

**Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on  
Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence  
Review of Irish Aid Programme**

**By**

**The National Youth Council of Ireland**

**October 2017**

IT'S TIME TO  
CHANGE  
THE WORLD



“Together, we can build a world that leaves no one behind, but we must not build it *for* everyone. We must build it *with* everyone”

— UN Youth Delegate for Ireland

## Introduction

The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence Review of the Irish Aid Programme. Our submission will focus on Development Education as well as Irish Aid's contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a national and international level.

The National Youth Council of Ireland is a national organisation which represents and supports community, voluntary and not for profit youth organisations in Ireland. Founded in 1967, we currently have 49 member organisations <http://www.youth.ie/members> which represent the scope, scale and diversity of the youth work sector. At a conservative estimate, these organisations touch the lives of almost to 400,000 young people in Ireland. In turn we work in partnership with other local, national and European organisations to deliver strong outcomes and results that positively impact and support young people in Ireland and internationally.

Our work is informed by:

- NYCI Strategic Plan
- National Youth Strategy (NYS)
- Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (BOBF)
- Youth Work Act 2001
- Children First
- Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017 - 2023
- European Youth Policy
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Sustainable Development Goals
- And related programme policy areas

We believe that a fair and just society is one where young people are valued; where there is a commitment to justice; a belief in the interdependence of lives and a sense of solidarity that comes from people acting together; a strong commitment to freedom; and, a strong engagement with the ecological values of harmony and balance with nature.

## Young People as a Key Population for Irish Aid – in Ireland and abroad

- Today, young people aged 10 to 24 make up one quarter of the world's population - 1.8 billion people – the largest in world history.
- In Ireland, one third of the population are under 25 years and particularly those aged 10-24 years represent 18.3% of the total population of 4.59 million people.
- It is estimated by the United Nations that close to 90% of the world's youth live in developing countries (some of the poorest nations on the planet).
- More than 500 million young people aged 15-24 live on less than \$2 a day.
- Some 74 million young people are unemployed and more than 600 million jobs need to be generated globally (including Ireland) by the year 2030.
- By 2050, with a projected increased global population of 9.6 billion, we would need the equivalent of almost 3 planets worth of resources to sustain our way of living, if our current consumption and production patterns remain the same.

Sources: <http://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-statistics/>

<https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20151008NatYouthStrat2015to2020.pdf>

These statistics begin to tell a story about the demands that there will be on the world to deliver what we consider to be quality lifestyles for current and future generations of young people as they progress through their lives. It is therefore important that young people are involved and engaged in how we progress as a society and as a planet, as we tackle some of the key challenges of our and their time.

### The Youth Sector in Ireland

There are almost 400,000 young people involved in a variety of different ways in youth work and half of these come from disadvantaged backgrounds. 2 in 5 young people are involved in a club or society.

According to the 'Assessment of the Economic Value of Youth Work' (NYCI, 2012: 13), the youth work sector involves 40,000 adult volunteers with 1,400 professional youth workers. The level of participation from young people and the volunteering of adults is part of our culture in Ireland. It is a real strength of the youth sector. This in turn, creates a different Development Education/youth work context to that of our European neighbours.

There are a broad range of actors working/partnering on Development Education in the youth sector.



The graphic above highlights the diversity of the youth sector, the diversity of development education provision with diverse groups of young people. Each actor has their own valuable role to play. Below are some of the issues that Development Education addresses – from a local (Ireland) and global perspective:

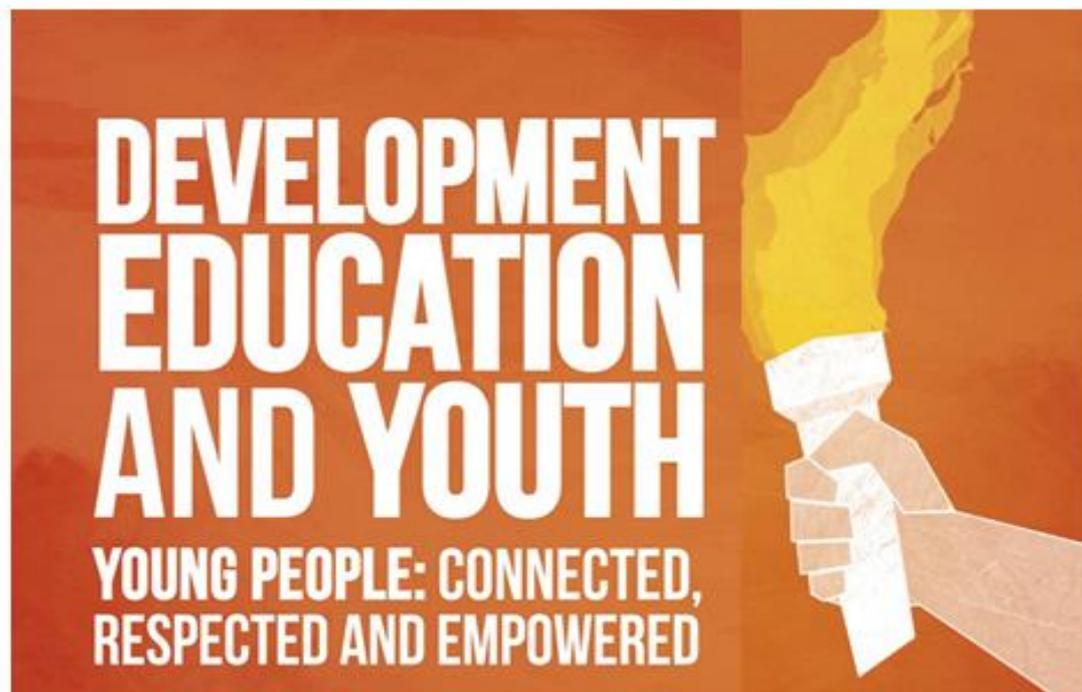


The Youth Sector is different from the formal sector in that that young people participate on a voluntary basis, largely outside of school, and are active partners in making decisions, planning programmes, and setting priorities for action through interactive methodologies and particularly experiential learning.

The Youth Sector must be adequately supported to ensure young people are aware of the issues and supported to bring about change personally, locally, nationally, and globally. Whilst the new Development Education Strategy is very welcome, the resources behind it do not match the ambition of the Strategy. In addition, with a potential new strategic partnership between Irish Aid and the youth sector, the resources required to meet the need and potential are not currently in place.



## Development Education



Development Education is a lifelong educational process which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, Development Education helps people to critically explore how global justice issues interlink with their everyday lives.

Development Education empowers people to analyse, reflect on and challenge at a local and global level, the root causes and consequences of global hunger, poverty, injustice, inequality and climate change; presenting multiple perspectives on global justice issues.

Development Education inspires global solidarity by supporting people to fully realise their rights, responsibilities and potential as global citizens. Development Education enables people to take action locally and globally -the understanding or theory of change being that such action will contribute to desired transformations in the social, cultural, political and economic structures which affect their lives and the lives of others.

By engaging with Development Education, learners develop the values, knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to become active global citizens and advocate for change.

(Source: Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017-2023) -

<https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/60aboutirishaid/IA-DevEd-Strategy-English.pdf>

Through Development Education, the public in Ireland learn about the key development issues in the world, the work of NGOs, and the work of Irish Aid.

## NYCI and Development Education

NYCI is a partner of Irish Aid delivering Development Education to the non-formal education sector and supports Irish Aid in attaining its new strategic goal whereby

*People in Ireland are empowered to analyse and challenge the root causes and consequences of global hunger, poverty, injustice and climate change; inspiring and enabling them to become active global citizens in the creation of a fairer and more sustainable future for all through the provision of quality Development Education.*

NYCI believes in young people being active participants in their communities and works to empower them on Development Education and the Sustainable Development Goals. Examples of NYCI's Development Education work include:

- Each year, NYCI coordinates **One World Week** (European Global Education Week) <http://www.youthdeved.ie/one-world-week-2017-1> providing mini grants for youth sector actions locally; training to skill educators on development issues including the SDGs <http://www.youthdeved.ie/sdgs-youth>; and creates resources to support greater knowledge and understanding <http://www.youthdeved.ie/publications> and an annual YOUTH Summit on the SDGs
- NYCI coordinates the **UN Youth Delegate Programme** (now in its third year) <http://www.youth.ie/nyci/Who-are-your-2017-Delegates-0> bringing together diplomacy and Development Education <http://www.youthdeved.ie/un-youth-delegates-ireland-2017-2018>; supporting young people to engage on public diplomacy; raising awareness about Ireland's role in the world <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dul8QLIDtZE&feature=youtu.be>

NYCI is a member of the **European Youth Forum**. The EYF was recently named by the European Commission as one of 30 members of a new high-level multi-stakeholder platform, to follow up on the SDGs in the EU [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-3922\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3922_en.htm) NYCI is a member of the EYF's SDG Taskforce. NYCI represents Ireland on **CONCORD's** (Umbrella body for European Development Platforms) **Hub 4**

NYCI is one of the founding members of **Coalition2030** - an alliance of 100 organisations based in Ireland and globally— who are working together with government (including Irish Aid) on the SDGs <http://www.youthdeved.ie/coalition-2030-launch>

NYCI were successful in having the SDGs and Development Education named in the National Youth Strategy in 2015 - the first policy in Ireland to do so. <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20151008NatYouthStrat2015to2020.pdf>



NYCI is a member of IDEA (Board and Convenor of Youth Taskgroup), Dochas (Development Education Group) and supports their submissions also.

## Sustainable Development Goals



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a new blueprint for the world and provide a unique opportunity to address the most urgent and fundamental needs of millions of people in Ireland and around the world – people who have the right, and who seek the means and the freedom, to live their lives in dignity. We cannot continue to do business as usual but take this opportunity through the 17 goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators to ensure we are successful, for people and planet, so no one is left behind.

The SDGs will not be achieved without the support from those working in the Development Education and Global Citizenship Education sectors. SDG Target 4.7 calls on countries to

*ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development*

Following the adoption of the SDGs, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the UN Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security, there is unprecedented momentum for working towards sustainable development. There is an urgent need to raise awareness and educate about the SDGs, what it means for young people/the world, and to work on its implementation.

Development Education strengthens public understanding of the interconnectedness of global and national poverty and inequality, supporting the Irish public (and others) to acquire the necessary knowledge, values and analytical skills to understand and practice global justice. Development Education is therefore integral to the successful delivery of the SDGs, inspiring and enabling people to take action to deliver the Goals at personal, local, national and global levels.

## Recommendations

1. The status of Development Education within Irish Aid should be reviewed and the work undertaken by the Development Education Section and its partners be better incorporated into all areas of Irish Aid's work – at home and abroad. Development Education should be a priority focus within One World One Future or any review, update or replacement of One World One Future and any new White Paper. The Development Education sector should have annual meetings with Irish Aid as a whole and not just the Development Education Section (Head of Civil Society; Policy; Human Rights; etc). These would be mutually beneficial to all.
2. The Irish Aid Development Education Strategy should be integrated into Irish Aid management planning and overall strategy.
3. The optional status of Development Education in Irish Aid Programme Grants should be removed, and the requirement to include Development Education should be reinstated.
4. Irish Aid Development Education funding modalities should allow for mixed, balanced and longer term DE programme through multi-annual funding, strategic partnerships and innovation funding.
5. Irish Aid and the Irish Government, through its SDGs National Action/Implementation Plan (and VNRs), should recognise and develop an indicator on SDG Target 4.7 – Development Education/Global Citizenship Education - particularly looking at the non-formal sector – for which there is limited information at global level. Ireland is a world leader in Development Education and Ireland would build good will with other countries should we choose to monitor and evaluate SDG Target 4.7. This would provide an opportunity to work cross-departmentally in government also – but Irish Aid should take the lead.
6. In 2015 the Irish Aid Development Education budget was 0.5% of ODA. This amounts to an annual investment in Ireland of approximately €0.71 per person<sup>1</sup>. The level of funding has not increased substantially since 2015. Funding for DE should be linked to ODA and at a rate of 3% or more.
7. Young people and youth sector (organisations, volunteers, academia, policymakers, etc) must be supported and resourced to ensure they fulfil their role as leaders in delivering the SDGs. The non-formal youth sector is well placed to support Irish Aid and Irish Government, using their unique knowledge, skills, interactive and action-based approaches to engage the wider public on Development Education and SDGs.

Development Education should be properly (financially) resourced and recognised across government as a gateway through which young people and those who work with young people are empowered to analyse, reflect on and challenge at a local and global level, the root causes and consequences of hunger, poverty, injustice, inequality, extremism, and climate change;

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<sup>1</sup> Based on CSO population figures <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cpr/censusofpopulation2016-preliminaryresults/> and Global Education in Ireland, GENE, p38

presenting multiple perspectives on global justice issues. Irish Aid should prioritise Development Education as essential for maintaining public engagement with Ireland's Aid Programme. This should be reflected in Irish Aid funding of programmes, policy support, and communications including annual reports.

8. Irish Aid (including DE) must build on global momentum and work towards achieving the targets and recommendations found in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) (<http://www.youthdeved.ie/transforming-our-world-2030-agenda-sustainable-development>), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change ([http://unfccc.int/paris\\_agreement/items/9485.php](http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php)) and the UN Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security (<https://www.youth4peace.info/UNSCR2250/Introduction>) <http://www.youthdeved.ie/coalition-2030-launch>
9. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Irish Aid should ensure engagement with Development Education by the Department of Education and Skills, Department of Children and Youth Affairs and other relevant government departments, state agencies and community development structures.





*Young people will be the torchbearers of the next world development agenda through 2030. We must ensure that, while protecting the planet, we leave no one behind.*

**– UN Synthesis Report for the SDGs, December 2014**



## Conclusion

This is a hugely important time for Irish Aid and its role in the world.

We must all ensure that we maximise this review of the Irish Aid Programme by you, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence and that we create a strong, relevant, strategic, and resilient Irish Aid that will take us through until the world achieves the SDGs in 2030.

Development Education has never been more important in playing its part in the world and playing its part to support the work of Irish Aid in Ireland and globally.

A greater acknowledgement, understanding, and resourcing of Development Education is required.

Young people and their diversity are still largely unharnessed and can be a much greater asset for Irish Aid. Young people want to take action for a better world. The SDGs provide a framework on which Irish Aid and Development Education can hang its work and this is probably one of the most exciting features that the SDGs bring to Development Education.

It is up to all of us, politicians, educators, funders, organisations, researchers and policy makers to work together to develop pathways through which young people, those who work with young people, those who educate the educators, and others, can engage on what are the issues of our time to be successful in achieving the SDGs. And Irish Aid can be a national and global leader in this regard.

In making this submission to you, NYCI is setting out to work with you (Oireachtas Committee and Irish Aid), and with others who have made submissions to you (IDEA, DOCHAS, Trocaire, Concern, 80:20, etc) to support a stronger Development Education sector and interconnecting role across all units within Irish Aid to enhance engagement and understanding by the public and particularly by young people.

Submission from the National Youth Council of Ireland

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