



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

### 1. Introduction and Summary of Key Messages

The Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid. Before presenting our argument we would like to commend Irish Aid on the results of the independent reviews and evaluations presented in the consultation paper. They highlight the fact that Ireland’s aid programme is of very high overall quality. The White Paper has set an array of very ambitious targets and the progress made towards some of them

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outlined in the consultation paper is impressive. However, we agree with the statement made by Dóchas in their submission to this review process that a key success factor in achieving these ambitious goals is to ensure “a comprehensive, all-government approach which involves not just aid but all policies with international impact.” (Dóchas Submission, pg. 3)

IDEA is a network of currently 85 organisations and individuals involved in development education across the island of Ireland. This submission has been written based on a consultation process with our members and is, therefore, reflective of views and opinions throughout the development education sector in Ireland. However, many of our members have also indicated that they will provide their own inputs. Our submission, therefore, will be focusing on providing an input from a sectoral point of view.

**The most important message of this submission** from a development education perspective is that the issues of **public ownership** of the Irish Aid programme and **public engagement** with development and global justice issues – which are presented in the White Paper as cross-cutting themes – **need to be strengthened in the overall Irish Aid programme**. Building on the achievements of development education in Ireland Irish Aid needs to build up a more sophisticated strategy to engage the Irish public; a strategy that goes beyond a simple support mechanism for international aid or

communicating results. Recent research into the area of public engagement shows that attempts to harness public support by reducing the message to slogans and sound bites often has the opposite effect. Such attempts tend to produce uncritical supporters rather than engaged members of the public, therefore, going against the very ambition that Irish Aid has set out in the section “Irish Aid and the public” in the White Paper. With this submission we would like to make the case for an enhanced and sustained investment by Irish Aid to deepen the engagement with the public around global justice issues as we believe that the people of Ireland can be change-makers in our common aim to work for a more just and sustainable world. In short, we believe more could be done in relation to public ownership and engagement if it was made a priority of the Irish Aid programme. This would require:

- A **clearer understanding of what public ownership** of the aid programme means and how such ownership can be further strengthened and achieved
- A stronger focus on building **deeper public engagement with global justice issues** amongst the Irish public.
- A clear focus on a **rights-based approach** throughout the Irish Aid programme and, for the White Paper, a departure from the current language that is dominated by “needs” rather than “rights”, re-enforcing the paradigm of a “powerful giver and grateful receivers.”
- An enhanced effort on **policy coherence for development (PCD)**, especially around the issues of trade, taxation and economic development. Such development related policy areas require an all-Government development effort and are crucial for both delivering on the ambitious aims of the White Paper and making the development cooperation programme relevant to the people of Ireland.

#### Successes

Amongst the many successes of the Irish Aid programme the long and proud history of development education in Ireland and its many achievements should not be forgotten.

## 2. Progress Made

Both the Dóchas submission to this review process and the consultation paper provided by Irish Aid point to the many achievements of Irish Aid, namely on issues such as hunger, climate change, basic needs, governance and

human rights. Rather than repeating what has been said already, this submission will focus on progress made in an area that unfortunately does not feature greatly in the consultation paper drafted by Irish Aid: development education.

The omission of the proud history and many achievements of development education in Ireland in the consultation paper is all the more surprising as this too is an area in which Ireland can claim to be a recognised leader internationally. Two recent independent reports at European level commissioned by the European Commission ([DE watch](#) and [DEAR study](#)) have recognised Ireland as one of the leading European nations in development education both in terms of support structures and the quality of programmes and organisations delivering development education. To name but a few, programmes such as the DICE project are frequently quoted as examples of good practice in how to integrate a global perspective in initial teacher education, material and courses and models for integration developed in Ireland are often used in other European countries and Ireland’s national

umbrella body, IDEA, is recognised through its contributions to international conferences and inputs to European policy processes.

These successes and achievements are a result of both the continued support of Irish Aid to development education over the years and the dedication of people working in the area of development education. Irish Aid itself has been taking stock of the achievements of development education by commissioning the study *Mapping the Past, Charting the Future* (Fiedler/Bryan/Bracken, 2010) and an independent review in 2011. To include the findings of these reviews in the consultation paper would have added an important dimension to areas of Irish Aid's work in which achievements have been made in the past. IDEA also feels that in Part V of the White Paper Ireland should be listed as a country in which Irish Aid works as development education in Ireland has been a part of the Irish Aid programme for many decades.

Furthermore, the consultation paper does not include a remark on progress in terms of the commitment in the White Paper that "every person in Ireland will have access to educational opportunities to be aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities as global citizens [...]" (pg 107) This is all the more surprising as Irish Aid's own review has found that there is "clear evidence that engagement in development education is growing in Ireland and that there is some excellent practice in integrating a global development dimension across both the formal and non-formal education sectors". The list of impressive results of development education initiatives can be found on page 6 (ff.) of the [official report](#) of the 2011 Review. They include:

- In the primary sector there is a strategic and comprehensive approach to development education within initial teacher education, which is leading to more newly qualified teachers entering the classroom with the skills to teach development education.
- In the post-primary sector there is a strategic approach to school linking and immersion, which engages around 1 in 10 post primary schools.
- In the youth sector through the strategic partnership with National Youth Council of Ireland, there has been an increase in the number of key youth organisations that value development education within their structures and programmes of activity.
- In the adult, community and trade union sectors, a wide range of learners have been reached and are engaging with global development issues.
- There has been a significant increase in the opportunities for volunteers to avail of development education ([IA synthesis paper](#), accessed 26/02/2012).

*Mapping the Past, Charting the Future* comes to a similar finding, seeing the three areas of i) integration of development education into the mainstream, ii) the expertise, professionalism and engagement of people working in the sector, and iii) increased coordination and cohesion of the DE sector as major successes. ([Mapping the Past, Charting the Future](#) , pg. 45ff., accessed 26/02/2012)

From a development education perspective we would urge Irish Aid to realise the potential that lies in these successes through continued support and an increased focus on public engagement and development education in the coming years. As we will show in section 3 the new contexts in which international development cooperation is taking place necessitate such changes in emphasis as awareness raising and education about global justice issues, advocacy and intelligent campaigning will

become more important in terms of delivering development results. In sections 4 and 5 we are suggesting concrete ways on how to build on those successes.

### 3. New Contexts

The consultation paper for the review process sets out clearly the changed contexts both globally and in Ireland between the year the White Paper was drafted and the year in which this review is taking place. Written during the years of the Celtic Tiger and at a half-way point of the timeframe set by the MDGs, the contexts that frame international development have changed dramatically. These changes are comprehensively dealt with in the consultation paper. However, we would like to take a slightly different approach in presenting these changed contexts by focusing on the nature of the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century that have become more and more visible in recent years. By focusing on the challenges we are hoping to provide a frame in which solutions can be presented from a perspective that focuses not exclusively on aid but also on the wider picture of international development cooperation as we see this as an important shift to be made in the coming years.

Climate Change/Justice  
 A re-framing in relation to Climate Change is necessary as this is no longer a development issue but a context in which development takes place.

There is an emerging consensus in the literature in international development on future challenges for our planet. The major point of disagreement, however, is on how to address and overcome those challenges. While they are all interlinked it is possible to isolate **four main challenges**. It is outside the scope of this submission to delve deeply into those challenges but outlining them in broad strokes seems to be necessary for the advancement of our argument in section 4 and 5.

#### Challenge One: Climate Justice

The first and overarching challenge for international development in the 21st century is **climate change**, with particular reference to **climate justice**. Most commentators on the MDG framework admit that, despite Goal 7, climate justice is one of the key dimensions missing in the present framework. In general, Irish Aid is to be congratulated for making climate change one of the key issues of their programme. In relation to international development, recent research by the Irish NGO Trócaire points to the fact that “Climate change is no longer a development issue – it is now a key context which will increasingly shape, if not determine, what can be achieved in terms of development.” (Trócaire, 2011, pg 12) Increasing dangers from climate change disasters such as floods, droughts and other ‘natural’ disasters in combination with increased scarcity of natural resources such as oil and water will fundamentally question the way in which development interventions are framed at the moment.

Recommendation:

*In this respect, IDEA welcomes Irish Aid's continued focus on climate change. However, we feel that the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is not reflected adequately in both the White paper and the consultation paper as climate change is still very much framed as a development issue for developing countries, while most international research points to the fact that climate change has become a key context that needs to be addressed not just through programmes and projects in developing countries but as a context in which we live. This includes making it a key issue for work here in Ireland, including a coherent approach to climate change policies across Government departments and educating the Irish public about global interdependencies.*

## Challenge Two: Shifting Economics

Of equally fundamental nature is the crisis of the **global economic structure**, or as Amartya Sen has described it in a talk in 2010 in Dublin, “the global confusion” in economics. After relatively prosperous post-war years in the Global North, growing economies and the end of the cold war, the optimism of the late 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium has waned and has been

### Public Ownership and Engagement

The issue of public ownership of Ireland's aid programme and public engagement with global justice issues must become a key issue for Irish Aid and Irish NGOs working in international development. Through this review Irish Aid should establish a clear rationale why an engaged public is important for an effective development cooperation programme.

replaced by an increasing uncertainty about the capacity of our current system to solve the economic difficulties experienced in many countries since 2008. The most unsettling feature of this global economic crisis for people in more affluent countries is probably that it affects states in the Global North as well as in the Global South (although not to the same extent and IDEA, therefore, welcomes the continued focus on hunger and poor countries in the current Irish Aid programme). The crises of the past three years have confused the rich/poor binary that has been at the heart of how the North has thought about development for many decades.

Thus, it is important to note that in the context of the ongoing crisis in the Eurozone, efforts to anchor development policies in European societies and work towards raising public support for actions against poverty have become more challenging; European citizens are faced with mounting difficulties at home which results in them being more inward looking. This is of particular concern in EU countries such as Ireland in which the current crisis has led to severe austerity measures including cut backs on public expenditure. There is a danger that – as the crisis deepens - many citizens retreat to a “charity begins at home” mindset or become disengaged from global justice issues. Such engagement, however, is crucial for the successful planning and implementation of a coherent European approach to development. This tendency is confirmed in the latest [Eurobarometer](#), *Europeans and the Future of Development Aid*, (published in November 2011), which indicates a drop in the strongest category of support for development aid in countries most affected by the economic crises. While the overall support remains to be high for Ireland (85 % consider it either very or fairly important) countries such as Italy, Ireland, Spain, the UK and Malta have seen particularly strong drops in numbers of people who see aid as 'very important' (17% for Ireland, moving from the “very important” to the “fairly important” category. This ‘thinning out’ of the top category reveals a trend that must be of concern

for the Irish government with its clear commitment to a strong sense of public ownership for the Irish Aid programme. For IDEA such a sense of ownership is inseparably connected to the issue of public engagement. Unless the Irish public has ample opportunities to engage critically with its own aid programme public support for it will continue to thin out. In order to stop this trend an increased investment in measures of engaging the public in a deep and meaningful way with global justice issues by showing the interdependencies and relevance for their own lives is essential. Such an engagement is not achieved by public information efforts or strict communication exercises but through structured interventions based on sound pedagogical concepts.

Recommendation:

*With the economic crises affecting people in Ireland and across Europe the issue of public ownership of Ireland's aid programme and public engagement with global justice issues, therefore, must become a key issue for Irish Aid and Irish NGOs working in international development. Through this review Irish Aid should establish a clear rationale why an engaged public is important for an effective development cooperation programme.*

*From IDEA's point of view International development needs an engaged and informed public for three reasons: firstly, public ownership provides legitimacy for NGOs and governments to take decisive political actions on poverty and global justice. However, public ownership is not gained through simple public information campaigns but through a deeper engagement of people with global justice issues showing how such issues are connected to them. Secondly engaged individuals make a difference through their daily actions as consumers, campaigners, volunteers, educators, etc. Thirdly, an engaged public opens a space for dialogue on the root causes of poverty, necessary for implementing systemic changes to tackle global poverty and to create a sense of real ownership for the Irish Aid programme amongst the people of Ireland.*

Policy

*The next three years are an opportunity for Ireland to become a leading force in contributing cutting edge thinking and academic expertise at policy level.*

Challenge Three: Shifting Geopolitical Structure

Closely related to the second challenge is, **thirdly**, the issue of **shifting geopolitical structures**. The emergence of China – or more broadly the BRICS countries – has further upset old demarcation lines and has started a process of profound change in terms of global governance such as a clear move from G8 to G20 at a global governance level. The latter is very important for future debates as one could argue that, while the MDGs – and therefore the White Paper which was written in clear reference to the MDG framework – were a product of an era dominated by DAC countries and the G 8, the new paradigms will almost certainly be the product of a G20+ agenda. This will have major repercussions for the negotiations leading up to and beyond 2015.

Recommendation:



*This has major repercussions for work in international development, especially at policy level. Irish NGOs such as Trócaire have shown impressive leadership in this policy area by conducting the Leading Edge 2020 report and engaging critically with 'Beyond 2015' processes at European and international level. At policy level, the next three years are an opportunity for Ireland to become a leading force in contributing cutting edge thinking and academic expertise to the development of new paradigms for framing international development. Especially for a*

Widening Inequality

*More could also be done prioritizing an inclusive and rights' based model of development.*

*small country such as Ireland contributing to the discourse on international development can be an effective way of increasing its influence. This would require an investment in innovative thinking and research on global development issues on the part of Irish Aid. In this respect an increased focus on targeting higher education institutions in Ireland with a view to build up our*

*academic credentials in terms of development studies and also development education and public engagement is a key opportunity.*

Challenge Four: Widening Inequality

The **fourth major challenge** is the changing but persistent existence of **poverty and inequality** in the world. Here as well, things have shifted. Andy Sumner (2010) describes this shift as a possible “game changer” for international development. In summary his argument is the following: “In 1990 most of the world’s poor people (93 per cent) lived in poor countries – meaning low-income countries (LICs). Two decades on, the world’s poor – 72 per cent, or almost one billion poor people – now live in middle-income countries (MIC) and 61 per cent of the world’s poor live in stable MICs. LICs account for just 28 per cent of the world’s poor, and fragile LICs account for just 12 per cent. This is a startling change over two decades. Contrary to earlier estimates that a third of the poor live in fragile and conflict-affected states, our estimate is about 23–26 per cent if one takes the broadest definition. The picture is fairly similar taking education, nutrition and the new UNDP multidimensional poverty index. (Sumner 2010, pg 22)

These observations are also mentioned in the consultation paper and yet, the paper does not seem to suggest a major change in its emphasis of interventions even though most research into the changing landscape of international development cooperation and aid point to the fact that development without a clear focus on equality, inclusion and rights will not deliver results in relation to poverty reduction globally.

Recommendation:

*In this respect, IDEA supports Dóchas’ submission in urging Irish Aid to re-assert – through this White Paper review – “the focus on the poorest countries and on the poorest, most*

*marginalised areas and communities across countries and put in place transparent systems for monitoring this prioritisation and the actual impact of the resultant policies (Dóchas submission, pg. 9f.) More could also be done by prioritising an inclusive and rights based model of development. In this case one observation of the current White Paper is that the language is very much framed by “needs” rather than “rights”. As language in both life and policy frames our thinking, IDEA suggests a major shift in emphasis to a human rights based approach to development as part of this review and we support Dóchas’ proposition that the White paper should explicitly name the human rights principles which will inform its work. In addition, we think it is of paramount importance that Irish Aid re-frames its approach to development by focussing on rights rather than needs as this will also overcome the unhealthy and outdated notion that Ireland is the “powerful giver” vis-à-vis partner countries as the “grateful receivers”.*

## 4. Key Issues

Looking at all the challenges outlined in section 3 there is striking evidence that the way international development is perceived in the White Paper is still based on a clear division between developed and developing countries which runs roughly on a North/South axis. It is based on an us/them division in which “we” in the North provide resources in order for our partners in the South to develop. Although this is – especially in the case of Irish Aid funded programmes – most often done in a spirit of partnership, pro-poor policies and with involvement of local communities, the fact remains that according to underlying premises of the present MDG framework and the White Paper, development mainly needs to happen in the South. Contrary to that, the message that clearly stands out from the challenges listed above is that such a division no longer makes sense. All four challenges are “world challenges” that defy any clear division or binaries of developed/developing, rich/poor, safe/in danger. We would therefore, argue that in order to respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance, human rights and gender equality it is absolutely necessary to re-frame the notion of development that is put forward in the White Paper. In order to be fit for any Beyond 2015 scenario and future development policies, overcoming the binary view that development issues are to be located exclusively in the South is, in our view, a necessity if the Irish Aid programme wants to remain effective and results-based in tackling the root causes of poverty.

IDEA, therefore, does not suggest removing any of the current key issues mentioned in the consultation paper but instead a new framing of these key issues in order to allow Irish Aid to respond to global challenges more effectively. The **two elements that could provide guidance in re-framing the issues** are an increased focus on PCD combined with a new emphasis of working in the global North to tackle issues of “poverty production” rather than exclusively focusing on “poverty



reduction/eradication". In relation to the latter, development education must – in our view – be seen as an essential constituent of such an approach.

## 1. Effective Development needs a focus on Policy Coherence for Development

**Policy Coherence for Development** (PCD) is mentioned in the consultation paper as “ways of working”. We think PCD should not be seen as a means to an end (eradicating poverty) but as a key and cross-cutting issue in our common endeavor to end poverty. In order to respond to the issues highlighted in the consultation paper effectively, Irish Aid would need to **enhance efforts on PCD**, especially around the issues of trade, taxation and economic development. Such development related policy areas require an all-Government development effort and are crucial for delivering on the ambitious aims of the White Paper.

IDEA proposes that the review of the White Paper should be used to introduce a strong framing of development issues under the common thread of PCD and supports the Dóchas proposal to institute a bi-annual report on progress in this area. In line with EC reporting this report should highlight successes towards PCD as well as identify any government policies that undermine the ambitious goals set by the White Paper. It is crucial for success that such a report identifies strategies to reach more PCD across government departments and policies and sets measurable targets and indicators to monitor this process.

## 2. Effective Development needs engaged Citizens

In the light of the challenges that Ireland faces at the moment but also more generally, IDEA thinks that public engagement should become a key issue for Irish Aid – in conjunction with NGOs working in international development – to work on. Recent research in this area by Martin Kirk (Finding Frames, New ways to engage the UK public in global poverty, Oxfam 2010) has already paved the way to think more systematically about this issue. He makes a compelling case for governments and NGOs to invest more in a deeper engagement with the public about global justice issues and the work they are doing. In short, he claims that NGOs and governments have focused too much on what he calls “cheap engagement” by increasing the numbers of uncritical supporters rather than looking for engaged members of the public with a clear sense of ownership. The latter, he claims, is only possible if we start working on reinforcing values and frames that are conducive for our continued work on global justice issues. We realise that this submission is not the place to discuss the importance of these findings in detail and we would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the big task of how to engage the Irish public in the light of this recent research on public engagement. Engaging the public in tackling poverty will require a multi-faceted long-term approach in shifting people’s attitudes and values. This is where the experience built up by development educators of the past decades will prove to be effective if adequately recognised. Development needs strong and informed public engagement for three reasons:

- Public support provides legitimacy for NGOs and governments to take well informed, wise and decisive political action on poverty and global justice
- Engaged individuals make a difference through their daily activities (e.g. as a fair trade consumer, volunteer, activist, educator, voter, etc.)

- Public support opens a space for debate on root causes of global poverty, thus it allows discussing and implementing systemic changes required to tackle global justice and poverty issues.

Development communication and public information exercises are not sufficient to provide deep and values based options for citizens to engage; support will remain “a mile wide and an inch deep”. To create lasting support and engagement for global justice, both NGOs and governments should aim to strengthen intrinsic and positive values; the true level of ethical development of a society is revealed by the extent to which citizens are able to choose values transcending their own immediate self interest. Research shows that people who have stronger ‘self-transcendent values’ engage more and longer in pro-social behaviour. Development education proposes an approach to reinforce these values. Successful development education forms multipliers that reach out in society and can enable the large and deep public support, which is crucial for any global justice movement to succeed. If NGOs and public institutions aim for a broad and deep democratic debate on development issues and for making global justice a central concern for all citizens – thus obtaining a real and solid democratic mandate for much needed policy changes (in particular in non-aid policies related to development such as trade, migration or climate change) – they need to adopt far more ambitious policies for public engagement.

Public engagement in Ireland is crucial – not only to support aid - but to eradicate structural global inequalities. As described above, the public often see their only role as ‘funders’ of aid, in a charitable approach to a ‘lack of development’ in Africa, Asia and Latin America. As Irish Aid projects often exemplify, successful development cooperation projects and ‘development effectiveness’ in the Global South are characterised by negotiation and debate with the local community, and full involvement of all stakeholders to ensure a sustainable impact of the project. This engagement with local communities needs to be replicated in the Global North in order to ensure development effectiveness, through understanding and challenging the structures of inequality. As Matt Baillie Smith maintains: “We need to begin by ‘locating Northern constituencies within development, rather than characterising them as the funders of development elsewhere and to bring the North into the process of addressing global inequality. This particularly requires a challenge to definitions of development rooted in assessment of the absence of development in the South’. (Bailey Smith, 2008) Development Education is an intrinsic element of ensuring development effectiveness by empowering people to become active global citizens with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to challenge the status quo and demand equity in global relations through campaign actions, education and awareness-raising.

IDEA urges Irish Aid to use this White Paper review process to introduce public engagement and development education as one of the key issues of their programme.

## 5. Ways of Working

We have already commented on the fact that we feel that two of the areas that the consultation paper sees as “means”, or “ways of working”, are in our view key issues of any effective aid programme.

In addition to this, we propose to use the opportunity presented by this review to re-frame the “aid” programme as a programme of “development cooperation”. Both, international good practice and the inclusion of the trade portfolio into the ministry necessitate such a step. As development educators we are very concerned that Irish Aid in their consultation paper (p.18) still talks about “Aid Effectiveness” instead of “Development Effectiveness”. We feel that language matters in this respect and it reinforces the points made in section 3 that Irish Aid should use this White Paper review to re-frame some of its thinking at policy level. It is internationally agreed that an exclusive focus on aid and aid-related policies will not be effective in the long run unless “aid” is seen in the broader context of international development and the new global landscape. An all government approach to development related policies as well as a clear strategy on how to achieve more substantial policy coherence for development will be key elements in achieving a more effective overall Irish Aid programme.

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

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