

Restless Development Response to the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid

2.0 Response:

Introduction: If respondents wish to include an introduction, setting out any background information to their organisation / activities undertaken to prepare their response / other relevant information, this should be kept as brief as possible

Over half the world's population is under 25. As the largest, most energetic population, young people can and must participate in our global development efforts. They are also highly represented among the world's poor and it is vital that their needs are effectively met by development programmes and service providers, and that governments are fully accountable to them. Restless Development puts young people at the forefront of development, supporting them to take a leadership role in addressing the most urgent issues facing their countries and communities. We support them to lead civic participation, livelihoods and sexual and reproductive health programmes in eight countries, and build capacity of youth-organisations in a further thirty. We work with governments and development agencies to facilitate effective engagement with their youth constituencies.

Restless Development's three goal areas:

- Civic Participation: Young people become significant contributors to development processes, resulting in government policy and practice that is both beneficial and accountable to young people and all citizens.
- Livelihoods and Employment: Young people take up productive livelihoods and employment opportunities that contribute to their household income and to their communities' and countries' economies.
- Sexual and Reproductive Health: Young people observe safe sexual and reproductive practices that lead to health lives.

Restless Development directly delivers programmes in India, Nepal, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, UK, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition we build the capacity of over sixty youth organisations in over thirty additional countries each year.

In 2010 we reached 443 communities across the world, conducted over 30,000 sexual health lessons and over 440,000 livelihoods lessons. We trained 1,000 youth volunteers to lead community-based development programmes.

Restless Development promotes the professional youth-led development sector worldwide, by supporting bi- and multilateral development agencies to develop youth programmes, and make their existing programmes more accessible to young people.

This response to Irish Aid's White Paper consultation was prepared in partnership with Restless Development's country programme offices, particularly Zambia where we receive Irish Aid support.

Progress Made: Has the Government been successful in implementing the commitment contained in the White Paper on Irish Aid?

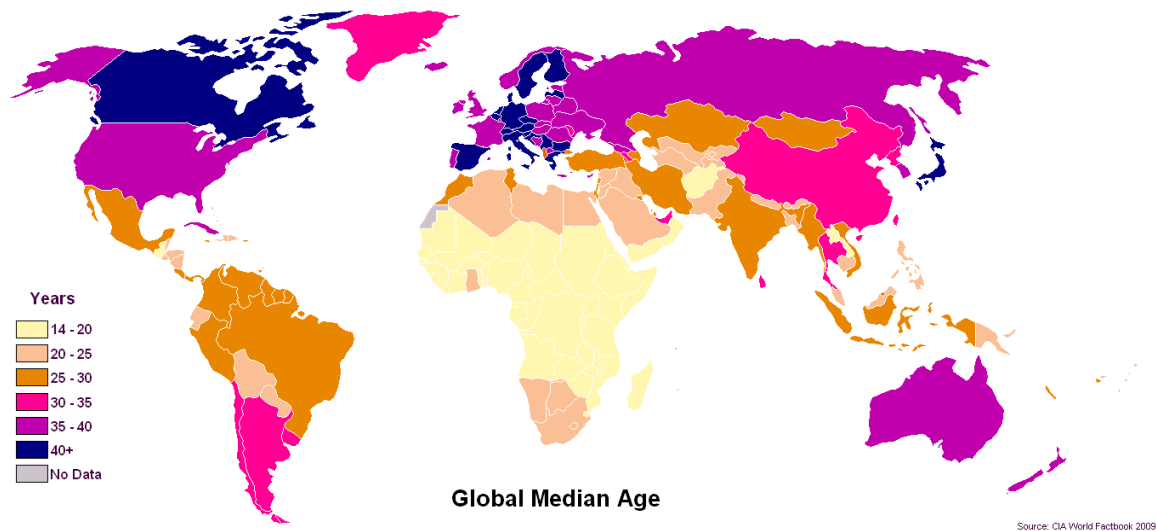
While Restless Development is not in a position to comment across the scope of Irish Aid's work, we would like to make a case for a strong focus on youth in Irish Aid's next strategy (see Changing Context section below).

We contributed to the White Paper consultation within Zambia, including sharing our submission to the Parliamentary Sessional Committee for Labour, Youth and Sport for the first session of the eleventh national assembly of Zambia. The subject of the paper was 'The Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship in Zambia'. It made the case for pre-professional skills for all youth (including financial literacy, awareness of youth-related policy, and involvement in community and local government decision-making) as a pre-requisite for sustainable youth livelihoods and entrepreneurship, and young people's equal benefit from economic growth.

Changing context: What are the implications of the changes in the global and domestic context for the Government's aid programme in the future and how will these affect current priorities?

Demographic changes highlighted in the 2011 UNFPA State of the World Population Report have implications for development programmes worldwide. The global population is now over 7 billion, half of which are under the age of 25. UNFPA argue that the youth population is peaking in many developing countries, and calls for investment in youth now to ensure they are able to take responsibility for social development and growth in the coming years.

"...the number of years in which a large, young working population can be counted on to fuel development may be fleeting, and governments and the private sector need to act expeditiously to prepare the young for productive roles and create jobs for them early in their working lives."



This sense of youth as an opportunity contrasts with current media focus on youth as a potential threat. The crises in northern Africa have been associated with mass discontent among youth and are seen as a warning of the potential negative impacts of large populations of disempowered young people (see *Guardian* and *FT*).

Despite the youth majority in many developing countries (UNFPA State of the World Population Report), our experience shows that most development initiatives do not specifically target youth or use methodologies which ensure their equal access and participation. Young people are strongly represented among the poor and unemployed (70% of young people live in poverty, young people are 47% of the unemployed, and 15-24 year olds are most at risk of HIV infection)

but frequently excluded from consultations for policies and services which directly affect them. A recent study commissioned by Restless Development (*Youth Engagement in Development, 2012*) revealed a scarcity of research relating to youth engagement in development, which in turn reflects the lack of consideration given to youth as a demographic in development programming.

Because they are highly represented among the poor, young people potentially have most to gain from development programmes. Their exclusion has negative implications for accountability to service-users. In the long term it also undermines democracy as an ever-increasing proportion of the population becomes excluded from policy-making processes. The reasons for poor youth access to development initiatives are varied and include age hierarchical cultures, lack of information, shortage of youth-friendly services, and lack of understanding by government and development actors of how to engage young people.

The need to better engage with youth has led a number of major development agencies to develop youth participation guides and policies. For example, DFID recently partnered Restless Development to develop [Youth Participation in Development: A Guide for Development Agencies and Policy-Makers \(2010\)](#), and we inputted to the new [Youth in Development Policy](#) about to be released by USAID. We worked with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs to produce a [Private Sector Toolkit for Working with Youth](#), and are currently working with KPMG to develop a series of thematic workshops around this theme. We would like to advocate that Irish Aid's future strategies recognize youth as a growing demographic requiring specific approaches, which can be mainstreamed or conceptualized as separate programmes, importantly with distinct budget lines attached.

Restless Development conducts youth-led research to gain a detailed understanding of young people's lifestyles, challenges and priorities. Recent publications include [Strength, Creativity and Livelihoods of Karamojong Youth \(2012\)](#) carried out by young Karamojong in Uganda, [State of Youth Tanzania \(2012\)](#) investigating youth perspectives on sexual and reproductive health, civic participation and livelihoods, and [Girl Hub: State of Girls in Rwanda \(2011\)](#). We are keen to see more development programming which reflects young people's needs and priorities as identified in this research.

Key Issues: How should the Government respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality? Are there other issues? Given the limited resources and the need to focus these, which issues should the Government prioritise in its future aid programming?

Restless Development would like to put the case for an explicit commitment to youth participation and engagement across Irish Aid's programmes, perhaps included as a cross-cutting theme (as with Gender or Trade in the current paper). Irish Aid clearly targets the most disadvantaged people, and has supported our own programmes in Zambia. We would be keen to see a clear policy on youth engagement to ensure that this significant group is integrated across the key issues identified by Irish Aid.

Below are examples of the ways that Restless Development has responded to youth needs, related to each of the issues targeted by Irish Aid:

Hunger – In Zambia we support youth collectives to improve their livelihoods through income-generation activities. A challenge faced by young people is that age-hierarchies exclude them from allocation of government-subsidised agricultural inputs, including through the Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission and Constituency Development Funds. We work with young Zambians to help them advocate for equal allocation, and support them to form collectives through which they can pool collateral and access start-up grants.

Fragility – In Sierra Leone the presence of large numbers of unemployed, traumatized and disadvantaged youth represent a clear threat to reconstruction efforts after the conflict. We work with young people across all districts to improve their health, livelihoods and civic participation. Implementing this holistic programme helps young people to improve their quality of life and actively participate in rebuilding their country and reducing its fragility. Read the Restless Development Sierra Leone newsletter [here](#).

Climate change – In Karamoja in Northern Uganda, young nomadic people are unable to take over their parents' livelihoods because climate change has undermined their ability to sustain a living through subsistence farming. Many resort to cattle-raiding, a practice that has fuelled conflict in the region. Restless Development supports young Karamojong to identify alternative sustainable livelihoods, and to gain a stake in development through participation in peace-building activities. Our recent youth-led research in Karamoja (see above) provided unique insights into livelihoods opportunities from a youth perspective.

Basic needs – In Tanzania our youth-led research (see above) demonstrated that young people do not access local health services because they are seen as unwelcoming and inaccessible for youth. We support young people to engage with service-providers and clinic staff to communicate their needs and ensure they can access quality basic health services. Our recent external evaluation ([Evaluation of Restless Development Tanzania Youth Peer-to-Peer Programme 2008-10, AMCA 2011](#)) in Tanzania showed that the percentage of health centres and schools offering youth-friendly services was 50% in areas where Restless Development had implemented its programme, as compared to 20% in control communities.

Across its country programmes Restless Development has identified link between poverty and poor sexual and reproductive health indicators among young people. Faced with extreme poverty, young people are unmotivated to protect their health and many resort to risky inter-generational relationships or transactional sex in order to secure income. Restless Development's holistic approach supports young people's basic health and basic livelihoods needs while simultaneously empowering them to have a greater voice in community and local government decisions to enable them to gain long term control over their lives and prospects.

Governance and human rights – In Uganda and Tanzania we organized the first ever national youth consultations, feeding into the formulation of national poverty-reduction strategies. This set a precedent for ensuring young people's views are incorporated into design of policies directly affecting their futures. In Tanzania 150 young people and 83 youth groups attended the two-day workshop to input to Mkukuta II, while in Uganda 110 young people from the Karamoja region attended a workshop on youth contributions to peace-building.

Gender equality – In many places, young women have the lowest social status due to lack of education and employment opportunities, their unmarried status, and the perception that they have no long term income-generating potential. There are many programmes addressing gender inequalities, but few disaggregate by age, despite this being a strong determinant of poverty levels and access to development initiatives, and necessitating a specific approach.

In Tanzania Restless Development is lobbying for the effective implementation of the Right to Return policy, to ensure that young mothers are allowed to return to school after pregnancy, and is establishing a young women's economic empowerment and mentoring programme. We conduct specific young women-led research to gain insights into the challenges young women face. This approach builds capacity among young women and creates a comfortable environment conducive to open dialogue and debate.

Ways of Working: How can the Government further strengthen its ways of working in delivering an effective aid programme, with a view to delivering real results in poverty reduction?

Irish Aid could take the following steps to ensure they are reaching young people through their development interventions:

- Establish a youth engagement policy, setting out Irish Aid's commitment to pro-actively include youth in its initiatives, and ensure programmes meet their needs. This would ensure that Irish Aid's programmes reach the most marginalized, and give young people a strong stake in Irish Aid's programmes and in their communities' and countries' development.
- Offer youth engagement toolkits and training to in-country Irish Aid staff and partners, to ensure they have capacity to work with young people throughout the processes of programme design and delivery, increasing the impact of Irish Aid's programmes for this important demographic.
- Ensure youth and their representative organizations participate in Irish Aid's consultation and decision-making processes, leading to programmes which are fully accessible to young people, and address the particular barriers they face.
- Ensure young people are fairly represented among beneficiaries, and that programmes are targeted to integrate their needs. Introduce youth indicators and youth budgeting to track the extent that young people are able to access and benefit from programmes.
- Encourage partners to mainstream youth participation across their programmes.

Restless Development has worked with a range of development agencies, NGOs and governments (for example USAID, DFID, UNFPA, Oxfam and the Governments of Nepal and Zambia) to develop their engagement with young people. We would be keen to discuss opportunities to work with Irish Aid in this area, and share best practice examples of youth engagement from across your work and ours.

Other comments: If the respondent seeks to address other issues – of direct relevance to the White Paper on Irish Aid – they should do so in this section. N/a

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