



Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid

Submission from The DICE Project

(Development and Intercultural Education within Initial Teacher Education)

April 2012

Introduction

The DICE Project welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid and would like to congratulate Irish Aid on drawing on the experience of so many varied stakeholders over the course of the consultation process. The DICE Project regards the review of the White Paper as a timely opportunity to examine how Irish Aid approaches its work in global development and as an important method of engaging critically with development and development education practitioners in Ireland. The DICE Project would like to lend its broad support to the submissions of our colleagues in Dóchas and the Irish Development Education Association and thank them for representing the wider development sector in such a positive and vibrant way. Rather than duplicate many of the themes contained in these submissions, the DICE Project has chosen to focus on the commitment to development education for our contribution to the White Paper Review.

About the DICE Project

The DICE Project is a collaborative educational initiative, funded by Irish Aid, which operates in the five colleges of education in Ireland; Church of Ireland College of Education, Marino

Institute of Education, Froebel College of Education, Mary Immaculate College, St. Patrick's College. The central aim of the DICE Project is the embedding of development education and intercultural education as essential elements of initial teacher education in Ireland. It works with college lecturers and student teachers to promote global solidarity, human rights and environmental awareness and it aims to develop the ability to recognise and challenge discrimination and inequality, globally and locally.

Progress Made

The DICE Project congratulates Irish Aid on all of the achievements of the aid programme since 2006, as outlined in the consultation paper. There have been significant realisations of the aims and objectives of the 2006 White Paper which have contributed to Ireland's positive reputation internationally for its commitment to untied aid.

Ireland's aid programme is of a very high overall quality and a source of considerable pride for people in Ireland. Internationally it provides a model of good practice in many ways and serves as Ireland's 'calling card' to the World (Dóchas Submission to White Paper Review, 2012).

At a domestic level, significant progress has been made by Irish Aid in recent years to engage the public with regard to Ireland's aid programme and to raise awareness about broader global justice issues. DICE cites the opening of the Irish Aid Centre on O'Connell Street in 2008 as a very positive example of such engagement. Establishing the Irish Aid Centre has provided the Irish public with a visible and accessible location to learn more about all aspects of Ireland's aid programme. The staff of the Irish Aid Centre regularly facilitate information sessions and workshops for students on DICE-related modules in the colleges of education. It is also an interesting and stimulating venue for visits from primary school children from all over the country. Furthermore, the Centre has become the first point of contact for many students who are interested in finding out more about their options for voluntary teaching abroad and has similarly provided great support to student teachers participating in the sending programmes of the various colleges.

From a primary education perspective, DICE would like to mention the '*Our World Irish Aid Awards*' as another example of an initiative which encourages primary students to learn

more about the lives of children in the Global South. Irish Aid has also contributed greatly to the primary sector as a result of their commitment to resource production and dissemination. Some noteworthy publications in this regard include the '*Our World, Our Future*' Geography teaching pack and the '*One World, Our World*' storybook which are utilised by DICE staff and alumni alike.

However, as the IDEA submission observes, one area that does not feature greatly in the consultation paper drafted by Irish Aid is that of development education. DICE also believes that this is an unexpected omission from the list of achievements, given the level of support that Irish Aid has provided to development education practitioners in recent years. A new strategy for development education was published in 2007 and integration of development education into the formal education system is a key objective of this strategy. The extensive investment and support from Irish Aid for initial teacher education in Ireland in recent years has gone a long way to achieving this objective.

As a direct result of Irish Aid funding, initial teacher education at primary level can claim the following achievements:

- Two full-time and three part-time DICE lecturers are employed in the five colleges of education, with responsibility for embedding development education into the formal curriculum and extra-curricular life of the colleges
- A selection of compulsory and elective modules in development education and related disciplines of intercultural education and human rights education are offered to all student teachers
- A rigorous research programme which builds capacity within and across the colleges and that contributes to the improved design and delivery of development education in initial teacher education
- A comprehensive programme of Continuous Professional Development for staff in the colleges which contributes to capacity building objectives and includes regular workshops, seminars and a well-established annual national conference

The colleges of education welcome the ongoing support from Irish Aid which has enabled them to take a more cohesive and whole-institution approach to embedding development education at initial teacher education level.

Changing Context

The White Paper on Irish Aid (2006) is a very valuable policy document, as it was the first of its kind to outline the core principles and values of Irish Aid. However, a difficult economic climate domestically has resulted in the aid budget being reduced by 30% between 2008 and 2011. The Review of the White Paper must take into account the different national and international context that we now operate in and find ways of working effectively with whatever means are now available. DICE would like to echo the sentiments put forward by IDEA in this regard and support the 'New Contexts' which they have identified in their submission, particularly in the area of climate justice.

In the context of teacher education, it is important to note that September 2012 marks the beginning of a new B.Ed programme for student teachers in Ireland. This new programme presents Irish Aid and DICE with many opportunities to build on increased levels of awareness about global justice issues in formal education. DICE calls upon the White Paper to commit to ongoing support for initial teacher education in the context of these new developments.

Key Issues

'Building on the achievements of development education in Ireland, Irish Aid needs to build up a more sophisticated strategy to engage the Irish public; a strategy that goes beyond a simple support mechanism for international aid or communicating results. Recent research into the area of public engagement shows that attempts to harness public support by reducing the message to slogan and sound bites often has the opposite effect (IDEA Submission to White Paper Review, 2012:1).

DICE agrees with the overarching message of the IDEA submission, namely that public engagement with global justice issues needs to be strengthened in the overall Irish Aid programme. DICE believes that in spite of dedicated practitioners and a vibrant development education sector in Ireland, there is still some debate needed about the definition of and our understanding of development education. DICE believes that Irish Aid are well-placed to play an essential leadership role in safeguarding the true meaning of development education, to ensure it remains a value-based education, rather than comprise potentially donor-driven initiatives within a problematic charity model. If discourse around

these approaches is rooted in critical educational practice, this will have a positive effect on public engagement with development education in the future.

A clear focus on a rights-based approach throughout the Irish Aid programme and, for the White Paper, a departure from the current language that is dominated by 'needs' rather than 'rights', re-enforcing the paradigm of a 'powerful giver and grateful receivers' (IDEA submission, 2012:2).

We further concur with Dóchas about the necessity of a Human Rights based approach to our work in this area:

The White Paper should name the human rights principles which inform its work and set out the mechanisms for integrating these rights into planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluation of aid programmes and into other areas of Government policy impacting on development (Dóchas Submission, 2012).

Finally, it is important to note that development education does not operate in a vacuum. From a DICE perspective, the teaching and learning of development education has benefitted from its relationship with the related disciplines of Intercultural Education and Human Rights Education.

Ways of working

The White Paper on Irish Aid (2006) outlines a commitment to development education and affirms that 'every citizen should have access to educational opportunities to be aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities as global citizens'.

Dóchas sees the need to sustain continued public support for effective development as one of the greatest challenges facing the Irish Aid programme. However, it is equally important that Irish Aid encourages people in Ireland to take on our responsibilities and rights as global citizens, and foster a deeper engagement, not merely awareness, of people in Ireland with issues and mechanisms that create, sustain or deepen poverty and inequality (Dóchas Submission to the Review of the White Paper, 2012).

DICE calls on the White Paper to renew this commitment to public engagement by committing to adequate resourcing for development education in the long-term. An assurance of long-term funding for development education practitioners in Ireland will enable organisations to be more productive and strategic in their approach to their work

with the public. With secure funding, stakeholders can build expertise among their staff and have the certainty they need to plan effectively for the future. A comprehensive approach to long-term and sustainable funding for development education would be a positive statement of intent from Irish Aid about their commitment to follow up on their already extensive investment in this area. Moreover, it is also essential for Irish Aid to commit to ongoing support for capacity building and development within the DE sector.

DICE would also like to use this submission to support Irish Aid's current focus on impact assessment as a way of making the aid programme more focused and effective. At the consultative meetings, Minister Joe Costello acknowledged that Ireland is recognised as a world leader in delivering strong results for our investment in international development and it is hoped Irish Aid will continue to approach their work in such a way that delivers real results.

The DICE Network is:

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- Dr. Barbara O'Toole, Marino Institute of Education
- Deirdre O'Rourke, Mary Immaculate College
- Rosalind Duke, Church of Ireland College of Education
- Rowan Oberman, St. Patrick's College
- Therese Hegarty, Froebel College of Education