



**Submission to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and Defence
October 2017 - Review of the Irish Aid programme
Irish Development Education Association (IDEA)**

Introduction

IDEA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence review of Irish Aid. Our submission will focus on Irish Aid's Development Education strategy and implementation.

IDEA, the Irish Development Education Association, is the national network for Development Education in Ireland. We represent over 100 members involved in the practice, promotion and advancement of Development Education. Our members include International Development NGOs, Domestic NGOs, schools networks, youth sector organisations, adult and community educators. Their work encompasses global citizenship education, education for sustainable development, human rights and equality. IDEA members deliver Development Education through formal, non-formal and informal education. This breadth of engagement is one of the sector's core strengths, enabling it to engage with a wide array of audiences using a range of tools drawn from education and development practices.

Context:

Development Education is a fundamental part of sustainable development. Under **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** Ireland must "ensure all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including among others through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (SDG Target 4.7).

Development Education is a fundamental part of development cooperation and is essential to achieve **One World One Future's** aim of "a deep public understanding and engagement

with our aid programme and our development policy, harnessing the contribution of Irish people and institutions.”¹

“Development education plays an important role in building the conditions in which we can continue to meet ongoing global challenges and as such forms a key part of our overall aid programme. Irish Aid is committed to ongoing support for development education because it contributes to an actively engaged and well-informed Irish public, with the competencies to engage with the dynamic, globalised, unequal and interdependent world in which we live. Development education develops a deeper understanding of rights and responsibilities as global citizens and inspires them to influence the decisions that affect them as individuals and which shape the global sustainable development agenda.” Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017-2023

Ireland’s high quality Development Education (DE) has been recognised internationally. The Global Education Network Europe (GENE) peer review of Development Education in Ireland states “Both Irish Aid strategies to date have been highly commendable, Ireland clearly showing itself as a leader in Europe with regard to strategic development and coordination of DE.”² It commends the long-term commitment to Development Education within Irish Aid and Irish civil society. “The Peer Review report acknowledges the rich history, traditions, experience and skills evident in DE in Ireland. Irish support for DE is reflected in the range of committed organisations involved in DE, and the many initiatives and programmes in the formal and non-formal education sectors, and in civil society.”³ Two independent reports commissioned by the European Commission identify Irish Development Education as an exemplary model for European counterparts⁴.

The adoption of the Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017 -2023 is a positive step for Development Education in Ireland. An exemplary consultation process ensured the involvement of both Irish Aid and civil society partners in the creation of this policy. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan, stated “This new strategy affirms our commitment to development education and its central role to both our international development programme and Irish foreign policy. I believe that our strategy is ambitious in that it seeks to increase the accessibility, quality and effectiveness of development education in Ireland. And I believe that the vision which drives development

¹ One World, One Future, Ireland’s Policy for International Development, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2013 p 3

² Global Education in Ireland, GENE, 2015, p9

³ GENE, P8

⁴ DE Watch: European Development Education Monitoring Report, 2010, 28 and 52; and OECD Development Co-operation Peer Review: Ireland 2014, 74–75 .

education is compelling: a sustainable and just world where people are empowered to overcome poverty and hunger and fully realise their rights and potential.”⁵

The Department of Education and Skills National Strategy on Educational for Sustainable Development and the National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 ensure policy commitments to Development Education across government departments. In recent years, the Development Education Sector has made significant progress in implementing Development Education in the formal, non-formal and informal sectors through Irish Aid’s Strategic Partnerships and partnerships with Civil Society Organisations.

IDEA welcomes Irish Aid’s support for Development Education and partnership with our members to ensure all people in Ireland have access to Development Education. We ask the Joint Committee to consider our suggestions that we believe would strengthen the Irish Aid programme:

Strategic prioritisation and investment in Development Education are essential for Development Education in Ireland to ensure an equal, just and sustainable world where empathy, solidarity and active citizenship are fostered. As discussed above, Development Education in Ireland delivers excellent work at the highest international standards, however, limited investment and a lack of strategic prioritisation risk the sustainability of the sector and prevent the delivery of its potential impact for Irish society.

Strategic Prioritisation of Development Education across Irish Aid’s strategy is required to achieve its potential for change. The current lack of strategic prioritisation is reflected in the level of Irish Aid investment in Development Education. In 2015 Irish Aid’s total Development Education budget⁶ was 0.5% of Ireland’s ODA total⁷. We welcome the increases in Ireland’s ODA in recent years. The rate of investment in Development Education has not been in line with these increases, and as a percentage of ODA, Development Education investment between 2011 and 2017 has ultimately declined.

The launch of the Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017-2023, and the backing of both the then Minister and Minister of State was a step in the right direction. What is now required is a further integration of Development Education, and the Irish Aid Development Education Strategy, into Irish Aid management planning and overall strategy, in particular, into any review, update or replacement of One World One Future. Development Education must be seen as central to the delivery of Irish Aid’s aims at all level of the organisation. As stated by the GENE peer review of Development Education in Ireland in 2015:

“Given the high level of skills, experience, and commitment related to DE among stakeholders in Ireland, the Peer Review team believes that this should be nurtured

⁵ Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017 -2023, Irish Aid, 2016, p4

⁶ GENE, P.38

⁷ <https://www.irishaid.ie/what-we-do/how-our-aid-works/where-the-money-goes/> Accessed 09/10/17

and built upon in the next Irish Aid strategy. The positive potential and opportunities ahead for DE and GE [Global Education] in Ireland are very significant. In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals, provide an opportunity to link the strong work to date in DE in Ireland, with commitment to Global Goals.”⁸

Underinvestment in Development Education is a significant barrier to achieving the aim of integrating Development Education in lifelong learning in Ireland. Ireland’s high quality Development Education has been propelled by the commitment of civil society. The ongoing commitment of Irish Aid to support Development Education since the 1970’s must be commended. However, overall levels of investment are not sufficient and result in uncertainties and a drain of expertise from the sector.

Development Education is a huge resource for development cooperation and education in Ireland. There is a significant risk this resource will be dissipated before it is possible to utilise it fully. A strong Development Education strategy requires a strong Development Education sector for the delivery of high quality and impactful Development Education in Ireland. The Development Education sector reaches into all aspects of Irish society. Underinvestment undermines the Development Education sector’s capacity to deliver and increases the risk of losing expertise and experience from the sector. This point was underlined by the GENE peer review:

“Given the quality of strategies to date and the expected potential of a new Irish Aid DE Strategy, along with the growing capacity and the commitment of development educators on the one hand; and given the reductions in funding support to DE over several years on the other, there is now a need to plan for a staged series of increases in funding for DE (when budgetary circumstances permit).”⁹

In 2005, a European Commission conference made up of member state ministries, including Irish Aid, Department of Foreign Affairs, and civil society representatives concluded that:

“National and European authorities should ensure there is adequate funding for development education and awareness-raising in their planning. It is proposed that the European Commission and Member states move towards or beyond a figure of 3% of ODA, as proposed in a UNDP Report. This increase in funding implies the necessary quality, efficiency and effectiveness of development education and awareness raising activities.”¹⁰

⁸ GENE, p9

⁹ GENE, p 9

¹⁰ EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC AWARENESS AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION FOR NORTH-SOUTH SOLIDARITY, BRUSSELS, 19-20 MAY 2005, quoted in The European Consensus on Development: The contribution of Development Education & Awareness Raising, 2007

In 2015 the Irish Aid Development Education budget was 0.5% of ODA¹¹. This amounts to an annual investment in Ireland of approximately €0.71 per person¹². The level of funding has not increased substantially since 2015.

Recommendations

Strategic Prioritisation of Development Education should cut across Irish Aid's management and strategic approaches.

- Development Education should be a priority focus within the whole of government approach of One World One Future
- Development Education should be a priority focus for any review, update or replacement of One World One Future
- Irish Aid should prioritise Development Education as an essential activity for maintaining public engagement with Ireland's aid programme. This should be reflected in Irish Aid funding programmes, policy support, and communications including annual reports.
- The Irish Aid Development Education Strategy should be integrated into Irish Aid management planning and overall strategy
- The optional status of Development Education in the Programme Grants should be removed, and the requirement to include Development Education or Public Engagement activity should be reinstated

Investment in Development Education should be significantly increased and strategic multi-annual funding modalities put in place.

- Irish Aid investment in Development Education should move towards or beyond 3% of ODA
- Irish Aid Development Education funding modalities should allow for mixed, balanced and longer term Development Education programmes through multi-annual funding, strategic partnerships and innovation funding.
- Building on the success of Irish Aid's Development Education Strategic Partnerships, strategic multi-annual funding should be open to partners within the current Irish Aid Development Education Annual Grants programme.

https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/publication-development-education-for-the-european-consensus-200806_en.pdf

¹¹ See above

¹² Based on CSO population figures <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpr/censusofpopulation2016-preliminaryresults/> and Global Education in Ireland, GENE, p38

- Innovation funding & seed funding to support innovative practice should be introduced
- Match funding will be available to Irish Development Education programmes that access European or international investment
- Irish Aid should play an active role in supporting the Development Education sector to develop new funding relationships and cultivating new donors for Development Education

Policy support for Development Education should enable more effective cross departmental and cross sectoral Development Education.

- Irish Aid should ensure engagement with Development Education by the Department of Education and Skills, Department of Children and Youth Affairs and other relevant government departments and state agencies.
- To enable the universal application required by the Sustainable Development Goals, Irish Aid and DCCAE must ensure that all relevant government departments prioritise Development Education.
- Implementation of Irish Aid's Development Education Strategy should ensure institutional support to enable integration of Development Education across life-long learning, including early years, primary and post primary education, adult & community education, and the youth sector.

Conclusion

IDEA values Irish Aid's partnership with civil society in support of Development Education. We hope that these suggestions and the review of Irish Aid's Programme will lead to a strengthening of the Irish people's engagement with global citizenship and sustainable development.