



**Consultation Process for Development of new Irish Aid
Development and Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021- 2024**

Submission by

80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World

Question 1. How can Irish Aid support life-long learning and increase public understanding of and engagement with development and global citizenship issues as well as increasing awareness of the Irish Aid programme?

With nine years to go, we are one third along the road to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals deadlines, ideas and ambition. The next five years are a crucial benchmark for driving and reaching a tipping point in achievement and critical engagement on the SDGs. The new strategy is one of the most important contributions to realising this agenda.

Lifelong Learning

- A clear definition and common understanding of lifelong learning (LLL) and how these will impact on existing strategic partnerships and approaches, will need to be developed in concert with the broader DE sector.
- Irish Aid’s current strategic partnership approach covers a number of key LLL areas; primary teacher training (DICE), Youth (Youth 2030), post-primary (WorldWide Global Schools), to third level (Suas), to Adult and Community (Saolta), to online engagement (DevelopmentEducation.ie). As such, investment in new areas should build on the existing, highly effective programmes.
- A LLL approach should mean that the current distinction between development education (GCE) and public engagement, should be ended. Public engagement is part of a development education continuum and not separate from it.

Awareness of the Irish Aid programme

- A key recommendation of the 2020 **DAC Peer Review** is for Ireland to:

“develop and implement a comprehensive plan that identifies how to grow spending and communicate the value of international development to the parliament and public... in order increase its ODA budget and meet its international commitment of 0.7% of GNI by 2030.”

If the new Development Education strategy is forming part of this plan it will be important to clearly articulate how it will contribute to the recommendation above.

- Ireland’s ODA programme, including support for development education, has been consistently recognised as one of the best in the world and is rightly a programme that Irish citizens can be proud of. The values base on which the programme is built, articulated in **A Better World**, is a reflection of ‘who we are’ and our role in the world. As Development Educators we should go beyond merely building ‘awareness’ of the Irish Aid programme to demonstrating, discussing and debating how Irish citizens are contributing to its success. This should include supporting civic spaces and sparking debate to engage understanding of ‘official’ Ireland (the world as it is) and as well as ‘unofficial’ Ireland (the world as it could be, and, to changing the world).
- The new strategy should communicate with learners not only that that the Irish Aid programme exists but why such a programme, based on diversity, equality, sustainability and human rights is so important in bringing about a Better World not just ‘overseas’ but

at here at 'home' as well. This point extends two previous points made by 80:20 in its White Paper submission¹ on International Development in 2018:

That development education must be, and must be seen to be a core element of the strategy and not simply a 'necessary' add on. Irish Aid must be as ambitious for the development education components of its strategy as it rightly is for its development co-operation components.

And

Maximise awareness, public ownership, and engagement by people in Ireland with the SDGs by building on the groundwork already laid by Development Education support during the term of the MDGs through a comprehensive education and communications plan.

Question 2. Are there other groups or organisations we should seek to work with in order to build this awareness and engagement?

- **Journalists:** The Simon Cumbers Award should be continued and more opportunities explored for development educators to engage in schools of journalism and the NUJ.
- **Business and Corporates:** Recognising the vital role that business and corporate leaders have in bringing about the SDGs, deeper engagement with groups linked to Business and the Community or via the CSR Stakeholders Forum. (to include the overseas CSR component of companies based in Ireland)
- **The SDG stakeholder forums** brought a broad range of organisations together including government, business, farming, environmental and international development NGOs and were a welcome initiative. For example, it could include an SDGs education-specific forum with regular decisions, actions and reporting component.

Question 3. What has changed in the external environment since 2017, both in the education sector and broader societal changes nationally and globally, and how should that be reflected in our priorities, our relationships and in our revised strategy?

80:20 supports the range of changing factors listed by the IDEA working groups on Youth, Formal Education and Adult and Community Education. In addition:

- COVID-19 has been particularly devastating for people who were already struggling in the Global South, those whose food security was already precarious and those without the safety net of social protection. The pandemic threatens to **roll back the development gains** and **human rights** gains so hard won by the most vulnerable communities across the globe. This is expected to worsen as more countries experience economic recession.
- **Access to information:** people have so much access to information, 'fake news', conspiracies and a range of other misinformation that are dividing societies and countries and testing democracies to their very limit. Media literacy has been part of the Development Education 'tool box' but will need to be enhanced in the coming years.

¹ For 8020's full submission to the White Paper visit <https://8020.ie/app/uploads/2018/08/8020-White-Paper-submission-30.08.18.pdf>

- **Individual actions:** whether as a result of the Fridays for Future student-led protests on climate change or the Black Lives Matter movement, the role of critical self-reflection exercises has emerged, most especially in the context of systemic issues such as racism.
- **The scale of inequalities:** following the release of special rapporteur on human rights and extreme poverty Philip Alston in 2020, the scale of anti-poverty work is not enough, by a wide margin, coupled with an era of extremes in income growth for high-net-worth individuals. Systemic inequalities are visibly and demonstrably worse.
- **Internationally:** On the international front, the last few years have been dominated by the Climate Crisis, Black Lives Matter, Brexit, #MeToo and US President Donald Trump, who for four years disrupted many of the values and principles espoused by development educators. This was the backdrop for development education, which systematically undermined the big picture goals of universal human rights access, justice and dignity for all.
- **International opportunities:** A number of opportunities to take active leadership roles in international contexts have included integrating a platform for DE ideas and action projects in tandem with Ireland's tenure on the UN Security Council, submissions to The International Commission for Futures of Education by UNESCO in 2021 etc.

Question 4. What do you consider to be the key areas of progress made since 2017 in the implementation of the Irish Aid Strategic Planning process? Are there any key lessons learnt or gaps in the current response?

Progress:

- Creation of new strategic partnerships with the Youth and Adult and Community sectors.
- Supportive and constructive relationship between Irish Aid staff and the DE sector.
- The production of accessible digital resources, online dissemination and engaging in audits of DE resources as scoping exercises underpinned by the SDGs and curriculum-subjects. This supported a free and open resources library of DE and GCE resources, significantly progressed and building on Irish Aid's strategic partnership with the developmenteducation.ie Consortium.
- Multiannual grants funding to DE organisations, additional funding made available to groups in receipt of DEAR funding and growing the 'pot' of funding available to the DE sector.
- Measurement and Results frameworks: While there is still some learning to be done regarding the capture of quality data that can be used both to measure progress and plan into the future, there has definitely been progress made over the past 4 years.

Gaps:

- While recognising Irish Aid's stance on campaigning and advocacy work, it is important to highlight that 'awareness' and 'understanding' of global issues are in and of themselves not enough. Behavioural change requires engaging in and practicing in opportunities to take action, whether by holding governments to account for treaties and commitments made on their behalf or questioning corporate power. 80:20 joins Concern and IDEA members in supporting active citizenship learning opportunities and invites Irish Aid to

acknowledge this **spectrum of taking actions**. (The EU grants DEAR support structure may be a useful guide in considering this element).

- **Funding alternatives:** The DE sector is hugely dependent on Irish Aid for funding. European Commission funding is inaccessible for most and other sources are limited. It would be helpful to explore how the financial sustainability of the sector could be assured and could be linked with the all of government SDG approach or stimulating a specific philanthropy fund, for example.
- **Learning from the Data:** While Irish Aid report on the data received from grantees and strategic partners on an annual basis, an opportunity for the sector to come together to learn from the data presented would be welcomed.

Question 5. With reference to the five output areas of the current Irish Aid Development Education Strategic Plan, what do you consider the key priorities for 2021- 2024 should be?

The five output areas in the current Development Education strategy should be maintained. However, the Non-Formal Education output should be renamed and separated into two; Youth and Adult and Community Education.

Output 1: Policy Coherence. An enabling and coherent policy environment for development education at local, national and European levels

Whole of Government: Output 1 has been regarded as an 'internal' output for Irish Aid to work across other government departments to ensure policy coherence. This is to be applauded and should be maintained. With the commitment of government to fulfilling the SDGs by 2030 there is an opportunity in the next strategy to see what role DE organisations can play in helping to bring about this policy coherence both nationally and at European levels.

Output 2: Capacity Building Maximised capacity, collaboration, partnership and coherence of development education partners to enhance the quality, delivery, impact and communication of development education

- **Measurement:** More effective use of measurement tools to highlight areas of weakness and supporting creative solutions will be key to building capacity across the sector
- **CPD** Increased capacity needs to be linked to increased funding, for example if we are to engage more unique teachers/learners/trainers/employment sector professionals over the course of the strategy, the capacity of various organisations involved in the delivery of CPD will need to increase also.
- **Research** There is a need for targeted strategic research to inform and enhance the effective delivery and practice of high-quality development education in Ireland.

Output 3 Formal Education Further integration and mainstreaming of quality development education in formal education curricula, programmes and structures

- 80:20 is a member of the formal education working group (FEWG) and as such endorses (and will not repeat) the submission made by the group, particularly in relation to Output 3: Formal Education.

Third level/higher education

- There is a great deal of commendable DE engagement at Third Level, however it is a much broader and complex area that includes a wide range of subjects and professions in training such as law, engineering, nursing, culture studies and more that a broader view of education must engage with.

Output 4: Non-Formal Education Increased integration, quality and spread of development education in non-formal education curricula, programmes and structures

- 80:20 is a member of the IDEA Youth Task Group and the IDEA Adult and Community Education Working Group and as such endorses (and will not repeat) the submissions made by both groups particularly in relation to Output 4: Non-Formal Education.

Output 5: Irish Aid Awareness Programme Increased awareness within the education sector of Ireland's development cooperation programme and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

- Output 5 needs to move beyond 'the education sector', clearly articulate why Irish Aid is looking for increased awareness and needs to communicate to learners not only that the programme exists (awareness), but to increase public ownership of the programme based on why such a programme, based on diversity, equality, sustainability and human rights is so important in bringing about a Better World not just 'overseas' but at here at 'home' as well.

Question 6. Irish Aid is considering changing the name of the programme and strategy to Global Citizenship Education, do you have any comments or concerns in relation to this suggestion?

- A rationale is not provided to the potential change, which makes the suggestion unclear at this stage and the potential implications.
- Since 1975 when the term Development Education was launched it focused on 'developing' countries and was about 'human development'. It sought to engage learners in a host of issues related to the legacy of colonialism, debt, (in)equality, trade, (in)justice, conflict, poverty, hunger and many more. Those issues have neither vanished nor progressed to a point where international development goals are no longer needed, despite the optimism for an accessible universal global and active citizenship agenda.
- Just as the equity principle of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change recognises 'common but differentiated responsibilities', Development Education has been located in and has roots in challenging our connections to these fault lines of global inequalities, in particular in developing countries and our common but differentiated responsibilities to these realities as a high-income country.
- That DE is located within the Irish Government's ODA programme is not incidental – the connective tissue in creating opportunities to understand and be active on global to local and transnational issues based on human rights, sustainable development and human development has been part of the mandate and mission of the DFAT for decades. This approach adds a distinctive contribution to education and learning contexts and moments, a contribution that is potentially at risk of fragmentation and being reduced to a minority position.

Question 7. What opportunities have arisen from the COVID-19 experience and how can we learn from it in order to reach a broader audience?

- Covid-19 has been experienced by all countries, all around the world. We have all experienced the same shock, had the same restrictions on our 'normal' way of life. It has exposed vulnerabilities in global health systems, in supply chains and relationships within and between countries.
- It has reinforced the value of working in partnership across the sector and with people outside of it. Many are facing similar challenges in adapting and experimenting to the new normal, which have changed under a series of lockdown measures in Ireland. Partnership work, such as our work in the developmenteducation.ie consortium with Aidlink, Concern Worldwide, the National Youth Council of Ireland, Self Help Africa, the Irish Development Education Association and Trócaire, has benefitted from coordinating discussions, strategies and the sharing ideas in managing and mitigating against changing circumstances.
- Expanding free and open-source technologies and materials for teachers and learners grows their autonomy and supports open educational online resources and open platforms, where possible. As the Futures of Education report by UNESCO in 2021 states, 'Public education cannot be dependent on digital platforms provided by private companies.'

Question 8: How can technology and digital outreach help us?

- The challenge of geographical reach has largely been flattened in Ireland by the use of new technologies. Yet it isn't without complications regarding irregular work hours, technology failure, the digital divide in some areas of Ireland (for online delivery) and the potential for digital saturation.
- Access to 80:20 staff, partners and funders through Zoom has greatly enhanced our developmenteducation.ie programme, workshops reach, talks and resource development projects, as well as enhancing opportunities to bring colleagues overseas to Irish events.
- Use of digital can provide many opportunities but it is a tool that needs an integrated blended approach with a continued focus on face to face for the sector. It also carries a range of expected and unexpected costs in terms of software, equipment, training and development and upskilling as technology changes. Provision for this reality of delivering a multitude of DE opportunities is vital.