

**Submission by Irish Girl Guides, to the  
Consultation Process for Development of new Irish Aid  
Development and Global Citizenship Education Strategy  
2021-2024**

1. Nature of views (indicate personal / on behalf of an organisation):  
Organisation
2. Organisation (if applicable): Irish Girl Guides
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## Strategy Questions

The response should address some or all the following questions:

- *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?*
  - We believe that non-formal education programmes for all age groups are the ideal setting for wider public awareness of these issues. We also believe that youth-led community actions and awareness campaigns are especially effective in impressing the importance of these issues on the general public - through community group involvement.
  - Young People have shown strong leadership around the climate change issue in recent years and can lead the way into impactful intergenerational dialogue and wider public awareness both of the issues, and of the possible solutions - including those supported by Irish Aid. IGG feel that the intergenerational aspect of organisations such as ours could be used to cross-fertilise ideas from various generations.
  - The term “engagement” needs defining so as to clarify development education from a pedagogical point of view as opposed to increasing awareness for PR purposes.
  - Irish Girl Guides felt it is key that the programme both in its intention and its implementation, mirrors and models the principles of Development Education and of the SDGs i.e. it must challenge inequalities and work through partnerships. By using this explicit ‘showing not telling’ methodology, the programme can reach the widest audience which promotes its value. This will lead to a more meaningful engagement from the wider public than ‘marketing’ type exercises for awareness raising.
  - Greater detail of positive storytelling and imagery from partner countries would assist in raising awareness of IA’s work whilst developing an understanding of the global challenges. There is a need to move away from stereotypical imagery to enable a deeper discussion to be held.
  - Long term research is required to critically analyse the benefits of public engagement events and funding should be allocated to this key area in this strategy.

- Long term research is required also with the individuals completing Development Education activities. The short term pieces of funding currently available don't allow us to see the long term development that happens in individuals when they have engaged in such activities looking at the SDGs and Development Education.
- *Are there other groups or organisations we should seek to work with in order to build this awareness and engagement?*
  - Irish Girl Guides believe the fact that Development Education has become optional for Development NGOs is a problem as it undermines Development Education's importance, and we would welcome a return to more collaboration in this space. A mapping exercise showing where the NGOs that received funding from Irish Aid work would be useful so that both gaps and synergies can be easily identified.
  - Specifically for Irish Girl Guides, as part of the Irish branch of a 150 country worldwide network, it would be important that the strategy does not limit our work with countries that are not Irish Aid partner countries.
  - The new strategy should have clear links with the National Volunteering Strategy. It is great to see links to the National Action Plan on Racism and the DES Education for Sustainable Development. We would like to see similar clarity around linkages with the DCEDIY and the successor to Brighter Outcomes, Better Futures strategy.
- *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?*
  - Young People have taken the lead in recent times on Climate Change awareness and, increasingly, they are also aware of Climate Justice as a related but separate concept. They are forcing the debate with their passion and their concern for their future. Their passion and energy should be harnessed.
  - In the last year COVID-19 has meant that the balance and relationship between Climate Change issues has changed, and this looks to become more permanent than it first appeared with reduced carbon emissions vs increase in single use plastics ranging from the necessary PPE to take away coffee cups. There is also less opportunities for reuse such as second-hand clothes shopping. As a result, some of the focus areas when working with YP and indeed the wider public need to be adjusted. It is much harder to perform local community actions such as river clean ups, community gardens, second hand swap sales etc, but it is easier to engage isolated Young People in the debate via digital means, so the approaches and methods of Development Education are evolving.

- Evidence of growing racism and extremism is on the rise in Ireland in the last couple of years so Irish Girl Guides very much welcome the introduction of anti-racism work into the programme as an important aspect of Development Education. There is an opportunity to build on positive forces as well such as the Black Lives Matter movement, this can fit very effectively within Development Education looking at connected issues of racism, colonialism, Climate Justice etc.
- The role of volunteerism has grown since 2017 and the reliance at community level on volunteers is significant. It is important that both volunteer and paid Development Education workers are recognised in the new strategy.
- *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?*
  - Irish Girl Guides welcomed the recognition of the Youth Sector in the current strategy and efforts made to enhance our sector to deliver Development Education in youth work and the re-introduction of the Development Education Strategic Partnership for the Youth Sector and we would like to see this maintained in the new strategy.
  - Multi-annual funding opportunities were very welcome however we would like to see greater funding levels particularly focussed on:
    - fulfilling the training needs for generalist youth workers and volunteers
    - more funding for dedicated Development Education workers; these posts would provide not only skilled experts to support the work within organisations with volunteers, but also the time and focus required to access further funding - applications and reporting are often demanding - and generate resources etc, thus creating value for money and a multiplier effect.
  - The PMF is time consuming and has taken time to get used to so we would prefer to avoid a change of M&E system; or if such a change is likely, that it be planned in consultation together with the sector. Earlier sharing of the results/data would also be appreciated, without this it is hard for the sector to improve on weaknesses or to build on strengths and successes.
  - There is a gap in relation to the information about and the rationale for the partner countries Irish Aid works with.

- *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?*

## **1 Policy Coherence**

- Dovetailing with UNESCO and other government departments' policies would be wise. A focus on the SDGs as a global partnership would also be of benefit.
- The idea of a not-for-profit organisation 'passport' that would reduce the need for duplication in applications and reports across Government Departments would be very welcome.

## **2 Capacity Building**

- As mentioned above, we need support to enhance the skills and knowledge of Development Education practitioners, both professionals and volunteers, through the increased provision of training opportunities and/or increased provision of funds for upskilling.
- Funding for multi-annual professional posts: e.g. paid staff can support volunteers providing excellent value for money with a multiplier effect both internally in the organisation and across the sector; the consistency and depth of delivery would be greatly enhanced.
- We would encourage that Irish Aid support partnerships with other organisations including Development NGOs as well as partners in non-Irish Aid funded countries and that the results of a mapping exercise be publicly available.
- We ask that the implementation of the fairly onerous PMF be made more beneficial for the sector via better sharing of data and results in a more timely fashion, collated by the sector to enhance our collective capacity to deliver.
- Continued funding for resources in particular SDGs related badges and activities in the case of IGG.

## **3 Formal Education – this is not an area of focus for Irish Girl Guides**

## **4 Non-Formal Education**

- Again, we very much hope that the actions announced in the last strategy around the upskilling of non-formal educators, will be not only maintained but in fact increased.

- The importance of the specific nature of non-formal education needs to be recognised as being learner-led when it comes to the targets and framework, and consideration therefore needs to be given to how that can be quantified and applied to projects.
- The Irish Girl Guides engage with the SDGs as part of their long term programme. The SDGs are not a simple additional piece, but are embedded in all we do. Our methodologies for all our programmes use what are considered Development Education methodologies and strategies. These methodologies enable our members to come to a deep involvement with the SDGs and delve into the core issues involved in working towards achieving the SDGs.
- IGG encourages and enables our older youth members to develop their own Development Education programmes. This needs to be recognised as a Development Education strategy in its own right. Developing those programmes (badge curriculum & resources) shows how embedded the principles of participant-led Development Education methodologies have become in our organisation and this needs to be recognised.

## **5 Irish Aid Public Awareness Programme**

- The Irish Aid Centre is a useful venue which could be used further for proactive training offered to youth organisations.
- The imagery used remains stereotypical and further adds to the beliefs of the global north as the givers and the global south as the receivers. Greater understanding and implementation of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messaging in Irish Aid's public awareness would help contribute to a more realistic and positive perception of the global south.
- *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?*
  - The Mission of the Irish Girl Guides is to enable girls and young women to develop to their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world. As such this proposed new name resonated with IGG and we have many specific badges and activities that relate to this specifically, as well as to the SDGs, for all of our four age groups.
  - However, it would be helpful to know what the intention and potential implications of this name change would be. The change of name per se is not the issue but the question is whether this would reflect a change in the nature of the programme. From a Youth perspective, Development Education is a specific and invaluable process of learning by doing and of active ongoing engagement meeting the young person where they are, and it is essential that this is not lost going forward. This

process allows for an emotional connection to the issues to take place. This is particularly true in terms of engaging marginalised Young People to access Development Education and to have their voices heard. We would also be concerned that it would mean the removal of the connection between Irish Aid, development organisations and development education.

- *What opportunities have arisen from the COVID-19 experience and how can we learn from it in order to reach a broader audience?*
  - People feel much more connected to the fate of others globally, through the common experience of lockdown, the spread of variants etc, and there is a sense of global responsibility and citizenship that is much more tangible than before.
  - The worldwide changes in lifestyle are having positive effects on Climate Change with the reduction in travel and the huge rise in homeworking . The fact that both employers and employees are in their majority keen on continuing at least with blended working, will have a positive impact on emissions. Cycling is becoming more popular and safer.
  - The majority of people across age groups and social groups report an increased connection with nature and the outdoors at a local level, which those working with Young People are capitalising on in their Development Education work.
  - It has highlighted inequities in the world and how we have an opportunity to do better, for example in relation to ensuring vaccines for all. It has brought the topic of equality of access to healthcare to the fore and provided a very real and powerful example that people everywhere in the world relate to.
  
- *How can technology and digital outreach help us?*
  - Working online is providing Development Education with some new opportunities, particularly around Gamification and also engaging isolated Young People in rural areas.
  - While these opportunities are real, they are counter-balanced by significant barriers such as digital poverty (both in terms of devices and the cost of Internet access), very poor broadband in certain areas, lack of quiet space/time to participate in online activities while locked down at home etc. We need to be careful not to move too much of our work online as these barriers lead to exclusion, going against the very ethos of DE's central tenet of togetherness. Alternatively, or additionally, significant provision must be made to remove the barriers mentioned, such as financial support for

devices/internet access. Online dialogue and debate is not as effective as in-person group activities and a balance is key as we move forward.

- We also need to avoid quick, easy, tokenistic actions such as signing online petitions or 'liking' videos etc, becoming a poor replacement for the real dialogue, debate, learning and action that take place with true Development Education.
- The depth of Development Education that occurs online is not as sustainable as face-to-face long-term engagement with an issue, particularly if the topic is sensitive which would be better discussed within a safe space with trusted youth leaders and peers.

Submissions should not exceed 2,500 words and should be forwarded by close of business on Friday 19 March 2021.