

2.0. Response

Other comments – regarding provision and protection of development resources

Introduction

UCD Development Studies Library, now in existence for over 20 years, is a specialist research library for human development issues. It is committed to providing resources, research assistance, and meeting space to researchers, civil society, non-governmental organisations and members of the public who are interested in development issues.

This library holds an extensive collection of resources in all subjects relevant to International Development and specifically to the developing countries. It identifies and sources development related publications published on the island of Ireland.

White Paper

The *White Paper on Irish Aid* commits to co-operation with the higher education sector: “collaboration with the higher education sector is important, not just in the context of the next few years...but also in the long term” (p 106). It also recognises the importance of development education and in people understanding the challenges of global human development: “we will provide support for development education, which has a crucial role in enlarging public understanding of development issues and the underlying causes of poverty and underdevelopment in the world” (p 107).

The *Consultation Paper for the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid* acknowledges that public understanding of development is still poor: “the knowledge and understanding of development issues, and the government’s aid programme is somewhat low” (p 6); “for example, a recent survey found that almost 75% of Irish people surveyed had never heard of Millennium Development Goals” (p 23).

Our recommendations

National Repository: There is no other library or archive in Ireland which actively pursues and collects all the development resources published and printed in Ireland, and makes them available in an open access collection. The withdrawal of long-term support from Irish Aid means that the UCD Development Studies Library is no longer able to collect development related materials at a level appropriate to its mission. As a result, materials and resources being produced in Ireland will be lost to posterity, current research and education in this area will be adversely affected, and this valuable resource, built up over 20 years, will be compromised.

The development sector urgently needs a central point where resources are being collected and protected. The Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid could stress the importance of protecting development resources for future research by mandating that copies of any new development resources that are produced in Ireland be sent to Development Studies Library for safe keeping.

The *Consultation Paper for the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid* cites a report “Mapping the Past, Charting the Future: A Review of the Irish Government’s Engagement with Development Education and a Meta-Analysis of Development Education Research in Ireland” (p 23). This report

was published in 2011 and at its launch the report's authors, Matthias Fiedler, Audrey Bryan and Meliosa Bracken, spoke of the challenges of finding the information they needed for the report. Their sources had to be accessed in a large variety of places. In some cases, they could not locate reports or surveys that they knew had been written and published. This illustrates the need for a central point where development resources can be made accessible and the importance of protecting resources for future research.

Development resources: In order for development to be understood and engaged with, people need to be able to read up to date information about the issues. Historical information should be preserved and archived to ensure researchers in the future can identify the impact that development aid programmes have achieved over time. Development is a complex subject and requires an understanding of a range of topics, across a number of disciplines; politics, international relations, history, economics, health, agriculture, geography, social justice, sociology, etc. Development Studies Library has a broad, holistic collection policy which covers all aspects of development.

Funding is required to ensure that these substantial collections – in print and online – remain up to date and relevant. Nowhere, though, does the *White Paper on Irish Aid* or the *Consultation Paper for the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid* mention development resources – what is available and where they can be accessed.

Research support services: Assisting people in effectively and efficiently locating relevant information will help raise the profile of development issues, while also ensuring the task of learning about these issues is less daunting. People need to know that such assistance is available from a central location, where skills training and support are also provided. UCD Development Studies Library provides this support to the wider development community in Ireland, as well as advice about related historical collections, preservation issues etc.

Space: UCD Development Studies Library offers a neutral space where people can meet with colleagues to discuss development related issues and access and assess development resources.