

Attitudes Towards Development Cooperation in Ireland

The Report of a **National Survey**
of Irish Adults by MRBI in 2002



Edited by
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Ireland Aid has now taken responsibility for the publication of this report and for the next stages of the research programme. The editor would like to thank John Boyd, Rory Coveney and Maeve Collins of Ireland Aid for their work in coordinating the publication of the present report.

Introduction and Background

1. Introduction

The National Committee for Development Education (NCDE)¹ was established in 1994 by the Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs under the auspices of Ireland Aid, the official Development Cooperation Programme of the Irish Government. The primary aims of NCDE are to promote and support Development Education in all sectors of Irish society through cooperation with groups, schools, and other institutions with an involvement in education. NCDE's role includes policy formulation, research, consultation, evaluation and advocacy in order to promote best practice in Development Education in Ireland.

In 2000, NCDE undertook an initial study entitled *Development Cooperation and Public Attitudes, Awareness and Support – A Review and Feasibility Study of Research* to establish a broad understanding of the context as well as the issues and challenges their work raises. This study reviewed previous research on public attitudes awareness and support for development, the different models and methodologies used in Ireland and elsewhere in doing public attitude surveys on development cooperation (qualitative as well as quantitative). It also reviewed past and ongoing attempts to measure public attitudes to aid.

Following a review of this report, NCDE/Ireland Aid decided to implement a research programme aimed at assessing the nature of public attitudes and perceptions of development issues, development cooperation in general, and within that, aid and Ireland's role internationally. It was decided that the research programme would consist of a set of interlinked activities including:

- A dedicated national opinion survey – to include quantitative and qualitative aspects.
- A number of focused qualitative research studies that could arise from issues identified in the national survey and/or the needs of the diverse stakeholders in the research programme.

This report presents an overview of the major findings from the first phase of the research programme - a national opinion survey. The research was commissioned by Ireland Aid/NCDE towards the end of July 2002, following a public tender process in which the fieldwork phase of the research was awarded to MRBI. *Weafer and Associates Research & Consultancy Ltd* took responsibility for the management and coordination of the research programme in association with Ireland Aid/NCDE.

1.2 Research Objectives

The primary objective of the research was to measure and evaluate the opinion of Irish people towards development issues, development cooperation in general and, within that, aid and Ireland's role internationally. More specifically, the purpose of the research was:

- To measure the level of information, knowledge of and attitudes to development issues and development cooperation and levels of public support for aid;
- To get an in-depth understanding of attitudes among the general public and selected sectors of the population;

¹ Due to changes outlined in the recent Ireland Aid Review, a new development Education Unit was established within Ireland Aid to continue and expand this important aspect of development cooperation, which was previously carried out by NCDE.

- To establish a baseline for ongoing monitoring of attitudes;
- To assess the implications for Ireland Aid/ NCDE, Ireland Aid and NGOs for their development education and public awareness programmes.

It is envisaged that the findings of the research will help inform:

- Ireland Aid/ NCDE in the promotion of more effective and targeted development education.
- Ireland Aid of the public perceptions towards and support for development cooperation and the Ireland Aid programme in particular.
- The Communications and education strategies of stakeholders, including Ireland Aid, development educators and NGOs.

1.3 Research Approach

A draft questionnaire was compiled following a review of relevant literature and in-depth interviews with eighteen key informants drawn from the stakeholders to this process. This was subsequently tested in a pilot study by MRBI prior to the commencement of the main fieldwork phase of the study and approved by the Working Group of Ireland Aid/NCDE in August 2002. The final version of questionnaire, a copy of which is appended to this report, was relatively lengthy, with more than 80 individual questions, including nine open-ended questions, across a range of different topics.

Fieldwork for the research was carried out over the five-week period 9th September – 11th October 2002, during which face-to-face interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of approximately 1,000 adults aged 15+ years using a structured questionnaire. The sample was quota controlled to ensure it was representative in terms of age, sex, social class and region. The sample was first stratified by 15 broad regions, encompassing 5 different community types (cities; towns 10,000+; towns 5,000-10,000; towns 1,500 – 5,000; rural <1,500), within the four standard areas of Dublin, Rest of Leinster, Munster and Connaught/Ulster. This ensured a representative territorial spread of the sample. The second stage of the sampling procedure involved the systematic sampling of individuals within each of the pre-selected District Electoral Divisions. Interviews were conducted with respondents in their own homes.

Some of the defining characteristics of the sample are summarised below in Table 1.1 (overleaf).

Table 1.1 | Composition of National Sample of Irish Adults

AGE	%	SOCIAL CLASS²	%
15-24 years	22	ABC1	39
25-44 years	37	C2DE	50
45-64 years	27	FARMER	11
65+ years	14		
REGION	%	WORKING STATUS	%
Dublin	29	Fulltime employed	40
Rest of Leinster	24	Part time employed	12
Munster	29	Student	12
Connaught/ Ulster	18	Housewife	18
		Retired/ Unemployed	18
EDUCATION	%	SEX	%
Primary Education only	11	Male	49
Secondary (incomplete)	25	Female	51
Secondary (complete)	34		
Third Level (incomplete)	12		
Third level (completed)	13		
Professional/Postgraduate/Technical	3		

1.4 The Context of the Research

‘To bring about the changes that world poverty alleviation entails, stronger democratic support by citizens is necessary....public support has remained consistently high for two decades, and is a precious constituency...Yet grasping public attitudes and opinion about official aid and development co-operation is immensely difficult. What does the ‘public’ really think? How much does it actually know, and understand, about development, poverty or international co-operation? Does public opinion have an impact on the way development co-operation policies are devised and implemented? Seeking firm answers to these questions, one is rapidly confronted with a frustrating scarcity of data. There is no systematic polling and monitoring of public attitudes towards these issues across OECD DAC Member countries’.

(McDonnell, Solignac Lecomte and Wegimont 2002:4-5)

Depending on your viewpoint, research into Irish public attitudes to overseas development is either ‘quite limited’ (O’Loughlin, Quigley and Wegimont, 2000) or ‘grounded in a considerable research background’ (Nua Research Services, 2001). Either way, it is clear that research in this area has been gathering momentum through the 1990s and into the present decade. Some of the key themes emerging from these surveys are briefly summarised below in order to put the results from the present research into context³.

- Most surveys conducted over the past 20 years or so, indicate that the majority of Irish people believe it is important to help people in developing countries (ACDC 1985, 1990; DEFY/IMS 1995, 2000; Eurobarometers 46.0 1997 and 50.1 1999). Indeed, international research indicates that a higher proportion of Irish adults are likely to classify aid to the Developing World as ‘very important’ than in most other European countries (Eurobarometer 50.1, 1999). Research also indicates that the importance attributed to helping people in developing countries extends across the different age categories, including teenagers and adults (DEFY/IMS 2000).
- Furthermore, the practical expression of this public support for helping poor countries has remained consistently high over the past two decades. McDonnell et al, for instance, make the point that ‘public support for aid has remained high and stable for two decades, and there is no sign of general aid fatigue among the public’ (2002: 7). Furthermore, they state that ‘a large majority of OECD citizens support the principle of giving aid to developing countries. Running between 70 per cent and 88 per cent support, the average support over thirteen countries comes to 80.4 per cent’ (ibid, 7).
- However, in spite of the undoubted generosity of Irish people towards the developing world, a number of commentators have highlighted the relatively limited knowledge most Irish people have on Ireland’s role in this regard. O’Loughlin et al, for example, believe that survey evidence⁴ indicates that ‘public support for helping the developing world may not necessarily translate into knowledge about developing world issues or what Ireland is actually doing to help’ (2000:7).

² Social class is typically measured in terms of eight different socio-economic groups. The defining characteristics of each group are as follows: A – professional/ very senior people in business/top level civil servants; B – middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications. Principal officers in local government and civil servants. Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments. C1 – junior management; owners of small establishments; and all others in non-manual positions. C2 – All skilled manual workers and those manual workers with responsibility for other people. D – All semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers. E – All those entirely dependent on the state long term through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons. F1 – farmers with 50+ acres. F2 – farmers with less than 50 acres and farm labourers. It is standard practice to combine these separate categories into three summary categories when analysing differences between different socio-economic groups as follows: ABC1, C2DE, and F1F2.

³ I am particularly indebted to Ida McDonnell for a copy of her paper, *Public Opinion Research, Global Education and Development Co-operation Reform: In Search of a Virtuous Circle*, which was prepared by Ida McDonnell, HB Solignac Lecomte and Liam Wegimont for the Europe-Wide global Education Congress, Maastricht, 2002. The chapter by Ida McDonnell in the present report also provides a comprehensive review of public opinion research on development issues.

⁴ See, for example, DEFY/IMS surveys 1995/2000 and Eurobarometer 50.1 1999.

This point is also made by McDonnell et al when summarising key trends in public opinion and international development co-operation in OECD DAC member countries: ‘with a few exceptions, public awareness and understanding about global development and poverty issues remains very shallow’ (2002:14). This gap in public knowledge has important implications for policy making and action by citizens according to McDonnell et al: ‘This is important, as experience shows that there is no influence without action, and no effective action without sufficient prior awareness. Several, examples show that when the public is well informed about an issue, it is more likely to act’ (2000:14). They conclude that public awareness about ODA and development co-operation issues do increase significantly as a result of global education, awareness raising campaigns, public debate and media focus.

- Most Europeans are unaware of the amount of aid given by their national governments to developing countries, with most people overestimating the amount given in aid. (McDonnell et al 2002). Conversely, the majority of European Union citizens believe that their national government should increase its contribution to development aid (Eurobarometer 50.1 1999).
- The majority of people identify the media as a primary source of information about developing countries (DEFY/IMS 2000; McDonnell et al. 2002). This is hardly surprising since the media in general, and TV in particular, consistently emerges in surveys as the preferred source of information on most issues, including news and advertising. Furthermore, research also shows high levels of satisfaction with the way developing countries are portrayed by the media (DEFY/IMS 2000). O’Loughlin et al see the central position of TV as both threat and a challenge: ‘As the primary source of information, TV can be harnessed to provide more and more accurate information; however the nature of TV coverage of the Third World can also serve to reinforce prejudice and diminish the possibility of increased critical support..... the media, and subsequently the public, are more often interested in that side of the developing world which feeds support for short-term or simple rather than long-term or complex solutions. With the emphasis strongly weighted in favour of ‘disaster’ it is no wonder that the general public may fail to link structural problems, like debt and trade restrictions, to the ‘images of poverty and despair’ that they are fed on a daily basis’ (2000:12-13). The benefits of increased aid contributions in the short-term can too often be at the expense of more understanding of long-term development issues and initiatives.
- Most people in OECD DAC Member countries perceive ODA in terms of humanitarian assistance, such as famine relief and poverty, and the environment (UNFPA/MORI 2001). However, McDonnell et al report that evidence in the UK, Canada and the Netherlands ‘shows an increase in the number of respondents pointing to international trade, debt relief and good governance in recipient countries as solutions for poverty reduction’ (2002:12). They conclude that support for development co-operation and awareness are indeed correlated.
- Finally, while some research indicates little or no significant variations across the different socio-demographic groups in attitudes either to aid or to more general Third World issues, others have observed a correlation between public attitudes and specific socio-demographic characteristics. The ACDC 1989 survey found, for example, that women have a marginally more positive attitude to helping the Third World than men and students are marginally more inclined to have a strong sense of Ireland’s responsibility to help the Third World than other educational groups. However, overall, it concluded that *‘both of these effects are weak and otherwise no significant socio-demographic relationships emerged’* (1990:22). Conversely, McDonnell et al, 2002 note that research in Norway and Australia demonstrates that support for development co-operation is highest among women, younger people, the highly educated and those living in urban/densely populated areas.

1.5 The Structure of the Report

Following this introductory chapter, the principal findings from the research are presented in Part 1. This summary is followed in Part 2 by six commentaries on the findings from different perspectives. The initial contribution by Dr. Peadar Cremin reviews the survey data from an education perspective, paying particular attention to the implications of the research for the promotion of more effective and targeted development education. Ida McDonnell focuses on the implications of the Ireland Aid/NCDE research findings from a European comparative perspective. It does so from four specific angles: (i) public support for development co-operation in general; (ii) public attitudes to aid commitments; (iii) public satisfaction with levels of official aid; and (iv) public awareness about development problems. The chapter concludes with some policy conclusions for engaging a more informed public opinion in development co-operation.

In presenting the NGDO perspective, Cary Gibson and Howard Dalzell quite rightly address the limitations of quantitative surveys for understanding public opinion and highlight the need for qualitative research to assist in the interpretation of the findings produced by the survey. They also ask a number of probing and provocative questions concerning the impact of Ireland Aid and development education. The fourth contribution by the Canadian International Development Agency serves to highlight the similarity of attitudes in Canada and Ireland. Given the perceived importance of the media generally and TV in particular, the way in which development issues are handled on TV is very important. In his review of media coverage, Paddy Coulter makes that point that 'a sustained engagement with television gatekeepers should be a major priority for development organisations who are serious about getting across development messages to the public'. The final contribution by Maeve Collins discusses some of the implications of the research for Ireland Aid. She concludes by saying that the data 'provides a timely wake-up call as to how effective (or otherwise) we have been informing the public. For the future, it provides critical baseline data against which the effectiveness of Ireland's communications strategy and development education strategy can be evaluated'.

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The Research Findings

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the major findings from the survey are summarised under the following headings:

- Attitudes of the Irish Public towards Developing Countries.
- Sources of Information about Developing Countries.
- Perceptions of the Causes of Poverty in Developing Countries.
- The Responsibilities of Ireland Towards Developing Countries.
- Knowledge and Perceptions of Aid to Developing Countries.

2.2 Attitudes of the Irish Public Towards Developing Countries

Spontaneous Impressions of Developing Countries

The first question sought to investigate respondents' spontaneous impressions of developing countries by asking what words or images come to mind when they think of developing countries. The four most popular responses were:

- Africa/African countries (mentioned by 39% of respondents).
- Poverty/poor countries (37%).
- Famine/hunger (34%).
- The Third World (21%).

Other responses spontaneously mentioned included: disease/AIDS (8%), suffering/misery (5%), overcrowding/ poor housing (4%), and war (4%). It is clear from the responses to this question that, for many Irish people, the imagery spontaneously associated with developing countries is grounded in traditional and largely negative terms. The views expressed are consistent with previous research, such as DEFY's 1999 study of children (12-17 years), young adults (18-24 years) and older adults (25+ years) in the Republic of Ireland. When asked 'what images come into your mind when I mention the people of the Third World', the most frequently cited answers given by each of the groups were: 'starvation/famine/hunger/no food'; poverty/no money'; babies/children'; diseases/sickness/blindness'; 'suffering/ sadness/ despair/ pain'; and 'dying people/death'.

Perceptions of Changes in Living Conditions

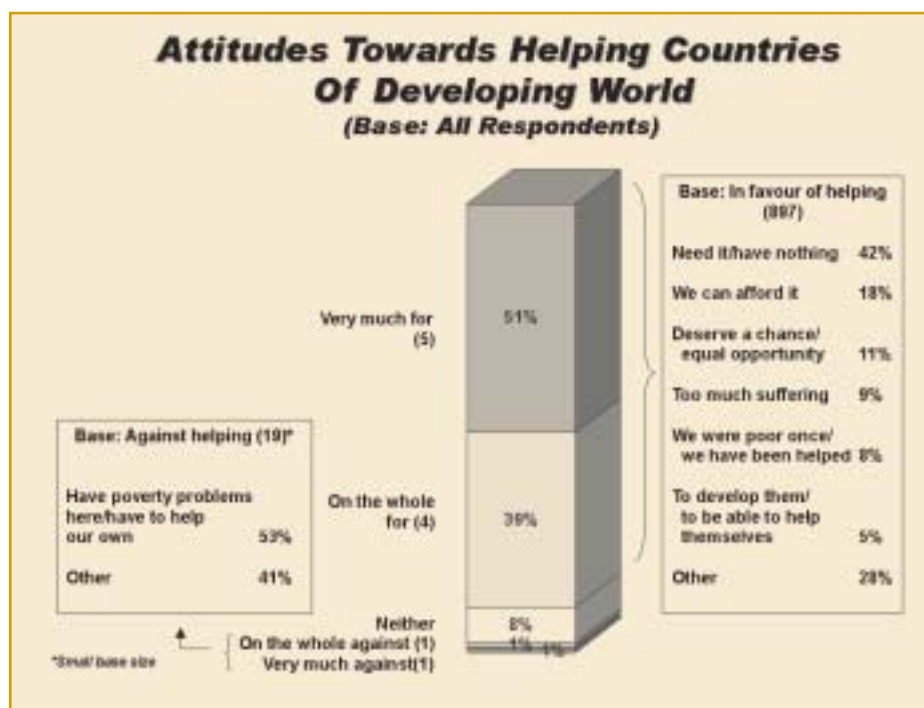
When asked if they feel life is better, worse or more or less the same in developing countries now than it was five years ago, respondents expressed a range of opinions, with 31% believing it to be 'better', 36% saying they feel it is 'the same' and 21% believing that life is 'worse' nowadays when compared with five years ago. Approximately, one in ten (11%) respondents were unable to give an opinion on this question. In general, the differences between the different demographic groups were not significant, although the youngest (15-24 years) and oldest (65+ years) age cohorts were most likely to feel that life is better now than five years ago. Respondents living in Connaught/Ulster were also more likely to feel life in developing countries is better nowadays.

Helping Countries of the Developing World

The survey results indicate a strong degree of goodwill towards developing countries. When asked about their general attitudes towards developing countries, the majority (51%) of Irish adults indicated they are 'very much for' helping countries of the developing world, while a further four in ten or so (39%) are 'on the whole' in favour of helping these countries¹. Conversely, only two percent of respondents are against helping countries of the developing world and less than one in ten (8%) remain undecided. In general, differences across socio-demographic groups were quite small, with a tendency for females, students, the ABC1 (professional/middle management), socio-economic group, Munster residents, regular Church-goers, and the most highly educated (post-graduate/professional) to be most in favour of helping countries of the developing world.

This generally high level of goodwill towards developing countries is slightly down on the responses to a similar question asked by the Advisory Council on Development Co-Operation on two separate occasions during the 1980s (ACDC 1985, 1989). In 1989, 58% of Irish adults (15+ years) were 'very much for' helping the Third World, while 31% were 'on the whole for' helping them. However, the underlying consistency across the three surveys over the seventeen years since 1985 is very apparent when the favourable viewpoints ('very much for/ on the whole for') are combined: 91%, 89% and 90%, respectively.

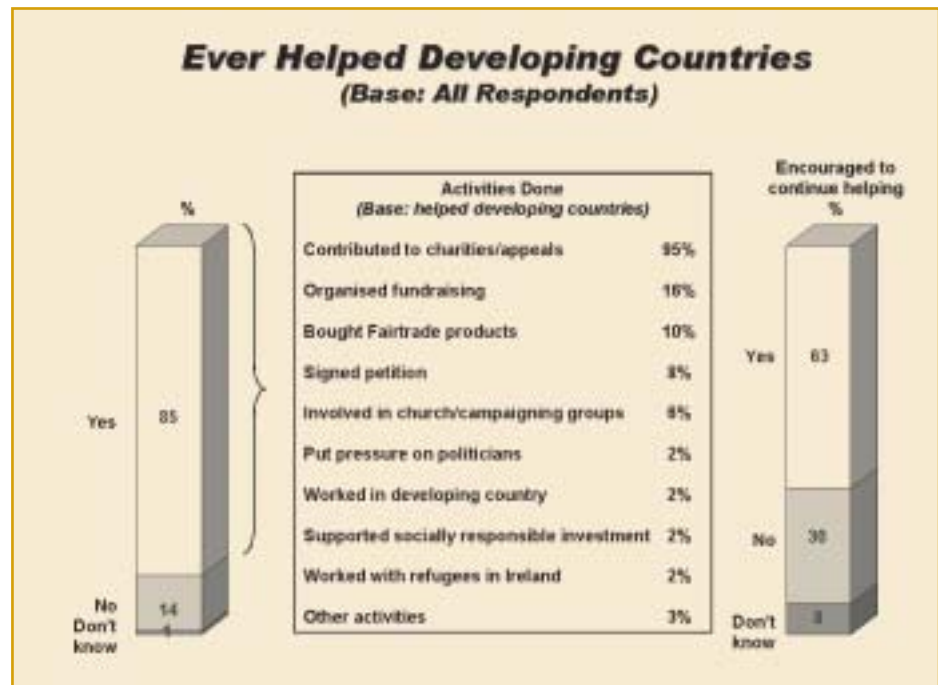
The principal reason cited by the majority of respondents who feel Ireland should assist countries of the developing world was that 'they need help/ they have nothing'. Other reasons for helping countries of the developing world are summarised in the following chart.



Personal Experience of Helping Developing Countries

The vast majority of respondents said they had personally helped developing countries in some way, with most indicating they had contributed to charities/appeals. Furthermore, as the following chart illustrates, the majority of respondents felt their action in helping developing countries had encouraged them to continue doing something in relation to developing countries.

¹ The importance for people of Ireland to help people of the Third World was also highlighted in the DEFY survey of teenagers and adults in 1999, with more than eight in ten of each age group saying it is either 'Extremely Important' or 'Very Important' for people in Ireland to help the people of the Third World.



High levels of personal commitment to developing countries were also reported in the earlier ACDC surveys (1985/1989), where approximately nine in ten adults said they had ‘helped the Third World in the last two years’. Furthermore, ‘giving money’ was also mentioned most frequently as the way in which they had helped the Third World (1985: 96%; 1989: 92%).

When asked if they felt they were any other ways they could help people in poorer countries, the vast majority (85%) of respondents mentioned at least one way, including the following²:

- Contribute to charities/appeals59%
- Buy Fairtrade products.....34%
- Organise fundraising activity23%
- Sign a petition18%
- Put pressure on politicians16%
- Become involved in Church/campaigning groups10%
- Work in developing country8%
- Support socially responsible investment6%
- Work on behalf of refugees in Ireland.....6%
- Something else (not specified)2%

Sense of Responsibility for Helping Developing Countries

A related question asked respondents if they thought they had a responsibility to help poor people living in developing countries. Just over one quarter (26%) felt they had ‘considerable responsibility’ in this regard, compared with the majority (61%) who said they had ‘some but limited responsibility’ and less than one in ten (8%) who felt they had ‘no responsibility’³. The corresponding answers for respondents’ sense of responsibility towards helping poor people in Ireland were 31% ‘considerable responsibility’, 55%

² Similar ways of assisting people in poorer countries have also been identified in other surveys (MORI 2000, 2001; DEFY 2000).

³ The question was asked differently in the ACDC 1989 survey. In the 1989 survey, public attitudes towards the Third World were explored by asking respondents the following question: ‘Most people in Third World countries live without food, education and health care. Do you think that Ireland as a country, has a responsibility to help the people living in these conditions? More than four in ten (46%) of the sample felt that Ireland had a ‘considerable responsibility’, compared with 45% who felt that Ireland had ‘some but limited responsibility’ and six per cent who said that Ireland had no responsibility whatsoever. It is impossible to say if the difference is due to the question wording or an actual decrease in public sentiment.

'some responsibility', and 8% 'no responsibility'. Thus, Irish people would appear to have a slightly higher sense of responsibility towards poor people in Ireland than in developing countries. Members of the farming community, young people (15-24 years) and people living in Connaught/Ulster were least likely to feel they had 'considerable responsibility' to help people living in developing countries or in Ireland.

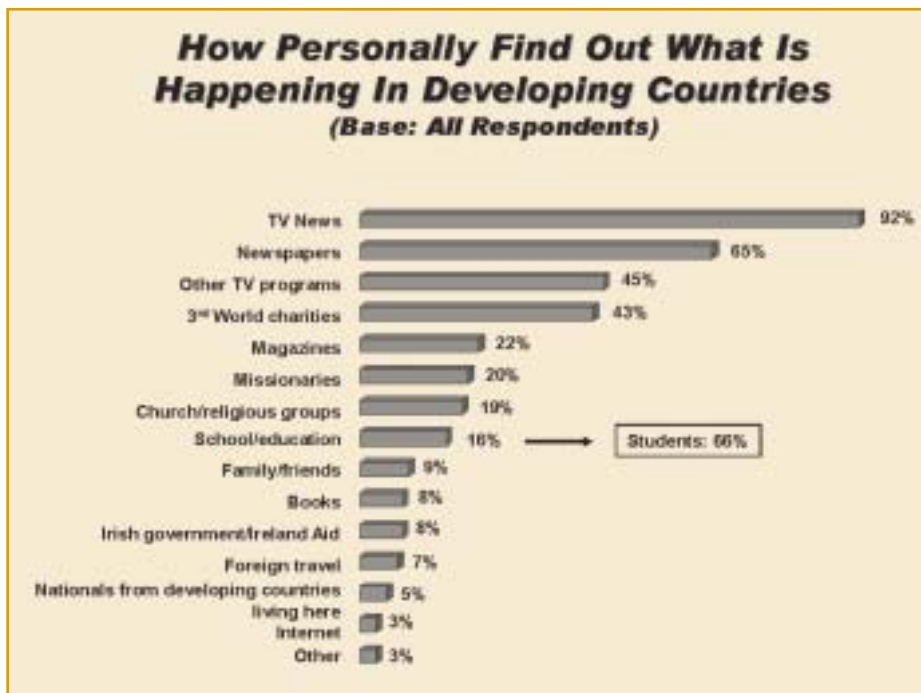
2.3 Sources of Information About Developing Countries.

Perceived Level of Knowledge about Developing Countries

The vast majority (81%) of respondents claim to know 'something' about developing countries, with an additional group, comprising approximately one in ten respondents (8%) claiming to 'know a lot'. A similar proportion (8%) also feel they 'don't know anything' about developing countries. In general, the youngest age group (15-24 years) claim to know least, while the oldest age group (65+ years) perceive themselves to be most knowledgeable⁴. Other groups with relatively low levels of knowledge about developing countries include: Dublin residents, young single adults and those with no children, people who attend Church infrequently or never, and most especially, people who are not concerned about levels of poverty in developing countries.

Sources of Information About Developing Countries

Respondents were given a list of 14 possible ways⁵ for finding out what is happening in developing countries and asked to indicate which ways they personally use to get information⁶. The most popular source, mentioned by over nine in ten (92%) respondents was the TV news, followed by newspapers, other TV programmes and Third World Charities. Thus, it is clear that the media dominates as a source of information on events in developing countries, with TV news as the primary source.



⁴ The MORI surveys of school children aged 11-16 years in England and Wales conducted in 2000 and 2001 also found that the vast majority of respondents feel they know 'something' or 'a lot' about developing countries: 83% in 2000 and 80% in 2001.

⁵ The list of 14 diverse ways was presented to respondents in the following order: School/education, newspapers, magazines, TV news, other TV programmes, Third World Charities (e.g., Concern, Trocaire), Church or other religious groups, nationals from developing countries living in Ireland, Irish Government/ Ireland Aid, family/ friends, foreign travel, internet, books, missionaries. They were also given an opportunity to mention any other source not in the original list.

⁶ In a related question used in two MRBI surveys, a representative sample of Irish adults were asked to what extent 'Their thinking on Aid to Underdeveloped and Poor Countries' was influenced by home, media, Church and politicians. In 1987, just over half of all respondents mentioned the media (56%), followed by the Church (24%), home and family (7%) and the Government/Politicians (7%). In 2001, the answers were very similar: Media (58%), the Church (19%), politicians (11%) and home (6%).

The top four sources listed above were also ranked in the same order when respondents were asked to identify which of the sources they get **most** information about developing countries. While the top sources of information were prioritised by each of the major socio-demographic groups, some interesting variations also occurred: females were more likely than males to mention Third World Charities, magazines, missionaries, school/education, and family/friends; school/education was emphasised most by the youngest age group generally and students in particular; missionaries received most emphasis in Munster and Connaught/Ulster, while Leinster respondents placed more emphasis on school/education, books and foreign travel than was the case in other Provinces. Respondents who expressed most concern about poverty in developing countries were significantly more likely to mention most of these information sources than the minority who were not concerned.

Interest in Getting More Information

Just over half (54%) of all respondents would like to know more about what is happening in developing countries, with approximately one third (34%) not interested and just over one in ten (12%) who are undecided on the matter. Most interest in knowing more about developing countries was expressed by women, students, ABC1 social class, Church-goers, and people with highest levels of formal education.

Preferred Source of Additional Information

Most respondents would appear to be satisfied with the current sources of information on developing countries. When asked to choose which would be their preferred sources of information, the most frequently mentioned sources were: TV (88%), Newspapers (60%), Third World charities (22%), magazines (17%), Church/religious groups (14%), school/education (12%), Irish Government/Irish Aid (9%) and post (9%). Further, when asked to select one source from these preferred sources, over half of all respondents chose TV (55%), followed by newspapers (17%) and Third World charities (6%).

Some socio-demographic differences emerged from the responses to this question, although the differences did not affect the overall ranking of preferred sources, with the same information sources preferred by all groups. Thus, for example, while female respondents were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to opt for magazines and Third World Charities as preferred sources of information, the majority of respondents, regardless of gender or age, chose TV as their overall preferred source. Other 'internal' differences included, the greater preference by the two middle-aged groups (25-64 years) for newspapers, while the oldest age group (65+ years) were most inclined to select Church/religious groups and magazines as their preferred sources.

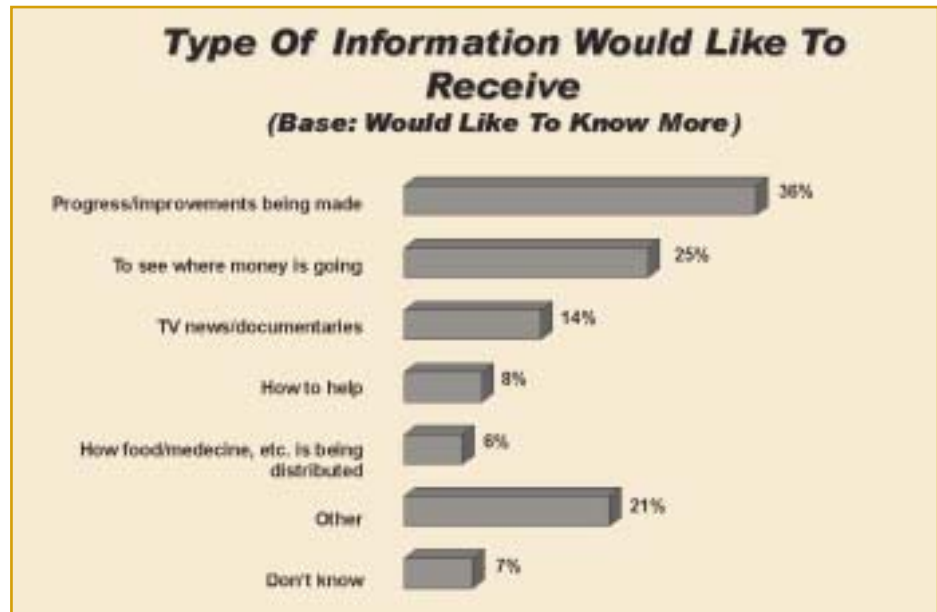
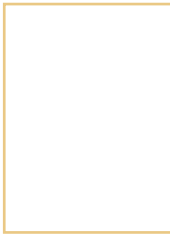
The preferred source of information on what is happening in developing countries for each of the main demographic subgroups are presented in Table 1, following.

Table 1 | Preferred Sources of Information by Sex, Age, and Location.

Information Source	TOTAL	SEX		AGE				LOCATION			
		Male	Female	15-24	25-44	45-64	65+	Dublin	Rest Lein.	Mun.	Conn./ Ulster
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
TV	88	90	86	82	92	88	84	88	83	86	96
Newspapers	60	61	59	41	67	67	58	54	59	66	59
Third World Charities	22	18	26	20	23	23	22	26	21	23	18
Magazines	17	12	22	17	17	16	24	22	21	10	18
Church/ Other Religious Groups	14	13	16	7	13	17	27	12	12	12	27
School/Education	12	9	14	27	7	8	5	17	14	7	9
Irish Government/ Ireland Aid	9	8	10	8	9	10	8	10	5	11	9
Post	9	10	8	10	10	7	7	6	8	10	12
Family/ Friends	5	5	6	4	6	6	8	5	9	7	-

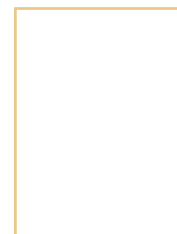
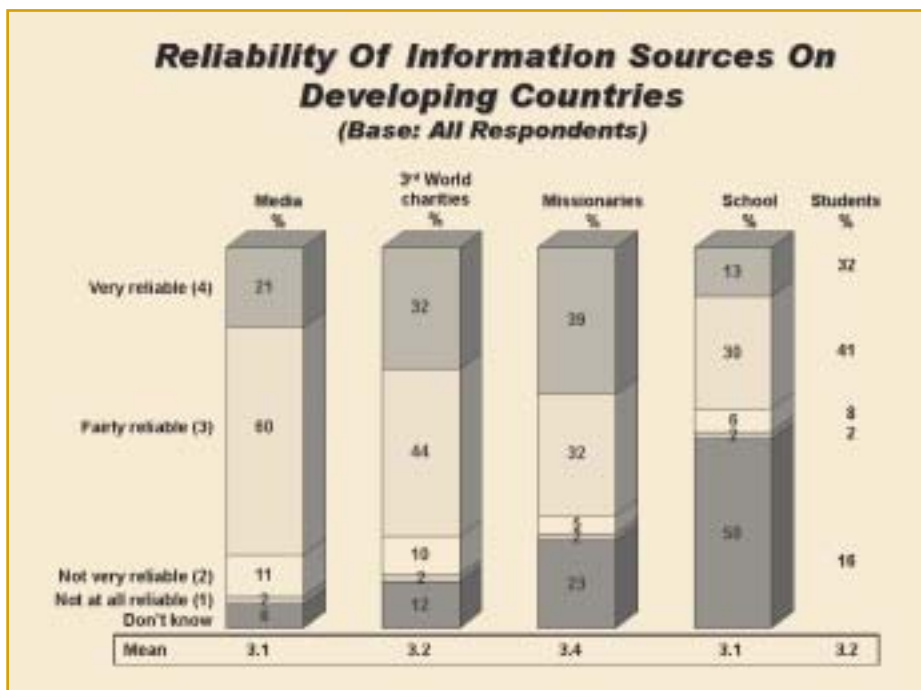
Type of Information They Would Like to Receive

Over one third of respondents would like to receive information on any progress or improvements being made in developing countries, while one quarter would like 'to see where the money is going'. Other types of information they would like to receive are listed in the following chart. There were no significant differences in the type of information requested by any of the major demographic sub-groups.



Perceived Reliability of Information Sources

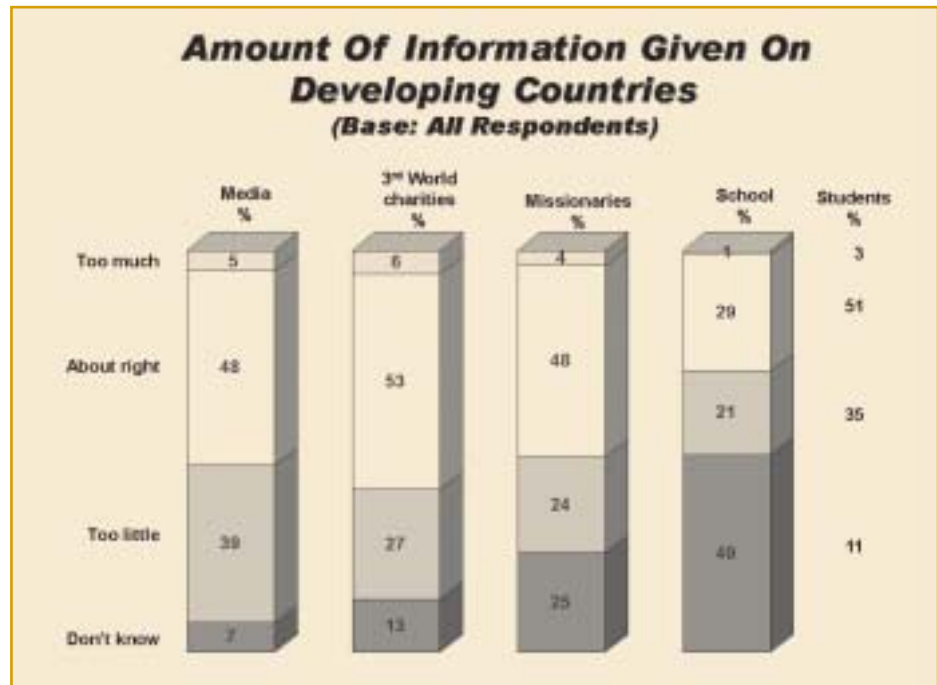
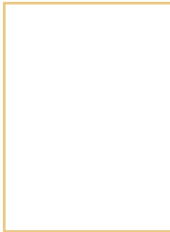
Given that the media is the primary source of information on developing countries, it is encouraging, perhaps, to note that the majority of respondents regard it as a reliable source. However, it may be of some concern that less people are likely to treat the information they receive from the media as 'very reliable' when compared to Third World charities, Missionaries and School (for students). Approximately, one in ten respondents believe each of these sources are unreliable, with substantial numbers of people unsure about the reliability of school and missionaries. Furthermore, as highlighted by some of the commentators in this volume, the way in which development is presented on TV can be critical to the public's understanding of development.



While the different sub-groups were quite consistent in their views of the relative reliability of these sources, some differences did emerge in their views: the youngest age group, and residents of Dublin/ other parts of Leinster were somewhat more likely to regard the media as unreliable. Younger respondents were also more likely to perceive the school as unreliable, while those with highest levels of formal education had most positive views of school in this regard. No significant differences were found in respondents' views of Third World Charities or, for the most part, Missionaries, where more regular Church-goers were more likely to regard Missionaries as a credible source of information.

Opinions on the Amount of Information Provided

Overall, respondents would appear to be satisfied with the amount of information they receive on developing countries, although, as the following chart illustrates, a substantial proportion of respondents feel the amount of information is 'too little', particularly in relation to the media.



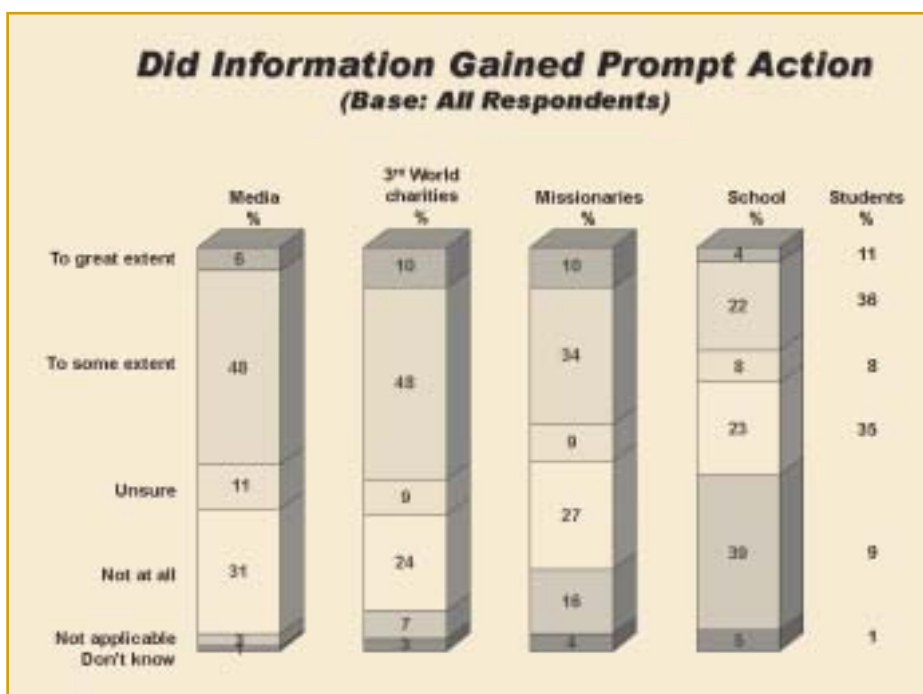
Overall, males, people from Munster and infrequent Church-goers were most likely to believe that the amount of information given by the media is 'too much', while females, ABC1 respondents, Dublin residents, and people most concerned with poverty in the developing world were most likely to judge the amount of information as 'too little'. Similar trends were also found in relation to the other sources of information. An overview of responses to this question by respondents saying the amount of information is too little is outlined in Table 2, following.

Table 2 | Analysis of Respondents Saying the Information Provided on Developing Countries is 'Too Little' by Sex, Age, Social Class and Region.

	The Media	School	Third World Countries	Missionaries
	%	%	%	%
Sex				
Male	34	15	25	23
Female	45	26	30	25
Age				
15-24 years	41	26	19	18
25-44 years	40	19	31	24
45-64 years	43	22	32	29
65+ years	30	12	23	19
Social Class				
ABC1	47	24	30	26
C2DE	38	20	27	24
F1F2	22	11	19	13
Region				
Dublin	45	24	33	26
Leinster (Ex Dublin)	39	18	24	22
Munster	38	18	23	22
Conn/ULster	33	23	32	24

Perceived Impact of Information

Approximately half of all respondents claim to have been prompted into action to some extent by the media and Third World charities, with missionaries perceived to be somewhat less effective. However, only a minority of respondents were prompted to take action 'to a great extent' in relation to developing countries as a result of the information gained from these diverse sources.



Overall, as the following table illustrates, the groups most likely to take action in relation to developing countries as a consequence of the information received were: female, middle-aged, and living in Connaught/ Ulster.

**Table 3 | Those Taking Action in Relation to Developing Countries
'To Great/ Some Extent' by Sex, Age, Social Class and Region.**

	Media	School	Third World Charities	Missionaries
	%	%	%	%
Sex				
Male	50	22	53	39
Female	57	30	63	48
Age				
15-24 years	41	40	48	30
25-44 years	56	22	58	42
45-64 years	62	26	66	53
65+ years	52	12	58	52
Social Class				
ABC1	59	27	61	43
C2DE	49	27	56	41
F1F2	57	15	58	57
Region				
Dublin	48	25	54	30
Leinster (Ex Dublin)	53	28	60	48
Munster	57	19	57	45
Conn/Ulster	60	35	63	57

The principal actions that respondents were prompted to take as a result of the information gained from one or other of these sources were:

- Financial aid/ giving to charities (61%).
- Fundraising (11%).
- Donated clothes (5%).

Approximately one in ten respondents were prompted to take another form of action, while one fifth or so either took no action or didn't reply to this question.

2.4 Perceptions of the Causes of Poverty in Developing Countries.

Concern About Levels of Poverty in Developing Countries

The majority of Irish adults expressed some level of concern about levels of poverty in developing countries, with one quarter (25%) of all respondents being 'very concerned' and over half (56%) saying they were 'fairly concerned'⁷. Over one in ten (14%) had 'no strong feelings one way or the other' and only 3 per cent were not concerned about the situation. Overall, women and the most highly educated expressed most concern, while the youngest age cohort (15-24 years) expressed least concern.

⁷ In a similar question, the majority of respondents to the 2000 and 2001 MORI surveys of 11-16 year old children in England and Wales said they were concerned with the fact that 'in many countries there are people who do not have enough to eat, cannot go to school to learn to read and write, or cannot always get basic healthcare'. However, in keeping with the findings from the present survey, a substantial proportion, comprising approximately one fifth of the total sample in both years, claim to be aware of the situation but 'don't have strong feelings about it one way or another'.

Perceived Importance of Factors Causing Poverty

Respondents were given a list of 14 possible reasons to explain why developing countries are poor and asked to say how important or unimportant they feel the reasons are in explaining why developing countries are poor. The relative importance attributed to each of the reasons is presented in the following table (below)

Table 4 | Reasons Why Developing Countries are Perceived to be Poor

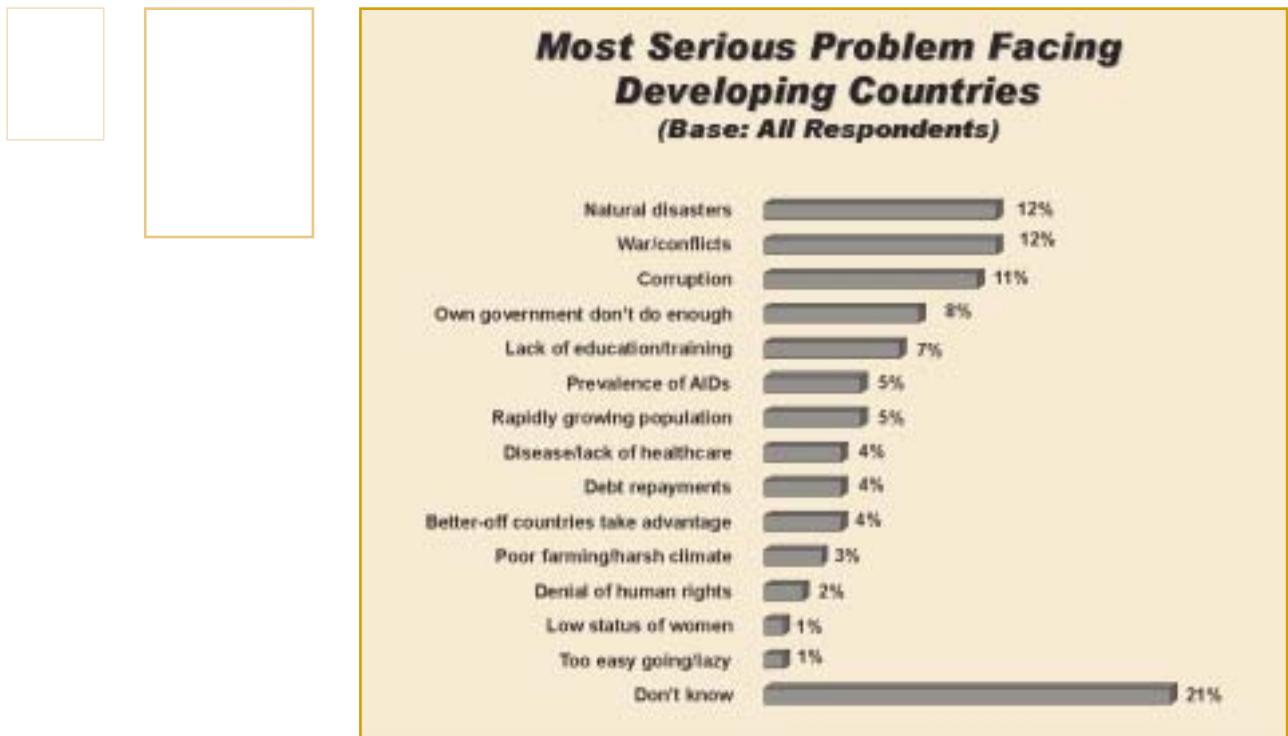
Developing countries are poor because of	Very Important	Fairly Imp.	Neither Imp. Nor Unimp./ D.K.	Fairly Unimp.	Very Unimp.
	%	%	%	%	%
Disease and lack of healthcare	72	22	5	1	*
War and conflicts in these countries Because the better-off countries take advantage of the Developing Countries	68	25	5	2	*
They lack education and training	67	24	6	2	*
Corruption across many sectors in their own countries	64	28	6	2	*
Their governments do not do enough to help their own poor	61	29	8	2	*
The prevalence of AIDS in many Developing Countries	61	26	9	4	*
Poor farming practices and harsh climatic conditions	57	33	8	1	1
They suffer from many natural disasters, like floods, earthquakes and droughts	55	34	8	2	1
A denial of human rights across many sectors in their own countries	52	34	12	2	*
Debt repayments to banks and other financial institutions in the West	48	31	15	4	2
Their populations are growing too rapidly	44	34	13	6	2
The better-off countries take advantage of the Developing Countries	44	34	12	7	3
The low status of women in Developing Countries	39	32	18	8	3
Developing Countries people are basically too easy going and/or incompetent/lazy	18	20	22	20	20

Note: An * indicates the answer is less than 1%.

Overall, the analysis shows that virtually all respondents, with the exception of the final reason, regarded all of the factors listed as important – ‘people in developing countries are too easy going and/or incompetent/lazy’. There was also very little variation across socio-demographic groups in their responses to this question. However, female respondents tended to place more emphasis on ‘the low status of women’ and ‘natural disasters’ when compared with their male counterparts, while male respondents placed higher emphasis on ‘too easy going/lazy’.

In the ACDC survey of 1989, respondents were given a list of nine possible causes of Third World poverty and asked to rate them as either 'very important', 'important' or 'unimportant', with 'don't know' also offered as an option. The list of nine possible causes comprised the following: lack of education; inaction by Third World governments; corruption in Third World; natural disasters/floods/droughts; overpopulation; international debt repayments; better off countries taking advantage; the low status of women in the Third World; and Third World people are easy going/incompetent. While direct comparisons between both surveys are not possible⁸, similar causes were ranked more or less in the same order in both surveys. Thus, excluding the additional possible causes listed in the present survey, the three top causes in both surveys were perceived to be: lack of training/education, inaction by Third World governments, and corruption in the Third World. Conversely, the lowest ranking causes of poverty in developing countries were perceived to be: better off countries taking advantage, the low status of women, and people in developing countries are too easy going/lazy.

The relative emphasis given to each of these reasons changed somewhat when respondents were asked to identify the most serious problems facing developing countries, as illustrated in the following chart.



2.5 The Responsibilities of Ireland towards Developing Countries.

The perceived helpfulness or otherwise of ways in which a country like Ireland can help developing countries was evaluated by asking respondents to say how helpful or unhelpful they found the following forms of help. Overall, most of the ways suggested were regarded as helpful, particularly those aimed at helping people to develop themselves.

⁸ In addition to using the term developing countries instead of Third World, the wording was changed in some of the statements used in the present survey.

Table 5 | Perceived Helpfulness of Assistance Provided to Developing Countries

	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Neither Helpful Nor Unhelpful /D.K.	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful
	%	%	%	%	%
Sending out skilled people, such as engineers, scientists and teachers to train and educate people in the Developing Countries.	77	19	3	*	0
Supporting self-help programmes so that the poor can help themselves.	72	23	4	1	*
Providing emergency relief and humanitarian assistance, such as food and medicine.	68	28	3	*	*
Training people from Developing countries in Ireland so that they will be able to play a more useful role in their own countries.	66	27	5	1	1
Helping to reduce conflict and war.	62	26	10	1	1
Providing financial assistance for long-term development.	58	34	6	1	1
Seeking to bring about economic policy change in order to stimulate economic Growth and employment	48	37	14	1	*
Working with others to cancel the debt owed to the industrialised world	49	32	16	2	1
Giving support to groups/projects working to raise the status of women in Developing Countries.	44	39	15	2	*
Creating a better understanding in Ireland of the situation in Developing Countries.	44	36	17	2	1
Buy a product with the Fairtrade Mark rather than a similar product without it.	43	36	18	2	1
Giving support to groups seeking political change in Developing Countries.	35	37	21	5	2
Buying more products from Developing Countries.	34	44	18	3	1
Paying a reasonable price for products coming from Third World countries, even if it increases prices here.	33	41	19	4	3

The top four ways in which Ireland can help developing countries were also ranked highest in the corresponding question in the 1989 ACDC survey. Once again, there was a strong consistency across the different socio-demographic groups in the way they answered this question, with only slight variations evident. The greatest gender difference related to 'giving support to groups/projects working to raise the status of women in developing countries' where a higher proportion of women (49%) than men (38%) felt this could be 'very helpful'.

2.6 Knowledge and Perceptions of Aid to Developing Countries.

Spontaneous Impressions of Overseas Development Aid

In overall terms, respondents to the survey do not appear to have a clear image of what overseas development comprises. Thus, while 'food aid', 'financial aid' and 'volunteer personnel' are the most frequent spontaneously mentioned associations, these are only mentioned by relatively low proportions of the total sample:

- Food/aid/supplies (17%).
- Financial aid (16%).
- Volunteers (14%).
- Healthcare/ medical supplies (10%).

Other words and images spontaneously associated with overseas development aid are: famine/hunger (8%), education/schools (8%), helping/organising aid (7%), Trocaire (6%), Agriculture/help in growing own crops (6%), Concern (6%), lack of water (5%), poverty/reducing poverty (5%), disease/sickness (5%), not enough being done (3%), clothes aid (2%), improving housing (2%), missionaries (2%) and Red Cross (1%). Just over one fifth (21%) of respondents also gave less frequently mentioned reasons, while approximately one seventh (14%) could not think of any words or images when they specifically thought of overseas development aid.

Aid from Ireland

When asked to name any ways in which Ireland helps developing countries, the most popular answer given spontaneously by respondents was 'Financial aid/giving money', mentioned by over four in ten (41%) respondents, followed by fundraising/donations/charities (25%), volunteers (23%), food aid (18%), Concern (17%), Trocaire (17%), and Government funding/ State aid (10%). In addition to these ways, a substantial proportion of respondents (39%) mentioned other ways in which Ireland helps developing countries.

The majority of respondents (66%) believe that development aid from Ireland is given through Third World charities, with most of the remainder, comprising approximately half this number (32%), said that aid to developing countries is given through the Irish Government/Ireland Aid. One fifth of all respondents have no idea how aid is provided.⁹ The disparate answers given by the major sub-groups to this question are outlined in table 4, following. The groups most likely to mention the Irish Government/Ireland Aid comprised: males, ABC1 respondents and people living in Munster. Conversely, farmers and residents of Leinster and Connaught/ Ulster were most inclined to mention Third World Charities. The youngest cohort, Dublin residents and working class respondents expressed most uncertainty regarding the provision of aid to developing countries.

⁹ The total percentage response to this question exceeds 100% as respondents were allowed to select more than one answer.

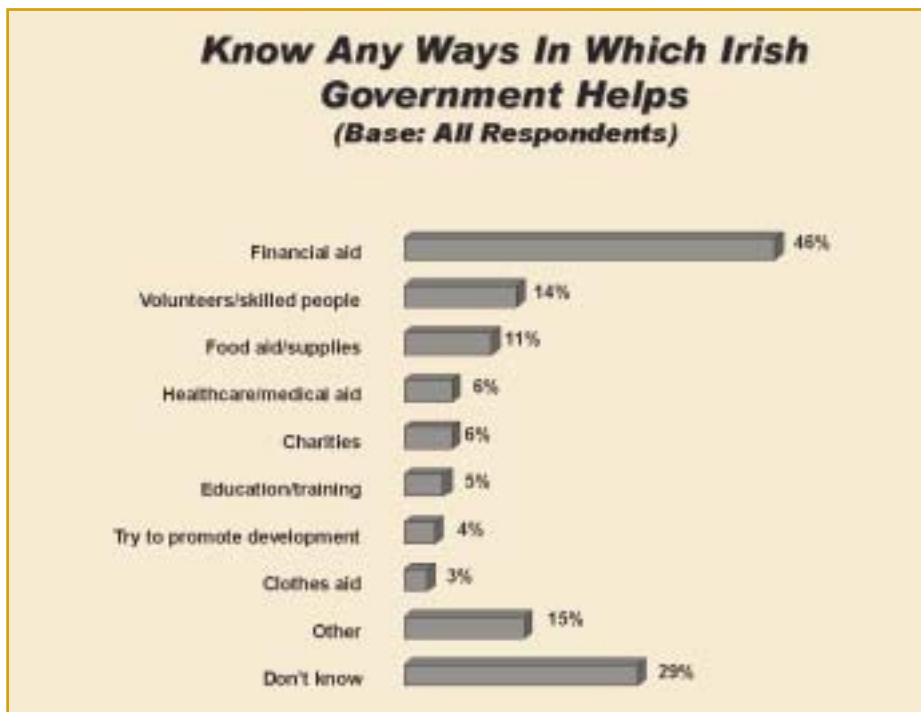
Table 6 | Perceptions of How Development Aid from Ireland is given to Developing Countries by Sex, Age, Social Class and Location.

	Irish Government/ Ireland Aid	Third World Charities	Other	Don't Know
	%	%	%	%
Sex				
Male	34	66	6	20
Female	30	65	8	23
Age				
15-24 years	24	64	4	29
25-44 years	32	65	7	21
45-64 years	37	70	9	16
65+ years	36	63	10	20
Social Class				
ABC1	40	68	8	17
C2DE	25	62	7	26
F1F2	35	75	6	14
Region				
Dublin	24	52	9	33
Leinster (Ex Dublin)	34	76	7	16
Munster	39	66	7	18
Conn/Ulster	31	74	4	14

Note: Totals exceed 100% as respondents were given an opportunity to select more than one answer.

Aid from the Irish Government

Financial aid was also mentioned most frequently when respondents were asked if they knew any ways in which the Irish Government helps developing countries.



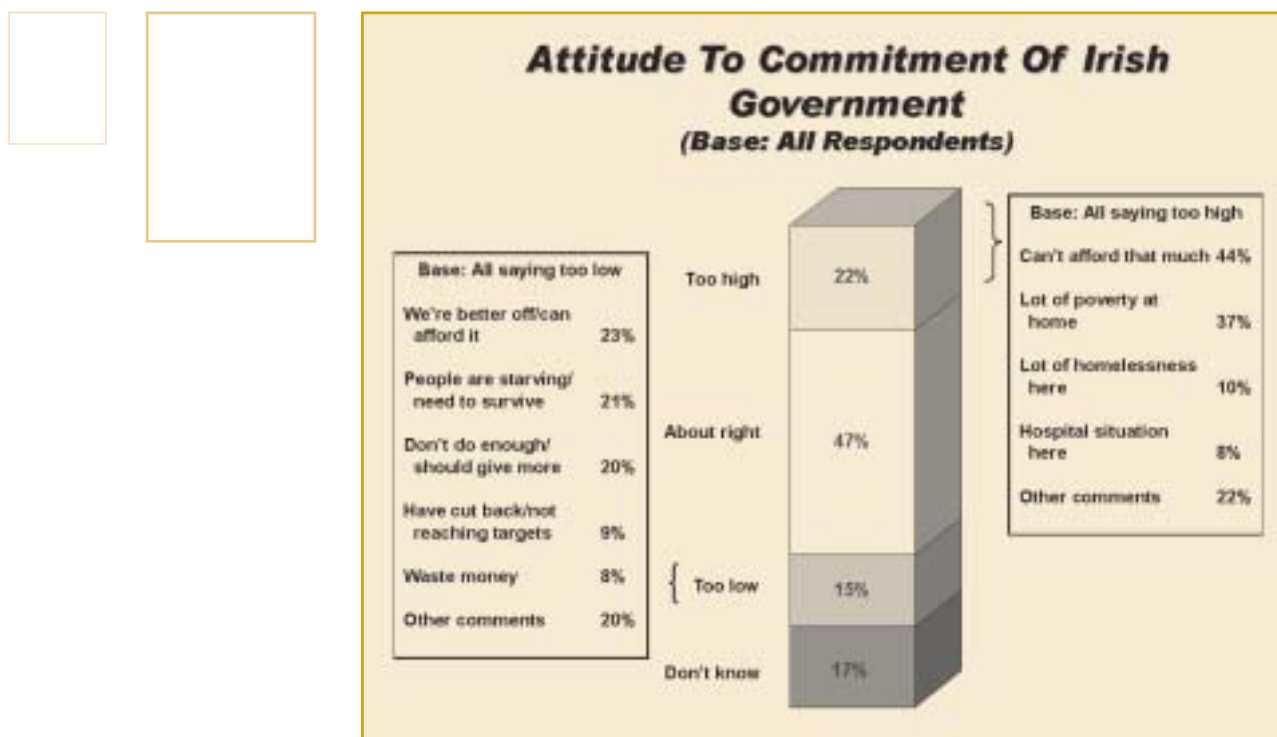
Awareness of Aid Given by the Irish Government

Almost half (48%) of all respondents had 'absolutely no idea' how much financial assistance was provided by the Irish Government in 2001 to developing countries in the form of development aid. Most of the remainder (27%) said the amount was between €1 million and €50 million. The full range of answers is as follows:

- Less than €1 million8%
- €1 - €50 million27%
- €51 - €100 million11%
- €101 - €500 million5%
- €500 million +1%
- Absolutely no idea48%

Attitudes to Level of Aid Commitment by the Irish Government

At this stage, respondents were informed that the Irish Government plans to increase its funding to developing countries over the next few years to over €900 in 2007, in line with UN targets. When asked for their views on this level of commitment by the Irish Government to poverty reduction in developing countries, almost half (47%) of all respondents felt the level was 'about right', compared with just over one fifth (22%) who felt the level was 'too high' and approximately one sixth (15%) who felt it was 'too low'. The main reasons for their views on future Government funding to developing countries are summarised in the following chart.



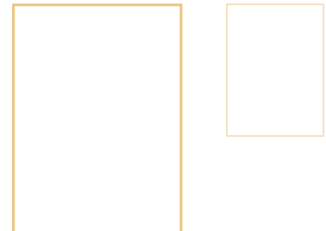
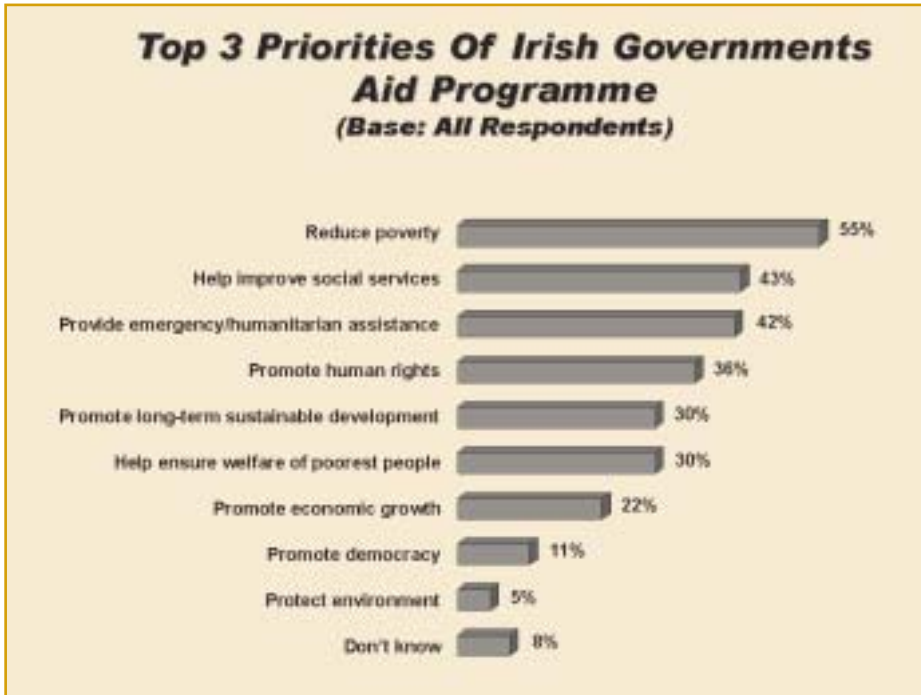
Awareness of Ireland Aid

The majority (62%) of respondents had never heard of Ireland Aid, particularly those from the following categories of respondents: female; working class; young (15-24 years); Dublin and Leinster residents; and people without Third level education. A minority of respondents had heard 'a little' (30%) or 'a lot' (8%) about Ireland Aid. However, most people (79%) felt that Ireland Aid should be made better known and approximately two thirds (64%) felt they personally would like to learn more about the Ireland Aid programme. Conversely, while only five percent felt that Ireland Aid should not be better known, one fifth of all respondents would not personally like to learn more about the Ireland Aid programme. Female respondents and those in the ABC1 (professional/management) socio-economic group expressed most interest in knowing more about Ireland Aid.

Most people interested in learning more about the Ireland Aid programme would like to hear it through TV/Radio documentaries (79%), followed by newspapers (50%), direct mail (18%), educational programmes (17%), magazines (13%), the Internet (10%), public seminars/debates (9%) and cultural events (6%).

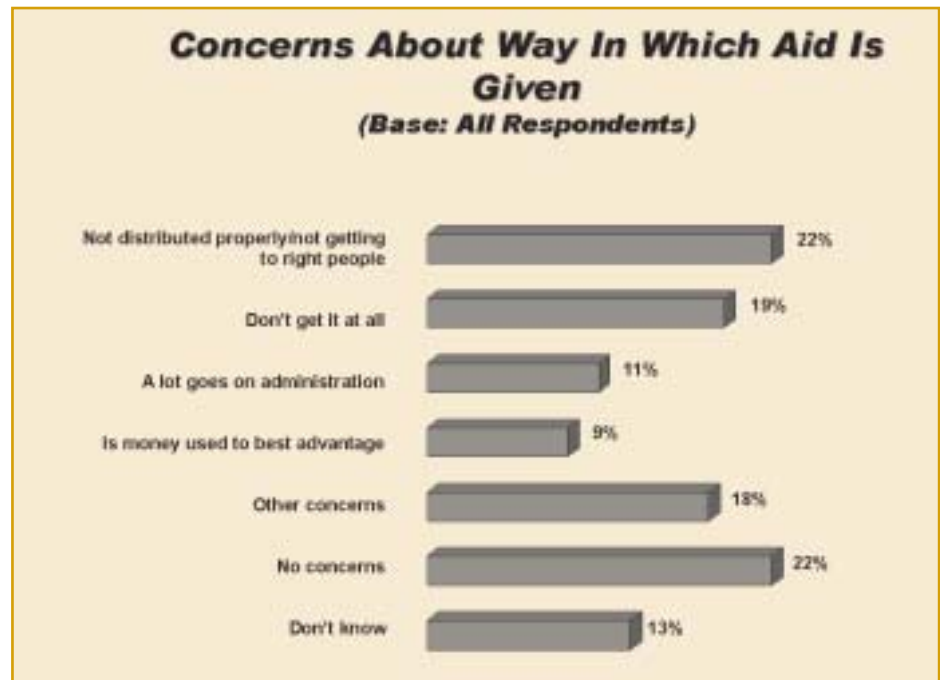
Perceived Priorities of the Irish Government's Aid Programme

The top three priorities of the Irish Government's aid programme for developing countries are perceived to be reducing poverty; helping to improve social services; and providing emergency/humanitarian assistance. The other perceived priorities are listed below.



Concerns About Ways in Which Aid is Given

When asked what concerns, if any, they have with the way in which aid is given to developing countries, the majority (65%) of respondents mentioned at least one concern.



The Impact of Aid from Ireland

Respondents were evenly split in their opinions on the possible impact of aid from Ireland. Almost half (47%) felt that aid from Ireland makes a real difference to the lives of people in developing countries, while for a similar proportion (43%) the difference was only 'a little bit' or 'not at all' (3%). Female respondents, those in the oldest age group (65+ years), and residents of Leinster were most likely to feel that aid from Ireland makes a real difference.

However, when asked how important, if at all, they think it is for people in Ireland to help developing countries, the majority of respondents said 'extremely important' (37%) or 'very important' (42%). Most of the remainder (15%) felt it was 'fairly important', with only two percent saying help from Ireland was not important. Female respondents and those in the oldest age group were most likely to feel that it is 'extremely important' for Ireland to help developing countries.

Perceived Capacity to Improve Situations

The final set of questions investigated respondents' perceptions of their capacity to improve the social and economic situation in three different areas if they felt the situation needed improving i.e., their local area, in Ireland, and in developing countries. Overall, the respondents were quite consistent in their views across these three areas, with approximately two thirds of respondents saying they could improve the social and economic situation if they felt it needed improving. These findings are similar to those recorded in the DEFY survey of children, young and older adults in 1999, where approximately six in ten of each age group agreed with the statement, 'If things needed to be improved in your own area or neighbourhood, do you think young people (like yourself) can do anything to help or not?'; just over half agreed with the statement, 'If things needed to be improved in Ireland, do you think young people (like yourself) can do anything to help or not?'; and over seven in ten agreed with the statement, 'If things needed to be improved in different countries of the Third World, do you think young people here in Ireland (like yourself) can do anything to help or not?'. Conversely, lower levels of perceived influence have been reported in other surveys, such as the 2000 and 2001 MORI surveys conducted among school children aged 11-16 years in England and Wales: 58% of respondents in 2000 and 41% of respondents in 2001 felt that they personally or their family could not do anything to help people in poorer countries.

2.7 Overview of Survey Findings

In this final section, some of the key findings from the research are briefly reiterated before the implications of the research findings are discussed in the following chapters of this report.

- A majority of Irish people are in favour of helping countries of the developing world, principally because they perceive a need for such aid in these countries. Furthermore, most people feel they have a responsibility to help poor people living in developing countries. In keeping with this sentiment, the vast majority of respondents to this survey said they had personally helped developing countries in some way, with most indicating they had contributed to charities/appeals.
- Overall, the majority of Irish adults claim to know something about the situation in developing countries. However, approximately half of the total sample expressed an interest in finding out more. The media dominates as a source of information on events in developing countries, with TV news as the primary source. The general consensus is that the amount of information given on developing countries is 'about right' from each of the four major sources – the media, Third World charities, missionaries and schools. However, without further analysis, it is not possible to say what development 'messages' are being presented by the media and received by the public.
- In terms of the type of information required, the common aspects spontaneously mentioned by respondents related to information on progress being made as a result of aid provided and to see how funds are being allocated. A substantial proportion of people are concerned that aid may not be getting to the 'right people'.

- About half of all respondents claim to have been prompted into action to some extent by the media and Third World charities, with missionaries perceived to be somewhat less effective in this regard. Typically, the action prompted was to provide financial aid/contributions.
- Approximately, eight out of ten respondents claim to feel some level of concern about poverty in developing countries.
- Virtually all factors mentioned to respondents were regarded as important as to why developing countries are poor. Similarly, all the suggested ways of providing assistance to developing countries were regarded as helpful, particularly those aimed at helping people to improve themselves
- In overall terms, people do not seem to have a clear image of what overseas development aid comprises.
- Without prompting, one third of respondents cited the Irish Government/Ireland Aid as the source of development aid from Ireland. However, this is half the proportion that believes that aid is provided through Third World charities.
- Although two in ten respondents expressed no concerns about the way aid is given to developing countries, the main fears expressed by others concerned how much aid gets through to the people who need it most. However, it is acknowledged by the vast majority of respondents that aid from Ireland does make a real difference and that it is important for Irish people to help developing countries.
- A little under half of all respondents spontaneously mentioned financial aid as the way in which the Irish Government helps developing countries. However, the same proportion has no idea how much this financial aid actually entails. Following an explanation of the planned amount of funding by the Irish Government over the next few years, about half of all respondents felt this was 'about right'.
- About six in ten respondents have not heard of Ireland Aid and the majority feel that Ireland Aid should be better known.
- Finally, the analysis showed that there were almost no significant variations across socio-demographic groups in their attitudes to, or knowledge of, developing countries and development aid. In keeping with some international research (see McDonnell et al 2002), analysis of individual questions in the present research tentatively suggests that women, students and the most highly educated are most likely to have positive views on development issues. The correlation between women and more positive views towards developing countries was also tentatively reported in the 1989 ACDC survey. However, as is the case with the present survey, the difference was not substantial and conclusions in this regard should be treated with caution.

In general, little would appear to have changed since the ACDC surveys of the 1980s. The vast majority of Irish people continue to display very high levels of goodwill towards developing countries, with approximately nine in ten respondents in each of the surveys expressing favourable attitudes to helping developing countries. Furthermore, this support continues to be expressed in practical ways by more than eight in ten respondents through fundraising and other activities. Perceptions of causes of poverty in developing countries retains strong consistency since the 1980s, with the same perceived causes being prioritised across each of the surveys: lack of education; inaction by developing countries' governments; corruption in developing countries; natural disasters; and overpopulation.

The principal purpose of large-scale surveys is to provide an accurate measure of existing situations – the 'what' of research. In this regard, the present survey has fulfilled its objectives more than adequately. We now have an accurate and representative picture of how Irish adults relate to many development issues. Not only is this information important in its own right but also because it provides benchmark data for comparison with subsequent surveys. However, quantitative surveys are inherently limited in their contribution to the 'why' of research. Accordingly, in order to fully understand the reasons why the Irish public feel the way they do and to better understand the answers they gave in this survey, more probing qualitative research will be required.

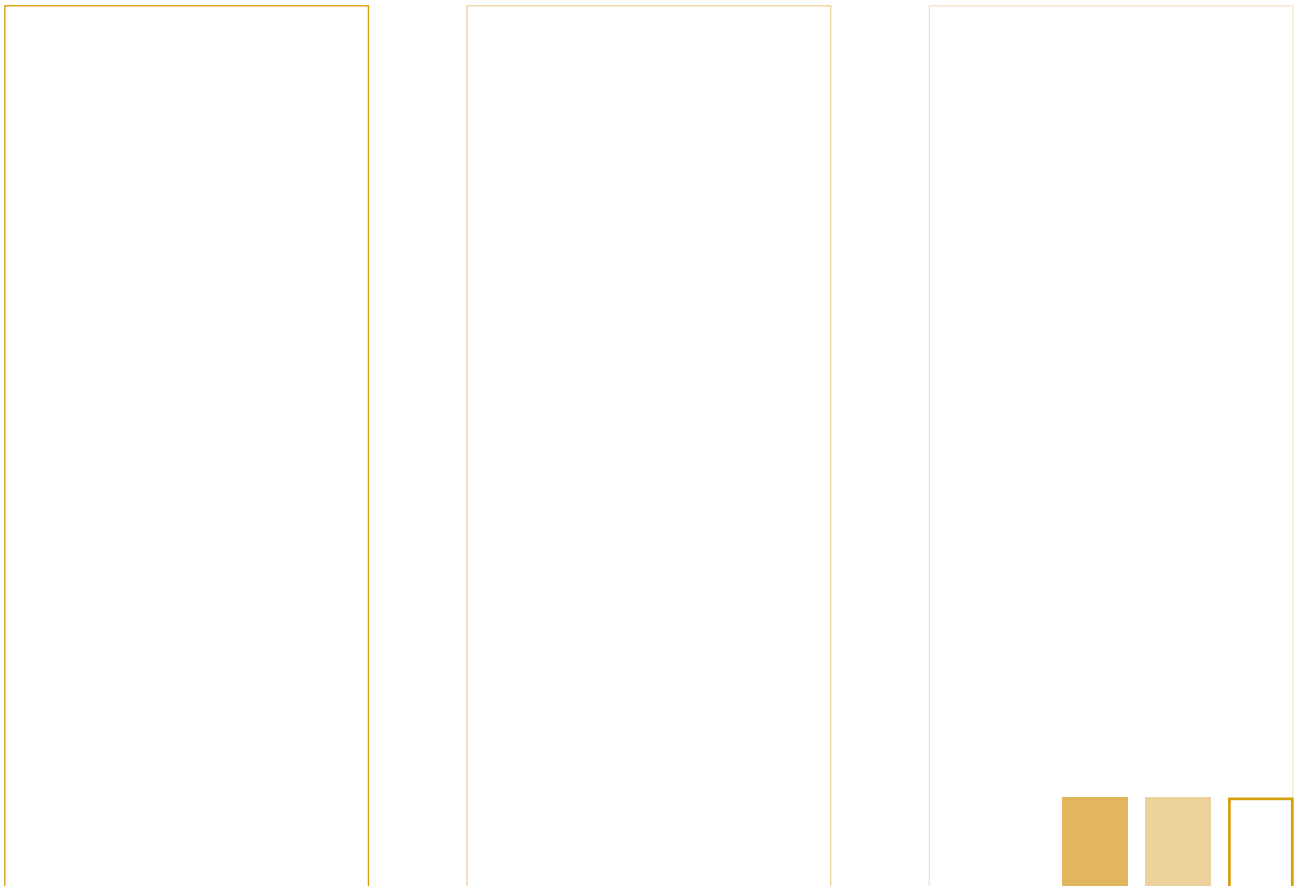
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The Educational Perspective

Dr. Peadar Cremin,
Chair, Development Education Advisory Committee

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to comment, from an education perspective, on the findings of a piece of research conducted into *Attitudes towards Development Cooperation* by the MRBI on behalf of Ireland Aid in December 2002. The commentary seeks to identify the implications for the education sector of the findings of this research.

What the Current Research Tells Us

MRBI's research focussed on

- (a) the promotion of more effective and targeted development education
- and
- (b) public perceptions and support for development co-operation and the Ireland Aid Programme

As this short commentary is being written with an education focus, its main focus will be on (a) rather than on (b).

Because the sample population was drawn from those over 15 years of age, there is a difficulty from the perspective of the current commentator. Much has been done, in recent years, to promote development education within the education sector. While it is to be expected that some of those at the younger end of the national sample (15-24 years) will have been targeted through various development education initiatives, the absence of reliable data on any younger age cohort is a limitation of the current survey. Either consideration should be given to the inclusion of this age cohort in future surveys, or in the event that a different research instrument is necessary, then consideration should be given to adopting a specific focus on school- and college-going populations so that the current gap in the database is addressed, in relation both to baseline data and for future comparative purposes. In the commentary which follows, there will be a particular focus on the 15 to 24 age cohort, especially where the data relating to that cohort contrasts with that relating to other cohorts.

In relation to "Attitudes towards helping Countries of the Developing World" (Q.2a), while it is gratifying that so few people are against helping (2%), it is surprising that within the very large proportion favouring helping (90%), so few saw the issue as being about helping people to help themselves. More than a quarter of this cohort had unidentified ("Other: 28%") reasons for helping. It would be valuable to have an insight into what these were. It is, for instance, noteworthy that the list provided did not refer to "human rights" as one of the bases for humanitarian support.

When respondents were invited to describe how much they knew about Developing Countries (Q.3), it is noteworthy that, of the four discreet age cohorts surveyed (15-24; 25-44; 45-64 and 65+), the youngest age cohort (15-24 years) had both the smallest number of individuals professing to "know a lot" and by far the largest number in the "Don't know anything". On the other hand, a later test item (Q.5) asked whether respondents would like to know more about developing countries and it is remarkable that the student cohort had by far the largest proportion (63% as compared to an average 54%) of those who wanted to know

more and by far the lowest proportion (22% as compared to an average 34%) of those who did not want to know more about developing countries. These findings indicate a very great openness on the part of students to learning about developing countries, marred only by the polarisation represented in the further finding that the student cohort also included the largest proportion of respondents choosing the “Don’t know” category on this item.

In a listing of the sources through which respondents personally find out what is happening in developing countries (Q.4a), schools and education are ranked eighth, below church or religious groups, missionaries and Third World charities and well below the Media.. In light of the age range included in the survey, it is perhaps not unduly surprising that so few respondents (16%) reported school or education as being a significant source of such information. However, the survey notes that, when students are separated out, 66% of them identify school and education as being a source of information. While this is generally a positive finding, the fact that one-third of all students do not see schools and education as a source for information on developing world matters merits further research. Whether this is because students are making the assessment on the basis of their familiarity with particular schools, colleges, courses or degree programmes, which are devoid of any developing world content, is an interesting issue.

In a parallel question (Q.4b), where respondents were invited to identify the sources from which they get most information about developing countries, schools and education (7%) are ranked more highly (this time in sixth place) surpassing missionaries and church or religious groups as sources. More importantly, among students, schools and education get a 35% rating which would mean that this is the second most important source of information on developing countries for students if the ranking of other items is consistent among students and the general population (as no comprehensive breakdown of the student data is provided, it is not possible to be definitive on this).

When those surveyed were asked (Q.6a and b) to identify their preferred source of additional information on the developing world, school and education came in sixth place in the overall ranking. By contrast with the other age groupings, the 15 to 24 age cohort is less favourably disposed to obtaining additional information from television, from newspapers, from church or religious groups or from family or friends but very strongly in favour of obtaining such information from schools and education which are then placed third in the overall rankings for this age cohort. It is, perhaps, not surprising that schools and education are at their lowest ranking as a source of information for the 65+ age cohort, coming in joint last place on that list. Rather than simply accepting this as a description of reality, this finding might suggest a future direction. It seems reasonable to conclude that older people are not benefiting from the focus on development education activities in the education sector, whether formal or informal. It might be worth examining the grants and supports given in recent years to see whether any or adequate support had been given to those groups which work with the elderly. It seems reasonable to suggest that there is as strong a case for adopting a development education focus in work with the elderly just as there is in existing activity with the youth sector.

In regard to a question on the reliability of information sources on developing countries (Q.8), there is a remarkably high number (50%) of “Don’t Know” responses in relation to the school as a reliable source. This is probably ascribable to the fact that most of the age cohorts would not be in a position to assess or know of the work going on in schools. The disproportionate number of “Don’t Know” responses in this column makes comparison with the other sources (media, Third World Charities and Missionaries) difficult. Currently, only 43% overall register as seeing the information presented by schools as being reliable, but if the “Don’t Know” were to be excluded, this would double with 26% then seeing schools as “Very reliable” and a further 60% seeing them as “Fairly reliable”.

With the “Don’t Know” responses included (16%), the number of such responses among the separate student cohort also seems quite high. While 32% of all students see schools as being “Very reliable” sources of information, a further 41% see them as “Fairly reliable”, generating an overall positive response rate of 73%, as compared with the 10% who consider them to be unreliable. From an educator’s point of view, the fact that as many as 10% of students should perceive schools as unreliable sources of information on any issue must generate attention and may merit further exploration.

On the related matter (Q.9) of how much information is given on developing countries by schools, it is worth noting that, as with the previous item on the work of schools almost half of the general population (49%)

join the ranks of the “Don’t knows”, presumably for the reasons suggested above. There is clear support among the general population for schools to do more, with 21% thinking they already do too little and only 1% believing they do too much. This is mirrored in the separate data relating to students where 35% of students would like to see more done and only 3% feeling that too much is being done. While there may be a tolerance for more, it should be noted that over half of the student population consider that the current level of information giving is about right. Were the “Don’t knows” to be excluded, then close to 60% of students would consider the current level of provision of information to be about right. It may also be worth remembering, in this context, that development education, as espoused by educators and by Ireland Aid through its Strategy Plan, is about much more than information giving

Asked whether the information gained had prompted them to action, it is noteworthy that almost half (actually 47%) of all students (11% in “To a great extent” and 36% in “To some extent”) had been prompted to action by what they had learned. Among the general population of respondents, while there is a large proportion (39%) who felt that this item did not apply to them, just over one quarter of the total indicate that they have been moved to act by what they had learned at school.

For the most part, the action taken had been to support charitable giving (Q.10b) with only 11% of respondents indicating that they had not acted and a further 10% in the “Don’t know” category. It is clear that the definition quoted above requires a far more fundamental and far-reaching set of actions than mere charitable giving, however valuable that may be. Later questions (Q.24 and 25), which are considered out of sequence here because of their relationship to this issue, show that a large proportion (85%) of Irish people have acted to help developing countries and are encouraged to continue helping (63%) with very few people (6%) considering that they cannot help. Significantly, there is little difference (Q.28a,b,c) in the extent to which people consider that they can help locally (69%), nationally (63%) or in developing countries (66%).

Ostensibly, the fact that over 80% of people express themselves as being concerned (25% “Very concerned” and 56% “Fairly concerned”) about the levels of poverty in developing countries indicates an Irish population that has a genuine interest and concern for this issue. We must, however, allow for the fact that this response might well be boosted by the feeling that it is more acceptable to make such a response. None-the-less, when contrasted with the 3% who are either “not very concerned” or “not at all concerned”, it is clear that there is strong public interest in this area. The finding on this matter is closely paralleled elsewhere in the survey. For this reason, a later item will be considered here. The response to a later question (Q.17) on the importance of Ireland helping developing countries shows that 37% of people considered it “Extremely important” that aid be given, together with 42% who thought it “Very important” and a further 3% who thought it fairly important, giving a grand total of 94% as opposed to just 3% who thought this was not important.

The research questions (Q.13a and 13b) which sought to identify the public’s understanding of why developing countries is most interesting and challenging when viewed from the education perspective and could be a basis for useful ongoing debate. While it may be gratifying that an older notion of the populations of developing countries being easy going or lazy has been superseded, it is worrying that the dominant reasons for poverty in the developing world are seen as arising from disease, poor healthcare or from war or conflicts, while at the same time, issues such as the exploitation of the Third World by better-off countries or the low status of women languish near the bottom of the rankings. This survey finding also sheds light on areas which might need to be prioritised in popular campaigns or as the focus of educational materials.

There is an interesting contrast between the two topmost items in the ranking of ways in which Ireland could help developing countries (Q.14a). On the one hand, most people seem to adopt a somewhat paternalistic approach in the strength of support for sending skilled people from Ireland to train and educate people in the developing countries. On the other hand, there is a clear view that supporting self-help programmes is most desirable. Viewed overall, it is important to note that there is overwhelmingly positive support for the entire range of actions listed, with very few negative views. From the perspective of development education, specifically, it is worth noting that 80% of people support steps to create a better understanding in Ireland of the situation in developing countries, with 44% of people seeing this as “Very helpful” and a further 36% seeing it as “Quite helpful”. The fact that this items took tenth place in the rankings, above such steps as buying more products from developing countries or paying a reasonable price for the goods produced by these countries, is also worthy of note.

The images (Q.14b) associated with Overseas Development Aid seem quite diverse, particularly when the 21% included under “Other” is taken into account, this being the largest single category. It would be useful to learn whether the dominant images in other developed countries are similarly diverse.

The finding (Q.15a) that more than twice as many people associate the giving of development aid with Third World Charities as with the Irish Government/Ireland Aid will provide a challenge to Ireland Aid in the years ahead. It is particularly noteworthy that the youngest age cohort surveyed (15 to 24) was that with the least awareness of the role of government or Ireland Aid, while also having the highest proportion (29%) of respondents in the “Don’t know” category. In a parallel question (15b) on the effectiveness of aid from Ireland, this same age cohort again had the highest proportion (9%) of “Don’t knows”, had the lowest proportion (40%) who considered that such aid made quite a lot of difference and the highest proportion (49%) who thought such aid made a “little bit” of difference. Again, the fact that the figures indicate that the cohort closest to the education system in age (and presumably containing most students) also seems to be more sceptical about aid and its impact than others, will be of interest to those planning educational initiatives. The related finding (Q29) that the 15 to 24 age group is the single age cohort which feels least responsibility to help poor people whether they are to be found in Ireland (10% “no responsibility” on Q.29) or in the developing world (10% “no responsibility” on Q.30). A finding (Q.21) showing that the 15 to 24 age cohort contains the greatest proportion (72%) of people who have never heard of Ireland Aid seems to continue the pattern identified above.

The responses to some other questions reinforce the idea that little is known about the ODA programme of the Irish government. A surprisingly large group (29% “Don’t knows”) profess (responses to Q.18) that they know nothing of how government helps while an extraordinary 48% (Q.19) have “absolutely no idea” as to how much was actually disbursed in ODA in 2001. The fact that 62% of respondents have never heard (Q.21) of Ireland Aid suggests that a review should be conducted of the public relations activities of the Department of Foreign Affairs in the decades since ODA began. While there is clear public support (79% of respondents to Q.22a) for making Ireland Aid and its programme (64% of respondents to Q.22b) better known, it is unfortunate that there is no disaggregation of the figures to show the views of the 15 to 24 age cohort or of students, as a group, on this issue or on the related question (Q22c) of how respondents would like to learn about Ireland Aid.

Conclusion

The first comment to be made relates to the need for regular research so that valid comparisons can be made over time. It should be noted that the current research had been commissioned by the National Committee for Development Education (NCDE) and had been planned as part of an ongoing research programme, which, following the demise of NCDE, will now become the responsibility of Ireland Aid.

Given the increasing investment in development education, it is essential that there be regular assessment and evaluation of the outcomes of the work being undertaken, both in the formal and informal sectors. In addition to assessing and evaluating individual programmes and projects, in the way that normally happens already, there is also a need for comprehensive surveys of the kind under review which have the benefit of examining impact on a wider population than might be reached when the clearly defined target groups of various programmes or projects are surveyed.

The aim of Ireland Aid’s development education policy, as recently presented in its Strategy Plan for 2003 to 2005, is two-fold, seeking

- (a) to support the mainstreaming of development education within education in Ireland
- and
- (b) the promotion of greater public awareness and understanding of development issues.

When the period covered by the Strategy Plan comes to an end, in 2005, it will be relatively easy to see the extent to which the area has been mainstreamed in the official curricula of the NCCA or of other bodies, such as third –level Colleges and Universities, but more difficult to assess the extent to which a development education perspective has been incorporated in the teaching and learning experiences of our young people.

School and college populations are, by nature, transitory and so it is essential that the impact of development education programmes on succeeding cohorts of those leaving primary, secondary and third level be surveyed with regularity. In the absence of such ongoing research, there are, and there will continue to be, great gaps in our understanding of the knowledge, attitudes and skills which development education seek to impart. Similarly, lacking the research outlined, we fail to identify any patterns of change, which may take place over time or in response to occurrences at particular periods. Most significantly, we lack the tools, which will allow us to identify where the best returns are to be found, be they financial or otherwise.

Within the informal sector, such is the diversity of the target audience for development education that it would be easy to hide behind the claim that it is scarcely possible to assess impact. If outcomes are diffuse and dissipated, then, inevitably, questions will be asked about the benefit of ongoing investment. It seems clear that the public, which provides the funding for development education, will question value for money unless it is possible to show a beneficial outcome.

The research undertaken by MRBI shows some evidence of a young population (both the 15-24 age cohort and students) that perceives itself as not being well informed on development issues, but with a great openness to learning more about such issues and about the developing world. While two-thirds of students state that school and college programmes provide such information, there is a large segment to which such material is not provided and a corresponding demand for such a focus.

The fact that information gained on development issues at school had prompted more than a quarter of the total population (47% in the case of students) is significant in the context of the definition of development education currently used by Ireland Aid which specifies that development education is a process leading to greater participation and action for change. The definition states that:

For Ireland Aid, development education is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. It seeks to engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship and participation. It is about supporting people in understanding, and in acting to transform the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and the lives of others at personal, community, national and international levels. ¹

One of the surprising outcomes of the survey is the finding in relation to how little is known of Ireland Aid itself or of its activities. It would be somewhat surprising if Government, the Department of Foreign Affairs or Ireland Aid were not to seek a greater public knowledge and understanding of its ODA activity, its scale and its impact. This could lead to debate as to whether the funding required for such promotional work should be drawn from Public Relations funds or from the Development Education budget. While it is likely that more and better development education will lead to “greater public awareness and understanding of development issues”² and, coincidentally, of the disbursement of aid, it is clear that a propagandist approach is not accommodated within the current definition of development education.

Ireland Aid’s development education programme rests on the premise that “people in Ireland can contribute to global poverty reduction by challenging policies that perpetuate poverty, by making changes to unsustainable lifestyles and through supporting national and international efforts to reduce poverty and promote development”.³ This requires that people are informed on the issues as well as actively engaged with the process of change towards a more just and equal world. The survey findings suggest that the Irish population already has a strong positive image of the extent to which individuals can and should respond to the current global situation and take action to change it. This is a valuable base on which development educators can and must build.

¹ Ireland Aid, *Deepening Public Understanding of International Development: Development Education Strategy Plan 2003-2005* (Dublin: Development Education Unit/Ireland Aid, 2003), p. 12.

² Ireland Aid, *Deepening Public Understanding of International Development: Development Education Strategy Plan 2003-2005* (Dublin: Development Education Unit/Ireland Aid, 2003), p. 12.

³ Ireland Aid, *Deepening Public Understanding of International Development: Development Education Strategy Plan 2003-2005* (Dublin: Development Education Unit/Ireland Aid, 2003), p. 7. the present survey.

Official Aid and Development: Public Opinion in Ireland and Europe

By Ida Mc Donnell¹

Introduction

Irish public opinion exists in an environment which has changed significantly over the past decade. In the Member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), fears of negative impacts on security, welfare, culture, food security, social cohesion, jobs, etc., all grew rapidly through the 1990s into the new Millennium. Alongside these immediately “self-centred” concerns, though, issues of more global relevance, such as the protection of the environment, growing global inequality, human rights violations involving international criminals, etc., also gained prominence². By the end of the 20th Century the effects of *Globalisation* had penetrated the world of ordinary citizens and come to occupy centre stage in the public debate, both at national and global levels. One of the outcomes of a more globalised world is what Scholte (1999) defines as the “globalising civil society”:

Global civil society encompasses civic activity that: (a) addresses transworld issues; (b) involves transborder communication; (c) has a global organisation; (d) works on a premise of supraterritorial solidarity. Often these four attributes go hand in hand, but civic associations can also have a global character in only one or several of these four respects.

Indeed citizens’ opinions [and actions] may play an increasingly influential role when it comes to international political economy. They are demanding greater accountability from domestic policymakers on foreign policy issues and, to some extent, development co-operation³.

Parallel to the globalising civil society is the global political consensus on the importance of fighting poverty. This was incarnated by the adoption of the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) in 2000⁴. However, in order to reach the 2015 development targets official development assistance (ODA) must at

¹ The author is based at the OECD Development Centre and is one of the editors, with H-B Solignac Lecomte and L. Wegimont, of *Public Opinion and the Fight against Poverty* (2003), OECD Development Centre Study in collaboration with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, OECD, Paris. The project was generously financed by the Government of Ireland. This article draws from that publication.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed and arguments employed in this article are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the OECD, Development Centre or the governments of their member countries.

² An attempt to conceptualise those concerns lies with the UN concept of ‘Global public goods’, which stems from the idea that ‘we have entered a new era of public policy, defined by a growing number of concerns that straddle national borders’ (Kaul *et al.*, 1999; www.undp.org/globalpublicgoods/).

³ Examples span from the collapse of the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in Seattle in January 1999 because of mass public demonstrations, to the success of the Jubilee 2000 debt cancellation campaign, to the breakdown of the G8 Summit in Genoa in July 2001.

⁴ The Millennium Development Goals were adopted in the Millennium Declaration at the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2000. Their overriding objective is to halve the proportion of the world’s population living in poverty (www.un.org/millenniumgoals/). On progress towards the goals, see the Paris 21 website « A better world for all », at www.paris21.org/betterworld/, as well as the World Bank’s website at www.developmentgoals.org/.

least double from its current level of approximately \$52 billion (in 2001) from the Member countries of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)⁵. The International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey (March 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (September 2002) witnessed announcements from the donors to increase ODA to support their commitment to the MDGs.

To bring about the changes that world poverty alleviation entails, stronger democratic support by citizens is necessary. There is little reason to fear that invoking public support may slow or hinder the reform of international co-operation in pursuit of the MDGs: on the contrary, public support has remained consistently high for two decades, and comprises a precious constituency for change. However, people's understanding of poverty and development issues remains very shallow. Public awareness about ODA and development co-operation policies is low. Furthermore, the adoption of the MDGs so far largely remains an untapped opportunity to peg more vigorous efforts to inform and engage the public. Nevertheless, some policy makers are placing increasing emphasis, with greater financial backing, on the involvement of public opinion in development co-operation. For example, an international development Minister calling for a bolder political commitment to development and poverty alleviation, argued in 2002 that "People would support us if they knew what we do with the [ODA] resources"⁶.

Grasping public attitudes and opinion about official aid and development co-operation is immensely difficult. What does the "public" really think? How much does it actually know, and understand, about development, poverty or international co-operation? Does public opinion have an impact on the way development co-operation policies are devised and implemented?

Attitudes towards Development Co-operation (Ireland Aid/NCDE, 2002) provides new and broad data on Irish attitudes to poverty and development co-operation. The MDGs are not addressed in this survey, they should in future opinion research because Irish aid finances the MDGs while debate around them will grow⁷.

This short article will deliberate on the implications of the Ireland Aid/NCDE research findings from a European comparative perspective⁸. It does so from four specific angles: (i) public support for development co-operation in general; (ii) public attitudes to aid commitments; (iii) public satisfaction with levels of official aid; and (iv) public awareness about development problems. The article concludes with some policy conclusions for engaging a more informed public opinion in development co-operation.

⁵ DAC Member countries are responsible for approximately 90 per cent of global aid flows. Increased quality and effectiveness of aid, private investment, good governance, reduced sovereign debt of developing countries and policy coherence in donor countries with the development agenda are also crucial to the achievement of the MDGs.

⁶ Speech by Clare Short, British Secretary of State for International Development, at a conference organised by the Spanish EU Presidency on "Democracy and Development" (Valladolid, Spain, 7th March 2002).

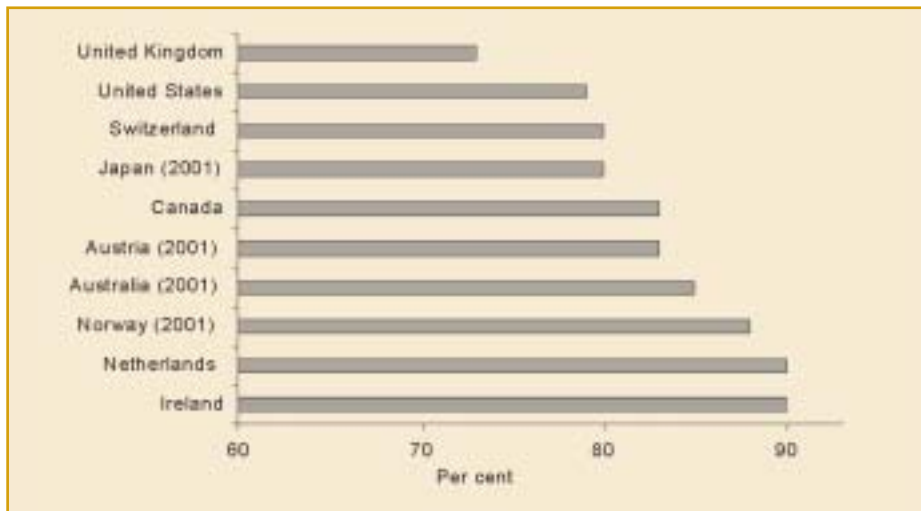
⁷ Paragraph 11.6 of the *Report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee* (2002) states that one approach to an effective communications strategy might be to highlight the significance of the Millennium Development Goals, largely unknown to the general public, along with the many examples of the programme's practical success in the field in addressing these.

⁸ The analysis will draw from various survey sources, conducted at different periods in time. The lack of harmonised data compromises comparison. The European Union's Eurobarometer (http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/) conducted an EU wide survey on European attitudes to development co-operation in autumn 2002. Unfortunately, the results were not available at the time of writing this article, reference is made to the most recent Eurobarometer (50.1) undertaken in 1998. When reference is made to Irish opinion it refers to the results of the 2002 Ireland Aid/NCDE survey, unless otherwise stated

Public support for Helping Poor Countries: High

Ninety per cent of Irish people are very much for (51%) and on the whole for (39%) helping countries of the developing world. Along with the Dutch, the Irish are the greatest supporters of helping developing countries (Figure 1). They also bypass the 'average' level of public support for the principle of helping developing countries, which has hovered around 80 per cent among EU Members over the past two decades.

Figure 1 | Public Support for the Principle of Helping Poor Countries in a sample of OECD Member Countries 2001-2002



Source: Ireland Aid/NCDE (2003), *Attitudes Towards Development Co-operation* and Mc Donnell et al (2003), *Public Opinion and the Fight against Poverty*, Development Centre Study in collaboration with the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, OECD, Paris.

Notes: Data on all European countries is not available because a survey may not have been conducted for the relevant years or this broad question was not asked in the survey.

Within the small segment of Irish respondents (2%) who were against helping developing countries, over half put forward the argument that Ireland has poverty problems/should help its own poor. This finding is consistent with Eurobarometer 50.1 (1998) where the main argument of the minority who did not support assisting poor countries was “we should solve our own problems of poverty, unemployment and economy”, followed by suspicion that aid does not lead to poverty reduction, or go to the neediest, and instead benefits corrupt governments.

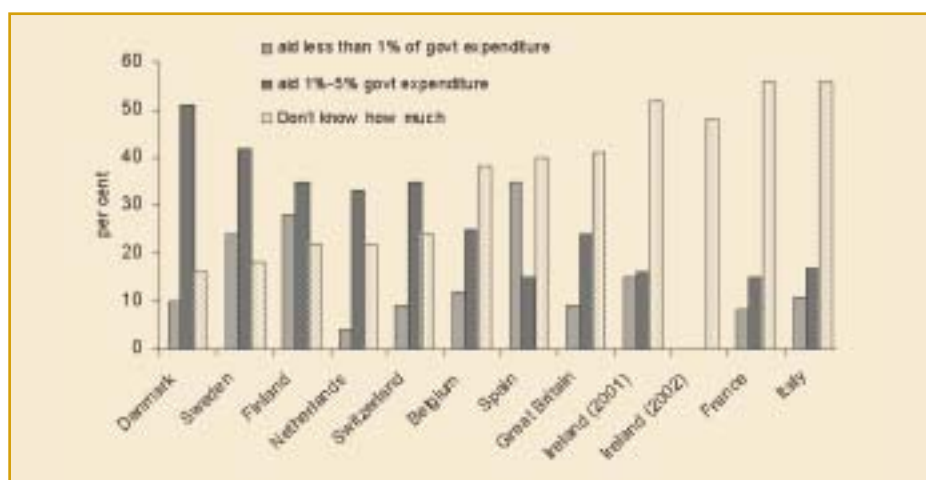
This question is about ‘principles’, that is, people are asked if they are in favour of doing something ‘good’. They are unlikely to say they are against the idea of helping poor countries because the respondent is liable to demonstrate courtesy bias. As a result this high stated support for helping developing countries does not tell much about the nature of public support for development co-operation or how strongly people feel about it. For this reason more probing questions challenging knowledge and opinion are necessary to come to a conclusion about what the public thinks.

When it comes to asking taxpayers how much they are willing to pay to help developing countries, such high general support may change. Comparing levels of public satisfaction with aid disbursements/commitments (ODA) to the country’s generosity in absolute terms is more instructive about public support for development co-operation.

Public attitudes to aid commitments

The Irish demonstrate a similar level of limited knowledge about aid levels as fellow Europeans (except for the Nordic countries⁹). Figure 2 shows that in most European countries covered more people have no idea how much ODA the government spends¹⁰. There is a tendency in most European countries (Italy, France, Great Britain and Belgium in this sample) to select the expenditure bracket for aid of one per cent to five per cent rather than less than one per cent, which demonstrates that people tend to overestimate government expenditure on aid. The Americans overestimate the aid level to a much greater extent (up to 18 times the actual level)¹¹. Irish people on the other hand tend to underestimate the amount of financial assistance provided by the government: 27 per cent thought that it spent between €1 and €50 million in 2001 and only five per cent estimated the correct expenditure parameter of €101 and €500 million.

Figure 2 | Public Awareness about their Government's Aid Expenditure in a Sample of European Countries in 2001



Source: Ireland Aid/NCDE (2003), *Attitudes Towards Development Co-operation* and UNFPA & MORI (2001), *Population Issues in the Developing World -1996 and 2001*, Public Opinion Research, MORI, United Kingdom.

Note: The parameters of less than one per cent and one to five per cent do not apply to Ireland (2002) where non-comparable parameters were used and therefore for comparative reasons it is better to leave a void.

Public satisfaction with levels of official aid

The publics' approval rating of ODA levels - whether people think it should increase, decrease or stay the same, varies from country-to-country. A comparison of the ratings with the actual level of ODA across European countries allows us to develop a rough typology of countries in terms of approval of the aid level and a countries' ODA as a percentage of GNI. It is important that the respondents to a questionnaire are aware (therefore informed in the questionnaire) about the amount of aid before they are asked to comment on it. Furthermore, the choice of terminology used to inform the respondent should be kept in mind: should the aid be broken down to Euro per capita per annum, the net amount in millions of Euro, the amount as a percentage of the governments' total expenditure or the amount as compared to expenditure in other public sectors? Depending on how the aid level is articulated there may be very different approval ratings for aid levels.

⁹ One of the main explanations as to why less people say they don't know how much the government spends on aid in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands and why people tend to select the correct expenditure bracket is that historically public communication about official aid has been a central part of the aid programme. This implies that communication has been effective in creating greater awareness about the aid effort.

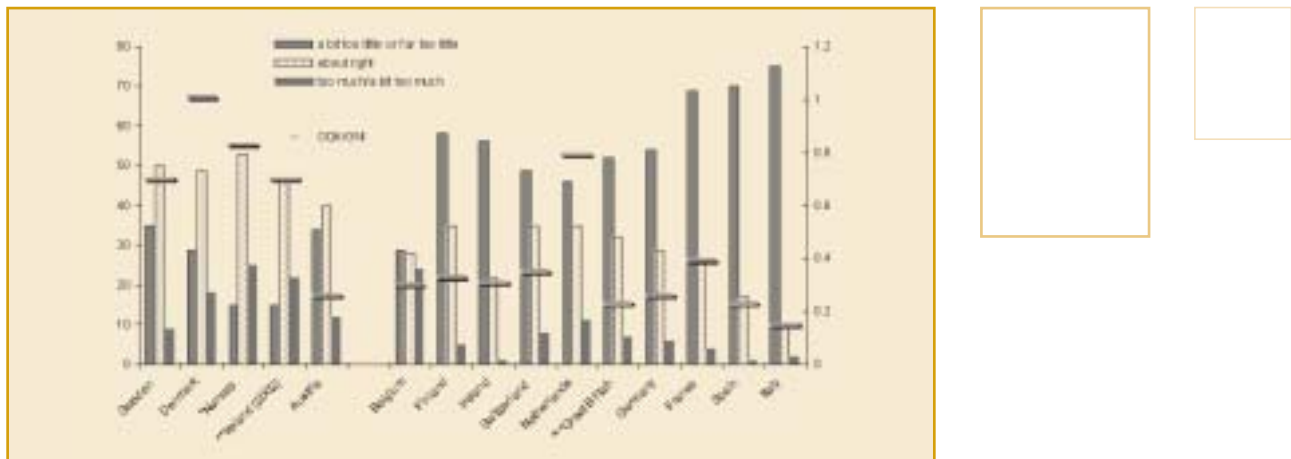
¹⁰ The amount of "Don't Knows" in Ireland in 2002 is consistent with 2001.

¹¹ Kull found that "Americans grossly overestimate how much development aid the United States provides to poor countries in comparison to that provided by countries of the EU" (PIPA, 1998).

In Figure 3, respondents were told how much the government spent in 1999 as a percentage of the governments' expenditure. Ireland has two entries: *Ireland* - from the Europe-wide survey (UNFPA/MORI 2001), and *Ireland (2002)* – form the Ireland Aid/NCDE survey. Irish approval of the aid level changed significantly between the surveys. Irish people were not satisfied with the level of Ireland's official aid in 1999 (0.3% ODA/GNI). Over half of respondents (56 per cent) thought that it was “not enough”, two per cent “about right” and only one per cent thought that it was “too much”. However, there was a much higher approval rating for the proposed aid level of €900 million by 2007 (47% thought it was about right)¹².

Indeed, European public opinion about the volume of ODA suggests that a majority of the population think it is too little and would support an increase in aid (Figure 3). Negative responses about the level of ODA (“too much” and “a bit too much”) are nevertheless significant in some countries (up to one-quarter of respondents in Norway and Belgium).

Figure 3 | Public Attitudes to Level of Government Expenditure on Foreign Aid in 1999 and ODA/GNI in Selected OECD DAC Countries (per cent)



Source: Ireland Aid/NCDE (2003), *Attitudes Towards Development Co-operation*; UNFPA & MORI (2001), *Population Issues in the Developing World -1996 and 2001*, Public Opinion Research, MORI, United Kingdom and PECD Development Co-operation Reports, various years.

Notes: *data from 2001

**The parameters of less than one per cent and one to five per cent do not apply to Ireland (2002) where non-comparable parameters were used and therefore for comparative reasons it is better to leave a void.

***Northern Ireland was not included in the UNFPA/MORI Poll

The grey floating bar denotes ODA as a percentage of GNI.

In countries grouped on the left side of Figure 3—Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Ireland (2002)—respondents who think that the aid volume is **about right** outnumber those who think that it is **too low**, and vice versa for the countries on the right hand side. At the extremes, between 70 and 80 per cent of respondents in Italy, Spain and France think that foreign aid is too low; while in Denmark, Norway, Ireland (2002) and Sweden approximately 50 per cent think that their foreign aid level is about right. A rough typology of attitudes to aid levels can be developed from the clear trends in Figure 3.

- i. In the countries where more respondents think that the volume is ‘about right’ **Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Ireland (2002)**, ODA has reached or surpassed the United Nation’s target for ODA: 0.7 per cent of GNI. They are the only donor countries, except for Netherlands (see below) and Luxembourg (not included in the sample) that have reached or hope to reach (Ireland) the UN target. This high rate of approval could mean populations in these countries are content with having reached and surpassed the UN target and are hence less likely to think that the volume should increase (see similar conclusions in Noël and Thérien, 2002). Moreover, public opinion tends to be better informed about the national aid effort in most of these countries (except for Ireland, although there is significant awareness about the non-governmental/charity sector).

¹² The two questions were phrased differently.

This trend could imply that a 0.7 per cent or greater ODA/GNI ratio (at least up to one per cent) could be a 'natural' ODA level for the public. Still, up to one-quarter think this level is too low.

- ii. Where ODA is below the average of 0.24 per cent for OECD donors, or has declined substantially in recent years, more respondents think that total aid volume is 'too low'. Both **Spain** and **Italy's** ODA/GNI were below this average and **France's** was half its 1994 level. This relatively high dissatisfaction could mean that the level of aid has not reached the 'natural' level for OECD populations. A poll conducted in 2002 revealed that 92 per cent of Italians were willing to pay one per cent more in taxes to help the world's poor, as were 75 per cent of Spaniards and 55 per cent of French¹³.
- iii. More respondents think the aid volume is 'too low' in the context of relatively high levels of ODA in **Finland, Switzerland, Great Britain, Germany** and **Ireland** (when the aid level was 0.3% of GNI). There, the ODA volume is equal to the OECD average or greater. In addition public opinion in Finland, Switzerland and Great Britain is somewhat better informed about the national aid effort than in Southern European countries. They are thus closer to the countries on the left side of the figure. It might be said, however, that the aid volume has not reached the 'natural' point for public satisfaction and therefore a majority would like it to increase.
- iv. Finally, three countries do not fit into any of the previous types: the **Netherlands, Austria** and **Belgium**. In the Netherlands, public support for development co-operation has always been very strong, galvanised by development education. A reason why the Dutch want a higher level of ODA in spite of it being already high may be that ODA/GNI declined from 0.92 per cent in 1990 to 0.79 per cent in 1999¹⁴. As for Austria and Belgium, a number of interesting traits surface from responses to other questions in the UNFPA/MORI poll. For instance, both are above the 13 country average for being "non-activists"; below the average regarding their choice of the most important issues in developing countries (e.g. poverty and Third World debt); and show below average awareness about the UN.

These results tend to concur with earlier findings of Noël and Thérien (1995; 2002), Lumsdaine (1993) and Risse-Kappen (1991): the closer the country is to the UN 0.7 per cent target, the more respondents will be satisfied with the volume of ODA. By contrast, in countries with lower ODA/GNI ratios, in general, a majority thinks it is too low. The UN target may thus appear as a sort of "natural point of equilibrium" between ODA spending and public satisfaction.

Public awareness about development Problems

In Ireland as well as most European countries, the overwhelming support for foreign aid is based upon the perception that it will be spent on remedying humanitarian crises. The UNFPA/MORI (2001) survey of 13 European countries indicates a bias towards humanitarian concerns against all other dimensions—with the exception of the environment—such as international trade, governance or democracy issues.

The Ireland Aid/NCDE survey finds a slightly weaker emphasis on humanitarian crises and demonstrates an awareness of lacking social services for the poor such as health care and education. The top three reasons why developing countries are poor to the Irish are: *disease/lack of healthcare* (72% it is very important), *war/conflicts* (68%), *lack of education/training* (67%). Considerable awareness of *corruption* (64%) and *HIV/AIDS* (61%) is demonstrated. Fewer people, however, think that *debt repayments* is a problem for developing countries (48 per cent)¹⁵. The *low status of women* is given particularly low consideration (39%). Indeed, only 17 per cent of Irish thought that *Women's rights/inequality between men and women* was the most important issue in developing countries in a Europe-wide survey where the average level of concern in

¹³ Environics International (2002).

¹⁴ Environics International (*ibid.*). Seventy eight per cent of taxpayers 'strongly agreed' and 'somewhat agreed' that they would be willing to pay 1 per cent more in taxes to help the world's poor in 2001.

¹⁵ There may be a perception that the Jubilee 2000 and Cancel the Debt Campaigns carried out by Irish and International non-governmental organisations a couple of years ago have been successful in cancelling this debt and therefore debt repayments are no longer a problem in developing countries.

Europe was 30 per cent (UNFPA/MORI 2001). Why do Irish people place such particularly low emphasis on this issue? Given that gender inequality and the low status of women in developing countries is such an important development issue an awareness campaign on this topic might be worth considering.

European citizens tend to place much less focus on the issues that form the agendas of donors, such as access of poor countries to markets, reform of agricultural policies, education, capacity building, gender equality, environmental sustainability and infrastructure, even when given the choice in questionnaires. Indeed 44 per cent of Irish people selected the problem of *better-off countries take advantage* as a very important factor in the poverty of developing countries. This phrase, however, is not specific enough to tell what respondents were thinking about when they chose it. They were not asked about agricultural subsidies or unfair global trading rules for example. Evidence in the United Kingdom, Switzerland and the Netherlands shows an increase in the number of respondents pointing to international trade, debt relief and good governance in recipient countries as solutions for poverty reduction¹⁶.

More generally, across European countries, awareness about issues such as debt relief, fair trade and the taxation of international financial flows (the Tobin Tax debate) seem to improve, emulated by global education, by NGO campaigns, public debate among opinion leaders and media coverage. Why are NGOs far bigger actors in these debates than governments? Government generally play a reactionary role in these debates. However, this might be an area that governments will want to build public awareness as efforts to improve policy coherence for development strengthen in OECD Member countries towards achieving Goal Eight of the MDGs: To Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

The Challenge of Engaging Public Opinion in Development Co-operation

That citizens in Europe, albeit supportive of international development co-operation, are so unaware of the challenges of development and poverty in the world, and so disconnected from the formulation and implementation of related policies is a problem. Firstly, in democratic countries, awareness and understanding by citizens of public policies—and of the issues they are aimed at addressing—is a desirable objective *per se*. Secondly, it is hard to understand why the “development community”—Ministers of co-operation, bilateral aid agencies, NGOs, etc.—could remain seated on top of such a pool of solidarity and generosity when it could provide a precious impetus in favour of more vigorous, coherent and more efficient development co-operation policies.

The recent OECD Development Centre Study suggests three sets of recommendations to reinforce public support: (i) to increase public awareness about development and poverty; (ii) to improve the transparency of development co-operation policies: and (iii) improve the efficiency of development co-operation¹⁷. This first concerns us here.

Increase public awareness about development and poverty

European Citizens do not own and influence policy making in this area because, with a few exceptions, public awareness and understanding about *global development and poverty issues* remains very weak. There is no influence without action, and no effective action without sufficient prior awareness¹⁸. In countries where public opinion demonstrates greater knowledge of the national aid effort and somewhat better awareness of development issues more than double the resources are devoted to information and development education than governments elsewhere in Europe, including Ireland. UNDP had suggested years ago that two per cent of ODA should be allocated to development outreach, yet today it remains a mere fraction of this.

¹⁶ In a 1999 Swiss poll about how to solve the problems of developing countries, 64 per cent mentioned reforming international economic structures and 69 per cent suggested importing agricultural products from these countries. In the United Kingdom, increasing trade and investment was chosen as a way to help by 59 per cent of respondents, after providing financial support (71 per cent) and reducing war and conflict (68 per cent). Interestingly, 60 per cent or more of respondents in opinion polls on trade and protectionism—rather than polls on trade and development co-operation—express negative views on the role of international trade (Mayda and Rodrik, 2002).

¹⁷ Mc Donnell et al 2003.

¹⁸ See Yankelovich (1991) and Klingemann and Römmele (2002).

The educational content of awareness raising activities must be informed by what the public knows, and by gaps in that public knowledge. Heads of Information in development co-operation department should therefore genuinely undertake to listen and monitor carefully the characteristics of public opinion and attitudes, their diversity and their evolution over time. Surveys, including this recent Irish one, show that people want to see results and they want aid to get to the people who need it. This is encouraging for the promotion of a *human rights-based approach to development*, as articulated by the United Nations and for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals¹⁹.

Irish people are broad supporters of poverty reduction, shown not least through voluntary contributions to the NGO sector. Unlike many Europeans development issues such as education, social services and capacity building figure higher in their priorities for developing countries than purely humanitarian issues. However, the Irish experience demonstrates the many shortcomings of Irish public opinion when it comes to the Irish development co-operation effort. There are advantages to be gained from better communication of international development challenges and the policy responses needed to meet them.

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¹⁹ See ODI (1999), and the UN website www.unhcr.ch/development/approaches.html. See also the European Strategy Framework for Increasing and Improving Global Education to the Year 2015, proposed for adoption at the Maastricht Europe-wide Global Education Congress 2002 (www.globaleducationeurope.net/).

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The NGO Perspective

Cary Gibson and Howard Dalzell¹

On its own, what does the survey tell Ireland Aid? Answers to the very first question in the survey give the best, though most complex, information. The first question gives no prompts, and follows no stream of thought; an interviewer simply asks the respondent, “When I say to you “developing countries” what words or images come to mind?” The analysis of these responses tells Ireland Aid that the Irish public tends to associate the phrase “developing country” with a narrow group of countries that suffer severe or extreme problems.

The three most common answers were “Africa/African countries”, “poverty/poor countries”, and “famine/hunger”. A survey of this nature can only scratch the surface of attitudes, so we are left with the question “but what is the image of Africa?” Would the direction to interviewers to “probe fully” have ended in transfers to “poverty/poor countries” and “famine/poverty.” We suspect this is likely.

Two interpretations can be given to the public’s narrow focus. One is that the public have only limited knowledge of developing countries, and have little or no appreciation of the economic and social progress of developing countries like Brazil or Malaysia. A second interpretation is that the public use the words “developing country” to describe what development professionals would call the “Least Developed Countries” – a category used by the UN and other organisations. One outcome, in the promotion of effective education, might be to inform the public of the need to come in line with “professional theory” and gain a more comprehensive and accurate picture of development with its regional differences. The other approach might be to respect the public “imagery”, supply them with a term to describe it, and then give them another term for countries that, in fact, cannot be simply characterised as being either rich or poor.

In many ways, the answers to the first question tell us the obvious: *the Irish public has learned what it has consistently been told*. For thirty years the public has been told, through marketing by NGOs, that a succession of individual countries need our help. The public has put a collective name on these countries, and since “developing countries” was prompted, most of those interviewed went with the flow – though the fact that 21% answered “Third World” as the word or image association indicates the need to un-package “Third World” at the same time as we un-package “Africa”. The real test would have been to find whether the public had another classification that showed that their “handle on the world” had more subtlety. Does the public perceive that there are “rich countries” and “developing countries” with nothing in between? How would the public categorise China or Saudi Arabia? When we use an unsubtle marketing tool, we should expect an unsubtle response. Without qualitative research, it is difficult to see how Ireland Aid can learn anything definite from the answers to this question. This is an area where further and more detailed research would be helpful.

The Survey goes on to explain the “right answer” to the image puzzle, and in doing so determines the course for the rest of the survey:

“The following questions are about developing countries or what some people might call the Third World. In particular we will be talking about countries in Africa, as well as part of Asia and Central/Latin America, which are poorer than Ireland and other industrialised countries.”

¹ The authors wish to thank Hugh Byrne and Michael Doorly for their considerable input to this commentary.

Is it surprising then that respondents answered, “Third World and Africa”? The survey itself encourages a particular, but not particularly helpful image of developing countries. The continued encouragement to use the term “Third World” alone will be of concern to aid agencies and development educators.

While conjuring with an image of that questionable geographical amalgam in their heads, the public go on to answer another question from their interviewer:

“Can you name any ways in which Ireland helps developing countries. By Ireland I mean Ireland in the broadest sense – the Irish people and the Irish Government.”

It is difficult to draw any clear conclusion from the responses, although there is a broad focus on financial assistance. In hindsight, the survey probably expected a good deal of specialised knowledge on behalf of the public. It prompts the question, what can be done to broaden public perceptions of development assistance beyond the financial?

A series of other questions leads to virtuous replies, with one percent having the courage to say they are against aid, with 8% being neutral.

In another question, 8% claimed to know a lot about developing countries, with people over 65 being the most confident of their knowledge; and 8% admitted they didn’t “know anything” with this rising to 14% in the 15 to 24 age group. On what are these self-perceptions based? Young people are either more honest, really do know less, or, it may be that this age group know *more* than their elders, but realise through increasing learning of global issues how much more they *don’t* know about the wider world. Further qualitative techniques, including triangulation, would clarify the accuracy of these results.

The survey also addresses the ways by which the public perceives itself as “finding out” about what is happening in their narrowly defined “developing country category”. The Irish media can congratulate themselves on this result. Over 80% of the public of Ireland find the media to be reliable as sources of information. The survey not only confirmed a trusting approach to the quality of media information, the public also confirmed TV news to be the predominant way that they find out about what is happening in developing countries.

Television was further elevated to being the public’s preferred source of any additional information it might seek in the future. The survey found also that 3% got their information from foreign travel; a further 1% got their information from nationals of developing countries; and 1% had read a book on the subject. In other words, only 5% had some prospect of testing the veracity of the information that the media gave to them. The source of confidence and trust in the media was not identified by the survey. The public’s responses lead us to the conclusion that Irish people generally believe what they are told by the media, or, perhaps more rationally, that they have experience of the media’s honesty with regard to “home affairs” and presume that the same level of trust can be reposed in their coverage of “foreign affairs”.

By comparison with the media, missionaries were considered reliable by 71 % of those questioned, and “Third World Charities” by 76%. “Third world charities” are also the public’s fourth most frequented source of information, after three forms of media. The charities are rated by the public to be *almost* as reliable as the media. Charities gain 32% support for being not only “fairly reliable” but “very reliable”, putting them ahead of the media who only gain 21% in this challenging category. We know that charities, more than the media, have a distinct interest in “spinning”, however well intentioned, the information they provide - in “selling” their work to the public in order to raise more income – but the Irish public still find them to be reliable. Also, unlike the media, the overseas charities have no local “track record” – they exclusively work overseas where the public has no direct knowledge of their work. So there are no grounds for an extrapolation of trust from Ireland to Africa. The basis of trust, perhaps, lies in a perception of the media’s ability to make NGOs accountable.

The public seems to find no problem with the charities being judge and jury in their own case. They see nothing odd or naive about indicating that they cannot judge the reliability of information because they have no means for doing so. Or to be more precise in the judicial metaphor, they see no difficulty with

reaching a conclusion having only heard one side of the case. It is surprising that the Irish public seem to believe information without regard for the benefit to the teller. It is also dangerous. There is a need to ensure the public receives development education carried out by a range of actors, including those without vested interest.

The problem of asking people questions through survey is that they sometimes tell social surveyors what they think are approved answers. This is sometimes revealed by responses that, under some analysis, are contradictory. For example, if the public trusts the information given by aid agencies, why is it that only 22% have *no concerns* about the way aid is spent. Since they perceive aid as being closely associated with NGOs this reflects more on NGOs than government aid. Three quarters have concerns about the way their money is spent – and yet they say they trust NGO information. The survey also shows that 41% think that aid is not distributed properly or is not getting through at all. And 11% own up to being concerned about “*a lot*” of financial expenditure on administration. This arguably adds up to more than half the population saying they have doubts about the charities – a doubt that that is not reflected in any assessment of their credibility as information providers. (The age breakdown of those who have high confidence in NGOs would be interesting).

Perhaps the charities have something to learn from the lower credibility of missionaries in comparison with the media or charities. It is difficult to imagine that twenty years ago, missionaries would not have “headed the poll”. Even before analysis of the age breakdown, some anomalies are evident in the reliability placed on the information of missionaries. Missions score better in the “very reliable” category than do the media or charities: they also attract an exceptionally high score for “don’t know”. And the message may be that “don’t know” is usually bad news. It seems that events not directly connected with Irish missionaries, namely a decline in the image of the largest church in Ireland, has been translated to the international stage, making people realise that the real answer to a question on the reliability of information is “don’t know”.

The success of a development education programme could perhaps be measured by the degree to which “don’t knows” increase over the years. Is development education ultimately about giving people an instrument to unpackage all “approved knowledge”?

What is the public saying to the agencies who communicate with them about the developing world? The public is split: 54% want more information and 34% want no more, with the rest being undecided. The people who want more information are telling development educators that they want to see more information on television. And it wants that information to be about the progress or improvements being made, and to see where money is going. Those who seek “more information” plumped for television (55%) in contrast with the 6% who wanted it from “Third World Charities”, and the similarly low percentages who chose church groups, (5%), schools (4%) magazines (3%), the internet (2%). And only 2% of people want Ireland Aid to tell them more about what they do with their taxes. People seem to have chosen television, perceived as an unchallenging medium. The public demand for difficult or complex information is arguably extremely low. Given the complex causes of poverty in the developing world, this raises something of a dilemma for anyone wishing to improve public knowledge of developing countries. It would be good if Ireland Aid could set a set of SMART objectives on what it would see as a successful outcome for Development Education over the next five years. It would then be possible to develop a course of action and funding to achieve them.

Advocates of delivering more, or different, information to the public are faced with a choice. We can choose either to try to influence TV news, and other popular TV programming, or we can “put a foot in the door” and persuade people that they have a problem they don’t know they have. Both policies are difficult to implement. To a fault, NGOs already encourage TV news towards newsworthy wars and disasters. And, presumably as a result, the 1985 public perception of the primary cause of world poverty - lack of education – is by 2003 relegated to fifth place. And “natural disasters” have moved to the top in 2003, from its third-ranked choice of explanation in 1985. The drift of public attitudes is opposite to the direction in which development educators have pushed them in the intervening eighteen years.

The drift in public explanation is a replacement of one narrow view by an even narrower view, and it suggests the supremacy of the marketing function over the public education function. We should not be surprised: the amounts of money, and skilled resources, devoted to marketing communications by charities now dwarfs the resources spent on communications about the complexities of development. Small-scale, voluntary, development education has failed to sell its message to a large percentage of the population, and has added little or nothing to our “humanitarian” impulse. This is perhaps not surprisingly given the limited resources development education receives by comparison to large-scale NGDO marketing budgets. An increased budget for development education would likely increase the scale and consequent impact on the public of such initiatives. There is also a challenge for development education to improve its ability to equip the public with the tools to see through the presentation of the world interpreted by others. NGDOs clearly have a responsibility to be more responsible, particularly in the overwhelming amount of negative imagery they produce, and to respond to the public desire for stories of *impact* made by aid.

Other historical comparisons reveal the “under-education of education”. In 1985 the public took little blame for world poverty by making it their *sixth*-ranked choice as an explanation of world poverty. In 2003, it is not until the *ninth* and *tenth* rank of “seriousness”, or importance, that one gets to an explanation of poverty that agrees to allocate some blame to us in better-off countries – debt repayments, followed by the category in which we definitely accept that we Irish people might be “taking advantage”. All other explanations lie in cruel nature and in things that can loosely be described as being “their own fault”. Even the economists in the IFIs wouldn’t be so self-forgiving!

The replies to the survey tell us that the Irish public is somewhat more to the “right of centre” about the causes of poverty than it was in 1985. The question now is whether the state, through Ireland Aid, has a mandate to use taxpayers’ money to introduce an alternative ideology through development education. Or perhaps the survey suggests that the state has to accept that the explanation of poverty and development that people apply to other countries is the same explanation that they apply to poverty and development at home. It might also be argued that Ireland is already committed to reaching the UN target for aid, and no further education about the public’s world responsibility is required.

Fashions in explanations have come and gone over the years, and students of development have different opinions. When the public answered the question about the image they had of a “developing country”, and when they choose the image of “famine/hunger”, they might reasonably expect to be talking of countries like Ethiopia, and perhaps not of countries such as Brazil. And their explanations for the condition of countries who have experienced large scale famine, might fit with natural disasters and war. Many senior NGDO staff, past and present, would go further down the list to agree, in the case of such countries, with the public’s choices of “corruption” and “own government not doing enough” as being fundamental parts of the problem.

In other words, maybe the “regressive drift” described earlier is not as un-educated as it might appear. Perhaps all that the NGOs and the media have produced is confusion about country classifications, and perhaps the public would not describe Brazil or Malaysia as developing countries. The three most distinct images that the public have of developing countries are perhaps, in fact, quite useful, and an Irish visitor to Rio or Kuala Lumpur would quickly realise that they were not in Africa, that the country wasn’t poor, didn’t have famine, or was not in the “Third World”. In other words, the Irish public constructs a category of “developing country” that is very different from the one constructed by most development specialists. And the public’s construct may arguably be sensible for a small group of countries that need aid. What then is the function of “development education”? Is it some kind of *moral* education?

The challenge for “development education” may, or may not, now be to explain that there is a category of countries in between the one Ireland is in, and the category they identified as “developing countries” in the survey. In that middle category there are a lot of countries which are not in need of our teachers, our food, our volunteers, our medical supplies they are not in need of our *charity*. These countries, however, have substantial debts, and exports against which we have trade barriers. These are countries that produce goods cheaper than we do, and in which rich Irish people may invest. The Irish public need to

know the role of, and need for, aid, *and* the role of, and need for, trade coherence? Development education needs then to guide the public through the differences between the various forms of development assistance, which will not always produce a “win-win” result.

In as far as a survey of this nature can enlighten a moral question, it asked if people felt they had a *responsibility* to help people living in developing countries. One can safely assume that respondents answered based on a perception that we are talking about African countries facing extreme problems of poverty, food insecurity, and disease. A full 26% thought that they had “considerable responsibility” to help, and only 8% felt no responsibility. Oddly, the public accepted similar levels of responsibility for helping “poor people” in Ireland. So it might seem that local charity and world charity have equal claim on Ireland’s sense of justice. Yet, when streamed into a line of questions around assistance, people reply in terms of assistance; they do not tend to jump to thoughts of justice. Did the 8% of people who felt no responsibility for helping the poor in Ireland also think that the welfare system ought to be abandoned? Did those who “took responsibility”, see it as a responsibility discharged with a donation to a charity, or with a major change in their personal consumption patterns by devoting the same percentage to ODA as they do to social welfare?

Questions were asked about the public recognition of the aid work done by the Irish Government. More people knew that aid is given by NGOs overseas than by Ireland Aid programmes, and the Ireland Aid brand had a low recognition rating. The survey may perhaps indicate marketing images have had more influence on public than development education. This is a tension which Ireland aid needs to address. There is a difference between promotion of, and ownership of, Ireland Aid funds, and delivering development education.

Rather than being downcast about the lack of brand awareness, however, perhaps DFA/Ireland Aid should reflect that marketing isn’t everything. Marketing will not add to the quality of the work that you do with the taxpayers’ money. The Government of Ireland does not need to engage with NGOs in the marketing version of an unseemly “scramble for Africa”. From here on, perhaps we should measure the quality of one’s development work by the decline, and not the increase, in the public recognition of one’s name.



Canadians' Attitudes towards Development Cooperation

Canadian International Development Agency

For more than three decades, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has been active in international cooperation, administering most of the Government of Canada's development cooperation program. Through the years, Canadians have consistently supported development cooperation. CIDA views the Canadian public's support as essential to the continued success of Canada's aid program.

For this reason, CIDA consults Canadians on a regular basis to ensure that its programs and policies reflect the values, priorities, and development expertise of Canadians. Canada's new policy on strengthening aid effectiveness, released in September 2002, is the result of extensive consultations. The Minister for International Cooperation met with individuals and organizations across the country to hear their views on aid effectiveness, and an interactive website was established to allow Canadians and people overseas to send in submissions and post comments on-line. Consultations in the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003 also led to the development of new policies on agriculture and private sector development.

The Agency also conducts focus groups and public opinion surveys to measure, track, and better understand Canadians' opinions and attitudes on a broad range of development issues. The results of these surveys are helpful in developing communications and public engagement programs and, more specifically, identifying target audiences, and media and information requirements.

Public Opinion Research Practices at CIDA

CIDA's quantitative public opinion research is carried out via telephone surveys of representative samples of the Canadian public. Stand-alone surveys—the last one done in 2000—are used for in-depth exploration of Canadians' opinions and attitudes. For the most part, however, the Agency relies on the insertion of questions in syndicated surveys. This has proven to be a cost-effective way of tracking, on an annual basis, the evolution of Canadians' views over time. Since syndicated surveys address numerous issues, ranging from satisfaction with governments and economic confidence to educational, cultural, health, and environmental issues, they provide analytical depth. Based on CIDA's experience, Canadians' views on development cooperation are best understood when examined in the context of public opinion on a range of domestic and international issues.

The Agency also conducts qualitative research using focus groups to refine its understanding of public opinion. While surveys provide information on *what* Canadians think about development cooperation at a particular point in time and over time, focus groups shed light on *why* they hold those views, which provides valuable information from a communications point of view.

Canadian Public Opinion on Development Cooperation

Polling information going back twenty years shows that Canadians support development cooperation. While media coverage of global and development events and views on domestic issues have caused fluctuations in support levels, in the main, support has been relatively high, fuelled by a strong humanitarian impulse not easily eroded by concerns about aid effectiveness.

The most recent public opinion poll conducted by Environics Research in March 2002 showed that:

- 83 percent of Canadians support development cooperation.
- According to Canadians, the main reasons to have an aid program are helping people in need (39%), maintaining Canada's reputation as a helpful country (26%), Canada's moral obligation and responsibility to help (20%), and creating future trading partners (20%).
- Half of Canadians say that Canada spends the right amount of money to assist poor countries, 24% feel that Canada does not spend enough money, while 21% are of the opinion that Canada spends too much. Canadians overestimate the amount of federal spending on aid: when told that only one cent to two cents of every dollar of federal government spending goes to foreign aid, support for more spending increases significantly—from 24% to 44%.
- A majority of Canadians (57%) would support paying 1% more in taxes if they were sure that all the money would be spent on improving the lives of the world's poor.
- Support for development cooperation spending is tempered by concerns about aid effectiveness. These concerns revolve around a lack of information on whether the aid program is making a real difference in people's lives, as well as a belief that corruption and waste are rampant in developing countries and in aid bureaucracies:
 - More than 8 in 10 Canadians believe that much of the aid given to poor countries never reaches those who need it most (48% strongly agree; 38% agree somewhat).
 - 9 in 10 Canadians believe that corruption in developing countries is the main factor in aid not getting to the people who need it most (59% strongly agree; 31% agree somewhat).
- A majority of Canadians (57%) hold the opinion that addressing basic human needs (food, education, and health) should be the primary focus of the aid program, while 2 in 10 Canadians feel that it should be for helping developing countries govern themselves more effectively.
- More than 6 in 10 Canadians (64%) have donated money (48%), time (5%), or both money and time (11%) during the past year to help people in developing countries, whether it was to a Canadian organization or to an international organization such as the Red Cross or UNICEF.

Even with Canadians' attachment to development cooperation, as reflected in surveys and private donations to development non-governmental organizations, public opinion points to challenges. As in many other countries, perceptions of economic well-being and support for development cooperation spending are correlated: when Canadians become concerned about the Canadian economy, they become less supportive of aid spending. And while Canadians give the government a positive performance rating on the development cooperation file, they assign it the lowest priority among domestic and foreign policy issues. While this may appear paradoxical, public opinion itself points to a number of explanations:

- Canadians on average think that the government spends at least five times as much as it actually spends on development cooperation. In addition, while 8 in 10 Canadians reject the idea that "*aid to developing countries is not necessary*" and agree that "*aid to developing countries is a duty of the industrialized countries*," there is overwhelming agreement among Canadians (86%) that "*much of the aid given to poor countries never gets to the people who need it most.*" Given the concerns about aid effectiveness and the lack of knowledge pertaining to aid expenditures, it is not entirely surprising that Canadians become less supportive of aid spending in times of economic crisis or when asked to prioritize government spending.
- Albeit supportive of development cooperation, public awareness and understanding of development and poverty issues remains limited. Aid is seen by Canadians as helping people in other countries and a moral obligation of industrialized countries, not as a means to address global issues that affect us all. It is CIDA's belief that support would be on a more solid foundation if Canadians, in addition to their strong humanitarian desire to help others, understood more fully that their long-term security and well-being is very much dependent on the security and well-being of people in developing countries.

CIDA's Communications Response to Canadian Public Opinion

Building public support for an aid program whose principal and immediate beneficiaries are people who live elsewhere is a challenge that confronts all development cooperation agencies. CIDA's communications activities address the knowledge deficit pertaining to Canada's development cooperation program by providing information that responds to Canadians' concerns with the aid program, particularly with respect to expenditure levels and progress made in developing countries as a result of Canada's efforts.

How CIDA goes about addressing the knowledge gaps in public opinion has evolved considerably in recent years:

- **Focus on results** – As much as possible, media efforts focus less on announcing the allocation of large amounts of money to future activities and more on revealing the meaningful results of current activities.
- **Canadians as beneficiaries** – Greater attention is paid to linking altruistic Canadian values with results of the aid program and the importance, for Canadians' own long-term security and well-being, of addressing global issues through development cooperation.
- **Localize and humanize** – Development cooperation, while supported by Canadians, is far removed from their daily lives and not a top-of-mind public issue. CIDA bridges this relevance gap by providing information through stories about ordinary Canadians from communities across the country and the important contributions they are making in the lives of real people throughout the developing world.
- **More in-depth coverage through mass media** – Since polling results have confirmed over and over again the dominance of television and newspapers as sources of information on global issues and developing countries, programs have been designed to encourage more in-depth coverage and analysis. CIDA's *Development Information Program* supports the development of mass media initiatives to promote greater public understanding of development issues and support for Canada's involvement in the developing world. The Agency's *Journalism and Development Initiative* aims to build the capacity of journalists to cover development-related stories with greater depth and analysis.
- **More focus on youth engagement** – In 2002, CIDA launched its *Global Classroom Initiative* to support the development of school-based global education resources that encourage young Canadians to become informed and involved global citizens, as well as *Butterfly 208*, an art-and-writing contest designed to interest youth in international development and spur reflection and discussion about global issues.

CIDA puts great value on public participation in its development cooperation program and encourages Canadians to embrace their role as global citizens. The Agency will continue to conduct consultations and public opinion surveys as a means to understand and respond to Canadians' views. This is particularly important now given that after nearly a decade of declining budgets, as part of the overall effort to restore the health and stability of government spending, Canada is increasing its investments in development cooperation with a commitment to double the international aid budget by 2010.

Scope for Development on television: A Media Perspective from Britain

Paddy Coulter

Like their British counterparts, the Irish public overwhelmingly use the mass media as their prime source of information about the developing world. A staggering 92% of Irish people interviewed for the Ireland Aid/NCDE gave television news as a source they used to find out what is happening in developing countries.

The corresponding figure for British interviewees in a broadly comparable survey carried out for the UK Department for International Development (“Public Attitudes towards Development”, Office for National Statistics 2002) is 85%. The second favourite source for both the Irish and British publics is the press - the two separate surveys come up with the same figure of 65% for their respective use of newspapers!

It is true that some findings of the Irish study would suggest an important subsidiary informational role for Third World charities (mentioned as a source by 43% of Irish interviewees), missionaries (by 22%) and churches (by 19%). Certainly these are significantly higher figures than charitable and religious organisations achieve in the UK where churches are mentioned by a mere 3% of British interviewees and charities by only 6%.

But other findings of the Ireland Aid/NCDE study seem to indicate that the attachment to charities and religious groups as information sources may not be quite as strong as at first sight - and perhaps not so out of line with the British experience. When asked to name the three main sources of information about the developing world, Irish interviewees accord the greatest priority to the mainstream media - 72% for television news, 30% newspapers and other non-news television programmes 22%. Churches and religious groups shrink in importance with only 6% of those interviewed using these as one of their three main sources: Third World charities on the other hand retain a certain hold in the mind of the Irish public with 22% giving them as one of their key sources.

When those Irish respondents who stated that they would like to know more about developing countries were pressed to specify their preferred source of additional information, 88% chose television and 60% newspapers. Third World charities again come in at third position at 22% and church and religious groups in fifth position with 14%.

So, although charities and religious bodies continue to play a more significant direct role in the provision of public information than their counterparts in Britain, the mainstream media is by far and away the most popular source of information about the developing world in both countries. Indeed an authoritative study carried out by Cardiff University for the Independent Television Commission concluded that “Television news is now the only news medium available, used, trusted and valued across the whole of British society” (“New News, Old News”, ITC 2002).

The overriding priority therefore for development organisations concerned about the level of public information on the subject must be meticulous monitoring of how development fares on television.

In the UK a consortium of major charities, the Third World & Environment Broadcasting Project (or 3WE), has been monitoring factual coverage of developing countries on the main UK terrestrial channels on a biennial basis since 1989. The Department for International Development (DFID) for its part has carried out a wide-ranging television research exercise (“Viewing the World: A Study of British Television Coverage of Developing Countries”, DFID 2000). This consisted of analyses of the content of news and features programme output, of audience responses to this programming and of the attitudes of senior “gatekeepers” within the television industry.

The DFID study discovered that most news stories about developing countries on UK television news bulletins are focused on war, conflict, terrorism, emergencies and natural disasters. These, together with stories about Western celebrity visits, constitute some 80% of total developing world news coverage. The study also highlighted a tendency to concentrate coverage on the more economically advanced developing countries at the expense of the poorest countries. It also commented on the frequent absence of proper context for developing country news stories, though both Channel 4 News and BBC2 Newsnight were commended for carrying more in-depth stories than other bulletins.

The latest 3WE report (“Losing Reality: Factual International Programming on UK Television, 2000-01”, 3WE 2002) reflects the complexities of current British television but certain stark trends emerge. Its research into the number of hours of (non-news) factual programming filmed in developing countries concluded:

- there has been an overall decline in the amount of programming hours in this area - down from a total of 387 hours in 1989/90 to 297 hours in 2000/01 despite the arrival of a fifth terrestrial channel, Five, in the interim
- the emergence of new entertainment programming genres such as Reality tv and the increase in travel shows, all placing British people in exotic foreign locations
- the slump in programmes dealing with “harder” issues such as development, environment and human rights which the 3WE report describes as having “plummeted to unprecedentedly low levels”.

In theory, mainstream television offers a plethora of outlets for development stories - in addition to news bulletins, there are current affairs programmes, documentaries, magazines, “event television”, drama and educational programming. There are now new opportunities for screening developing country programmes on digital channels such as the Community Channel in the UK and for streaming on broadband

But in practice these opportunities are moderated by television “gatekeepers” i.e. channel directors of programmes and commissioning editors, In 1999 3WE conducted face-to-face interviews with 38 senior executives in both commercial and public service UK television for the DFID “Viewing the World” study. The findings were very mixed. On the positive side, all the executives interviewed accepted that television still had a role to play in informing the public on the developing world, though a minority felt this should be on specialist or “niche” channels only. But the interviews revealed that most executives believed that British viewers don’t want more programmes on this subject - only 10 of the 38 interviewed felt that there was such a demand.

In Britain much of the editorial decision-making hangs on the creative style, distinctive format and general appeal of programmes on the developing world. One of the most interesting 3WE findings was that a majority of television gatekeepers believe that more programmes about the developing world would increase the level of public interest: 17 agreed “as long as the programmes were done well”, and a further 10 felt this was possible. Only 5 rejected this view (the others were don’t know).

A sustained engagement with television gatekeepers, therefore, should be a major priority for development organisations who are serious about getting across development messages to the public. This is frequently misconstrued by NGOS as a form of marketing their own agency “brand” but the British experience suggests this approach can be quite short-sighted. The scale of the challenge is so large that it requires a more collective approach involving both NGOS and government in a common

communications strategy (within which each agency can make its own distinctive contribution). There are several areas where interagency collaboration is a solid advantage:

1. Media Research

This is a prerequisite if development agencies are to be taken seriously by the television industry. The Ireland Aid/NCDE survey is an excellent model of interagency cooperation for this and there would seem to be scope for further studies on the performance of Irish television and the response of Irish audiences. Research collaborations with established bodies such as regulators or academic institutions are also to be recommended.

2. Lobbying

Interagency lobby work at broadcasting and programming policy level can be extremely effective, particularly where development agencies have made a genuine effort to understand industry practices and pressures. The British experience would suggest that an emphasis on good journalism and on innovation is important. A search for creative common ground with broadcasters should be pursued rather than agencies adopting a shopping list approach towards broadcasters of “must-dos”.

3. Stimulating Producers

This can be done in a variety of means, for example by sponsoring special television awards or as in Britain the holding of an annual “One World Media Awards”, or by the setting up of a specific “seed money” grant-making fund to help producers get certain ambitious programme ideas off the ground. In the UK some fifty of the leading development NGOs set up their own independent television company, the International Broadcasting Trust (IBT) to specialise in programmes on development, environment and human rights.

But perhaps the most efficacious method would be a drive within development agencies to get their personnel to “think story”. In my experience it is the rare agency that accords the mass media the critical importance they deserve and rarer still the agency, which fully understands the media’s insatiable appetite for stories.



The Implications for Ireland Aid

Maeve Collins

Background to the Research

The 1999 OECD DAC Peer review of Ireland's Development Cooperation programme recommended that Ireland Aid consider conducting studies of attitudes to development co-operation and aid which would provide them with more detailed and refined information. In February 2002, the Report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee acknowledged that "despite different information activities undertaken to publicise it, relatively little is known about the breadth and scale of the Ireland Aid programme". The Report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee recommended a "sustained public awareness programme which would raise the profile of Ireland Aid and encourage greater public ownership of what will be one of the most significant areas of public spending over the coming years". In addition, the Report acknowledged the crucial role of development education in enlarging public understanding of development issues, both global and local.

In the summer of 2002, Ireland Aid, through the auspices of the National Committee for Development Education, commissioned a major quantitative survey of opinion of Irish people towards development issues, development cooperation in general and, within that, aid and Ireland's role internationally. More specifically the purpose of the research was:

- To measure the level of information, knowledge of and attitudes to development issues and development cooperation and levels of public support for aid;
- To get an in-depth understanding of attitudes among the general public and selected sectors of the population;
- To establish a baseline for the monitoring of attitudes (ten years had elapsed since a comparable survey had been carried out) ;
- To assess the implications for NCDE, Ireland Aid and Non-governmental Development Organisations for their development education and public awareness programmes.

We envisaged that the findings of the research would help inform:

- Ireland Aid/NCDE in the promotion of more effective and targeted development education;
- Ireland Aid of the public perceptions towards and support for development cooperation and the Ireland Aid programme in particular;
- The communications and education strategies of stakeholders, including Ireland Aid, development educators and NGOs.

The research was carried out over the period August – October 2002, and the findings presented to Ireland Aid in December 2002. (During this period the National Committee for Development Education was wound up, and the process of transferring the staff of the former NCDE to a dedicated Development Education Unit within Ireland Aid was begun, in line with one of the recommendations of the Ireland Aid Review Committee. Ireland Aid, therefore, took responsibility for the next stages of the research programme.)

The Findings

There were few surprises in the broad findings of the MRBI research. Rather, the data puts on a sound empirical footing previously held hunches and beliefs about public opinion and awareness of development cooperation in Ireland. Overall, public attitudes to development co-operation are positive, while public understanding is incomplete and rather vague. The vast majority of those surveyed (90%) were either very much for, or on the whole for, helping countries of the developing world. Of those, 42% were in favour of helping developing countries because the people of developing countries “need it/have nothing” while a further 18% were in favour because “we can afford it”. When asked about the importance of Ireland helping developing countries, a total of 79% described it as either extremely important or very important. The imagery which most people associate with developing countries is of poverty (37%) famine (34%) and “Africa” (39%). The imagery associated with Overseas Development Aid is equally traditional. Most people associated development aid with food aid/supplies (17%), financial aid (16%), and volunteers (14%). When asked if they had ever helped developing countries, 85% responded that they had, mainly (95%) by contributing to charities or appeals.

The level of awareness of the Government’s role in providing development aid is very low. When asked how development aid is given from Ireland, 32% responded “Irish government/Ireland Aid”, whereas 66% responded “Third world charities”. Forty eight per cent of respondents had “absolutely no idea” how much financial assistance was provided by the Irish Government in 2001. Sixty two per cent had not heard of Ireland Aid, and 64% responded that they would like to learn more about Ireland Aid.

The primary source of information on developing countries is the TV news (72%), followed at quite a distance by newspapers (30%), other TV programmes (22%) and Third world charities (22%). Thirty five per cent of students cited school/education as an important source of information. A little over half of respondents (54%) said that they would like to know more about developing countries, with higher levels of interest among students (63%) and females (57%). Of these, 88% cited TV as their preferred source of information, followed by newspapers (60%).

The Communications Challenge

The research data provides both an excellent resource and a stiff challenge to Ireland Aid as the programme expands over the coming years. The research points to a need for a focussed public awareness campaign with the twin aims of raising the profile of the Ireland Aid programme and strengthening the Irish public’s understanding of the principles underpinning the Irish Government’s aid programme. A development assistance programme such as Ireland Aid which is committed to strong partnerships, cannot ignore the need for a deep and durable relationship with the Irish public. The programme now involves expenditure of significant public money, and is set to expand even further within the coming five years. In the current economic climate, it is imperative that the Irish public engage in a critical and constructive way with the Ireland Aid programme. Clearly, if 62% of the public have never heard of the Ireland Aid programme, the most immediate challenge is to increase public awareness of what Ireland Aid is, what it does and why.

To this end, a detailed three-year communications strategy is currently being finalised within Ireland Aid. Underpinning the strategy are three broad aims:

- To achieve greater accountability and transparency;
- To create public ownership and understanding of Ireland Aid;
- To build a broader constituency.

Achieving greater accountability and transparency

In 2003, the Ireland Aid output will amount to approximately €350 million of public money. That 48% of a representative sample of the public should have “absolutely no idea” that this amount is spent by the Government on development cooperation represents a serious failure of communication on the part of the programme. The Irish public are entitled to know how development assistance money is spent, and

that it is spent in an accountable, transparent and effective manner. Furthermore, Ireland Aid should be able to demonstrate clearly that not only is expenditure properly accounted for but that it is also effective. At present, a total of 41% of people are concerned that aid is either not distributed properly or not getting to the right people or that it simply doesn't get there at all. The challenge therefore is to show that the money is properly spent and well spent, contributing to a sustainable reduction in poverty.

To create public ownership and understanding of Ireland Aid

The data establishes that despite the fact that the Irish Government's development co-operation programme is almost thirty years old, and that it has expanded very significantly in recent years, the Irish public has no sense of ownership of the programme and a very limited understanding of the challenges of development co-operation.

The Ireland Aid communication strategy should therefore build on the positive support among the Irish public for assistance to the poorest people in the world, to ensure a deeper understanding of, and, ultimately, pride in the Irish Government's role in development assistance. Ireland Aid should be encouraged in this by the evidence of support for a higher public profile for the programme (79% agreed that Ireland Aid should be better known) and of a real interest in more information (64% agreed that they would like to know more about Ireland Aid).

To build a broader constituency

Currently, public support for Ireland Aid comes mainly from the small, albeit vocal, development community. If the Ireland Aid programme is to reach the UN target of 0.7% of GNP by 2007, and if Ireland is to ensure coherence across the full range of Irish Government policies on issues such as agriculture, trade, the environment and fiscal matters, in a way which keeps the interests of developing countries to the fore, then the support of a broad constituency of decision makers and opinion formers is indispensable. The Ireland Aid communication strategy must therefore identify means of informing and involving public representatives, social partners, civil society, the media and educators at all levels, with the programme as it evolves. While the research shows that the low levels of awareness of the Ireland Aid programme are broadly similar across all age groups and social backgrounds in Irish life, there are many interesting discrepancies, all of which should inform our communications strategy. It is clear, for instance, that more women (68%) than men (60%) would like to know more about Ireland Aid, that young people (aged between 15 and 24) perceived themselves to be less knowledgeable (14% said that they didn't know anything about developing countries) than other age groups, displayed the lowest levels of awareness of how development aid was given by the Irish government and were also more inclined to believe that life in developing countries was either much better or better (39%) than 5 years ago. There are also noticeable regional variations in support for the proposal that we have a significant responsibility to help poor people in developing countries, with 34% of those surveyed in Dublin agreeing, but only 13% in Connacht/Ulster agreeing.

The success of the communications strategy will be determined by a survey of Irish public attitudes to development, similar to that conducted in 2002, to be carried out in 2006.

The Development Education Challenge – Deepening Public Understanding

The data reveals some awareness of the underlying causes of poverty in developing countries, and only a limited understanding of the challenges faced by developing countries. A total of 72% of respondents thought that disease/lack of healthcare was either a fairly or very important reason why developing countries were poor, but only 61% identified the prevalence of HIV/AIDS as an important reason. When asked about the most serious problem facing developing countries, only 5% identified AIDS as the most serious problem. Only 39% regarded the low status of women as a very important reason while 27% regarded the low status of women as either unimportant or "neither important nor unimportant" as an underlying reason. Only 1% considered the low status of women to be the most serious problem facing developing countries.

The fact that the most common response to the question as to the most serious problem facing developing countries was “don’t know” (21%) raises serious questions for Ireland Aid. The first question relates to the message which the programme communicates to the public. A development programme as large as Ireland Aid’s, which will continue to grow in the coming years, must communicate not only how, where and why the money is spent, but must also assure the Irish public that the money is well spent on a development co-operation programme which addresses the root causes of poverty. If the root causes of poverty are not clearly understood, then the message will quickly lose its meaning, and far from engendering confidence in the programme, could alienate a public already bombarded with confusing or negative messages about the usefulness of development assistance. The challenge then, is to ensure that a highly complex issue is communicated in a way which is both comprehensible and credible, without either patronising or puzzling the audience.

The second question relates to the effectiveness of development education in Ireland. Development education has a long history in Ireland, and has been supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs, whether through the voluntary sector, the Churches or schools, since the 1970’s. While development education has real and visible “successes”, including public support for the abolition of apartheid in the 1980’s, the collection of over one million signatures for Amnesty International’s campaign for the Declaration of Human Rights, and, most recently, the public support for the cause of East Timor, it is clear that, to date, public understanding of development issues, most notably the causes of poverty in the developing world, is limited, to say the least.

Against this background, considerable changes have occurred in Ireland Aid’s involvement with development education in the past year. As outlined above, the NCDE has been wound up and a dedicated Development Education Unit has been established within Ireland Aid. A Development Education Advisory Committee was established in January 2003. Its role is to offer policy advice to Ireland Aid on development education and on ways of increasing knowledge and understanding of development issues in Ireland. In May 2003, Ireland Aid’s Development Education Strategy Plan entitled “Deepening Public Understanding of International Development” was launched. In the plan, we set out our priorities and objectives for the three-year period 2003 – 2005. The aim is to target effectively our resources and support for development education and, in so doing, to support the mainstreaming of development education within education in Ireland and the promotion of greater public awareness and understanding of development issues. There are six key objectives in the plan as follows:

- Objective 1:** *To integrate a development education perspective in relevant education policies;*
- Objective 2:** *To integrate and support the delivery of development education in selected areas in the formal and non-formal education sectors;*
- Objective 3:** *To provide support to civil society organisations in Ireland to increase public understanding of development issues;*
- Objective 4:** *To facilitate capacity building of the development education sector to support and promote development education.*
- Objective 5:** *To promote more effective use of communications to increase public understanding of development issues;*
- Objective 6:** *To identify and maximise educational opportunities for public engagement with the Ireland Aid programme.*

All of the objectives are of critical importance in deepening public understanding of development issues, but insofar as informing public opinion in the short term (the next three years) is concerned, Objectives 5 and 6 are of particular interest and merit further discussion here.

Objective 5, to promote more effective use of communications to increase public understanding of development issues, takes account of the finding in the MRBI research that the media is the single most important source of information on development issues for the general public. To deepen public

understanding, Ireland Aid must engage proactively with the media in the promotion of greater understanding of development issues. Television and radio will be particularly important media in this regard. As a first step, a Media Challenge Fund has been established, to encourage greater coverage by the media of development issues by supporting independent radio documentary broadcasts on a wide range of development issues.

Objective 6, to identify and maximise educational opportunities for public engagement with the Ireland Aid programme, recognises that if the development cooperation programme is to continue to grow, it will require sustained support from the Irish public. For the public to become involved actively and critically in Ireland's development cooperation programme, they must first be well informed about development issues. While it is not the function or purpose of development education to raise awareness of the Ireland Aid programme, there is much common ground between development awareness and development education on approaches to deepening understanding of the cross-cutting development policy issues which an effective development co-operation programme must address. Building on this common ground, Ireland Aid will identify key educational opportunities in both the formal and non-formal education arenas in Ireland where key development concerns, such as HIV/AIDS, gender, agriculture, debt, sustainability and governance, can be explored.

Conclusion

The Ireland Aid programme has as its absolute priority the reduction of poverty, inequality and exclusion in developing countries. The reduction of poverty is a complex matter, requiring a strategic, multi-faceted and sophisticated approach. Anti-poverty strategies should seek to break the vicious circle of poverty through support for sustainable indigenous development. All of Ireland Aid's policies and activities must be gauged against their contribution in this respect and against the progress they achieve towards the development targets set by the international community. Evaluation is vital if the programme is to continue to be effective.

The programme involves expenditure of a significant, and increasing, amount of public money. This gives rise to a serious responsibility to inform the public as to how that money is being spent, and, more importantly, the underlying reasons why that money is being spent. The MRBI data provides a timely wake-up call as to how effective (or otherwise) we have been informing the public. For the future, it provides critical baseline data against which the effectiveness of Ireland Aid's communications strategy and development education strategy can be evaluated.

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NGDE Public Opinion Survey Final Questionnaire

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6 - 1

I.D. No. (1-4)

Ass. No. _____

Qst. No. _____

MRBI/6124/02

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is _____ from MRBI Limited, the independent market research agency. We are conducting a survey on people's attitudes towards Developing countries. Would you have a few minutes to answer some questions?

Q.1a When I say to you Developing Countries, what words or images come to mind?
DO NOT PROMPT. WRITE IN RESPONDENTS REPLIES WORD FOR WORD.
PROBE FULLY: Anything else?

INTERVIEWER EXPLAIN:

The following questions are about developing countries or what some people might call the Third World. In particular, we will be talking about countries in Africa, as well as parts of Asia and Central/Latin America, which are poorer than Ireland and other industrialised countries.

Q.1b Can you name any ways in which Ireland helps developing countries? By Ireland I mean Ireland in the broadest sense – the Irish people and the Irish Government. **DO NOT PROMPT. WRITE IN COMMENTS VERBATIM. PROBE FULLY:** Anything else?

Q.2a Some people are for, and others are against, helping countries of the Developing World. Personally, are you....? **SHOW CARD.**

- Very much for.....1
- On the whole for2
- Neither for nor against3
- On the whole against.....4
- Very much against5
- Don't know6

Q.2b Why do you say that? **DO NOT PROMPT. WRITE IN COMMENTS VERBATIM. PROBE FULLY:** Anything else?

7
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21

Q.3 Which of the following best describes how much you know about Developing Countries?
SHOW CARD.

- I don't know anything about them.....1
- I know something about them2
- I know a lot about them3
- Don't know4
- Not stated5

22

Q.4a Looking at this list, can you tell me how you personally find out what is happening in developing countries? **MULTICODES ALLOWED. SHOW CARD.**

Q.4b And which are the three sources from which you get most information about developing countries? **CODE THREE MAXIMUM.**

	Q.4a	Q.4b		
	Find out	Most Imp.		
School/Education	1	1	Q4a	
Newspapers	2	2		
Magazines				23
TV news	4	4		
Other TV programmes	5	5		24
Third World Charities (e.g. Concern, Trocaire)	6	6		
Church or other religious groups	7	7		
Nationals from developing countries living in Ireland	8	8		
Irish Government/Ireland Aid	9	9		
Family/Friends	1	1	Q4b	
Foreign Travel	2	2		
Internet	3	3		
Books	4	4		25
Missionaries	5	5		
Other (Please specify).....	6	6		26
Nowhere in particular.....	7	7		
I don't know anything.....	8	8		

Q.5 Would you like to know more about what is happening in developing countries?

- Yes
- No.....
- Don't know

1	ASK Q.6a
2	GO TO Q.8
3	

27

Q.6a Which of the following is your preferred source of this information? **SHOW CARD.**
MULTICODES ALLOWED.

IF MORE THAN ONE SOURCE INDICATED IN Q.6a ABOVE, ASK:

Q.6b And if you were asked to select one source out of your preferred sources, which one would you choose? **SHOW CARD. SINGLE CODE ONLY.**

	Q.6a Preferred	Q.6b One Source	
Magazines	1	1	Q6a
School/Education.....	2	2	
Post	3	3	28
Newspapers.....	4	4	
TV.....	5	5	29
Irish Government/Ireland Aid.....	6	6	
Advertising billboards	7	7	
Cultural events and festivals	8	8	
Church or other religious groups	9	9	
Third World Charities	1	1	Q6b
Family/friends	2	2	
Foreign Travel	3	3	30
Internet	4	4	
Books	5	5	31
Other (Please specify).....	6	6	

Q.7 Can you tell me which type of information you would like to receive on what is happening in developing countries? **PROBE FULLY:** Anything else?

32
33
34

ASK ALL:

Q.8 How reliable is the information you get on developing countries from
(READ OUT IN TURN) – THE MEDIA, SCHOOL, THIRD WORLD CHARITIES, MISSIONARIES)?
SHOW CARD.

READ OUT ↓	Very reliable	Fairly reliable	Not very reliable	Not at all reliable	Don't know	
The media	1	2	3	4	5	35
School	1	2	3	4	5	36
Third World Charities	1	2	3	4	5	37
Missionaries	1	2	3	4	5	38

Q.9 Do you feel there is too much, too little or just about the right amount of information given by.....(READ OUT IN TURN) – THE MEDIA, SCHOOL, THIRD WORLD CHARITIES, MISSIONARIES)? on the Developing Countries?
SHOW CARD.

READ OUT ↓	Too much	Too little	Just about right	Don't know	
The media	1	2	3	4	39
School	1	2	3	4	40
Third World Charities	1	2	3	4	41
Missionaries	1	2	3	4	42

Q.10a Did any of the information you gained from (READ OUT IN TURN -The Media/school/Third World Charities/ Missionaries) prompt you to take action in relation to developing countries?
SHOW CARD.

	To a great extent	To some extent	Unsure	Not at all	Not applicable	
The media	1	2	3	4	5	43
School	1	2	3	4	5	44
Third World Charities	1	2	3	4	5	45
Missionaries	1	2	3	4	5	46

Q.10b What action did it prompt you to take? **PROBE FULLY.**

47

48

49

Q.11 Do you think that life is better or worse in developing countries now than it was five years ago?
SHOW CARD.

Much better	1	50
Better	2	
More or less the same.....	3	
Worse	4	
Much worse	5	
Don't know	6	

Q.12 Which item on this card best describes how you feel about levels of poverty in developing countries?
SHOW CARD.

Very concerned	1	51
Fairly concerned	2	
No strong feelings one way or another.....	3	
Not very concerned	4	
Not at all concerned	5	
Don't know	6	

Q.14a There are various ways in which a country like Ireland can help Developing Countries. I am going to read out a number of suggestions, which people have made. Using this card, please say how helpful or unhelpful you think each one would be.

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT EACH STATEMENT SLOWLY AND CLEARLY. RECORD ANSWER FOR EACH, BEFORE GOING ON TO THE NEXT STATEMENT. ROTATE & TICK START SHOW CARD.

TICK

	Very helpful	Quite helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Quite unhelpful	Very unhelpful	Don't know	
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing financial assistance for long term development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="checkbox"/> Providing emergency relief and humanitarian assistance, such as food and medicine	1	2	3	4	5	6	8
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Training</u> people from Developing countries in Ireland so that they will be able to play a more useful role in their own countries.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	9
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Buying</u> more products from Developing Countries.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	10
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Sending out</u> skilled people, such as engineers, scientists and teachers to train and educate people in the Developing Countries ..	1	2	3	4	5	6	11
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Paying</u> a reasonable <u>price</u> for <u>products</u> coming from Third World countries, even if it increases prices here	1	2	3	4	5	6	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving <u>support</u> to groups/projects working to <u>raise the status of women</u> in Developing Countries	1	2	3	4	5	6	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Giving <u>support</u> to groups <u>seeking political</u> change in Developing Countries	1	2	3	4	5	6	14
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting <u>self-help</u> programmes so that the <u>poor</u> can help themselves ..	1	2	3	4	5	6	15
<input type="checkbox"/> Creating a <u>better understanding</u> in Ireland of the situation in Developing Countries	1	2	3	4	5	6	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Helping to reduce conflict and war....	1	2	3	4	5	6	17
<input type="checkbox"/> Working with others to cancel the debt owed to the industrialised world	1	2	3	4	5	6	18
<input type="checkbox"/> Buy a product with the <u>Fairtrade Mark*</u> rather than a similar product without it.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Seeking to bring about economic policy change in order to stimulate economic Growth and employment ..	1	2	3	4	5	6	20

* *The Fairtrade Mark is an independent guarantee which ensures a better deal for producers in developing countries.*

Q.14b What words or images come to mind when you think specifically of overseas **development AID**? **DO NOT PROMPT. WRITE IN COMMENTS WORD FOR WORD. PROBE FULLY:** Anything else?

21

22

23

Q.15a To the best of your knowledge, how is development aid from Ireland given to Developing Countries?

DO NOT PROMPT. PROBE FULLY.

- Irish Government/Ireland Aid 1
- Third World Charities 2
- Other (specify) _____ 3
- Don't Know 4

24

Q.15b What concerns, if any, do you have with the way in which aid is given to developing countries?
DO NOT PROMPT. WRITE IN COMMENTS VERBATIM. PROBE FULLY: Anything else?

25

26

27

Q.16 Do you think that aid from Ireland makes a real difference to the lives of people in Developing Countries? **SHOW CARD.**

- Quite a lot of difference 1
- A little bit 2
- Not at all 3
- Don't know 4

28

Q.17 How important, if at all, do you think it is for us here in Ireland to help people in Developing Countries? **SHOW CARD.**

- Extremely important 1
- Very important 2
- Fairly important 3
- Not very important 4
- Not important at all 5
- Don't know..... 6

29

Q.18 Do you know of any way or ways in which the Irish Government helps Developing Countries?
PROBE: Are you aware of anything else the Government does?

DO NOT PROMPT. WRITE IN COMMENTS VERBATIM. PROBE FULLY: Anything else?

30

31

32

Q.19 Approximately, how much financial assistance do you think was provided by the Irish Government in 2001 to Developing Countries in the form of development aid? **SHOW CARD.**

- Less than 1 million euro 1
- 1 – 50 million euro 2
- 51 – 100 million euro 3
- 101 – 500 million euro 4
- 500+ million euro 5
- Absolutely no idea 6

33

INTERVIEWER EXPLAIN:

The Irish government plans to increase its funding to Developing Countries over the next few years to over €900 million in 2007, in line with UN targets.

Q.20a Do you think the level of commitment of the Irish Government to poverty reduction in developing countries is too high, too low or about right? **READ OUT.**

- Too high 1
- Too low..... 2
- About right..... 3
- Don't know..... 4

34

Q.20b Why do you say that? **DO NOT PROMPT. WRITE IN COMMENTS VERBATIM. PROBE FULLY:**
Anything else?

35

36

37

Q.21 Have you ever heard of Ireland Aid, the Irish Government's Official Development Programme?
PROBE TO PRECODES.

- Yes, quite a lot 1
- Yes, a little 2
- No 3

38

Q.22a Do you think that Ireland Aid, the Irish Government's aid to developing countries should be made better known?

- Yes..... 1
- No 2
- Don't know..... 3

39

Q.22b Would you like to learn more about the Ireland Aid programme?

- Yes.....
- No
- Don't know.....

1	ASK Q.22c
2	GO TO Q.23a
3	

40

Q.22c How would you like to hear more about Ireland Aid? **MULTICODES ALLOWED. SHOW CARD.**

- Internet 1
- Direct mail (post) 2
- TV/radio documentaries..... 3
- Newspapers 4
- Magazines..... 5
- Educational Programmes (School/University) 6
- Public Seminars/debates/lectures 7
- Cultural Festivals/Events..... 8
- Don't know..... 9
- Other (specify) _____ 0

41

42

Q.23 What do you believe are the top three priorities of the Irish Government's aid programme for Developing Countries? **SHOW CARD. MULTICODES ALLOWED. CODE 3 ANSWERS MAXIMUM**

Reduce poverty	1	
Provide emergency and humanitarian assistance	2	
Promote democracy	3	
Protect the environment.....	4	
Promote Human Rights	5	
Help ensure the welfare of the poorest people	6	
Promote economic growth	7	
Help improve social services, such as education and health	8	
Promote long term sustainable development	9	
Don't know	0	

43

Q.24 Have you yourself ever helped Developing Countries in any way?

Yes.....	1 ASK Q.25 2 GO TO Q.27b 3
No	
Don't know.....	

44

Q.25 Which of the following activities did you do? **SHOW CARD. MULTICODES ALLOWED.**

Contributed to charities or other appeals on behalf of developing countries	1	
Organised a fundraising activity.....	2	
Became involved in church or campaigning groups working on behalf of developing countries (other than fundraising)	3	
Worked in a developing country to promote development, emergency humanitarian assistance.....	4	
Worked with refugees/asylum seekers in Ireland.....	5	
Bought Fair Trade products	6	
Signed a petition	7	
Supported socially responsible business and investment.....	8	
Put pressure on politicians to promote development issues either on your own or part of a lobby group	9	
Don't know	0	
Other (please specify) _____	1	

45

46

Q.26 Did this action(s) encourage you to continue doing something in relation to Developing Countries?

Yes.....	1 2 ASK Q.27a 3
No	
Don't know.....	

47

ASK Q.27a IF RESPONDENT HAS HELPED AT Q.25 – OTHERS GO TO Q.27b

Q.27a	Are there any other ways you think you can help people in poorer countries? MULTICODES ALLOWED. SHOW CARD.	
Q.27b	How do you think you can help people in poorer countries, if at all? Please choose your answer(s) from this card. MULTICODES ALLOWED. SHOW CARD.	
	Contribute to charities or other appeals on behalf of developing countries	1 48
	Organise a fundraising activity.....	2
	Become involved in church or campaigning groups working on behalf of developing countries (other than fundraising)	3
	Work in a developing country to promote development, emergency humanitarian assistance.....	4
	Work on behalf of refugees/asylum seekers in Ireland	5
	Buy Fair Trade products	6
	Sign a petition	7
	Support socially responsible business and investment	8
	Put pressure on politicians to promote development issues either on your own or part of a lobby group	9
	I don't think I can help	0
	Don't know	1 49
	Other (please specify) _____	2
Q.28a	If the social and economic situation needed to be improved in your local area, do you think people like yourself can do anything to help or not?	
	Yes.....	1 50
	No	2
	Don't know.....	3
Q.28b	If the social and economic situation needed to be improved in Ireland, do you think people like yourself can do anything to help or not?	
	Yes.....	1 51
	No	2
	Don't know.....	3
Q.28c	If the social and economic situation needed to be improved in developing countries, do you think people like yourself can do anything to help or not?	
	Yes.....	1 52
	No	2
	Don't know.....	3
Q.29	Do you think that you have a responsibility to help poor people living in Ireland? SHOW CARD.	
	Yes, I feel I have considerable responsibility to help.....	1 53
	Yes, I feel I have some but limited responsibility to help	2
	I feel I have no responsibility to help	3
	Other (please specify) _____	4
	Don't know/No opinion.....	5
Q.30	Do you think that you have a responsibility to help poor people living in Developing countries? SHOW CARD.	
	Yes, I feel I have considerable responsibility to help.....	1 54
	Yes, I feel I have some but limited responsibility to help	2
	I feel have no responsibility to help.....	3
	Other (please specify) _____	4
	Don't know/No opinion.....	5

Classification

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE:

--	--	--	--

CODE/PREFIX

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

NUMBER

SEX: Male..... 1 Female 2 55

MARITAL STATUS:

Married 1 Living as married2 56
Single..... 3 Widowed/Divorced/Separated.....4

WORKING STATUS:

Working full-time 1 Working part-time 2 57
Housewife 3 Student 4
Retired..... 5 Unemployed..... 5

OCCUPATION OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD:

SOCIAL CLASS: AB 1 C1..... 2 C2..... 3 58
 DE 4 F1 5 F2 6

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE: How often do you attend Mass/Religious service? SHOW CARD.

Every day..... 1 59
More than once a week..... 2
Once a week..... 3
Two to three times a month 4
Once a month 5
A few times a year/special occasions only..... 6
Rarely..... 7
Never 8

AGE (exact):

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 (60-61) 60
61

15..... 1 16-17 2 18-19..... 3 62
20-24 4 25-34 5 35-44..... 6
45-54 7 55-64 8 65+ 9

LIFESTAGE SEGMENT:

- Single younger person living alone 1
- House sharing with others 2
- Young couple with no children..... 3
- Family with mainly pre-school children..... 4
- Family with mainly junior school age children..... 5
- Family with mainly secondary school age children 6
- Family with mainly adult children at home 7
- Older couple with no children at home..... 8
- Single older person living alone 9
- Other (specify)..... 0

63

NO. OF PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD (incl. respondent):

- 1 2 3 4 5 6+

64

HIGHEST LEVEL OF FORMAL EDUCATION:

- Primary Education only 1
- Some second level education 2
- Completed second level..... 3
- Some third level 4
- Completed third level..... 5
- Professional education..... 6
- Postgraduate degree 7
- Technical qualification 8

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I certify that I have interviewed the above named respondent in accordance with survey instructions.

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____



Attitudes Towards
**Development
Cooperation**
in Ireland