (case study 6). Most other partnerships developed organically, with the first encounter often by chance. Some of these organic partnerships then turned into more strategic ones – such as the partnership between IDEAS and the National Performance Framework (NPF) team in Scotland (case study 5).

Creative and transactional elements are part of most partnership – to varying extents. The partnerships between AKÜ and the Estonian National Broadcasting Company, which developed new TV programmes informed by GCE (case study 2), as well as the partnership between the Center for Education Initiatives and the Latvian Museum Association, which added a GCE approach to museum education (case study 9) have made use of creative ideas to develop an added value to their partnership. Transactional elements can be seen in the GCE partner offering methodologies for workshops/ trainings on the SDGs and/or on GCE in exchange for a wide outreach and exposure within a sector that has not been tapped into much before (for example, case study 3).

Partnerships have managed to combine their resources and reach a greater audience, enhance the level of discussion about sustainable development and the SDGs by adding a GCE perspective, but have not managed to achieve a transformative character – yet. Perhaps it is too early to look at this, since all partnerships that started as part of the Bridge 47 network are still relatively young. And there is certainly a lot of potential in some of them to expand much further – if other challenges can be overcome.

⁴⁰ Susa, R. (2019): p.13

Joining Forces for Lifelong Global Citizenship Education



Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SLOGA (Slovenian platform of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), for development, global education and humanitarian aid) Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE)
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Educational Institution Civil Society
What?	A strategic partnership with the aim to expand Global Citizenship Education through the lifelong learning community, initially the partnership focused on GCE participating at the annual Lifelong Learning Weeks festival, however the collaboration went much further.
Sustainable development issues and themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education, Lifelong learning opportunities, Global Citizenship Education
Global Citizenship Education links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCE methodologies introduced into lifelong learning community and practices Joint implementation of GCE activities across Slovenia with a wide new audience Joint advocacy efforts to mainstream GCE in educational policies
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifelong Learning Week Festival included GCE themes GCE Training for SIAE staff and coordinators Mutual support between partners at events/ panels etc Advocacy role and opportunities within Ministry of Education
Benefits	<p>Benefits for SIAE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New networking opportunities New project opportunities <p>Benefits for SLOGA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach to new audiences Reaching new stakeholders on different levels New project opportunities <p>Benefits of partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger alliance for GCE Advocacy opportunities that were only possible because of this partnership – because two strong partners joined forces
Learning from partnership development and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal relationships between the key individuals of each organisation are instrumental in moving the partnership forward It is important to introduce other team members to each other, so that the partnership does not depend on one person (who might leave and then jeopardize the partnership) An MoU gives an institutional framework for the partnership
Continuation of Partnership	The partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise their partnership and have participated in each other's projects and events, they will play a joint role throughout the Slovenian Presidency of the European Council.
Testimonies	<p>“At the beginning our partnership with our first joint activities even our coordinators of Lifelong Learning Weeks festival were not sure what Global Citizenship Education is and why it is needed. We were able to build bridges that led to deeper understanding.” Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik (SDG talks, January 2021)</p> <p>“I see good implementation of strategies and policies only in collaboration. Only when each stakeholder contributes their own piece, to the mosaic can it come to life.” Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik (SDG talks, January 2021)</p>

Initiating and maintaining a partnership

Every partnership usually goes through various stages of a partnership cycle. There are different ways to go about it, and essentially there will be trial and error, because what works for one potential partnership might not work for another. The steps outlined below are based on a combination of the *IDEA Stronger Together toolkit* (McKiernan 2017), the *SDG Partnership Guidebook* (Stibbe and Prescott 2020) and learning from the Bridge 47 exploratory partnerships.

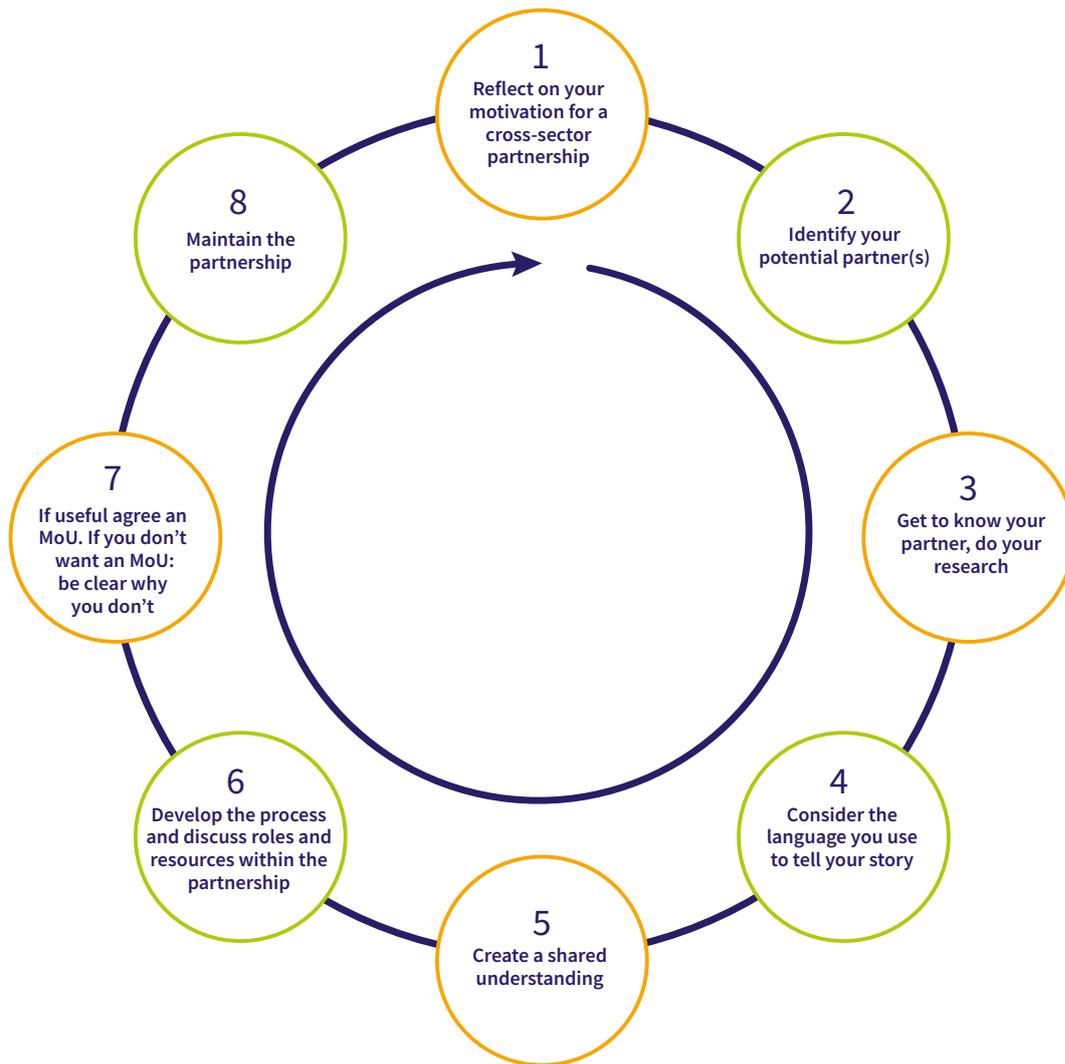


Fig. 4.4: A partnership development process

Step 1: Reflecting on the WHY of a potential partnership

There are many different types of partnerships and many different reasons for engaging in a partnership. Before starting the conversation with potential partners, it will be useful to reflect on some questions within your own team as to WHY your organisation would want to reach out to a specific partner/sector/institution.

Chapter 1 illustrated why cross-sector partnerships are essential in achieving a more sustainable world and in achieving the SDGs. Chapter 2 further illustrated why GCE in itself offers such a unique opportunity to reach out to other stakeholders for the sake of the overall aim to achieve a more just and sustainable world. But how does this relate to your very local and specific context? Who are your partners currently? Do you see an opportunity to increase your outreach? Below are a few questions that might help stimulate your thinking:



- If you reflect on your organisation's overall vision – how would cross-sector partnerships help advance your mission?
- How could a cross-sector partnership contribute to transformation within your local/ regional/ national context?
- Why is now a good momentum for a new (potential) partnership?
- What is your driving force?
- What can you bring into a cross-sector partnership?
- What holds you back in reaching beyond your current comfort zone?
- How can you begin to overcome this?

Step 2: Identifying Potential Partners

Perhaps the most challenging step to any partnership is identifying the right partner. This can happen in a variety of ways, such as intentional or rather 'accidental'.



If you know what you are looking for, but you do not have the best partner identified yet, you might want to do a stakeholder mapping to explore the stakeholders around you, their relationship with each other and with your organisation, as well as your sector. Try to include all possible sectors in this exercise.

A stakeholder mapping could start by looking at the SDGs and exploring which sector would have a role in which SDGs to identify overlaps and connecting points (see Chapter 1 for suggestions).

A stakeholder map can encourage a further look at the challenges and opportunities that each sector brings, as well as identifying possible entry points, such as a big event organised by one potential partner, which might offer an opportunity for initial collaboration, or joint participation in a certain working group or network, personal contacts, working with the same target group, or perhaps simply a potential common interest and commitment in one or more SDGs.



Useful questions to ask yourself within your organisation might be:

- From a strategic point of view, which stakeholder would be your most suitable partner?
- Which one has the highest chance of success?
- Which sector is based on the same (or similar) core principles and values that would enable smooth collaboration (likely a core-to-core partnership)?
- Which sector appears to share the same goals and commitments despite possibly not upholding the same values as your own organisation (rather an edge-to-edge partnership)?
- What resources are needed to approach which stakeholder?
- What are the potential risks involved in engaging each stakeholder?

Opportunities for meeting new potential partners might also occur by chance. You might make a connection during a conference, a workshop, as part of a wider network or working group meeting. Sometimes all it takes is to grab these opportunities and follow up on them. All too often we do not capitalise on these moments – either because our resources are stretched very thin, because we have not determined a specific partnership approach as an organisation, or because we assume the other person might connect eventually. Such opportunities can be increased by regular networking at various events (such as conferences, workshops, fairs and other events and opportunities) outside our own sector and by keeping good communication with representatives of stakeholders we have met during such occasions.

Step 3: Getting to know your partner(s) and their sector

Once the potential partner is identified, the question is how to initiate the first contact, how to make an effective partnership request – or sometimes simply how to get ‘your foot in the door’ to get the process started. One of the key learning points from existing partnerships is to dedicate a good amount of time and resources to research the potential partner – and maybe the sector as a whole. Use this as an opportunity to find out what they have been doing on issues of sustainable development, how do they address big questions around the SDGs, what their specific angle to this is. It might also be useful to explore how they operate, where possible entry points could be, and which department might be the most relevant to approach.

Step 4: Choosing your language to tell your story

Before approaching a sector different to our own, it will be very helpful to reflect on the way we tell our story, the language we use and the assumptions that might be underpinning our story. Bridge 47 has published a very practical guideline, *Tone of Voice for Bridge 47 Partnerships*,⁴¹ which might be a good starting point for organisations reflecting on how to phrase their requests, their aims and their expectations of a potential partnership. It is certainly useful to make approaches that are very clear and formulated without GCE jargon, so that someone outside of your sector can find it relevant and enticing. Depending on the sector, the choice of language might be different. The Story Telling Methodology⁴² could be a helpful tool in approaching a sector for potential partnership – sometimes an individual story can be very powerful. However, it is important to be mindful of the danger of a single story.

Step 5: Creating a shared understanding of the issue and the purpose of the partnership

When partners have developed a shared understanding of the issue they want to collaborate on, they can then determine where exactly their partnership can make a difference. Developing a shared understanding does not necessarily mean that both partners agree on each other's core principles and each other's way of working towards sustainable development. A shared understanding of the elements of sustainable development that the partnership is set to tackle, as well as a shared understanding of *why* and *how* this specific partnership can create an added value is what will drive the partnership forward. This process can take different forms, from joint meetings and discussions to more structured workshops aimed at understanding each partner's position, understanding and expectations. Part of the shared understanding is also the process to agree on the purpose and set a common and realistic goal for the partnership.

A good example from the Bridge 47 network is the partnership between IDEAS/Scotdec and NHS Scotland (see case study 1). Two exploratory needs-assessment workshops were held for NHS staff in order to better understand their needs regarding GCE and sustainable development, as well as how these could be best covered through the partnership.

Step 6: Negotiating the partnership process, roles and resources

Once a common understanding of the issue and purpose of the partnership is reached, it is then important to identify and agree on the goals and the process of the partnership. Will there be regular meetings/ communication? Who will take on what role? Who will report to whom? How are resources shared and utilized? The more clearly defined this process is at the beginning of the partnership, the smoother the partnership will evolve.

41 Bridge 47: <https://www.bridge47.org/resources/01/2019/tone-voice-guideline-bridge-47-partnerships>

42 In May 2020, Bridge 47 and IDEAS Scotland hosted a seminar on Storytelling for Global Citizenship Education. This is a short video capturing the key elements: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGX5vOAN64A>



Challenges and Opportunities

- How to find the 'right' person/ the 'right' entry point

If you or your organisation have no previous contact with a new potential partner, make use of your network, maybe there is a connection that you were not aware of – often times a simple introduction by a shared colleague/ ally can go a long way. Researching and learning about the different departments, previously organised events etc. will also help, as this might point you to the most suitable manager/ coordinator/ office within the partner organisation.

- Out of the comfort zone

Reaching out to a sector different to your own might be pushing you out of your comfort zone. It might feel uncomfortable to enter your potential partner's offices, you might worry about a lack of shared understanding and common ground, about power imbalances or about wasting your own scarce resources with no result guaranteed. It is challenging, but there is also a great potential in a partnership that pushes us to the limits – or out of – our comfort zone. If we are not willing to step beyond this comfort zone, how can we ever truly work towards transformation?

- Trying to move to action quickly

Getting to know the new potential partner might be exciting and inspiring – and you might be rushing to plan activities together immediately. While this excitement is a strong driving force, there is a risk of actions not connecting to expectations, to strategies or to the current way of working of either partner, which might then ultimately mean failure. It is important to get to know the partner well, reach a common understanding and agreeing on a common timetable and action plan. This might take longer to prepare, but in the long run will pay off as the partnership activities will be more solid and grounded.

Step 7: Formalising the Partnership: Memorandum of Understanding

Once the goals, milestones, process, roles and resources have been determined, many partnerships then formalise their collaboration by signing an agreement, such as an MoU. This process is important in formally acknowledging a partnership within the partners' organisations and gives it the institutional commitment that might be needed to sustain the partnership in the long run.

Of course, partnerships can exist without written agreements and have the potential to flourish and bring about great impact even if they are kept informal. Most Bridge 47 partnerships have remained on the informal level, and while they can certainly be viewed as having accomplished great benefits, their informal nature makes these partnerships more vulnerable in the long run.

Tips (based on Bridge 47 partnership learning points)



- **Know your audience!** Take the time to really research the sector you want to approach, find out about their work and activities, their values, their internal structure, their jargon, their perspectives on the SDGs. This way you can establish a connection with them and meet them right where they are.
- **Identify the ‘right’ person** – ideally you want to find a person that is well connected within your potential partner’s organisation/ institution and has enough internal leverage to move the partnership along. You also want this person to connect with your issues and understand them enough to be inspired and motivated to pursue the partnership.
- **Reflect on your own way of addressing GCE/sustainable development** – what is the story you want to communicate? Try to avoid jargon and references that might not be understood by someone outside of your sector. Are you open to a different perspective on how to address global issues?

Step 8: Managing and Maintaining a Partnership

Once established, the focus shifts to managing and strengthening the new partnership. Depending on the partnership, this might be very clear-cut around a specific event or production of a specific publication or other output, but it might also be more open-ended without a specific time frame. Either way, successful partnerships thrive on a set of building blocks. The following are based on *The SDG Partnership Guidebook*.⁴³

- **Fundamentals, such as ensuring there is a significant added value to the partnership** in comparison with the resources required; sufficient alignment of interests/shared commitment; sufficient compatibility of values in relation to the closeness of the collaboration; senior-level commitment to partnership
- These fundamental elements are best negotiated and shared during the initial phase of entering a partnership. Without having agreed and determined the (potential) added value (for the partnership as well as each partner), and the availability of resources, and without having explored the compatibility of interests and positions, it would be highly challenging to set up a functioning partnership.
- As mentioned earlier, values do not necessarily need to align. Edge-to-edge partnerships, for example, have a great potential, however, there needs to be a basis for collaboration and mutual respect for each other’s values and principles (if they differ).
- Lastly, without the commitment of senior-level management (or political commitment when one of the partners is a government institution), there is a real risk of the entire partnership collapsing and resources having been wasted with no outcome for either partner.

43 Stibbe and Prescott (2020), p. 45

- **Partnership Relationships** that are based on trust and transparency, power balance and equity, mutual benefit, accountability and commitment.
- Establishing trust may be a slow process among partners, especially when coming from rather different backgrounds. A partnership might feel uncomfortable in the beginning, but if regular, clear and transparent communication between the partners is established, and the mutual commitment to the partnership is evident, trust between the partners can be developed.
- It is quite normal for different partners to hold different levels of power at different times throughout the partnership journey. Recognising and addressing power imbalances and managing equity is essential for the partnership to function effectively. This also means that all partners should have sufficient resources to and be fully engaged in decision-making and key activities. Understanding one's own power and position within the partnership is important, as civil society organisations might easily perceive their own position as weak compared to a larger business or a public institution, when their role and the power they hold in the partnership is likely just as crucial to the overall partnership aims.
- **Structure and Setup**, which may vary heavily across partnerships, but should entail legal/financial arrangements, governance, management and operational structures, documentation, theory of change, as well as funding and resources.
- Partnership structures will look different in a formalised long-term partnership than in an informal, organically evolving partnership with its main focus around a commonly organised event. Generally, it is important for all partnerships to define their structure and set-up, as this will facilitate the day-to-day work for their common goal. Even if no legal arrangements exist, it is crucial to decide financial arrangements. If the partnership includes expenses (costs of trainer/facilitator for internal training, consultant, editing and printing cost for materials, expenses for public events etc.), partners need to be clear about where financial resources come from and who is responsible for what. Establishing a specific team that can oversee partnership activities, can manage, delegate and hold individuals accountable for their partnership activities is also very useful, especially when the partnership includes many partners, or when the partnership includes activities that are organised together.
- For a long-term, successful partnership it may be very beneficial if partners develop their theory of change together – where do they want the partnership to go, how do they expect to get there and what is needed in order to realise this change?
- **Management**, including leadership, project management, monitoring and reviewing, communication, learning and knowledge sharing.
- It might be useful to think of the partnership as a project that requires a management/coordination team, a management plan, regular monitoring and reviewing to assess whether the project is on track or deviating from its intended time plan. These elements are just as essential within a

partnership. And while they might not all be necessary when a partnership evolves organically, it would be useful even in those cases, to allow for a regular review – and consider formalising the partnership itself or the structure of the partnership. Perhaps the most crucial element seems to be regular and clear communication. This was echoed by virtually all Bridge 47 partnerships.



Challenges and Opportunities

Power imbalances

- Perceived or actual power imbalances are not usually healthy for a partnership. Ideally, all partners should have an equitable position, feel heard and their decisions taken seriously. There are many ways to hold power within a partnership, some might be more obvious than others. It might be helpful to map the power influences and power spheres (decisions, resources – financial and non-financial, such as access to schools for example, knowledge and expertise, connections etc) to identify each partner’s position of power.

Internal restructuring – key people leaving their positions

- This is a major challenge and occurs across all sectors. Whether there is an internal staff rotation, staff member leaving for personal reasons, restructuring of departments/ units that move staff around, lack of resources to maintain staff positions, the result is similar – it disrupts the partnership relation. If these changes are known ahead of time, adjustments can be made, and possible new staff can be introduced to the partnership team to ensure a smoother transition. These changes, however, might also be a terminating factor that could bring an informal partnership to a close.

Change of internal/political priorities

- This is a challenge that is outside of our control when setting up and working through a partnership. Depending on the partner or sector, political decisions might have a direct knock-on effect on the partnership in that certain issues or goals might no longer be deemed a political priority and therefore internal resources shifted elsewhere. Unless a written agreement binds the partners to their joint partnership commitment, there is very little to do.

Lack of resources to maintain partnership

- Even though a partnership might be going well, and partners are satisfied with the process, a change in resources available to the partnership might negatively influence the partnership. It might be challenging to re-imagine the partnership based on reduced resources, or staff might no longer be available to look after the partnership. Possibly, a partnership can revive if resources are made available at a later stage, perhaps through joint efforts.



External challenges, such as pandemic and its impact on organising events etc

- There will always be a possibility of external circumstances influencing a partnership. The Bridge 47 partnerships have made it through the immense challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has shown that we are all much more resilient and adaptable than we thought.



Tips (based on Bridge 47 partnership learning points)

- **Keep regular contact**, invest in inter-personal relationship. Almost all successful partnerships had a very strong personal connection established that would serve as the ‘driving force’ of the partnership. It might be helpful to expand this connection to a wider circle within partners’ offices to prevent disruption in partnership if one person leaves or moves on.
- **Have a schedule for meetings/ teleconference calls** (such as once per month/ every 3 months) and adhere to it. It is easy to get absorbed in your day-to-day activities and tasks. Having a clearly established communication structure will help keep the partnership active and engaged. It is important to agree on a structure and schedule that suits all partners.
- **Look for opportunities to engage and involve each other.** Your partnership might be primarily built around a specific set of actions or outputs, but that should not stop you from looking for more opportunities to collaborate. Are there other projects or events you could involve your partners in? How could you best make use of the ‘new’ expertise? Where else could you team up to take on an issue together and both benefit from? The more you work together, the stronger your partnership will become and the more you will be able to achieve with regards to your overall goals.
- **Allow yourself to be challenged, this is a learning opportunity.** Establishing cross-sector partnerships can be very challenging, the process might not go the way you hoped it would, you might be pushed far outside of your own comfort zone or simply get frustrated with multi-layered bureaucratic structures you had not thought of. Try to be open about these challenges and use them as a learning opportunity. GCE encourages us to challenge our own perceptions and biases, as well as to reflect on our actions – negotiating cross-sector partnerships is a wonderful opportunity to do just that. It might help see your very own organisation in a different light, it might bring up conversations that spark new ideas and break previously perceived boundaries to what you thought was possible. Let yourself be challenged and make the most out of it.

The partnership between SLOGA and the Slovenian Adult Education Institute (SIAE) is a good example of how to manage and maintain a partnership. As well as creating a strong personal connection between the contact points, the partners got other office members involved, leading to the signing of an MoU and collaboration on many different occasions, including new advocacy opportunities that only came about due to their partnership (see case study 8).

Step 9: Moving On

Perhaps you had decided to collaborate for a specific public event, or you had agreed to deliver a certain number of GCE training sessions to staff at your partner organisation, or you developed a training resource to be used internally by the partner – what do you do next? You have worked well together, and the benefit of your partnership has become quite clear – what are your next steps now? Your initial resources that you had allocated to initiate the partnership have been used – how can you manage to maintain what you have started?

There are many different points within your partnership – depending on its set-up, its purpose and its level of maturity and institutionalisation, where you will have to make a decision on how to move on. It might mean that you decide that it is time to close the partnership, or to integrate the key partnership activities within your or your partner's regular work, or maybe you will find that your partnership needs to take a different approach, a new direction – or maybe you would want to strengthen it further. Chapter 3, for example, offers some food for thought into the issues a partnership might consider when exploring their potential contribution to systemic transformation.



In terms of practicalities, there are a few things to consider:

- Have you reached the goals you set yourself at the beginning of the partnership journey?
- Would it make sense to close the partnership here?
- Has the partnership process opened new possibilities for longer collaboration? Even if initial goals are reached, is there an added value to restructure the partnership and sustain it?
- If your initial resources have been exhausted – how could you sustain this partnership?
- What would you have to change in the structure of the partnership so that you could maintain the collaboration?
- Have you had an honest and open discussion with the core team of the partnership about how to move on (including senior management)? How does the partnership align with your internal strategy?
- What are the main learning points for your organisation from this partnership?

Case Study 9

A Change of Perspective – Reviewing Museums’ Educational Approaches in the Context of Sustainable Development



Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Latvian Museum Association• Center for Education Initiatives (CEI)
Sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Museums• Civil Society
What?	The Latvian Museum Association was actively looking for a partner to incorporate Education for Sustainable Development into their educational approach. The partnership included the production of a resource and plenty of small introductory workshop/ reflection sessions
Sustainable development issues and themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Museum Association set out to include sustainable development in general into their education approaches
Global Citizenship Education links	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GCE methods were introduced to museum education activities• Regular museum exhibits were given an entirely new approach through a GCE perspective, for example a selection of rugs that had been part of the museum for a long time was then explored through the lens of gender equality and as an item empowering women (as the rugs were made by women)
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A training manual for museums (see link below)• New educational programmes for several museums
Benefits	Benefits for the Latvian Museum Association: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New experiences and new resources• A fresh perspective on existing exhibits Benefits for CEI: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New audiences• New opportunities for projects Benefits of the partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Museums now a serious actor within the field of Education for Sustainable Development
Learning from partnership development and implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The personal connection between the two partners facilitates the partnership process• Museums offer many entry points for CSOs of many different backgrounds
Testimony	<i>“The Latvian Museum Association truly believes that memory institutions can play a crucial role in raising awareness in society regarding the sustainable future which is the responsibility of us all – governments, institutions, organisations, individuals. Being part of initiatives such as Bridge47 strengthens the sense of unity and common understanding of the Global Goals for the support of our planet and all people”, Zane Grinvalde, Chairman of the Board, Latvian Museum Association</i>
Further information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• https://muzeji.lv/lv/specialistiem/aicinam-lejupieladet-izdevumu-muzeji-un-iltgspejiga-attistiba• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toU34v_vYSU

The risks of entering a partnership

Entering a partnership with a sector quite different to our own involves risks. Making a success of a partnership, requires a relatively high investment from a GCE organisation. The main risks include:

- Risk to waste scarce resources,
- Risk to waste valuable staff time,
- Risk of sharing internal strategies, ideas and materials with others who might potentially exploit them for their own benefit,
- Risk that the partnership process challenges a GCE organisation's principles, reputation, thinking, or way of working.

These risks are real, and these risks need careful consideration, including through the development of mitigation strategies. However, by virtue of being an organisation dedicated to Global Citizenship Education, we ought to take these risks, push ourselves out of our bubble and out of our comfort zone. This is how we can make a difference; this is how we can work towards the transformation needed to bring us all closer to a just, fair and sustainable planet.



Even if a partnership attempt fails, it is an opportunity for reflection, for learning, and it might kick-start other processes. The risks are well worth it, and hopefully more donors will recognise the value of cross-sector partnerships in their funding strategies to GCE organisations.

Concluding learning points

While most learning points have already been mentioned under the various sections, there are some that stand out as key learning from the partnership process as such. These have been shared by most of the Bridge 47 partnerships and will likely be the most relevant for any GCE organisation thinking about engaging in cross-sector partnerships. The following box also includes the main learning points that have been documented in the External Evaluation Report of the Bridge 47 project.



- Partnerships require a substantial **investment in terms of time and resources**. An organisation needs to be willing and able to do this. **Taking time in the beginning of the partnership process to learn about the partner**, their core principles, their values, their internal hierarchy and their way of working will almost certainly pay off, as you will be able to tailor your own approach to meet the partner right where they are. Engaging with a sector different to your own requires commitment, patience and the willingness to hear their story, find out how their structures work, how decisions are taken, and sustainable development is addressed – dedicating time and remaining open to this learning experience will offer a great benefit to a smooth partnership collaboration later on.



- **An enabling environment** will significantly enhance the impact of the partnership efforts. This might be outside of your control, it may be useful to try and identify such enabling factors/ allies/ policy frameworks, and potentially time your partnership approach accordingly.
- Regardless of the specific partnership, the general **willingness to enter into the uncomfortable space** where cross-sector partnerships can evolve is a critical foundation. If challenging situations are considered **experiential learning opportunities**, then even those partnerships that end up not reaching the desired goal will add value, and resources spent would then be able to be considered an investment into Global Citizenship Education regardless of whether a cross-sector partnership is fully developed or not. Social transformation cannot occur if we are not willing to step outside of our bubble, engage with different perspectives, challenge ourselves and through this, embark on a transformative learning journey.
- One of the most important ingredients to a successful partnership, according to experiences of Bridge 47 partnerships, is establishing and maintaining **personal contacts and connections** between the partners. Finding that key person within the partner organisation who understands what GCE is about and who is fully committed to this partnership has been a key factor. Unfortunately, this brings the risk of a partnership falling apart when one of the key contacts persons moves to a different position (due to internal staff rotation or due to any other unforeseen reason) or leaves the organisation. Establishing close working relations on organisational rather than personal level can help maintain the continuity despite staff changes. The most effective way to mitigate this risk seems to be **an MoU or similar agreement** between the partners, which would institutionalise the partnership and bind the organisations rather than the individuals. Even in the case of staff turnover, the partnership would have a framework to continue and would not rely on the passion and effort of one key individual.
- Considering the language used when communicating with prospective partners is fundamental. GCE organisations often use language and jargon familiar to like-minded organisations, but risk being misunderstood or not considered relevant to other sectors. Reflecting on the language we use, the stories we want to tell and on the overall framing of the prospective partnership potential is important before opening the dialogue with a prospective partner.
- **Flexibility** is key in building and maintaining partnerships. No matter how prepared you are as an organisation or as an individual – it is very helpful to keep a healthy degree of flexibility and willingness to adapt to changing scenarios and situations that might lead to a well-functioning, successful partnership.

References and other sources of information

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The following, and many other resources, are accessible via the Bridge 47 website:

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