



Submission to the consultation on Ireland's White Paper on International Development

Prioritising and supporting Development Education to strengthen Ireland's contribution to a more equal, just and sustainable world.

Submitted by: Tony Daly, Co-ordinator, on behalf of 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World

Nature of views: On behalf of organisation

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Freedom of Information: 80:20 are happy for this submission to be published in full under the Freedom of Information (Amendment Act) 2014

Date of posting response: August 30, 2018

About 80:20

80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World is an Irish non-governmental organisation that promotes popular education on human development and human rights.

80:20's vision

Through education, 80:20 seeks to realise a world which is more equal, more just and more sustainable than is currently the case. 80:20 believes that the concept of human development rooted in an international human rights framework offers the hope, dignity and the basis for, such a world. The organisation is dedicated to pursuing educational strategies for developing global citizenship as a fundamentally important priority in international development strategies.

80:20 is a member of the Irish Coalition 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals, the developmenteducation.ie Consortium, the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and EuroMed Rights Network.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Irish Aid have supported 80:20's work for over two decades.

Summary of 80:20 recommendations to the 4 key questions posed in the consultation

- The key crosscutting themes developed over the previous International Development policy should remain at the core of Irish Aid policy, namely a focus on the pro-poor approach, a focus on women and gender, governance, conflict resolution and humanitarianism with an expanded approach towards 'sustainable development', and not only 'development'.
- Building on the approach adopted in the 2006 White Paper in the new Irish Aid international development policy – ambitious, principled and not simply a technical document but one that inspires the public, officials and supporters of the overseas aid agenda within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – in order to build a strategic.
- In an evolving social, political and economic context that is challenging underlying principles and values of ODA such as universality, fairness, equality and justice, the Government should support and expand educational processes and opportunities for citizens to engage and grapple with the world around them through political and economic literacy on international development as a key pillar of Ireland's development co-operation programme.
- In supporting and agenda to learn about and learn through the SDGs the new international development policy would be strengthened by taking on board the 'systems-level' lessons learned through critical reflections on ODA within the context of aid effectiveness and a results-frameworks programme agenda.
- That the Government finally honour its supporting promises since 2005 and set out a detailed schedule and plan of action on how 0.7% of GNI will be reached in ODA by of 2025, as argued by Dóchas in its submission to the White Paper review.

- It is vital that Ireland's new development policy be held accountable to Irish people through a series of public mechanisms, and not just by press release or public opinion survey work.
- That as part of a policy that engages in specific country and regional contexts, the new Irish Aid international development policy should actively support global citizenship education approaches as stakeholders of the programme.
- Irish Aid and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade create an enabling and more ambitious environment for development education during the era of the Sustainable Development Goals with a wider set of public mechanisms and partnership mechanisms that are open and transparent for all stakeholders of the new international development policy.
- That development education must be, and must be seen to be a core element of the strategy and not simply a 'necessary' add on. Irish Aid must be as ambitious for the development education components of its strategy as it rightly is for its development co-operation components.
- Maximise awareness, public ownership, and engagement by people in Ireland with the SDGs by building on the groundwork already laid by Development Education support during the term of the MDGs through a comprehensive education and communications plan.
- Proactively engage in policy coherence across other departments and policies as a vital ingredient in the mix of Ireland's national implementation plan for the SDGs, and champion mechanisms for Policy Coherence for Development.

1. What elements of Ireland's international development experience should the new policy reflect?

A number of key priority areas that the Irish Aid White Paper proposes to build on are welcome, and are essential in a world of increasing global inequalities within and between countries. Renewing priority areas of work regarding gender quality (and women's rights), conflict resolution, a pro-poor approach, governance, climate action and humanitarianism are vital, necessary and welcome inclusions and have become distinguishing hallmarks of Ireland's proposed policy on international human development. While climate action is cited as a priority area, a more holistic approach to the concept of 'sustainability' in 'sustainable development' requires more visible inclusion and integration within the new policy. 80:20, therefore, recommends that:

- **The key crosscutting themes developed over the previous International Development policy should remain at the core of Irish Aid policy, namely a focus on the pro-poor approach, a focus on women and gender, governance, conflict resolution and humanitarianism with an expanded approach towards 'sustainable development', and not only 'development'.**

The 2006 Irish Aid White Paper on International Development was as ambitious as the agenda set to engage with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Unashamedly

leading with human rights principles and values, it balanced the need for technical detail and a comprehensive roadmap to achieving the target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) in advance of 2015. The White Paper is a public document to be read far wider than within policy circles and among practitioners alone; and this needs greater consideration in the communication of the strategy. 80:20, therefore, recommends:

- **Building on the approach adopted in the 2006 White Paper in the new Irish Aid international development policy – ambitious, principled and not simply a technical document but one that inspires the public, officials and supporters of the overseas aid agenda within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – in order to build a strategic**

2. What are the implications of the changing global context for Ireland's international development co-operation and humanitarian action?

The challenges faced by entrenched human insecurities and increasing inequality between and within countries, the contemporary rise of populist politics and movements, as well as regional and global instability brought about by war, sovereign debt burdens and neoliberal austerity economics, the accumulated powers of transnational companies, the stresses and changes on climate placed on planetary earth systems, the collapse of species systems and the regenerative capacity to replenish natural resources – all create the broad context for Ireland's international development co-operation and humanitarian action.

The international human development context since official development assistance (ODA) was established has evolved. Learning about and working in international human 'development' is not on the same scale or same urgency that it was when the ODA programme was established in 1974. From dependency to charity to rights-based work, ODA and related work has matured. In this context, a judicious mix of formal and non-formal development education is no longer the add-on it has so often been, it has become a 21st century imperative.¹ This point is reinforced by both President Michael D Higgins at the Irish Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals in 2016² and by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade with responsibility for Brexit³ as a civic responsibility to equip citizens through critical literacy on international political economy issues which explore international trade, monetary and finance systems, the processes of globalisation, the impact of emerging economies, and the causes and consequences of economic underdevelopment, among other core issues. 80:20, therefore, recommends:

- **In an evolving social, political and economic context that is challenging underlying principles and values of ODA such as universality, fairness, equality and justice, the Government should support and expand educational processes and opportunities for citizens to engage and grapple with the world**

¹ 21st Century Skills, Human Development Report 2016: Human Development for Everyone (2017), UNDP. Available from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2016-report>

² See section 2. The importance of citizen literacy in issues of political economy, in "Achieving Sustainable Development" President Michael D Higgins Opening Address at the 2016 Irish Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals (May 5th, 2016). Available from: <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/achieving-sustainable-development>

³ Opening comments made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade at the launch of the consultation on the White Paper on international development in Iveagh House, Dublin (July 12th, 2018)

around them through political and economic literacy on international development as a key pillar of Ireland's development co-operation programme.

This need is underlined in a recent warning from 15 economists in an open letter on the need to protect against shocks and gains through ringfencing social protections against fiscal adjustments has been apposite.

The open letter follows the work of the UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, arguing that an obsession in the micro-interventions in the context of 'aid effectiveness' and ODA work can miss a systems-approach where the root causes are neither explored nor addressed; merely bandaged or nursed. Instead of assessing the short-term impacts of micro-projects, we should evaluate whole public policies. The authors of the open letter are unequivocal: 'In the face of the sheer scale of the overlapping crises we face, we need systems-level thinking. The people of the south deserve better.'⁴ Expanding systems-level approaches, such as the *Irish Aid Social Protection Strategy 2017*⁵, is vital. 80:20, therefore, recommends:

- **In supporting and agenda to learn about and learn through the SDGs the new international development policy would be strengthened by taking on board the 'systems-level' lessons learned through critical reflections on ODA within the context of aid effectiveness and a results-frameworks programme agenda.**

3. Do the proposed priorities respond to the changing context and contribute to the achievement of our vision of a more equal, peaceful, sustainable world?

Despite a strong strategic start to 2009, the subsequent failure to incrementally and systematically reach the 0.7% of GNI over the course of the MDGs has undermined the aid programme in the years to 2015. Establishing 0.7% GNI as a target for overseas development assistance (ODA) has been a standing item of debate in Ireland since the establishment of the Irish overseas assistance programme in 1974.

While Ireland's strategic prioritisation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in this arena fits well with the promise to 'leave no-one behind', its fiscal commitment to ODA stood at just 0.3 percent of GNI in 2017, which is less than half of the 0.7 percent target agreed to by OECD nations in 2000.

There are ongoing risks posed by the ODA shortfall including harming goodwill, support and credibility (potentially encouraging cynicism about the entire enterprise). President Michael D Higgins observed these risks during the context of the multiple global humanitarian emergencies at the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 as, 'For too long, empty pledges and fine words have died in our mouths – now is the time to turn promises into action for this generation'.

⁴ Buzzwords and tortuous impact studies won't fix a broken aid system (June 16, 2018). The Guardian. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/jul/16/buzzwords-crazes-broken-aid-system-poverty>

⁵ Irish Aid Social Protection Strategy 2017, Irish Aid. Available from: <https://www.irishaid.ie/news-publications/publications/publicationsarchive/2017/september/social-protection-strategy-2017/irish-aid-social-protection-strategy-2017.html>

It is worth remembering Dóchas' critique nearly a decade ago of the severe cuts to the Irish aid programme:

*'We made promises to the world's poorest people, and built an international profile and reputation on the strength of those promises. That reputation lies in tatters now that the government has shown it is willing to attack the aid budget repeatedly, disproportionately and unfairly. We are fast acquiring a reputation as fair weather friends, rather than serious international partners.'*⁶

Genueflecting once more in the direction of the 0.7% GNI target without proposing a structured, incremental and strategically coherent whole-government approach will undermine Ireland's aid programme over the remaining period of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In such a context, it becomes increasingly difficult across movements and networks of teachers, educators, citizens and those engaged with the aid programme in learning and education contexts to maintain support and conviction. If Ireland will not actually honour its commitments on ODA, better to drop them altogether than continue an obvious façade. 80:20, therefore, recommends:

- **That the Government finally honour its supporting promises since 2005 and set out a detailed schedule and plan of action on how 0.7% of GNI will be reached in ODA by of 2025, as argued by Dóchas in its submission to the White Paper review.**

4. How can we improve delivery of Ireland's international development co-operation and humanitarian action?

Through the continued use of committee systems in the Oireachtas, the Dáil and general public, relevant events that people can actively engage in face-to-face opportunities where Irish Aid presents directly to the wider public; at present there is no public forum where Irish citizens can effectively interact with Irish Aid and Ireland's overseas development assistance. While there are some indirect examples in place, such as the Irish Aid workshops for schools and colleges, a series of regional seminars, for example, meetings that support listening and hearing opportunities would serve, as proactive examples of an agenda for building public ownership and participation of Ireland's development co-operation and international development practice, which would go beyond passive communication exercises alone.

80:20 strongly believes that investing in qualitative education and critical engagement exercises and strategies, building on extant DE, must hallmark the strategy. Public awareness, engagement and judgement on ODA and related issues cannot be taken for granted and public belief and ownership cannot be delivered without a combination of sustained and effective public education in a variety of methodologies and contexts. A strategy that does not have public ownership and engagement is no credible strategy.

Relying on public survey work alone, as is well known in development communications debates and discussions since 2012, is not a sufficient or reliable measure for gauging public support for development aid programmes, resulting in a possible 'mile wide and an inch deep'⁷ understanding which is unreliable and not fit for purpose.

⁶ Dóchas press statement, OECD Calls on Government to Meet Aid Targets (May 7, 2009). Available from: https://dochas.ie/sites/default/files/OECD_Calls_on_Government_to_Meet_Aid_Target.pdf

⁷ Argued critically in the UK since 2012 through the ensuing debates by scholars and development practitioners as a result of the work of David Hudson and Jennifer van Heerde-Hudson Hudson, 'A

Furthermore, development education opportunities should not be limited to Ireland alone. The place of immersions, exchanges and study visits (historically) has enabled cross fertilisation and added-value to education and global citizenship education agendas and programmes through experiential learning, culture exchanges and laying the groundwork for joint international human rights-based agendas in education and civics initiatives⁸. 80:20, therefore, recommends:

- **It is vital that Ireland’s new development policy be held accountable to Irish people through a series of public mechanisms, and not just by press release or public opinion survey work.**
- **That as part of a policy that engages in specific country and regional contexts, the new Irish Aid international development policy should actively support global citizenship education approaches as stakeholders of the programme.**

More than a fifteen years ago Irish Aid supported a joint exercise in establishing the Development Education Advisory Group (DEAC)⁹ to, among other matters, join Irish Aid in grappling with an incremental expansion of the DE programme in strategic work, and act as an observatory that was a transparent and participative model for working in partnership with civil society organisations in development and education. As a model of genuine partnership, the DEAC supported an annual consultation forum on development education. There are many stakeholders in the DE landscape that have yet to be adequately engaged, including local authorities, regional authorities, area-based partnership organisations and strategic partners in youth and adult and community sector organisations.

This would require the Development Education Unit of Irish Aid to have a sufficient staffing and funding to carry out this work as well as administration of funding to civil society organisations and other stakeholders. 80:20, therefore, recommends:

- **Irish Aid and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade create an enabling and more ambitious environment for development education during the era of the Sustainable Development Goals with a wider set of public mechanisms and partnership mechanisms that are open and transparent for all stakeholders of the new international development policy.**
- **That development education must be, and must be seen to be a core element of the strategy and not simply a ‘necessary’ add on. Irish Aid must be as ambitious for the development education components of its strategy as it rightly is for its development co-operation components.**

Irish Aid and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade should strive to generate a sufficient threshold of public support and confidence in the programme and the long-term

Mile Wide and an Inch Deep’: Surveys of Public Attitudes Towards Development Aid (2012). International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 5-23, 2012. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2015216>

⁸ Examples of this approach exist, such as the Young Scientists Tanzania and the Science for Development award as part of the Young Scientists exhibition supported by Irish Aid over a number of years, and 80:20’s development education HIV and Aids and civic engagement programme work in Zambia which ran from 2004 – 2011 which was supported by Irish Aid.

⁹ The DEAC was active from 2003-2012. More info available: <https://www.irishaid.ie/about-us/our-organisation/our-advisory-groups/development-education-advisory-committee/>

goals of the new International Development Policy. Setting aside a more ambitious portion of the proposed 0.7 percent GNI budget for public education and learning mechanisms would facilitate citizens and the Irish public to actively engage different sectors in society, as envisaged by the *Irish Aid Development Education Strategy (2017-2023)*¹⁰, and assist the Irish Government in delivering its SDG commitments. Driving and supporting meaningful participation by young people and adults in SDG design and implementation projects is fundamental, particularly if the public are to 'own' and be a part of delivering Agenda 2030. 80:20, therefore, recommends:

- **Maximise awareness, public ownership, and engagement by people in Ireland with the SDGs by building on the groundwork already laid by Development Education support during the term of the MDGs through a comprehensive education and communications plan.**

A key part of aligning policy coherence between all Government Departments should relate to implementation and practice in Ireland, impacts in other countries (worldwide impacts from, for example, trade, agriculture, energy and climate policies) and on public goods, and with regard to supporting other countries through ODA. Establishing consistent patterns in policy and practice is a vital ingredient for leading in, for example, the transition to low carbon economies and societies. While the Government supports overseas projects and works toward sustainable livelihoods in programme countries, at the same time appears content to overlook contradictory practices (and industries it subsidises) in Ireland regarding, for example, carbon-intensive energy production and transportation. This presents an alarming paradox over the remaining period of the SDGs that will undermine ODA and the values and principles that have been built over the course of more than four decades. Explicit Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) mechanisms should be formalised and strengthened by Irish Aid in this context.

As part of this policy review 80:20 welcomes deeper PCD work regarding Ireland's global footprint, supporting the German three-levels approach towards universal applicability of the 2030 agenda that considers 'impacts in other countries and on global public goods' as well as 'supporting other countries (our international co-operation policy' and 'implementation and impacts in Germany'¹¹. 80:20, therefore recommends that Irish Aid and the DFA:

- **Proactively engage in policy coherence across other departments and policies as a vital ingredient in the mix of Ireland's national implementation plan for the SDGs, and champion mechanisms for Policy Coherence for Development.**

Note: 80:20 supports the IDEA, Dóchas and NYCI submissions to the consultation.

¹⁰ Irish Aid Development Education Strategy (2017-2023), Irish Aid. Available from: <https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/60aboutirishaid/IA-DevEd-Strategy-English.pdf>

¹¹ see p.5 of Report of the German Federal Government to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2016 (July 12, 2016). Available from: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10686HLPF-Bericht_final_EN.pdf