



## Submission to Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid

April 2012

**Organisation: Galway One World Centre**

For further information, please contact

**Heike Vornhagen**

Co-ordinator, GOWC

**Galway One World Centre**

76 Prospect Hill, Galway, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0)91 530590

Website: [www.galwayowc.org](http://www.galwayowc.org)

GOWC agrees to the release of all of this response subject to data protection requirements.  
GOWC does not require any part of this submission to be withheld from Freedom of Information requests.

## 1. Introduction and Summary of Key Messages

The Galway One World Centre (GOWC) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid. Before presenting our argument we would like to commend Irish Aid on the results of the independent reviews and evaluations presented in the consultation paper. They highlight the fact that Ireland's aid programme is of very high overall quality. The White Paper has set an array of very ambitious targets and the progress made on some of them outlined in the consultation paper is impressive. However, we agree with the statement made by Dóchas in their submission to this review process that a key success factor in achieving these ambitious goals is to ensure "a comprehensive, all-government approach which involves not just aid but all policies with international impact." (Dóchas Submission, pg. 3)

The Galway One World Centre is a development education resource and training centre based in the West of Ireland. It carries out workshops and projects with a wide variety of groups and organisations including primary and post primary schools, NUI Galway (specific departments such as the School of Education, School of Political Science and Sociology, Huston School of Film & Digital Media and the School of Nursing and Midwifery as well as student bodies such as the ALIVE Volunteering Project and the Students' Union), community and youth groups. We support teachers looking to incorporate development topics into their classroom practice, students doing work projects, people interested in volunteering overseas, etc. The Galway One World Centre is an active member of the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA), Dóchas and the Debt and Development Coalition Ireland.

We agree with IDEA that "the issues of **public ownership** of the Irish Aid programme and **public engagement** with development and global justice issues – which are presented in the White Paper as cross-cutting themes – **need to be strengthened in the overall Irish Aid programme**". Development education is an ideal mechanism to encourage public understanding of global development issues that goes beyond slogans or fundraising appeals, thereby increasing the opportunities for critical engagement with the Irish Aid programme as a whole. Access to Development Education – and development issues in general – is limited as there are very few dedicated information and resource centres outside Dublin.

With this submission we would like to make the case for an enhanced and sustained investment by Irish Aid to deepen the engagement with the public around global justice issues especially at regional level as we believe that the people of Ireland can be change-makers in our common aim to work for a more just and sustainable world.

This would require:

- A **clearer understanding of** what **public ownership** of the aid programme means and how such ownership can be further strengthened and achieved
- A stronger focus on building **deeper public engagement with global justice issues** amongst the Irish public.
- Increased **access** to information on development issues **at regional and local level supports the sentiment that** 'every person in Ireland will have access to educational opportunities and understand their rights and responsibilities as global citizens as well as their potential to affect change for a more just and equal world. .

## 2. Key Messages

### **Public Ownership of the Irish Aid Programme depends on deeper public engagement with global justice issues.**

It is our view that meaningful public ownership depends on people being able to critically analyse the Irish Aid programme. This requires more than just communicating the work that is being done, and certainly more in-depth information than is often put across through fundraising appeals. Enabling ‘the public’ to critically engage with the Irish Aid programme is going to continue being a challenge as long as most information perpetuates stereotypical views of aid and development. At best this leads to superficial support for the Aid programme especially around emergencies, however, we believe, it will be detrimental to engaging the public on aid issues (‘Aid fatigue’) in the long run. There have been numerous studies and reports (eg [‘Finding Frames’](#), [‘Changing Perspectives’](#)) that highlight the dangers of relating complex issues to the public in an over-simplified way.

### **Access to information at regional and local level.**

Despite the advances in technology over the last 10 years, most people prefer to communicate with other people on issues, skills and methodologies. It is our view that development education centres (DECs) are ideally placed to provide expert advice on global justice issues to a wide variety of civil society actors. DECs are not concentrated on just one sector, instead they work with a number of sectors in their locality. This ensures wider access to development education activities and resources for the local community including schools, community & youth organisations, local media and people interested in global justice issues. It encourages cross-fertilisation by bringing together people in workshops and courses, encouraging peer-support and the building of alliances. DECs also provide a one-stop shop for the local community on any issue related to development. This includes teachers wondering how to support students from other countries within their classrooms, people wanting to volunteer abroad, youth and community workers interested in bringing a global perspective to local projects, schools participating in linking & immersion schemes, etc.

However, there are currently only four active development education centres – Centre for Global Education (Belfast), Galway One World Centre, Kerry Action for Development Education (Tralee) and the Waterford One World Centre. We believe that such centres could play a vital role in increasing critical understanding of the Irish Aid programme, through the provision of courses, workshops, advice on resources and local media work.

We would support IDEA’s call to use this White Paper review process to introduce public engagement and development education as one of the key issues of the Irish Aid programme programme. We also

support the Dóchas proposal that the White Paper review should be used to “establish a multi-year framework for ODA and outline the annual targets for ODA that would enable Ireland to reach the 0.7% target by 2015.” Consistent and predictable resourcing is a key factor of effective development cooperation programmes. Such predictability is important for the government itself as well as for its partners in Civil Society in Ireland and abroad in order to plan their work strategically and effectively.