



**Submission on Irish Aid Development Education Strategy**

Nature of views (indicate personal / on behalf of an organisation): Organisation

Organisation (if applicable): Department of Education

Role in organisation (if applicable): PO, CAP Unit.

Web-address: <https://www.education.ie/en/>

Freedom of information: Responses are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and may be released in total or in part. Please indicate if there are aspects of your response that you seek to have withheld, and the reasons for same.

Date of posting response: 25/3/21

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The Development Education Strategy and in particular the Irish Aid programme of work in schools and in the education sector has been a key contributor to the Department of Education's National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014 – 2020 and we see this collaboration continuing under a new strategy for ESD to 2030.

The aim of ESD to 2030 will be to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 4.7 *“by 2030 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”*.

The strategy for ESD to 2030 will be developed jointly by Department of Education and Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and will be informed by stakeholder engagement and public consultation. It will be aligned to UNESCO's Framework for ESD for 2030. Delivery of the UNs Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 agenda is a key priority for Government as set out in the Programme for Government and education for sustainable development is considered as a key enabler for delivery of this priority.

The Department will continue to work with D.FA/ Irish Aid to ensure policy alignment and that the aims of both strategies are coherent and complementary and achieve our respective aims and goals and ultimately SDG 4.7. We will also continue to work in collaboration with D.FA/ Irish Aid to exploit any potential for joint endeavours to expand the reach and impact of ESD and global citizenship education.

The current strategy for Development Education sets out five output areas: Policy Coherence, Capacity Building, Formal Education, Non-Formal Education and Irish Aid Public Awareness Programme.

UNESCOs Framework for ESD for 2030 which lays the foundations for the National Strategy for ESD to 2030 sets out the priority areas for ESD as: Advancing Policy, Transforming Learning Environments, Building Capacities of Educators, Empowering and Mobilising Youth and Accelerating Local Level Actions.

The parallels between the priority areas for both strategies is clear and provide significant opportunities for collaboration.

We would support any proposal to clarify and streamline terminology in order to make the Development Education Strategy (and the ESD strategy) more accessible to and understood both within the education sector and by the public more generally.

In relation to the provision of Development Education (DE)/ Global Citizenship Education (GCE) programmes for schools, we understand that there are already a wide range of programmes and resources related to ESD/DE and GCE available to schools at both primary and post primary level including for example the Irish National Teachers Association (INTO) programme on Global Citizenship Schools for primary level. We support collaboration and partnerships between such organisations and see it as the way to increase awareness and engagement in the formal education sector. The strategy for ESD to 2030 will seek to extend ESD beyond the classroom to the informal and non-formal sectors and collaboration and partnerships will also be key to delivering on this.

Timing of the roll out of any new programmes in schools must be carefully considered. The current public health situation and the impact it is having on the whole school community and will continue to have as schools reopen and settle down after lengthy periods of school closures must not be underestimated.

In addition any new programme should be clearly aligned to the curriculum and a support to and integral part of what is already being provided and not something new or additional. It is important to ensure that programmes are inclusive and accessible for all including small rural schools, DEIS schools, Gaelscoils, special schools etc. Programmes should also consider progression between primary and post primary levels and beyond.

COVID 19 has led to an increased dependence on technology and has increased opportunities for virtual engagement at local, national and international levels which should be exploited as fully as possible. On line and blended learning for teachers and learners has been normalised over the last year and can increase inclusion and accessibility for some.

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