

Irish Aid Development Education Strategy & GENE Review

IDEA proposal

05/06/2015

Summary

IDEA, the Irish Development Education Association, welcomes Irish Aid's invitation to present a written proposal about the future of Development Education in Ireland. We welcome Irish Aid's continuing support for and promotion of development education. Task groups focussing on Formal Education, Adult and Community and Youth sectors, were established to contribute to the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) peer review of Development Education in Ireland and the Irish Aid Development Education strategy. This proposal outlines the overall priorities from IDEA. Task group proposals elaborate in more detail for each area.

Vision for Development Education in Ireland:

Our vision is of an equal, just and sustainable world where empathy, solidarity and active citizenship are fostered and people are empowered to analyse and challenge the root causes of injustice, poverty and inequality.

Overall Strategic Priority for development education in Ireland:

By 2020...

Development Education will be an integral element of inclusive and equitable lifelong learning in formal and non-formal education in Ireland.

This means that...

every learner, at all stages of life-long learning, in formal and non-formal education, will regularly encounter relevant opportunities to access and experience quality Development Education.

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".

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."

Strategic support and investment in development education at this time is essential to deliver the potential of development education in Ireland to achieve these aims and to ensure an equal, just and sustainable world where empathy, solidarity and active citizenship are fostered.

About IDEA

IDEA, the Irish Development Education Association, is the national network for development education in Ireland. Our more than 100 members are involved in the practice, promotion and advancement of development education throughout the island of Ireland. Our membership reflects the full spectrum of development education and civil society in Ireland, including development

NGOs, community and voluntary organisations, educational institutions and networks, trade unions, educators, researchers and activists. Since 2004 IDEA has been a voice for the development education sector in Ireland. IDEA plays an active role in national strategy processes relating to development education including membership of the reference group for the Irish Aid Development Education strategy review, the GENE review of Development Education in Ireland, consultation on One World One Future - Ireland's policy for international development, the OECD DAC review of Ireland's development cooperation programme, the Department of Education and Skills Advisory Group on the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, as well as civil society initiatives including the European Year for Development and the People's Conversation in Ireland and DEEEP and the CONCORD DARE Forum in Europe.

Context

Development education in Ireland delivers excellent work at the highest international standards, however, limited and inconsistent investment, and a lack of strategic framework risk the sustainability of the sector and prevent the delivery of its potential impact for Irish society.

Significant progress has been made but there is a need to address core issues: underinvestment, a lack of strategic overview, leading to inconsistent support for development education and funding structures that drive practitioners towards fragmentation as opposed to collaboration.

The Sustainable Development Goals create a requirement for Ireland to provide quality education on global citizenship, human rights and sustainable development. The Development Education sector is essential to deliver this commitment, but requires institutional, policy and financial investment to maintain expertise and maximise the impact of Development Education in Ireland.

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, which has been recognised internationally¹, has been propelled by the commitment of civil society. The commitment of Irish Aid to support development education partnership since the 1970's must be commended. However, overall levels of investment are not sufficient and the lack of overall strategic framework results in inconsistencies, 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. Development Education has a strong reach into all aspects of Irish society, this strength needs to be the bedrock of any Development Education strategy for Ireland. Underinvestment undermines the Development Education sector's capacity to deliver and increases the risk of losing expertise and experience from the sector.

¹ European Development Education Monitoring Report "DE Watch", May 2010, European Multi-Stakeholder Steering Group on Development Education
OECD Development Co-operations Peer Reviews: Ireland 2014

An **overall strategic framework for development education** is necessary. A lack of an overall strategic framework for development education, and the extension of existing strategies, has resulted in inconsistencies in the approach to development education and a lack of a joined-up approach. Strategic partnerships have not been put in place for the youth sector and adult and community sector. There has been inconsistent application of existing development education funding support. This framework must be transparent, accountable and measurable.

We welcome the work of Irish Aid to develop and put in place an ambitious new strategy for development education in Ireland, and stress that this strategy and the work of the Irish Aid development education unit requires policy support, institutional commitment and resources.

To achieve the aim of all learners having access to development education it is necessary to have an overall strategic framework. For development education to achieve integration across lifelong learning it must involve other government departments and agencies, local, national and community development structures, in addition to a wider civil society and education actors. There is an opportunity for Irish Aid to utilise development education to further the whole of government approach of One World One Future. There is a need for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade & Irish Aid to drive the engagement with the development education strategy by the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and other relevant government departments.

Partnership and collaboration are essential to deliver the aim of development education being an integral part of lifelong learning in Ireland. Current approaches to development education funding and support have the effect of discouraging partnerships rather than encouraging collaboration. Despite plans with regards to collaboration and partnership on a range of innovative and worthwhile development education projects between groups in the sector, this proves very difficult in the context of decreased funding, drops in staff numbers and greater workloads for those who remain. One of the results of this is that the sector continues to struggle to engage vulnerable, marginalised and geographically isolated groups. There are challenges with the way that the funding for development education is currently structured – it is awarded in silos (formal education, non-formal, youth education, adult and community) and this does not encourage innovation and cross-sectoral fertilisation of good practice.

IDEA stresses the importance of **Quality Development Education**. We take quality development education to mean a teaching and learning approach which draws on good educational practice generally and is inclusive of activities pertaining to Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Quality development education encompasses formal and non-formal education, and includes a clear focus on innovation and collaboration. A strategy for development education in Ireland must support quality and innovation. Development education has a genius for cooperation, collaboration and creative innovation. Cross-curricular approaches, combining formal and non-formal education, civil society space, innovation and collaboration are essential for effective development education in Ireland. Development education is a key driver of innovation within education and civil society in Ireland. The strategy must enable, promote and celebrate innovation as a key success and benefit of development education, a benefit to learners, a benefit to civil society and to Irish Aid. Quality and impact measurement should balance the need to prove demonstrable results with the need to continuously improve development education practice. Development education stakeholders should collaborate to develop blended models of evaluation,

which utilise and adapt results-based approaches for the complex, non-linear learning environment of development education. The strategy should make it clear that planning for the years ahead is informed by census-based strategic planning as part of a broader quality, impact and outcomes agenda.

Strategic priorities:

By 2020...

Quality development education will be available to all learners in formal and non-formal education sectors.

- Opportunities to access quality development education will be available to learners across formal and non-formal education; within the formal education sector, adult and community sector and youth sector.
- Current best practice in development education in Ireland will be developed through strategic partnerships and multi-annual programmes to increase reach and impact.
- Existing expertise in development education in Ireland will provide capacity development and mentoring for newer actors and create a multiplier effect through partnership working
- Capacity development for the development education sector will be supported to ensure practitioners improve and integrate development education best practice
- Quality and impact measurement will be prioritised reflecting the need to prove demonstrable results and the need to continuously improve development education practice.

Innovation in development education will be supported to create new cross-sectoral and cross-curricular opportunities for development education.

- Cross-curricular development education that engages with formal and non-formal education, or that engages across the formal, adult and community and youth sectors will be enabled through innovation funding
- Development education programmes creating new partnerships with civil society sectors will be supported and monitored, creating shared learning for the development education strategy
- Development education engaging new audiences and expanding the reach of development education will be enabled through seed funding and innovation funding

Partnership and collaboration will be actively promoted through development education funding mechanisms, institutional support and programme design

- Diverse actors will be encouraged to engage with development education through partnership programmes, enabling a broader reach for development education across Irish society. Quantitative targets for development of new partnerships should be included in the strategy.
- Strategic collaborations between development education practitioners will be encouraged, (this could include collaboration on thematic issues such as climate change, or project delivery). Quantitative targets for collaborations should reflect this is the strategy.
- Irish Aid Programme Partner NGOs will be encouraged and enabled to develop partnerships programmes with development education actors

- Sectoral network-building and cohesion will be enabled through the participation of development education organisations in the work of IDEA. Development education organisations will be enabled to develop collaboration and partnership across sectors.

Enabling priorities:

Investment will be increased and strategic funding modalities put in place.

- An agreed percentage target of ODA will be allocated to supporting development education
- Match funding will be available to Irish development education programmes that access European or international investment
- Irish Aid will play an active role in supporting the development education sector to develop new funding relationships and cultivating new donors for development education
- Strategic approaches and clarity will be prioritised for Irish Aid development education funding. Multi-annual funding, strategic partnerships and innovation funding will be in place.
- Innovation funding and seed funding support for innovative practice will be prioritised

Policy support for development education will enable more effective cross departmental and cross sectoral development education.

- Development education will be prioritised within the whole of government approach of One World One Future
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Irish Aid will drive collaboration and engagement with development education by the Department of Education and Skills, Department of Children and Youth Affairs and other relevant government departments, state agencies and community development structures.
- To enable the universal application required by the Sustainable Development Goals, IDEA and members will provide development education for other government departments.
- Policy makers will draw on national and international policy, good practice and research in formulating policy and plans.

Institutional support will enable integration of development education across life-long learning

- Irish Aid will prioritise development education as an essential activity for maintaining public engagement with Ireland's aid programme. This will be reflected in Irish Aid funding programmes, policy support, and communications including annual reports.
- Development education will be integrated into relevant curriculum areas at post primary, primary and early years education, in addition to extra-curricular activity
- Education and Training Boards will commit to integrating development education into curriculum and practice in adult & community education, in addition to extra-curricular activity.
- Development education will be incorporated into the National Framework for Local and Community Development
- Development education will be incorporated into youth work training and will be supported by all state supported youth work programmes