



**Submission by Trócaire
to the
Consultation Process for Development of new Irish Aid
Development and Global Citizenship Education Strategy
2021-2024**

1. Nature of views (indicate personal / on behalf of an organisation): Organisation
2. Organisation (if applicable): Trócaire
3. Role in organisation (if applicable): Church and Development Education Manager
4. Web-address: www.trocaire.org
5. Freedom of information: Responses are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and may be released in total or in part. Please indicate if there are aspects of your response that you seek to have withheld, and the reasons for same. **wishes to have all of its submission released publically.**

Date of posting response: 19th March 2021

Submission Responses

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?**

- This approach can be facilitated through placing critical, deep engagement with global justice issues at the core of the development education strategy. From Trócaire's perspective, educators (in the broadest sense, across formal and non-formal sectors) are the people with the greatest expertise and reach and therefore their role as both participants and multipliers cannot be underestimated. Support should be targeted at educators rather than at standalone structures, and, by extension, those working to support educators to increase their expertise and confidence in delivering development education.
- It is important to have clarity on what is meant by both 'life-long learning' and 'increasing public understanding of and engagement with', and to identify how these would be measured. Lifelong learning represents a long term and diverse process which manifests differently in different spaces. This diversity needs to be recognised, along with clear and pragmatic guidelines on any accompanying measurement. What is the proposed link between life-long learning and increasing engagement and how would this be measured and understood in a meaningful way?
- Measuring public understanding across a broad audience is challenging, and evaluating the link between a development education intervention and any increase in public awareness of development cooperation would require clear guidelines and criteria from Irish Aid. Importantly, it is critical that we recognise the transformative nature of both 'understanding' and 'learning' with respect to Development Education and, as a result, the importance of emphasizing qualitative results rather than simply reach.
- Trócaire's view is that development education is a process of critical engagement and transformative learning that requires targeted and in-depth engagement, therefore a focus on increasing public awareness could potentially risk diluting the value of transformative learning spaces. Policy and practice need a strong evidence base informed by robust research in order to ensure that the principles of development education are upheld and that the learning journey of programme participants is impactful and transformative.

Summary

- Critical, deep engagement with global justice issues at the core of the development education strategy.
- Clarity on what is meant by both 'life-long learning' and 'increasing public understanding of and engagement with'.
- Strong evidence base informed by robust research to ensure that the principles of development education are upheld.

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

- In order to ensure that educators are supported in ways that are relevant and meaningful for them, engagement with groups such as the NCCA, the Teaching Council, teachers' unions, the Department of Education and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs will be essential.
- Create a cross-departmental forum on SDGs/GCE involving Departments Taoiseach, Youth, Environment, Foreign Affairs, Education, and Rural and Community Affairs.
- The purpose of this sectoral collaboration should be to strengthen educators' confidence in development education rather than reaching the wider public with wider awareness raising.

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?

- The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on both global inequality and inequality in our own society. This has led to an increased overall awareness of inequality and interconnectedness but has also contributed to an ever-widening social divide and increased marginalisation. In Ireland we have seen increased marginalisation of vulnerable groups, making them harder to reach with Development Education. This should be reflected in support for research in this area to unpack the obstacles faced and to identify ways to bring development education into these spaces in ways that are meaningful and relevant.
- The rise of populism and divisive rhetoric in global politics means that critical engagement skills to explore and understand complex issues, solidary, empathy and multiple perspectives are

more essential than ever. The transformative deep engagement that facilitates this should be at the core of the development education strategy

- There is increased precarity of employment in adult and community education, youth work and Early Years education. This has significant implications for reaching all but the most formal sectors. There have been significant changes within the education system, including the cancellation and adaptation of long-standing state exams. The primary curriculum is mid-review, making it challenging to build a cohesive Development Education strategy for that sector.
- Demographics continue to change within classrooms and youth spaces, as diversity continues to grow. Young people are increasingly aware of issues such as gender, racial justice, mental health and disability. It is essential to ensure that diversity is considered in messaging and resources, with a focus on challenging stereotypes, and bringing multiple opinions and perspectives. The consultation process should actively seek out diverse perspectives and experiences to ensure that the strategy is reflective of the above-mentioned changes. For example, Trócaire is embarking on a journey to strengthen diversity internally and in our public facing work, informed by an advisory group of people from diverse backgrounds.
- It will be essential to ensure that development education practice is aligned with guidelines and best practice in anti-racism, gender awareness and inclusion. Working with educators from each sector as key stakeholders throughout the process will ensure that the strategy is relevant and reflective of the changes in the education sector and in wider society.
- The rise and impact of grassroots social movements such as Black Lives Matter and Fridays for Future, has not only increased awareness of injustice but has channeled passion for action and change that is driven from the ground up. That calls for a continued critical and action focused lens on issues such as racial justice and climate action. This should be reflected in the strategy through a recognition of the link between global citizenship and action while acknowledging that the journey from awareness to action is non-linear and influenced by multiple factors.

Summary:

- Increased awareness of inequality accompanied by widening social divide and increased marginalisation; need for an informed approach to reaching marginalised groups with development education
- Rise in populism and divisive politics; increased need for critical engagement skills and multiple perspectives
- Changed demographics and increasing awareness among young people; need to ensure development education is aligned with guidelines and best practice in anti-racism, gender awareness and inclusion

- Rise and impact of social movements; reflected in action focus that recognises the non-linear nature and multiple factors that influence the journey from awareness to action
- 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?**
- Development and implementation of IDEA Code of Good Practice has been a key success
 - Growth of WWGS leading to strong engagement at post primary level. It would be of value to take learning from WWGS to apply at primary level.
 - The model of strategic partnerships has proved effective in strengthening development education in particular sectors e.g WWGs in post primary, Youth 2030 in Youth and Saolta in adult and community education. This strategic partnership approach recognises how each sector is unique and enables programmes to be designed that are best suited to that sector.
 - Emphasis on the universality of the SDGs and importance of local-global linkages in development education could be further strengthened in future strategies.

Summary:

- IDEA code of good practice
- WWGS and opportunity to apply learning from WWGS to primary level
- Strategic partnerships recognising unique nature of each sector
- Further strengthen the universality of SDGs and local-global linkages

- 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?**

Output 1; Policy Coherence

- Develop a cross-departmental measurement strategy for SDG 4.7¹ that captures the contribution of DE/GCE in Ireland to achieving the SDGs. Engaging with the DE sector to develop appropriate indicator(s) will be key to this process.

Output 2; Capacity Building

- It will be essential to ensure that relevant research is supported to ensure that policy and practice are rooted in a strong evidence base including on the impact of development education and development education resources. Flexibility in supporting collaborative research between NGOs and academic institutions that will strengthen practice and impact should be prioritised, which Trócaire has experience of with the Education for a Just World partnership with DCU. There should both clear guidance around using Irish Aid funding in such a way.
- Increased collaboration across the sector, particularly in enabling organisations to work collectively in line with their respective strengths will be key.
- A review of the PMF process would also be of value, including a review of the potential to include qualitative measures to support the wealth of quantitative evidence already gathered through the existing PMF framework.

Output 3; Formal Education

- A central aspect to this output should be involving educators as key stakeholders to ensure that the mainstreaming of development education is relevant and meaningful for them as well as supporting them in their professional roles. An increased focus on ITE will support educators to build confidence in DE from the early stages of their career.
- Mapping DE at ITE level to develop a comprehensive picture of DE in that sector, in line with the mapping that was conducted on the adult and community education sector². This will enable organisations to identify gaps, and understand better where the need is greatest. Third level institutions should welcome this initiative in order to help them address the new Céim standards. DICE and UBUNTU should be engaged early in this process.
- Consideration will also need to be given to the outcomes of the primary curriculum and senior cycle review to ensure that DE approaches are aligned as well as reflective of relevant strategies such as the anti-racism strategy
- Exploring possibilities for a strategic partnership at primary level, based on learning from WWGS and Youth 2030 and identifying the strengths that Trócaire can bring to such a partnership through our specific areas of knowledge and expertise.

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<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata?Text=&Goal=4&Target=4.7#:~:text=Target%204.7%3A%20By%202030%2C%20ensure,and%20non%2Dviolence%2C%20global%20citizenship>

² <https://www.developmentperspectives.ie/saolta-research>

Output 4; Non-Formal Education

- Allowing space for the different nature of non-formal curricula should be a priority in supporting effective mainstreaming.
- In the experience of the youth programme in Trócaire, targeted supported interventions deliver the greatest impact and therefore the priority should be on sustained engagement and support for targeted young people. Centring young people as active agents of change through youth led programmes and in-depth engagement, similar to the Trócaire Youth Leadership Programme, should remain at the core of this output.
- Through the Youth 2030 consortium, the continued support for training and upskilling of the youth sector on Global Youth Work approaches³ and DE methodologies is essential.
- The new National Action Plan Against Racism is an important development, and it is vital that both Irish Aid and the Youth Sector are named as key stakeholders in its development.
- Increasing support for further mainstreaming of DE in third level youth work courses, and recognising the positive impact that will have on the youth sector.

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?

- In Trócaire, we have a very clear understanding of and approach to development education. Development Education is very distinct, as reflected in the principles of development education laid out in the IDEA Code of Good Practice⁴. It is about education through the different sectors, both formal and non-formal. It is about deep engagement with development and associated issues. This distinction needs to be retained in the new strategy. As an overseas development agency, maintaining a direct connection to development and ensuring people understand the complexities of global justice issues is fundamental to our work. Indeed our responsibility to be aware of our duties towards people living with injustice and poverty is outlined in ⁵ founding document.
- Citizenship is rooted in rights and responsibilities, and therefore a move towards this term creates opportunities to focus on issue through these lenses aswell as building in a strong action-oriented component. However, not everyone living in Ireland is a citizen and the difference in peoples' experiences depending on their immigration status should be recognised.

³ <https://www.youth.ie/programmes/development-education/global-youth-work-and-development-education/#A-QUALITY-GLOBAL-YOUTH-WORK-APPROACH>

⁴ <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/9e15ba29/files/uploaded/Code%20of%20Good%20Practice%20Principles%20April%202021.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.trocaire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Pastoral-Letter.pdf>

- The term GCE as an umbrella works well, with the distinction of Education for Sustainable Development and Development Education remaining as distinct components underneath.
- Overall, this discussion would benefit from further consultation and engagement across the sector and more widely. Irish Aid should engage the sector in producing a position paper on the issue.

Summary:

- Retain distinct nature of development education
- Embrace action-oriented component of citizenship
- GCE as umbrella terms that can capture distinct nature of DE and ESD.
- Further discussion and consultation in this area.

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 brought about a heightened awareness of global injustice, particularly through the debate on vaccine equity, and social justice in general. While there is a sense of being part of a global challenge, people's immediate concerns and issues are often very local and domestic. Many people are facing precarity in their employment, especially in early childhood spaces, and educators and youth workers are often on the front lines of supporting young people with their well-being and response to the challenges of the pandemic.
- While a broader audience may be more aware of global injustice, robust research and informed policy and practice would be required in order to reach these audiences with transformative learning in a way that is meaningful and practical for them. The pivot to digital outreach provided opportunities for audiences to engage with development education who would typically not be in a position to attend face to face events e.g. parents, people in remote areas. It also removed geographical restrictions on attending events, as well as opening up opportunities to include voices from the global south in workshops and events. However, this must be balanced with the remaining challenges of reaching certain groups with global justice and development education messages.
- Focusing on digital outreach risks losing the richness and depth of transformative learning that happens in face-to-face settings. Building and maintaining relationships with educators and stakeholders is also an essential part of delivering any successful programme and face-to-face interactions are vital to this process.
- The purpose of reaching a broader audience needs to be very clear in terms of whether it is for awareness raising or a deeper engagement development education process. If it is proposed for there to be a link and journey from awareness to engagement and action, the non-linear nature of this journey as well as the challenges of measuring such a process, especially with broader audiences, needs to be acknowledged and reflected.

Summary:

- Increased awareness of global justice and social justice more broadly. Increasing marginalisation of vulnerable groups
- Opportunities of digital outreach must be balanced with its limitations
- Clarity needed on purpose of reaching broader audience and measurement of this reach

8. How can technology and digital outreach help us?

- Online tools and resources such as the developmenteducation.ie consortium are primed for online engagement as an established space and place for practitioners across all education sectors.
- Technology can be used to support innovative and engaging ways for young people to engage with global justice issues, which Trócaire has seen in practice through our work in Games Based Learning.
- Digital technology has also normalised virtual speakers, meaning that the voices of practitioners and partners in overseas programmes can be brought directly into outreach spaces. This can be maximised through continuing to bring voices from the global south into our development education work.
- Technology can be leveraged as an effective tool as part of a blended approach to awareness and engagement⁶. It is important to maintain a balance between the scope of digital outreach for reach, with the transformative and critical engagement depth of face-to-face outreach.
- The limitations of digital outreach for critical engagement must be considered. The marginalisation of young people and educators who do not have access to reliable broadband, devices or the relevant supports must also be considered. A development education approach which further marginalises already marginalised groups must be avoided.

Summary

- Continue to involve voices from the global south directly in development education interventions
- Games based learning and digital technologies provide transformative learning opportunities
- Importance of maintaining blended approach and avoiding further marginalisation of already marginalised groups

⁶ https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/chrce/digital_technologies_to_advance_gce_in_schools.pdf