



**Consultation Process for Development of new Irish Aid Development and  
Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021- 2024**

**COVER PAGE**

Nature of views: **On behalf of organisation**

Organisation (if applicable): **Concern Worldwide**

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Date of posting response: **March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Question 1.** *How can Irish Aid support life-long learning and increase public understanding of and engagement with development and global citizenship issues as well as increasing awareness of the Irish Aid programme?*

#### **Lifelong Learning:**

- A clear definition and common understanding of *lifelong learning* and how these will impact on existing strategic partnerships and approaches, will need to be developed in concert with the broader DE sector.
- It could be said that Irish Aid's current strategic partnership approach already covers a number of key *lifelong learning* areas; from primary teacher training (DICE) to Youth (Youth 2030), to post-primary (WorldWise Global Schools), to third level (Suas), to Adult and Community (Saolta), to online engagement (DE.ie). As such investment in new areas should not be at the cost of existing, highly effective programmes.
- The success of these strategic partnerships, as well as funding to annual grant recipients, in reaching tens of thousands of learners on an annual basis, should be celebrated, continued and where needed, strengthened in the new strategy. An expanded partnership at primary level, going beyond teacher education, and adapting the WWGS model, would be welcomed.
- A *lifelong learning* approach should mean that the current distinction between development education (GCE) and **public engagement**, should be ended. Public engagement needs to be seen as part of a development education continuum and not separate from it.
- **Longitudinal Survey:** If the next strategy is to incorporate a more explicit lifelong learning approach it will need to be supported by a longitudinal survey with a common set of short and medium-term indicators to measure progress and gather evidence of impact over longer periods of time.

#### **Awareness of the Irish Aid programme:**

- A key recommendation of the 2020 **DAC Peer Review** is for Ireland to “develop and implement a comprehensive plan that identifies how to grow spending and communicate the value of international development to the parliament and public... in order increase its ODA budget and meet its international commitment of 0.7% of GNI by 2030.” If the new Development Education strategy is forming part of this plan it will be important to clearly articulate how it will contribute to the recommendation above.
- Ireland's ODA programme, including support for development education, has been consistently recognised as one of the best in the world and is rightly a programme that Irish citizens can be proud of. The values base on which the programme is built, articulated in **A Better World**, is a reflection of ‘who we are’ and our role in the world. As Development Educators we should go beyond merely building ‘awareness’ of the Irish Aid programme to demonstrating, discussing and debating how Irish citizens are contributing to its success
- It should be noted that in the latest (2020) NFP Synergy poll, public awareness of Irish Aid has steadily risen over the past few years to **61%**. While difficult to attribute to any single actor, we feel the work of the DE sector has played an important role.
- The next DE Strategic plan needs to communicate to learners not only that that the Irish Aid programme exists (awareness), but why such a programme, based on diversity, equality, sustainability and human rights is so important in bringing about a Better World not just ‘overseas’ but at here at ‘home’ as well.
- Given the slide in progress towards ending poverty, the impact of C19 on equity and equality, the commitment to leave no one behind can be a wider and more inclusive discussion

#### **Africa Day 2.0**

- We believe there needs to be an annual public event that celebrates diversity and Ireland's contribution to building a better world, such an event could incorporate and build on the many

positive and hugely successful aspects of Africa Day. While being mindful of damaging stereotypes highlighting 'food/festival/fun', having some kind of event that marks, cultural ties, challenges and shared histories etc. would be a welcome endeavour

**Question 2.** *Are there other groups or organisations we should seek to work with in order to build this awareness and engagement?*

- **Social Media Platforms:** A hugely challenging but vital group with whom Irish Aid, as part of a whole of government approach, should seek to work with, is Facebook (Instagram, Youtube, WhatsApp) and other social media platforms. Given their vast reach and 'chequered' approach to taking down extreme racist, xenophobic and anti-immigrant posts, greater efforts should be made to see what, if any, synergies or partnerships could be created.
- **Journalists:** The Simon Cumbers Award should be continued and more opportunities explored for development educators to engage in schools of journalism and groups such as the NUJ.
- **Business and Corporates:** Recognising the vital role that business and corporate leaders have in bringing about the SDGs, deeper engagement with groups like IBEC could be explored.
- **The SDG stakeholder forums** organised by the Department of Environment, Climate Action and Community Affairs, brought a broad range of organisations together including government, business, farming, environmental and international development NGOs and were a welcome initiative. Broadening the consultation and deepening and sustaining the engagement of groups in fora like these, should be explored as part of the new strategy. Engagement needs to be an investment in the relationships with supporters, not just once off on an annual basis.
- **Embassies and Ambassadors:** Development Education initiatives involving Irish Embassies and Ambassadors have been undertaken in the past few years (2016 Primary Schools, 2019 Post Primary). If these are planned for the future, opportunities for working together would be welcomed.

**Question 3.** *What has changed in the external environment since 2017, both in the education sector and broader societal changes nationally and globally, and how should that be reflected in our priorities, our relationships and in our revised strategy?*

- **Covid-19 and DE/PE:** For development educators the Covid-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for a deeper exploration of values in relation to global solidarity, inequality, collective action and cooperation. It has brought home vulnerabilities and failures in Ireland, while shedding a light on global health systems; access to equipment and vaccines, the need for multilateral cooperation and the role of international bodies like the World Health Organisation.
- In relation to the Global South COVID-19 has been particularly devastating for people who were already struggling, those whose food security was already precarious and those without the safety net of social protection. The pandemic threatens to **roll back the development gains** so hard won by the most vulnerable communities across the globe. This is expected to worsen as more countries experience economic recession.
- In recognising the truly historic impact of the pandemic, there are myriad opportunities for development educators to engage and equip learners to help create a '**new normal**' or 'just recovery' that helps governments to reach their SDG commitments by not returning to pre-pandemic behaviours, particularly in relation to climate change and global inequality
- '**The Greta Effect**': saw tens of thousands of students in Ireland and around the world demanding political action to address the global Climate Crises. While many development educators would argue that they have been highlighting issues related to Climate Change, Hunger, Poverty and a host of other development topics over the past 40 years, it was hugely encouraging to witness so many students putting their learning into action.

- **Access to information:** people have so much access to information, ‘fake news’, conspiracies and a range of other misinformation that are dividing societies and countries and testing democracies to their very limit. Media literacy has been part of the Development Education ‘tool box’ but will need to be enhanced in the coming years.
- **Irish Aid DE Strategy:** the creation of strategic partnerships in the youth and adult and community sectors has been a welcome development as has been the increased involvement of the Department of Education with the DE sector through WorldWise Global Schools and the next iteration of the strategy on Education for Sustainable Development
- **Internationally:** On the international front, the last few years have been dominated by the Climate Crisis, Black Lives Matter, Brexit, #MeToo and President Donald Trump, who, even out of office, continues to represent a direct threat to so many of the values and principles espoused by development educators. All of these have provided rich, provocative, content for development education inputs.

**Question 4.** *What do you consider to be the key areas of progress made since 2017 in the implementation of the Irish Aid Strategic Planning process? Are there any key lessons learnt or gaps in the current response?*

#### Progress:

- The creation of new strategic partnerships with the Youth and Adult and Community sectors
- The ongoing and ‘award winning’ (GENE) success of the WorldWise Global Schools programme, which has the potential to become a model of DE engagement at second level for the rest of Europe...and beyond. The numbers of teachers, principals and broader school community involved in the programme has moved DE from the ‘margins’ to a much more sustainable place in the formal education sector
- The engaged and constructive relationship between Irish Aid staff and the DE sector
- The positive relationship between IDEA and Irish Aid and the support for the IDEA DE Code of Good Practice
- Multiannual grants funding to DE organisations
- Additional funding made available to groups in receipt of DEAR funding
- Growing the ‘pot’ of funding available to the DE sector
- Measurement and Results frameworks: While there is still some learning to be done regarding the capture of quality data that can be used both to measure progress and plan into the future, there has definitely been progress made over the past 4 years.
- Increased resources, outreach and engagement of Gael Colaiste

#### Gaps

- While recognising Irish Aid’s stance on campaigning and advocacy work more and more learners believe that awareness and understanding of global issues are in and of themselves not enough. They **want to take action** and contribute whether by holding governments to account for treaties and commitments (Paris Agreement, SDGs etc.) made on their behalf as evidenced by the *Fridays For Futures* campaign or in the ‘divestment’ from fossil fuels and arms, campaigns. It will be important in the next strategic plan to clearly address this **spectrum of actions**. The new Strategy should present advocacy and campaigning as a positive way for securing policy change.
- **Funding alternatives:** The DE sector is hugely dependent on Irish Aid for funding. European Commission funding is inaccessible for most and other sources are limited. It would be helpful to explore how the financial sustainability of the sector could be assured and could be linked with the all of government SDG approach

- **Learning from the Data:** While Irish Aid report on the data received from grantees and strategic partners on an annual basis, an opportunity for the sector to come together to learn from the data presented would be welcomed.
- **Longitudinal Survey:** As stated in question 1 above, if the next strategy is to incorporate a more explicit lifelong learning approach it will need to be supported by a longitudinal survey to measure evidence of impact over longer periods of time.
- **Internships:** We would like to see addressed, particularly in relation to Further and Higher Education, how we can create opportunities for young people in Ireland to do internships with a view to being able to work internationally.
- **Training Register:** Part of the data gathering and dissemination could form a 'register' to record the inputs of DE actors across the sector at CPD or other training events, to help build cooperation and to build on reference and avoid repeating one another's work.

**Question 5.** *With reference to the five output areas of the current Irish Aid Development Education Strategic Plan, what do you consider the key priorities for 2021- 2024 should be?*

The five output areas in the current Development Education strategy should be maintained. However, the Non-Formal Education output should be renamed and separated into two; Global Youth and Adult and Community Education.

**Output 1:** Policy Coherence An enabling and coherent policy environment for development education at local, national and European levels

**Whole of Government:** Output 1 has been regarded as an 'internal' output for Irish Aid to work across other government departments to ensure policy coherence. This is to be applauded and should be maintained. With the commitment of government to fulfilling the SDGs by 2030 there is an opportunity in the next strategy to see what role DE organisations can play in helping to bring about this policy coherence both nationally and at European levels.

**Measurement of Target 4.7.** More clarity is needed on how 4.7 is being measured.

**Output 2:** Capacity Building Maximised capacity, collaboration, partnership and coherence of development education partners to enhance the quality, delivery, impact and communication of development education

- **Measurement:** More effective use of measurement tools to highlight areas of weakness and developing effective solutions will be key to building capacity across the sector.
- **CPD** Increased capacity needs to be linked to increased funding e.g. if we are to engage more unique teachers/learners over the course of the strategy, the capacity of various organisations involved in the delivery of CPD will need to increase also.
- **Research** There is a need for targeted strategic research to inform and enhance the effective delivery and practice of high-quality development education in Ireland. There is little research being funded and this is an area of weakness for the sector.

**Output 3** Formal Education Further integration and mainstreaming of quality development education in formal education curricula, programmes and structures

- Concern is a member of the WWGS consortium and the IDEA formal education working group (FEWG) and as such endorses (and will not repeat) the submissions made by both groups particularly in relation to Output 3: Formal Education.

**Primary:**

- There is a need for a strategic partnership at Primary level learning from and adapting the WWGS model

**Post-Primary:**

- Continue with the strong support and investment in post-primary

**Further and Higher education**

- There is a great deal of commendable DE engagement at Third Level, however it is a much broader and complex area. In agreement with points made by the FEWG we would endorse efforts to further enhance and deepen third level engagement incorporating Céim and other standards.
- **Internships:** (As stated above) We would like to see addressed, particularly in relation to Further and Higher Education, how we can create opportunities for young people in Ireland to do internships with a view to being able to work internationally

**Output 4:** Non-Formal Education Increased integration, quality and spread of development education in non-formal education curricula, programmes and structures

- Concern is a member of the Youth 2030 consortium and supports the NYCI DE programme through grant funding. Concern is also a member of the Saolta Consortium and supports Development Perspectives through grant funding and as such endorses (and will not repeat) the submissions made by both groups particularly in relation to Output 4: Non-Formal Education
- In the next strategy Irish Aid should no longer use the 'non-formal' label, rather, output 4 should be renamed and separated into two; Global Youth and Adult and Community Education.

**Output 5:** Irish Aid Awareness Programme Increased awareness within the education sector of Ireland's development cooperation programme and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

- (Cf. Question 1) The focus of Output 5 needs to move beyond 'the education sector', clearly articulate why Irish Aid is looking for increased awareness and needs to communicate to learners not only that the Irish Aid programme exists (awareness), but why such a programme, based on diversity, equality, sustainability and human rights is so important in bringing about a Better World not just 'overseas' but at here at 'home' as well.

**Question 6.** *Irish Aid is considering changing the name of the programme and strategy to Global Citizenship Education, do you have any comments or concerns in relation to this suggestion?*

- For much of its history the term Development Education focused on 'developing' countries and was about 'human development'. It sought to engage learners in a host of issues related to the legacy of colonialism, debt, (in)-equality, trade, (in)-justice, conflict, poverty, hunger and many more.
- The connection with International Development and the Irish Government's ODA programmes and the values that underpinned them was readily apparent and is captured in Minister Charlie Flanagan's remarks in the introduction to Irish Aid's Development Education strategy 2017-23; "In a world where millions suffer from extreme poverty, conflict and humanitarian crises, the need for education that promotes informed responses to these challenges has never been more important."
- The advantage the term Global Citizenship has over Development Education is that it is more readily accepted and understood by many of the learners and educators with whom we work, it sits 'comfortably' in the SDG framework and is also a term that other government departments could readily understand and therefore engage, support and fund.

- While the disadvantage is the loss of a direct and obvious connection with Ireland's ODA programme, Concern supports the change

*Question 7. What opportunities have arisen from the COVID-19 experience and how can we learn from it in order to reach a broader audience?*

- Covid-19 has been experienced by all countries, all around the world. We have all experienced the same shock, had the same restrictions on our 'normal' way of life. It has exposed vulnerabilities in global health systems, in supply chains and relationships within and between countries
- It has highlighted inequalities even more – from access to services, electricity and internet the idea of 'working from home' which is only available to certain income levels and communities around the world – this inequality should open up our engagement and adjust messages to how youth engage with inequality and inequity – what are classed as basic services
- It has cemented the need for effective multilateralism and support for bodies such as the World Health Organisation and in working with companies for the provision of life saving vaccines, PPE etc.
- It has given us access through Zoom and other platforms to experts and decision makers – flattened the hierarchy to an extent – emphasised the importance of accessibility
- It has shown us how quickly and dramatically decisions can be taken by governments to safeguard their citizens and implement measures that in normal times would have taken years
- It has given us a chance to create a 'new-normal'...if the individual, national and government will is there
- Increased familiarity to working via tech platforms, increased and expanded reach and inclusivity – there are real positives for young people wishing to engage more on their terms

*Question 8: How can technology and digital outreach help us?*

- The Concern Debates online experience has been broadly a very positive one, we were able to reach new schools who had never debated before and pairing up schools not limited by 'geography' (e.g Donegal and Cork)...
- We have been able to connect communities in Ireland directly to our programme work particularly in our Project Us cafés, school talks and engagement with supporters
- Concern's GCE programme will continue to offer 'hybrid' events across all of our events and activities
- Access to Concern programme staff, through Zoom has greatly enhanced our Project Us cafés, debates programme, TY Academy and talks.
- In some areas of Ireland the digital divide is proving challenging (for online delivery).
- Use of digital can provide many opportunities but it is a tool that needs an integrated blended approach with a continued focus on face to face for the sector.