

Educating pre-service teachers on Global Citizenship:

Research perspectives from a preliminary study in the Italian context

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Keywords: Global citizenship education, pre-service teachers, initial training education, Italy

- There are fragmented political actions for global citizenship education (GCE) in Italy.
- There is a lack of training related to GCE at pre-service level.
- GCE is usually included through specific modules or transversally in other subjects.
- Study of in-service teachers' interest in GCE and its inclusion in a pre-service programme.
- Further research linking GCE learning opportunities, personal interests, citizenship education.

Purpose: To analyse prospective teachers' interest in global citizenship education (GCE) and the inclusion of GCE-related issues in a teaching programme in Italy.

Design/methodology/approach: Administration of an online questionnaire to pre-service teachers attending a course for becoming pre-primary and primary school teachers, and discussion of the main results.

Findings: Pre-service teachers are provided with basic discipline-related and pedagogical knowledge that is not directly linked to GCE but allows the implementation of GCE in their classrooms. Findings also suggest the influence on prospective teachers' self-preparedness and confidence of the learning opportunities that occur in non-formal and informal contexts.

Research implications: There should be further analysis of the relations between GCE and students' interests, their opportunities to learn about GCE, their degree of global engagement, and civic and citizenship education for the enhancement of pre-service training curricula.

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1 INTRODUCTION

According to Morin (1999), the relationship between complexity and global issues is a feature that characterizes the contemporary world. Complexity occurs when the connection between a single component and the whole is “interdependent, interactive and inter-retroactive” (Morin, 1999, p. 6). This connection, that can be seen as the result of the widely known process of globalization, poses new challenges to the individual, to society and, not least, to educational systems. The traditional ways in which knowledge has been structured and transmitted, parcelled in different subjects and discipline-oriented, appear to be inadequate to tackle contemporary problems that are transversal, multi-dimensional and global. Scientific developments across the centuries have led to deep specialization and consequent fragmentation of knowledge, limiting our comprehension of contemporary issues that need, instead, a multi-dimensional and transversal approach to be fully understood (Morin, 1999).

In this scenario, the impetus gained in the last decades by several trans-curricular educational areas, that cannot be included within a single discipline, can be seen as a reaction to the fragmentation of knowledge into different and specialized subjects, as a means of providing students with the awareness and skills for developing a deeper understanding of contemporary issues. Global citizenship education (GCE) is one of several educational areas, like civic and citizenship education (CCE) and education for sustainable development (ESD), whose relevance has constantly grown in the academic and political discourse, becoming one of the main objectives of several educational systems around the world (Banks, 2004; Bourn, 2015; UNESCO, 2014, 2015; Oxfam, 2015).

The discussion on GCE conceptualizations has highlighted that this area is by definition multi-layered and multidimensional, and its theoretical underpinnings are rooted in the intersection of topics that belong to different research sectors (Parmenter, 2011). GCE is thus characterized by the combination of different pedagogies and educational discourses related to its key antecedents (Tarozzi & Torres, 2016): human rights and peace education (Council of Europe, 2010; Reardon, 1995; Tibbitts, 2017), global education (O’Loughlin & Wegimont, 2003; Pike & Selby, 1988; Tye & Tye, 1992), cosmopolitan education (Appiah, 2006; Archibugi & Held, 1995; Nussbaum 1996, 2002; Osler & Starkey, 2003), development education (Bourn, 2015) and education for sustainable development (UN, 1987; UNESCO, 2012, 2017a). In addition to this, GCE is strongly intertwined with CCE, whose traditional concepts related to nation states have been expanded toward more supranational and/or global orientations (Held, 1991; Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Urry, 1998) in terms of both policies and the social and cultural dimensions of living together in modern and multicultural societies (Veugelers, 2020).

The scope and definition of GCE are still debated, and different conceptual frameworks and classifications have been developed by scholars in different parts of the world highlighting which content, learning processes, and teaching approaches and aims should relate to GCE (Gaudelli, 2009, 2016; Oxley & Morris, 2013; Oxfam, 2015; Parker & Fraillon, 2016; Reimers, 2013; Reimers et al., 2016; Tawil, 2013; Veugelers, 2011; UNESCO, 2015). Moreover, this educational area has also attracted criticism for its latent colonialism, hidden in an ambiguous conceptualization of global awareness and interconnectedness (Andreotti, 2006, 2010).

The multifaceted dimension that characterizes GCE is also exemplified by different approaches to its delivery in the curriculum (as a school-wide issue, as a cross-curricular issue, integrated within different subjects, as a standalone subject) that are often complementary and coexist in single school contexts (UNESCO, 2015).

In this paper, GCE is conceptualised as the knowledge of, and willingness to influence decision-making processes throughout the world and their effects on the lives of individuals in pursuing common interests, through the concepts of democracy, peace, human rights and social justice.

Therefore, GCE is not intended as a global dimension of citizenship education focused on international awareness, nor it is related to a vague sense of belonging to a common humanity. GCE is understood as the promotion of a global civic awareness, in order to prepare students to live and act in a context of global change, interdependence, and diversity and to influence the processes of globalisation for a more just and sustainable world (Davies, 2006; Pike, 2008; Wringe, 1999).

The relevance that GCE has recently gained is deeply connected with a growing interest by policymakers and the civil society in global citizenship: GCE has become part of the policy development of national and international organizations (Andreotti & de Souza, 2012), as exemplified by the United Nations Global Education First Initiative (GEFI, 2012) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015). Its promotion has become a major objective across many education systems, and some countries have already included GCE in their national curricula as an educational priority for the twenty-first century (Sant et al., 2018). Global citizenship education is considered essential to empower all students to become informed and engaged global citizens in a globalised world, in order to make it more inclusive and fair. The need to educate all students for GCE implies the adoption of different educational policies, innovative curricula and teaching approaches (UNESCO, 2015; Reimers et al., 2016).

In this view, teacher education, both during pre-service and in-service, is considered as a crucial factor for the successful implementation of GCE in educational systems, ensuring that changes are implemented and sustained over time (Schugurensky & Wolhuter, 2020; UNESCO, 2018). Across Europe, universities are recognised as key institutions for offering teacher education programmes focused on GCE (GENE, 2018). Although an increase in the number of studies related to GCE and teacher education in the last decades (Yemini, Tibbitts & Goren, 2019), research is mostly concerned on teachers' experience and classroom practices (Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019), and the field of teacher education on GCE appears as an emerging topic in the academic literature (Estellés & Fischman, 2020; Gaudelli, 2016; Goren & Yemini, 2017; UNESCO, 2017b). An in-depth investigation of the actors involved in initial teacher education (ITE) and continuing professional development (CDP) and the teaching programmes is thus needed, with a focus on universities as main agents for ITE and CDP. This is particularly relevant for the Italian context, where ITE across all levels of education does not encompass any compulsory training activity related to GCE.

This article presents the results of a preliminary study that seeks to delve into prospective teachers' interest in GCE and the inclusion of GCE-related issues in a teaching programme in Italy. The target group of the research is prospective teachers attending the ITE course to become pre-primary and primary school teachers at LUMSA University (Italy). They were asked to answer an online questionnaire addressing their self-reported interest and preparedness on a range on GCE-related topics, teaching methods and approaches.

Although the research findings present limitations, mainly due to the convenience sample selected and its strong connection with a specific context of instruction, they allow us to identify some key aspects that require further research in order to address for GCE implementation into ITE programmes in Italy.

After an introduction briefly framing the debate on GCE at the national level, through the analysis of political and educational initiatives in the field, the article presents a synthetic overview of the literature on teacher education and ITE programmes in Italy. The main research findings are then described and discussed. The final section focuses on the implications of this study in terms of both recommendations for GCE inclusion in ITE curricula and further research.

2 THE POLITICAL AND EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE ON GCE IN ITALY

A recent research on GCE integration in primary education curricula through a comparative policy analysis in ten European countries, including Italy, shows that successful implementation is related to the presence of several key actors (from policymakers to NGOs, from universities to schools) that operate in synergy and coordination. Among them, findings highlight how Ministries of Education and of Foreign Affairs play a pivotal role, especially if they manage to collaborate jointly, and with the other stakeholders, with regard to funding and the drafting of regulations and recommendations that contribute to development of the political discourse on the topic (Tarozzi & Inguaggiato, 2016, 2018).

This section presents an overview of the most relevant initiatives and policy developments for GCE delivery and support in Italy occurring in the last decade, when growing attention has been devoted to the topic of GCE, especially since the release of the SDGs and of Agenda 2030 (UN, 2015).

This overview, in line with previous research, is focused on two main groups of actors: on the one hand, the Ministries of Education (MoE) and of Foreign Affairs, with their national recommendations and programmes that deal with GCE, more or less explicitly; on the other, different political entities at regional and national level interested in GCE implementation through the involvement of multiple stakeholders and the creation of an agreed strategy.

Before analysing the national interventions on GCE carried out by the MoE, it is important to note that the wide range of topics and objectives that characterize GCE have always been included in Italian curricula, embedded in several subjects (such as geography, science or social studies) depending on the different levels of education, although without a rationale and a common pedagogical framework. In the national guidelines for the curriculum (Indicazioni Nazionali, MIUR, 2012)—the most relevant document that informs instruction in the first cycle of education (students aged 3 to 14)—the GCE-related elements that gained greater prominence are related to multiculturalism and the analysis of different cultures through the centuries and across countries, mainly via the curricular subjects of history and geography. In addition to this, the national guidelines for the curriculum stress the importance for schools to develop citizens that belong to Italy and at the same time to Europe and to the world, and to address contemporary issues, both at local and international level through national, supranational and global dimensions. However, the link between CCE and GCE does not go further than this general statement: CCE is mainly aimed at raising students' awareness and strengthening national culture and traditions. In this regard, Italian curricula for CCE do not differ from those in other countries (Veugelers, 2020).

Two years after the release of the national guidelines, the National Operational Programme (Piano Operativo Nazionale [PON], 2014–2020) “For the School: Competence and Learning Environments”, developed by the Ministry of Education, for the first time made explicit reference to GCE in the section related to the improvement of students' key competences. GCE is thus strongly intertwined with the promotion of actions aimed at strengthening students' transversal, social and civic competences in order to develop responsible citizens.

Moreover, the document envisages specific actions related to the improvement of teachers' competences and the provision of professional development activities on ICT, globalization and multiculturalism. The Ministry of Education in March 2017 launched a public notice for the implementation of projects aimed at the enhancement of global citizenship competences in primary and secondary schools. These projects included topics related to food education, wellbeing and sport, environmental education, financial literacy, respect for diversity and active citizenship. The monitoring report of the National Operational Programme related to the years 2015–2017 showed that 37.1 per cent of schools in Italy participated in the public notice related to GCE, while most applied for projects related to the strengthening of basic competences, adult

education, digital citizenship, and the alternating school-work system (applicant schools' percentages ranging from 40 per cent to 60 per cent) (INDIRE, 2017a, 2017b).

In 2018, the National Curricular Guidelines and New Scenarios (Indicazioni Nazionali e nuovi scenari), drafted by the scientific committee that developed the national curricular guidelines in 2012, examined the role of education in light of the latest developments at the global level, with a specific focus on the 17 SDGs of the UN Agenda 2030. This document provided an overview of the most relevant features of the 2012 guidelines, highlighting the pivotal role of education for sustainable development, citizenship education and GCE to address the challenges in contemporary societies (MIUR, 2018).

The second group of actors that have dealt with GCE delivery and support in the Italian context encompasses regional and national entities that have acted at different levels, often with common goals and intentions.

In 2016, the Conference of Regions released a document on GCE that intended to place GCE at the heart of national and international policies concerning education and development cooperation, and stressed the need to plan structural interventions with multi-level approaches and to act consistently at both local and national political level (Conferenza Delle Regioni E Delle Province Autonome, 2016). However, three regions (Liguria, Lombardia and Veneto) did not sign this document, as they were governed by conservative parties

In 2016, the three-year programming document (2016–2018) developed by the Italian Cooperation stressed the need to implement programmes to raise awareness of GCE. The subsequent planning for the years 2017–2019, providing an in-depth description of the key priorities of the Public Cooperation for Development, confirmed Italy's commitment to promoting GCE and the need to implement a national strategy on GCE (Cooperazione Italiana per lo Sviluppo, 2017). Since 2016, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione e lo Sviluppo [AICS]) has funded educational initiatives every year for both formal and informal education on GCE.

In June 2017, the National Council for Development Cooperation (Consiglio Nazionale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo [CNCS])—a permanent authority made up of ministries, regions, local entities, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the main civil societies, universities and volunteering organizations—requested the establishment of a working group to develop the National Strategy for Global Citizenship Education. Consequently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) gathered different specialists that could contribute to elaboration of the strategy. Coordination of the working group was entrusted to the Autonomous Province of Trento, with the assistance of the networks of civil society organizations and Concord Italia. In January 2018, the group released the Italian Strategy for Global Citizenship Education, aimed at:

- Involving multiple actors at different levels.
- Promoting actions on GCE uniformly across the country.
- Encouraging ministries, regions, local authorities, universities, schools, social and political services to carry out actions/programmes on GCE.
- Promoting a public debate on the links between global issues, education and active citizenship.
- Integrating this strategy with other national initiatives on social inclusion and sustainability¹.

The strategy was focused on the development of possible initiatives for raising awareness in formal, informal and non-formal education contexts, specifying the involvement and role of different actors (ministries, schools, universities, civil society and media), and presented a list of concise recommendations that should inform the future work in terms of action plans at national and local level, funding opportunities, communication and training (in schools and universities).

The strategy was structured to follow a one-year agenda but unfortunately, probably due to the resignation of the then Minister of Education Valeria Fedeli, has not furthered its general premises and objectives.

This overview of the initiatives related to GCE and the different actors involved at the national level has highlighted the growing importance that has been ascribed to GCE in Italy in the last decade and the strong willingness to plan and set up possible strategies and initiatives that could involve multiple stakeholders pursuing shared objectives. However, most of the actions undertaken seem to be hindered by elements that often characterize the political scenario in Italy:

- Fragmentation of the initiatives due to the lack of cooperation among key actors and stakeholders that operate without a common framework of intents and interventions.
- From an educational policy point of view, the implementation of several projects, entrusted to single schools that receive funding to carry out actions at the local level on a wide range of topics.
- The absence of monitoring and evaluation of actions in order to measure the impact of the different initiatives, especially of projects carried out in schools.
- Political instability, which is often the main reason for the interruption of political actions (the above mentioned Minister of Education Valeria Fedeli was in charge for only one and a half years between 2016 and 2018).
- Lack of funding for the education sector and international cooperation and development (OECD, 2019; Openpolis & Oxfam, 2019).

Another element that contributes to the fragmentation of the GCE scenario in Italy is related to the policies undertaken in fields that are closely connected to global citizenship, such as sustainable development. At the national level, there are several projects and committees that deal with sustainability and education for sustainable development, more or less explicitly focused on GCE but without a direct connection with the initiatives carried out by the MoE and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such as the national strategy for sustainable development promoted by the Ministry of the Environment since 2017.

To sum up, the political scenario for GCE implementation in Italy is mainly related to recommendations and general statements of interest that relate to different contexts and actors and that seldom imply a straightforward implementation. In contrast, impacts of the interventions undertaken (e.g. projects funded under the PON programme) are difficult to evaluate due to the high number of small-scale projects implemented, often with a strong focus on local contexts, and the wide range of topics covered.

However, the different initiatives analysed in this section are evidence of the relevance that GCE has gained in the Italian political scenario, even with the limitations outlined above, and contribute strongly to the development of the political and educational discourse on GCE in Italy.

3 TEACHER EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: IMPLICATIONS FROM RESEARCH AND CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

In a paper drafted for the Global Education Monitoring Report (2017/2018), aimed at examining the preparation of teachers in Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education, initial teacher education on GCE is found to be usually limited in scale and related to the interest and dispositions of teacher educators. It is generally included in already existing pre-service programmes through the presence of specific modules; alternatively, it is included transversally in subjects deeply related to GCE (e.g. geography, social studies, sciences, and CCE; Bourn, Hunt & Bamber, 2017).

In countries where a national strategy on GCE is implemented at the policy level, teacher programmes on the topic receive funding and support (Tarozzi & Inguaggiato, 2018). NGOs and civil society organisations tend to be the major providers of training within teacher education, often shaping its practices and tools (Bamber et al., 2016).

A study on teacher education academic literature highlighted the multiplicity of topics and trends that characterize global citizenship education programs for prospective teachers, including studies on preservice teachers' preparedness or perceptions about GCE. In this research, authors found that most programmes are characterised by a common vision of GCE, intended as one of the most relevant solutions to address global challenges within the teaching profession. However, they also recognised a deep gap in teacher education programmes between the provision of theoretical, often idealised assumptions, the trainings on activity-based interventions and the strategies to overcome the barriers that hinder GCE implementation at the school and classroom levels (Estellés & Fischman, 2020).

Some studies have stressed how prospective teachers and teacher educators have a vague notion of GCE, often due to unsolved tensions in relation to the topics that are ascribed to global citizenship education, where it is deemed unpatriotic (especially in the US), politicized, and oriented towards sensitive and controversial issues (Myers, 2008; Rapoport, 2010). Goren and Yemini (2017), in their review of research on GCE, refer to a "growing disillusionment" (p. 179) among teachers in the transition from university studies, where they appear to confer strong relevance on GCE and are eager to implement it in their teaching, to real school contexts, where they often find barriers (e.g. lack of resources and guidelines) that obstruct their ability to teach it.

Other research analysed the benefits of international placement programs in the strengthening of future teachers' self- and global awareness and the enhancement of classroom teaching, although less evidence was found in relation to the development of active engagement to address global issues and inequalities (Larsen & Searle, 2017).

Research on improving the inclusion of GCE in initial teacher education has pointed out several challenges that policymakers and educators need to address (Bourn, Hunt & Bamber, 2017):

- The overlaps between GCE (its conceptualizations, wide range of topics and learning objectives) and other educational areas that make it difficult to frame global citizenship education into discipline-oriented curricula, including at university level.
- The need to adapt GCE general frameworks and topics to national and local contexts and to identify rapid changes in GCE issues due to new scenarios that may occur in the contemporary world.
- The need to train prospective teachers not only in the benefits of including GCE in the classroom and in school contexts, but also in the difficulties of delivery that they may face in daily activities in schools (Goren & Yemini, 2017).
- The relevance of training prospective teachers not only to develop their students' knowledge and skills, but also to foster engagement with global issues at different levels and to value the connections between the curriculum, their own GCE experience and students' GCE experience (Tichnor-Wagner, Parkhouse, Glazier & Cain, 2016).

While some studies have highlighted the increased interest from teachers in their continuing professional development for the improvement of their knowledge, skills, and competences to deliver good quality Global Citizenship Education (Hicks & Holden, 2007; Hunt, 2012), others have showed that also during initial teacher education teacher candidates feel that they are not well-prepared with knowledge and skills to tackle GCE at school. Several studies have emphasised the need to introduce GCE into teacher education programmes in order to prepare

prospective teachers to deliver global citizenship effectively in their future classes (Appleyard & McLean, 2011; Guo, 2014; Pike, 2008).

Successful teacher education on GCE (both during pre- and in-service) entails courses and activities focused on the students' development of the different dimensions that comprise global citizenship, i.e. knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviours. GCE requires a wide range of pedagogical approaches that are participatory and learner-centred, in the view of transformative education (UNESCO, 2018; Merryfield, 2000; Zhao, 2010), although the relations between theory and practice within transformative pedagogy on GCE still need to be deeply explored (Bamber et al., 2018).

In addition to this, effective teacher education on GCE should also tackle those challenges that teachers usually face in delivering global citizenship education at school – also taking into consideration that the relationship between curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education is strongly connected with schools' development (Bamber et al., 2016).

In Italy, such challenges are mainly related to several factors that concern GCE but also have implications for other educational areas such as civic and citizenship education: lack of time and resources for extra-curricular projects; the presence of traditional teaching methodologies and the tensions often perceived by teachers between participatory approaches, lectures and the need to fulfil curriculum requirements; the access to appropriate resources; the role of external actors (e.g. NGOs) within the school curriculum; the often neglected attention paid to the behavioural dimension, because the focus of the instruction is mainly devoted to the cognitive and socioemotional aspects of GCE; the difficulties in delivering competence-based teaching and assessment using transdisciplinary approaches, within a national curriculum that is strongly subject-oriented (Bourn, 2016; Damiani, 2018; Franch, 2020).

This latter element is strongly intertwined with the increased attention paid in the last decade at the national level on international discourse regarding student competences development (e.g. by the European Union and the Council of Europe). The Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning (2006) have influenced the most relevant national documents on school curricula in Italy (i.e. the National guidelines for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education); and urged the Italian school systems to adopt competence-based pedagogies and trans-curricular approaches (Rey, 2003) – elements that are difficult to integrate in subject-oriented curricula.

The absence of a recognised status for GCE at the political level, due to the lack of a national strategy (as outlined in the previous paragraph), and at the school level, where teachers are often even unfamiliar with the term (Franch, 2020) and transdisciplinary approaches are difficult to implement, has strong implications for initial teacher education programmes.

4 INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION IN ITALY: WHAT ROLE FOR GCE?

Initial teacher education in Italy is carried out at the higher education level and is characterized by the presence of two different programmes, according to the level of education at which teachers will be teaching:

- A single-cycle university programme for pre-primary and primary teachers.
- A course for secondary teachers focused on the discipline they will teach, plus the acquisition of specific competences related to anthropology, psychology, pedagogy, teaching methods and technologies. Initial training education for secondary teachers is currently under reform after law 107/2015.

The involvement of higher education institutions (HEIs) as providers of pre-service training for pre-primary and primary education teachers started with the DM 249/2010¹ and has been

implemented since the academic year 2011/2012. Ministerial Decree 249/2010 established for the first time in Italy the Primary Education Sciences (Scienze della Formazione Primaria) courses to be organized by HEIs in the departments of educational sciences (or other departments upon authorization by the Ministry of Education).

For admission to the Primary Education Sciences course, it is necessary to hold an upper secondary education leaving certificate or any other equivalent qualification obtained abroad. Since these courses have a planned number of available places, established every year by the Ministry of Education at national level, students must pass an admissions test, drafted by single universities according to the decrees published every year by the Ministry of Education.

The course lasts five years for a total of 300 ECTS credits, and includes trainee activities in schools, which usually start in the second year of the course, for a total of 600 hours (24 ECTS credits). At the end of the course, prospective teachers take the final exam, where they discuss a final work and the final traineeship report. This final exam qualifies them to teach at both pre-primary and primary level.

The curriculum of the Primary Education Sciences course aims at developing subject-related and pedagogical knowledge and skills for prospective teachers to enable them to plan, assess and adapt their teaching to different groups of students (e.g. in terms of age, proficiency level, skill, social and cultural background). Within these programmes, students attend general training activities related to pedagogy, didactics, psychology, sociology and anthropology, as well as specific training activities concerning the acquisition of i) discipline-related knowledge and skills, including the integration of special educational needs pupils; and ii) knowledge within the fields of infantile neuropsychiatry, psychology, law and health.

The subject areas that are the focus of the specific training activities include Italian language and literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, history, geography, sports, arts, music, children's literature, and English language. Prospective teachers are required to acquire level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. (Eurydice, 2020).

On this view, ITE programmes reflect the Italian school curriculum in that they provide courses and trainings that are mainly subject-oriented. The subjects are tackled not only in relation to the age of the students (pre-primary or primary); they also tackle the most relevant issues that are not necessarily the object of instruction for young children.

ITE across all levels of education in Italy does not encompass any compulsory training activity related to GCE. The lack of training at pre-service level associates GCE with CCE: CCE in ITE is regulated by national recommendations on general pedagogical competences, also relevant for citizenship education but not specifically targeted at it, and may be integrated into subjects that are CCE-related (Eurydice, 2017).

In recent years, a debate has been developing across HEIs in Italy for the promotion of cross-curricular subjects (especially GCE and ESD) and, more generally, of transversal competences as part of the curriculum of every undergraduate and Master's degree. The rationale underpinning this debate is related to the need to foster in students the knowledge and skills that will allow them to tackle the most relevant issues of the contemporary world. ITE on GCE and ESD for prospective teachers in all levels of education is another relevant issue that is highly discussed within this debate. In this regard, the conference held at the University of Bologna on Global Citizenship Education in Higher Education (2017) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Conference of Italian Rectors (CRUI) and the Observatory of the Magna Charta Universitatum, discussed the role of education systems in promoting GCE and ESD and drafted some recommendations on the promotion of GCE and ESD in HEIs and in ITE in Italy.

5 THE STUDY ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

This article presents the findings of an initial research whose aim was twofold: i) to investigate prospective teachers' viewpoints and interest towards GCE in order to gauge their willingness to be engaged in GCE-related activities during both ITE and their future teaching in schools: research has in fact shown the relevance of teachers' interest in GCE for its successful inclusion in school curricula (Bourn, Hunt, & Bamber, 2017); (ii) to investigate prospective teachers' self-preparedness on topics, teaching methods and approaches related to GCE after attending courses that tackle topics and pedagogical competences that are linked to GCE but not explicitly focused on it.

In order to reach these goals, a questionnaire was drafted and administered online to prospective teachers² in pre-primary and primary schools enrolled in the Primary Education Sciences course at LUMSA University, Italy, in the academic year 2019–2020 and attending the second and fifth years—i.e. at the beginning of their traineeship in schools and in the last year of the course. In Italy, 33 higher institutions offer the course in Primary Education Sciences and, among them, LUMSA is one of the six private Universities providing this kind of course.

Prior to administration of the questionnaire, an analysis of the ITE curriculum at LUMSA was carried out in order to highlight if GCE-related topics and issues were already included in some courses of the teaching programme. Through this preparatory investigation, it was found that students were provided with opportunities to learn topics and methodologies related to GCE in the science and geography courses, where issues concerning the UN Agenda 2030, the SDGs and ESD were tackled, with a specific focus on environment protection and environmental sustainability.

The questionnaire comprised 12 questions focused on prospective teachers':

- Background information (gender, course year, previous teaching experience, etc.).
- Use of media to find information on political and social issues at national and international levels and GCE-related topics of interest.
- Self-preparedness on GCE-related issues and teaching strategies.
- Willingness to carry out specific lessons or activities once they become teachers.

Some of the questions were partly modified from the student and the teacher questionnaires of the International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS, 2016) developed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) (Schulz et al., 2018). ICCS has been identified by UNESCO as one of the comparative research studies to monitor progress towards SDG target 4.7 and the thematic indicator 4.7.4, which relates to the cross-national measurement of aspects related to GCE and ESD. Recent research has mapped GCE-related questions and items included in the study (Sandoval-Hernández, Isac, & Miranda, 2019; Sandoval-Hernández & Miranda, 2018).

The questionnaire comprised an introductory section, briefly explaining to respondents the meaning(s) of global citizenship education and its main features. It is relevant to stress that in Italian HEIs, as well as in schools, prospective teachers (but also teacher educators) may not even be familiar with the term, although they implicitly attend (or provide) courses that tackle GCE themes and pedagogies.

Seventy-eight students (72 female students and six male students) answered the online questionnaire, administered in December 2019 (the prevalence of female students should not be surprising because Primary Education Sciences courses are mostly attended by females in Italy). The majority of respondents were attending the fifth year of the course (N=49) and had no teaching experience (N=55): in pre-service programmes, it is possible that students have already experienced teaching as substitute teachers in schools.

The following sections briefly present the findings related to two areas of the questionnaire, namely prospective teachers' interest and tools for finding information on political and social issues at national and international levels, and their self-preparedness on GCE-related issues and teaching strategies. All answers have been analysed, when relevant, considering students' course year (second or fifth) and if they had any teaching experience.

5.1 Interest on political and social issues at national and international levels, use of media to find information and GCE-related topics of interest

This section encompasses two questions. The first has a twofold objective: firstly, to gather data on the relevance that students attribute to national and international news (whether they may be interested in both or have a preference for finding information about one of them); secondly, to investigate which tools they use to inform themselves and the subsequent relation between the tools used to find information and the sources adopted for their classroom activities (especially newspapers and online sources, see par. 5.2). The question includes eight items: a) watching television to inform yourself about national news; b) watching television to inform yourself about international news; c) reading the newspaper to inform yourself about national news; d) reading the newspaper to inform yourself about international news; e) using the internet to find information about national political or social issues; f) using the internet to find information about international political or social issues; g) using social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to find information about national political or social issues; and h) using social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to find information about international political or social issues.

The majority of respondents reported using television as the main medium to get information on national issues (57 students), followed by use of the internet to inform themselves on political and social issues related to the Italian context (51 students). Television and the internet are also often used to find information about international news, by 43 and 42 students respectively. Furthermore, nearly half of the respondents use social media to inform themselves about national (35 students) and international issues (34 students). Newspapers are used as a source of information for both national and international issues by only 14 students.

The second question was focused on students' interest in GCE-related topics and asked prospective teachers how often, during the last six months, they had looked for information in order to delve into several topics, namely a) climate change, b) global health (such as pandemics), c) international migration, d) conflicts, e) world poverty, f) gender inequalities in different parts of the world, and g) international organizations.

Climate change was the topic that attracted the interest of most respondents (56 students reported having looked for information about this issue often or very often), followed by international migration (38 students), gender inequalities and world poverty (31 students) and global health (30 students). Only ten students declared that they had searched for information on international organizations in the last six months.

Surveyed students generally reported interest in the GCE-related topics listed in the question, although most of them searched for information related to national contexts. The results confirm national trends on the relevance of television as the main source of information and the growing importance of the internet and social media (CENSIS, 2018). They also stressed the perceived importance of issues such as climate change and international migration among this young generation, as reported in studies and European statistics on students and adult populations (European Commission, 2019; Schulz et al., 2018).

5.2 Prospective teachers' self-preparedness on GCE-related issues and teaching strategies

The section of the questionnaire related to students' perceptions of their self-preparedness encompassed four questions aimed at capturing data on the use of different sources for planning

lessons once they become teachers; on their preparedness to teach a range of GCE-related topics; on the use of teaching methods and approaches; and on their ability to foster students' skills and attitudes towards GCE.

These questions are intended to gather information on whether and to what extent the ITE programme students were attending was providing them with the basic knowledge and tools that would allow them to deliver GCE in the classroom, although without any explicit reference to global citizenship.

Prospective teachers' ability to use different sources, in addition to textbooks, in their lesson planning is central for GCE to be meaningful and rooted in the contemporary world. Knowledge of the English language is also a relevant aspect of prospective teachers' capacity to access a wider range of primary sources and information that is seldom translated into Italian (the items refer only to the English language because it is compulsory for students in pre-primary and primary ITE to acquire the B2 level).

As shown in Table 1, most respondents felt prepared to use newspaper articles in Italian for lesson planning (54 students), while approximately half of them reported that they were able to use original sources and documents published by public or academic institutions (40 students and 38 students respectively). It is relevant to point out that only 26 students felt prepared to use teaching and learning materials published by NGOs and freely available online: considering the extensive quantity of GCE-related resources on the internet, that often include guidelines for teachers, it is possible that the respondents were not acquainted with them and had therefore never had direct experience of their structure and tools.

English language knowledge seems to be an issue for more than half of the respondents to understand newspaper articles, and especially with regard to documents published by NGOs or international associations, that may include more specific or technical language (only 16 students reported feeling prepared to use this kind of source).

When analysing data by course year and experience, it is relevant to note that teachers who had already taught in schools generally felt more prepared than their counterparts without experience in using different sources, although they felt less prepared to draw on documents published by NGOs or international associations in the English language.

The question about prospective teachers' preparedness to teach a wide range of topics includes items specifically related to GCE (e.g. world poverty, the global community and international organizations) and those concerning CCE (e.g. citizens' rights and responsibilities, voting and elections) in order to gather information on prospective teachers' self-preparation in both traditional and global forms of citizenship that are both not explicitly addressed in ITE curricula.

The majority of respondents reported that they felt prepared to teach responsible internet use, and half declared that they felt prepared on most of the topics listed in the questions related to either CCE or to GCE (citizens' rights and responsibilities, world poverty, the environment and environmental sustainability, equal opportunities for men and women, child exploitation, world economic inequalities, emigration and immigration) (Table 2).

Table 1: When you will be a teacher, in planning lessons related to global citizenship education for your students, how well prepared do you feel about drawing on the following sources?

	Second year, with teaching experience (N=7)	Second year, without teaching experience (N=22)	Fifth year, with teaching experience (N=19)	Fifth year, without teaching experience (N=30)	Total (N=78)
Original sources (e.g. human rights declarations)	5	14	9	12	40
Teaching/learning materials published by NGOs and freely available online	1	10	7	8	26
Teaching/learning materials published by commercial companies	5	10	9	10	34
Newspaper articles, magazines in Italian (on paper or online)	7	16	12	19	54
Newspaper articles, magazines in English (on paper or online)	4	8	6	13	31
Documents published by NGOs, international associations in Italian	4	10	9	10	33
Documents published by NGOs, international associations in English	1	6	2	7	16
Documents published by public institutions, academic institutions	5	10	10	13	38

Note: The data included in the table are referred to students who chose the answer categories "I feel quite well prepared" and "I feel very well prepared".

Table 2: How well prepared do you feel to teach the following topics and skills?

	Second year, with teaching experience (N=7)	Second year, without teaching experience (N=22)	Fifth year, with teaching experience (N=19)	Fifth year, without teaching experience (N=30)	Total (N=78)
Human rights	3	13	9	12	37
Voting and elections	2	7	8	4	21
The global community and international organisations	3	5	5	2	15
The environment and environmental sustainability	4	12	12	20	48
Emigration and immigration	3	13	12	16	44
Equal opportunities for men and women	5	11	13	19	48
Citizens' rights and responsibilities	5	14	14	17	50
The constitution and political systems	4	6	7	9	26
Responsible Internet use (e.g. source reliability, social media)	5	13	17	22	57
European Union	2	9	9	6	26
Critical consumerism	3	6	7	9	25
Child exploitation	5	11	14	16	46
World poverty	5	12	14	17	48
World economic inequalities	4	10	12	17	43

Note: The data included in the table are referred to students who chose the answer categories "I feel quite well prepared" and "I feel very well prepared".

The topics on which students felt less prepared were mostly related to political systems and international organizations: only 26 students responded that they felt able to teach the constitution, political systems and the European Union; 21 students felt prepared to teach voting and elections; and 15 students felt ready to teach global community and international organizations.

The findings highlighted no specific pattern in relation to students' previous experience in teaching: for some issues (e.g. equal opportunities for men and women), students with teaching experience felt more prepared about teaching them than their counterparts with no experience; for other issues (e.g. emigration and immigration), second-year students with no experience felt more prepared than second-year students with past teaching experience.

Table 3 shows the results of students' self-preparedness in using teaching methods and approaches that are associated with GCE teaching and are included in ITE programmes as general pedagogical tools to be acquired by students without any explicit reference to GCE.

Table 3: How well prepared do you feel to use the following teaching methods and approaches?

	Second year, with teaching experience (N=7)	Second year, without teaching experience (N=22)	Fifth year, with teaching experience (N=19)	Fifth year, without teaching experience (N=30)	Total (N=78)
Pair and group work	7	19	17	27	70
Classroom discussion	6	15	18	25	64
Role play	6	12	14	19	51
Research work	6	17	15	20	58
Problem solving	6	15	17	23	61

Note: The data included in the table are referred to students who chose the answer categories "I feel quite well prepared" and "I feel very well prepared".

More than half of the respondents reported that they felt prepared to use all the methods and approaches listed in the question, with pair and group work, classroom discussion and problem solving selected by more than 60 students. With regard to this question, students with past teaching experience reported feeling more prepared to use the methods and approaches included in the question than students with no experience.

Similar results were found for prospective teachers' preparedness to foster in their future students GCE-related knowledge, skills and attitudes, with most respondents feeling prepared to enhance students' knowledge of different cultures (70 students) and respect for cultural diversity (64 students). Also for this questions, students with teaching experience reported feeling more prepared than their less experienced counterparts (Table 4).

Table 4: How well prepared do you feel in fostering in your students the following knowledge, skills and attitudes?

	Second year, with teaching experience (N=7)	Second year, without teaching experience (N=22)	Fifth year, with teaching experience (N=19)	Fifth year, without teaching experience (N=30)	Total (N=78)
Critical thinking	6	16	13	20	55
Respect for cultural diversity	7	16	16	25	64
Knowledge of different cultures	7	18	18	27	70
Conflict resolution	5	15	14	21	55

Note: The data included in the table are referred to students who chose the answer categories "I feel quite well prepared" and "I feel very well prepared".

6 DISCUSSION

This article presents the results of a preliminary study on pre-service teachers' training conducted to analyse prospective teachers' interest in GCE and how global citizenship is tackled in teaching programmes for pre-primary and primary education teachers in the absence of any national recommendation or guideline for its formal inclusion in curricula for ITE.

Examination of the recent political and educational discourse on global citizenship education at the national level, which framed the present research, highlighted a growing interest in the topic, although the initiatives undertaken by different actors appear fragmented, mostly related to general recommendations, and do not address ITE.

Research has shown how pre-service and in-service teachers generally feel they are not well prepared in tackling GCE in class in relation to its core elements, i.e. knowledge, attitudes and engagement. Successful GCE in teacher education cannot disregard the analysis of GCE different theoretical frameworks, the training on participatory and learner centred pedagogies and the strategies to overcome the barriers that hinder GCE delivering in schools.

In Italy, the need for GCE training both during pre- and in-service is strongly intertwined with other challenges that the Italian school system is facing, such as the involvement and the role of external organisation, the focus of the instruction not only on the cognitive dimension but also on students' attitudes and engagement, the adoption of transversal approaches across a subject-based curriculum. In this view, teacher education mirrors the structure of the school system and programs and offer to students courses and trainings that tackle in great depth the major issues of every discipline, but rarely integrate them in the light of transversal and multi-dimensional approaches, that are instead needed in order to understand the complexity of contemporary issues (Morin, 1999).

The absence of a strategy at national level on GCE, together with the unclear status of GCE in national curricular documents and in teacher education programs in HEIs, that often do not even encompass the term "global citizenship education" in their syllabi, are the most relevant challenges for both educators and researchers interested in implementing and analysing GCE in Italy. In addition to the general issues related to GCE (from its multiple conceptualisations to the heterogeneity of topics, learning outcomes and pedagogical tools), the peculiarity of the Italian case is represented by the still vague status of GCE across all levels of instruction and the consequent attempt (by researchers and teachers interested in delving into this educational area) to "bring to light" and connect existing practices into a GCE perspective, without the support of an overarching framework at national and institutional levels. For this reason, the Italian situation represents a peculiar scenario within international research based on curricula and programs for ITE explicitly focused on GCE (e.g. Estellés & Fischman, 2020; Goren & Yemeni, 2017; Bamber et al., 2016).

In the light of the above, this preliminary study can delve into the Italian context on pre-service teacher programmes, contributing to the growing debate at the national level on global citizenship education and teacher education. The data gathered from the questionnaire underlined the surveyed students' interest in GCE issues, especially climate change, although they search for information mostly related to national contexts. With regard to students' self-preparedness, prospective teachers reported feeling prepared in the use of pedagogical methodologies and approaches, which are the objects of both general and discipline-oriented training activities included in ITE programmes for pre-primary and primary education, in the light of a vertical articulation of the curriculum in order to guarantee the coherent continuity of learning. Most teacher candidates felt prepared for teaching several GCE-related topics, ranging from the environment to world poverty and emigration, with experienced teachers feeling more prepared in adopting teaching methods and approaches than their less experienced counterparts.

The quite high number of prospective teachers who felt prepared for teaching issues such as global inequalities, gender differences, world poverty and child exploitation is a result that needs

to be further analysed, considering that, as the preliminary analysis of the teaching curriculum pointed out, students were provided with training on GCE mainly in relation to the environmental dimension of sustainability (UNESCO, 2012), while the inclusion of other global citizenship issues, mostly related to economic and social dimensions, seemed to be uncertain. In addition to this, the results do not confirm those studies showing how most prospective teachers generally feel not well prepared on GCE and thus ask for more specific trainings (Hunt, 2012; Bourn, 2016).

A possible explanation for these findings can be found in the role that informal and non-formal contexts play in developing students' knowledge on global matters, and on the relevant role of personal interest in the selection of information about specific GCE topics to raise personal awareness. As already pointed out in the IEA surveys on CCE (CIVED 1999; ICCS, 2009, 2016), students learn about citizenship not only through formal learning at school, but also through their multiple relations with their civic communities (Torney-Purta et al., 2001; Schulz et al., 2008, 2016).

In a similar vein, the lack of reported self-preparedness on topics that mostly deal with formal education (e.g. political systems and international organizations) and, at the same time, the lack of interest of the respondents in these topics, can be ascribed not only to the absence of these issues in the ITE curriculum, but also to the strong influence that personal interests have on raising awareness on GCE issues (Bourn, Hunt, & Bamber, 2017).

Findings also highlighted how prospective teachers are familiar with using newspaper articles (in the Italian language) as a source for their classroom activities, although few of them use newspapers as their primary medium to find information about national and international issues. In general, teacher candidates reported being quite familiar with drawing on different sources for their future lessons, one of the key skills for designing GCE activities in order to provide students with multiple perspectives on global issues (UNESCO, 2018). However, it is easier for them to use original sources such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, newspaper articles or teaching materials published by commercial companies than documents (in the English language) and teaching/learning materials published by NGOs and freely available online.

These results suggest that, on the one hand, the students' teaching programme provided them with basic discipline-related and pedagogical knowledge that was not directly linked to GCE but that may allow prospective teachers to implement GCE in their classrooms. On the other hand, the results highlight the influence of personal interests and of non-formal and informal education on determining students' knowledge and awareness of global citizenship (Tarozzi & Mellon, 2019), this remedying the lack of formal provision on GCE in national regulations and therefore in ITE curricula.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The limitations of the present study, mainly related to the convenience sample selected and its strong connections with a specific teaching programme and context of instruction, do not allow us to draw conclusions that can be generalized to ITE curricula for pre-primary and primary education teachers in Italy as a whole. Further research across different universities and programmes is needed to confirm these initial findings. In addition to this, an in-depth qualitative study is necessary, with the students who took part in the research, to investigate the ways in which informal and non-formal contexts have influenced their self-awareness and thus their self-reported preparedness with respect to GCE-related topics and the meaning they confer to GCE. Other qualitative research could be also conducted with teacher educators, analysing the programmes of their courses in order to identify stronger global citizenship connections within the single disciplines in a view of a trans-disciplinary approach across ITE. Continuing professional development carried out at the school level may also provide additional inputs for ITE programs

development, in presenting those obstacles that teachers face at the classroom level and possible strategies to overcome them.

Research has highlighted the relevance to train teacher candidates during pre-service not only on the development of their students' knowledge and skills, but also on fostering their engagement with global issues at different levels and on the valorisation of the connections between the curriculum, their own GCE experience and students' GCE experience (Tichnor-Wagner, Parkhouse, Glazier & Cain, 2016).

This latter element is strongly connected with the present research. Prospective teachers' experience in GCE also in relation to their attitudes and engagement, is an additional key element that needs to be addressed in the planning of a GCE-oriented ITE programme aimed at tackling the multidimensional features of global citizenship (Bamber et al., 2016; Guo, 2014; UNESCO, 2018, 2015; Zhao, 2010). Taking future teachers' experience of GCE into consideration means analysing the relationships between their interest in GCE-related topics, their opportunities to learn about GCE (inside and outside the pre-service programmes), and their degree of global engagement as converging aspects that should be at the heart of pre-service teacher training on global citizenship. Although this study does not allow us to state that a competent teacher in GCE should also be a good global citizen, this is an aspect that needs additional investigation.

Finally, further studies should investigate how to improve the synergy between CCE and GCE at pre-service level, also in the light of the recent re-introduction of civic education in Italian schools as a separate subject to be implemented transversally across school subjects (law August 20th, 2019, n. 92) – although the core issues of the discipline do not address directly GCE but are focused on the Italian Constitution, digital citizenship, sustainability and the Agenda 2030. The two educational areas have several elements in common: for example, they are not regulated by national guidelines or recommendations for the delivery in ITE programmes; they include a wide range of topics in their frameworks; they present different approaches for delivery; and they are focused not only on the development of students' knowledge and skills, but also on their attitudes and engagement (Eurydice, 2017). The joint provision of trainings on GCE and CCE may benefit prospective teachers' competences in improving school curricula, which tend to be too centred on the national dimension of citizenship (Tarozzi & Inguaggiato, 2018), through the integration of different perspectives, from the local to the national and the global, in order to implement a multidimensional and transversal approach to the traditional discipline-oriented curriculum that, according to Morin, will allow their future students to understand the complexity of the contemporary world and to foster their multiple identities and belonging.

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ENDNOTES

¹ <https://www.info-cooperazione.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Strategia-ECG.pdf>

² http://www.miur.it/Documenti/universita/Offerta_formativa/Formazione_iniziale_insegnanti_corsi_uni_DM_10_092010_n.249.pdf

³ The research was approved by the Ethics Review Board at LUMSA, after following the protocols related to: the degree of invasiveness of the research, both from a physical or mental point of view; the benefits that participants may receive from the research; the risks / inconveniences deriving from participation; the voluntary and free participation; the revocability of consent; the use of study results; personal data protection. Moreover, every participant had received an information sheet about the study and was asked to sign a declaration of consent.