



DCU School of Law and Government
Submission to the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid¹

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Introduction

As development researchers and teachers within the fields of **Development** and **Security Studies** within the **School of Law and Government in Dublin City University**, we very much welcome the opportunity to contribute to the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid. We hope that this represents an important step in the development and consolidation of a mutually beneficial relationship between the two institutions.

In recent years, DCU has placed an increasing emphasis on **translational research** and this is reflected in the **policy and programming relevance** of our own research within the School

¹ This response may be released in full subject to data protection requirements.

of Law and Government. To this end, our submission focuses on both **Sections 5 and 6** ('Key Issues' and 'Ways of Working' respectively) of the Consultation paper. Specifically, while we welcomed Irish Aid's commitment to '*...deepening the level of engagement with Higher Education Institutions*' within the 2006 White Paper (p. 106), the precise nature and function of this engagement has, to date, remained unclear and we would like to see this clarified within the new version. Reflecting on what we can bring to the table in this regard, we feel the new White Paper and ensuing Irish Aid programme need to include greater collaboration between Irish Aid and academic specialists in key policy and programming areas, with Irish Aid policy and programming being rooted in relevant research and theory. These points are developed below.

Ways of Working

Separated from practice, theory becomes simple verbalism.

Separated from theory, practice is no more than blind activism.

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

The symbiotic relationship between theory, research, policy and practice is by now well-established. Within academia, both Development and Security Studies have emerged as disciplines rooted in policy and practice on the ground. Within Public Administration, evidence-based policy (EBP) has become the norm and the ODI argues that "*Better utilization of evidence in policy and practice can help save lives, reduce poverty and improve development performance in developing countries.*"² Development and Security staff within the School of Law and Government focus in particular on translational research and their work is of considerable relevance to particular aspects of Irish Aid's work.

As the wider public sector, including Irish Aid and the university sector, adapts to the reductions in staff numbers imposed in recent years and for the foreseeable future, there is an added urgency in maximising positive collaborations and avoiding duplication of highly specialised staffing or often even more expensive use of private consultants.

Recommendation

Irish Aid should develop a strategic and sustained relationship with specialist academics with a view to rooting its policy and programming in relevant theory and empirical contemporary research.

Key Issues

² Sutcliffe, Sophie and Julius Court (2005) *Evidence-Based Policymaking: What is it? How does it work? What relevance for developing countries?*, London: Overseas Development Institute.

We are in agreement with the key issues set out within the White Paper as constituting priority issues for the Irish Aid programme. However, we also feel that the rapidly shifting geopolitical context and its implications for development policy and programmes requires more attention within the Irish Aid Programme. Staff within DCU's School of Law and Government have particular expertise in a number of these areas (notably Situations of Fragility, Governance and Human Rights, Gender Equality and the Changing Geopolitical Context) and would very much welcome the opportunity to engage in more depth on changing priorities and contexts within these³. Some brief examples of our staff members' areas of interest and contributions are as follows⁴:

Dr John Doyle's work in the area of conflict resolution with both academics and civil society activists in South Asia – in particular in the conflicts in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan has shown that external expertise is both welcomed and plays a positive role in facilitating people to people contacts. Insecurity is one of the strongest contributors to poverty and underdevelopment in the region and bringing external experiences and expertise has open up potentially fruitful areas of dialogue. More recent work by Dr Doyle in Timor Leste on the role of the international community in post conflict reconstruction is central to Irish Aid's mission there and could assist the maintenance of relations following the closure of the embassy.

Dr Eileen Connolly's current work on gender and development is highlighting the obstacles to progressing gender equality and tackling Gender Based Violence in post conflict/developing countries. Her work on civil society and state relations in East Africa has identified the symbiotic relationship between these two spheres and the impact of the process of state building and donor interventions on the development of local civil society. These relationships have very significant impacts on policies dealing with poverty and equality and are of central importance to Irish Aid. Dr Connolly's research has provided clear evidence that it is essential to maintain financial support for independent civil society organisations within aid recipient countries in the context of closer donor/state relations.

Dr Niamh Gaynor's work on civil society engagement in the PRSP process in Malawi has documented the challenges of domestic representation and legitimacy for civil society groups and highlighted the importance of national media in this regard. Her recent work, in collaboration with *Trócaire-Burundi's Governance and Human Rights Programme* highlights the opportunities and challenges provided by the evolving process and makes specific recommendations for local NGO support to Burundi's Decentralisation programme.

³ While we would welcome the opportunity to contribute substantively on specific policy and programme priorities within this submission, for practical purposes we have decided to keep our submission brief.

⁴ See <http://www.dcu.ie/info/staff.php3?query=law&schoolname=School+of+Law+and+Government> for links to individual staff profiles and work areas. A range of staff publications are available at <http://doras.dcu.ie/view/people/>.

Dr Walt Kilroy has worked in the development sector (based in East Africa) and now teaches on development, security, globalisation, and Africa. His research has assessed the programmes for the reintegration of ex-combatants in Liberia and Sierra Leone, from the perspective of participatory approaches. His earlier work looked at Track Two diplomacy in conflict resolution in Africa.

Ms. Aurélie Sicard's current PhD research focuses on gender relations in post conflict states, looking specifically at the impact of the UN Resolution 1325 and post conflict reconstruction (see White Paper, p62). Ms Sicard's work makes an important contribution to the relationships between International "gender" Texts (CEDAW, DEVAW, UNSCR 1325) and gender relations, particularly in Western Africa and most specifically in Sierra Leone.

Mr. Eamonn McConnan's current PhD research focuses on the changing geopolitical context and the possible securitisation of aid globally post-9/11. His findings will investigate the varying contexts in which security and development have been merged in donor policy. Establishing conditions where development and security can be merged whilst allowing optimum priority for development goals is essential for Irish Aid policy as it continues to work in countries experiencing conflict.

Recommendation

Irish Aid should draw from the existing research of academics specialising in development or politics and society in the Global South and work with staff in developing mutually beneficial research projects and programmes in the future.