

"Revitalising Development Education"

Written proposal
from IDEA's Formal Education Task Group
to inform the

GENE Review

&

Irish Aid's Development Education Strategy

June 2015

Summary

The Formal Education Task Group of the Irish Development Education Association welcomes Irish Aid's invitation to present a written proposal about the future of Development Education in Ireland. The Formal Education Task Group (FETG) was established in late January 2015 for the express purpose of responding to the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) peer review of Development Education in Ireland and also as a way of bringing stakeholders together to feed into the new Irish Aid Development Education strategy covering the period 2017-2020. Members of the FETG met face-to-face on 4 occasions in the period February-April 2015, and included learners, teachers/educators, policy makers and civil society actors working in early childhood, primary, post-primary, further and higher education from twenty-eight institutions and organizations (see Appendix 1 for FETG membership).

This proposal begins with an articulation of the benefits of quality Development Education initiatives and programmes in the formal education sector (Section 1), before outlining some of the key successes achieved to date through the efforts of funders and proponents of Development Education content, teaching and learning methodologies, and the values-base underpinning Development Education (Section 2). Section 3 contains a summary of the main challenges and obstacles to a fuller and more coherent approach to Development Education across formal education settings. The final section (Section 4) includes a set of six strategic priorities for the year 2020, agreed by FETG members, and relevant to Irish Aid in terms of the forthcoming strategic plan. Each of these strategic priorities is underpinned by an overarching aim, which states that:

Development Education (DE) will be an integral element of teaching and learning at all stages in the formal education sector.

This means that…

every learner, across all curriculum areas, at every level, will regularly encounter relevant opportunities to experience quality DE.

The six strategic priorities proposed by the FETG build on the existing successes and strengths of the Development Educations sector and actions in relation to these strategic priorities would, we believe, lead to a revitalized Development Education sector in Ireland by the year 2020.

1. Some benefits of quality Development Education in the Formal Education sector:

The members of the FETG recognise a myriad of benefits to the integration and expansion of Development Education (DE), but would qualify this claim by stressing the need for quality DE. We take quality DE to mean a teaching and learning approach which draws on good educational practice generally and is inclusive of activities pertaining to Global Citizenship Education (GCE) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). We believe that quality DE:

- Encourages policy makers, educators/teachers and learners to view the world through a variety of 'other' perspectives.
- Challenges policy makers, educators/teachers and learners to think about their individual role and responsibilities as global citizens, as well as the role and responsibilities of the state and international organizations.
- Assists educators/teachers to achieve the broad aims of education and deliver curriculum requirements, including, where relevant, formally certified learning, i.e. DE helps educators/teachers to do what they have to do anyway, but in a way that adds value to their work rather than constituting additional work.
- Facilitates joined-up thinking and helps people to make links between areas that are otherwise often artificially separated from each other, e.g. the relationship between DE, environmental education, human rights education, education for sustainable development; cross-curricular work, etc.
- Contributes to a more engaging, participative and enriching learning environment, thereby creating opportunities for positive relationships between educators/teachers and learners.
- Engenders key life skills such as information processing, critical and creative thinking, communicating, working with others, reflection on action, etc.

2. Successes to build upon

DE proponents are in the fortunate position to be able to list a number of very significant successes in relation to the formal education sector. Some of these successes have been a long time coming and others have been achieved in a more opportunistic way, but they are all to be celebrated and should be built upon in the coming years, partially as a result of Irish Aid's new DE strategy.

Some of the key successes achieved to date through the efforts of funders and proponents of Development Education include:

- Continued commitment to maintaining and improving the coherence, strength and diversity of the DE sector in a very difficult and challenging economic context with the result that there are many diverse and inclusive ways to access and engage with DE.
- In Ireland, IDEA acts as the umbrella network for a steadily growing number of individuals and organizations active in the DE sector. IDEA responds to the capacity

development needs of the sector and pursues strategic approaches to influencing relevant policy and practice. For example, IDEA's Formal Education Working Group (FEWG) developed the first set of IDEA Good Practice Guidelines for primary and post-primary schools, which formed the basis for the development of the WorldWise Global Schools Award Scheme (the Global Passport), which provides recognition and validation for DE work in post-primary schools.

- In recent years DE programmes have become increasingly 'visible' in the formal education system. There is evidence of a greater focus on DE by entities within the DES, for example the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the statutory body charged with advising the DES on matters relating to curriculum and assessment. The NCCA has been influenced by the sector's consistent response to public consultations (evidenced in reports on consultations), with results including the development and impending implementation of *Politics and Society* as a full, optional post-primary senior cycle subject and the integration of DE related themes and topics in formal education curriculum specifications, e.g. post-primary junior cycle Science, Business Studies, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) etc.
- The visibility of DE in the formal education sector has also come about as a result of the ongoing work of the DICE and Ubuntu Networks in primary and post-primary initial teacher education – with the Ubuntu Network being instrumental in building support for the naming of DE in the new Prof Masters in Education programmes.
- In terms of teacher engagement there is a more visible engagement with DE evident in increased in-career demand for and participation in professional development events – this is particularly evident through the work of WorldWise Global Schools (WWGS) at post-primary level.
- Increased visibility of DE in educational institutions, for example, Suas in the higher education sector.
- Effective outputs from collaborations between key networks, e.g. Guidelines for Producing Development Education Resources (2014) developed by Dóchas, IDEA and www.developmenteducation.ie
- Application of relevant tools and research into DE practice in the formal education sector, e.g. Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages, audit of DE resources, etc.
- The development of online DE related resource and research platforms such as www.Developmenteducation.ie which acts as a hub for DE resources, research and action and is increasingly referenced and used by the sector and beyond; and *Policy and Practice: A development education review* which has just recently published the 20th issue to mark the 10 year anniversary of this important vehicle for sharing high quality research into DE.
- Recently we have seen the start of a stronger relationship between relevant government departments, for example as a result of the Advisory Group on the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development which is organized by the DES and has representation from Irish Aid, together with IDEA and other relevant stakeholders.

3. Challenges to overcome

It is no surprise that the diversity and complexity of the DE sector, and the education sector, create their own set of challenges. Despite all the successes listed in Section 2, the status of DE remains problematic – aside from a few notable exceptions DE is not sufficiently valued as a research topic in higher education, and the charities/fundraising mindset is difficult to overcome in primary and post primary schools. Teacher professional development is still somewhat fragmented - a fact for all teacher professional development, not just the programmes organized in relation to DE - but fragmentation contributes to a lack of confidence about content and methodologies amongst many teachers when raising and dealing with DE issues in their classrooms.

Despite great plans with regards to collaboration and partnership on a range of innovative and worthwhile DE projects between groups in the sector, this proves very difficult in the context of diminishing funding, decreases in staff numbers and greater workloads for those who remain. One of the results of this is that the sector continues to struggles to engage vulnerable, marginalised and geographically isolated groups.

DE is a contested term but a term with a very long history in the Irish context – some would see value in the fact that so many can use it as a banner for their work, while others would value more shared clarity or even a name change.

The forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent both an opportunity and a challenge for the sector – a challenge insofar as there are capacity and realignment issues. IDEA will have a role to play in terms of building the capacity of the sector, but further response is required. Although policy makers are now finding opportunities to come together these opportunities are still very limited because of competing priorities and resources. We would particularly like to see further relevant cooperation between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Department of Education and Skills, and would also strongly encourage relevant links across all government departments in response to the Sustainable Development Goals.

In terms of research there are several challenges. There has been no Irish Aid funding for research in the recent past, an element of reflecting on practice which has been badly missed in recent years. For this reason we lack sufficient depth and breadth of research in Ireland, for example, research which would generate educational theories which in turn could influence practice, research to facilitate the sharing of DE failures as well as highlighting DE successes etc.

And last, but certainly not least, there are challenges with the way that the funding for DE is currently structured – it is awarded in silos (formal education, non-formal or youth education, adult and community) - a fact that does nothing to encourage innovation and cross-fertilisation of good practice. While annual funding for new and innovative projects is worth considering, anecdotal evidence would suggest that this type of funding structure is unsatisfactory for smaller DE operations with limited staff, who are required to make annual applications with onerous reporting requirements to stay in existence.

4. Strategic Priorities for 2020

The final section includes a set of strategic priorities as agreed by the FEWG, and relevant to Irish Aid in terms of the forthcoming 3-year strategic plan up to 2020. Each of these strategic priorities is underpinned by an overarching aim, which states that:

Development Education (DE) will be an integral element of teaching and learning at all stages in the formal education sector.

This means that…

every learner, across all curriculum areas, at every level, will regularly encounter relevant opportunities to experience quality DE.

The six strategic priorities proposed by the FETG build on the existing successes and strengths of the Development Educations sector and aim to meet the challenges currently facing DE in Ireland, leading to a revitalized funding scene and sector.



The six strategic priorities are graphically represented in the form of an interconnected wheel, with each priority playing an essential part in achieving the overarching aim.

The six strategic priorities are dealt with in alphabetical order, an indication that the FEWG consider all to be equally important in achieving the overarching aim. A number of actions to be completed by specific organizations are outlined under strategic priority. Some actions can help to achieve more than one strategic priority but for the purposes of brevity each action is outlined in relation to one strategic priority only.

Strategic Priority 1: Collaboration and Partnership

By 2020…

Strategic sector-wide collaboration and partnership will be enhanced within the DE sector in Ireland and between the DE sector and relevant education and civil society actors in Ireland and internationally.

This strategic priority will lead to improved capacity, increased collaboration and partnership, and improved quality in DE delivery, together with an increased coherence in the delivery of DE and related educational fields, a greater recognition of the impact of DE in civil society, and a more central role for DE in civil society programmes.

Actions contributing to achieving this strategic priority might include:

- Building new, and strengthening existing partnerships and collaboration - focusing on quality, innovation and reach in the delivery of DE (e.g. between networks like IDEA and Dóchas; between actors in different sub-sectors in the formal education sector, e.g. Ubuntu Network, DICE, WWGS, Suas and a whole range of additional civil society actors; between the formal education and non-formal education sectors (i.e. facilitated by civil society actors operating across both etc), and finally at a cross-border level so that a strengthened whole Ireland DE model could be held up as an example at European level.
- A further strengthening of IDEA as the national network for DE, with programmes and working group structures furthering existing collaboration and partnership

Irish Aid contribution: to facilitate partnership and collaboration through a reorganized funding structure, while simultaneously recognising the inherent nature of some systemic challenges to partnership and collaboration in the various sub-sectors of the formal education sector.

Strategic Priority 2: Communication of Development Education

By 2020…

There will be greater understanding of, and commitment to DE amongst policy makers, educators/teachers and learners in Ireland.

Policy makers, educators/teachers and learners will have an understanding of the essential role of DE in development cooperation and in education in a globalised world. Relevant policy makers will be clear about the relationship between DE and related educational fields, have a more nuanced and informed understanding of the different approaches to DE and their effects in different education contexts, based on relevant high quality research.

Actions contributing to achieving this strategic priority include:

- Strengthen collaboration to achieve better clarity about the scope of the DE sector, to define the purpose, content and values of DE and consider how to 'make the case' for DE (building on IDEA's 'What is development education?' campaign,

www.developmenteducation.ie DE in action hub – for example, a series of seminars or conferences to situate DE in the post-2015 context, or to examine the relationship between DE and development cooperation etc)

- Raise awareness of existing DE resources, for example those available on www.developmenteducation.ie

Irish Aid contribution: to lead on DE discussions at an interdepartmental level; to support and actively seek avenues of engagement across departments with the DE sector; to participate in the discourse with the DE sector; to provide funding for initiatives to facilitate this discourse.

Strategic Priority 3: Curriculum

By 2020…

DE will be a visible, valued and supported component of curriculum at all levels of the formal education sector, from early childhood through to further and higher education.*

*The term curriculum refers to the entirety of the learning environment – including the formal curriculum (curriculum specifications, pedagogy and assessment for and of learning), cross-curricular and extra-curricular initiatives and activities, whole school approaches etc.

Actions contributing to achieving this strategic priority might include:

- Active and cooperative engagement by the sector with decision makers and stakeholders in formal education to promote and advance DE (e.g. entities within the DES particularly the Inspectorate, the curriculum and assessment policy unit, and the ESD advisory group etc, the NCCA, the State Exams Commission (SEC), the Teaching Council, Teacher Professional Networks (TPNs), academics in higher education, principals and those in leadership positions, civil society actors etc).
- Collaborative participation in consultations on policy reform and curriculum reviews (e.g. review of junior cycle subjects from 2014-2020, both in relation to background papers and draft specifications), consultation on primary Ethics, Religion and Beliefs from May 2015, implementation of Guidelines on School Placement (post-primary) issued by the Teaching Council etc.)
- Appropriate support for educators to build their capacity to engage in quality DE in their teaching, capitalising on changes and developments that arise in their area (e.g. for early years through initiatives to compliment or support the implementation of Aistear (birth – 6); at primary to support teachers in relation to the ongoing review of the primary curriculum; at junior cycle level through initiatives to compliment or support the Junior Cycle Team (JCT) in-service programme; at senior cycle in relation to the implementation of senior cycle *Politics and Society* and other relevant subjects, e.g. Economics; at initial teacher education in terms of the new 2 year Professional Masters in Education for post-primary student teachers).

- Continued support for teacher educators and teachers to integrate DE into all subject areas and educational experiences across formal education.

Irish Aid contribution: building of further relevant links with the Department of Education and Skills and related entities, e.g. through agenda items on interdepartmental meetings; funding for initiatives to facilitate strengthened DE sector engagement with educational organizations and key individuals in terms of policy development, in relevant curriculum consultation and implementation processes, and in terms of initiating or enriching relevant initial teacher education programmes and teacher professional development initiatives.

Strategic Priority 4: Policy

By 2020…

Increased coordination and coherence amongst policy makers will be evident at a national level, with the result that a clear progression and scaffolding of learning vis a vis *DE is a feature from early childhood to further and higher education, and across the professional development continuum for educators and teachers.*

Policy makers will draw on national and international policy, good practice and research in formulating policy and plans.

In this case policy makers would include the likes of Irish Aid, DES, NCCA, Teaching Council, State Examinations Commission, the Professional Development Service for Teachers and Junior Cycle for Teachers, and the Higher Education Authority. However, it is important to note that civil society organizations and DE educators/teachers represent both a crucial resource and critical 'friend' for policy makers in terms of the knowledge, experiences and 'voice' they bring to bear in the making of policy.

Actions contributing to achieving this strategic priority might include:

- Responding to opportunities to influence teacher education policy (e.g. the Teaching Councils review of criteria for Accreditation of ITE programmes, and the production of the Teacher Continuing Professional Development framework).
- Contributing and responding to the implementation of National Strategy on ESD.
- Encouraging cross-fertilization and adaption of quality DE practice within and between sub-sectors in the education system, e.g., learn from higher education initiatives to embed DE themes in specific subject areas, such as Business, and adapt successful practice to suit second level subjects such as junior cycle Business Studies, or senior cycle Economics.
- Capitalising on the inclusion of global citizenship education (GCE)/ education for sustainable development (ESD) as a priority within the post-2015 framework and the requirement on the Irish government to ensure provision is in place for quality education on GCE and ESD.

Irish Aid contribution: to contribute to the public consultations on teacher education policy and facilitate the DE sector to also contribute through the provision of appropriate funding;

to use representation on the Advisory Panel for the National Strategy on ESD to encourage government to realize it's commitments; to create opportunities for the sharing of information with the DE sector about the development and implementation of the post-2015 framework from a governmental perspective; championing the role of DE in Ireland's commitments under the SDGs; partnering with relevant government departments to ensure investment in DE to deliver these commitments.

Strategic Priority 5: Professional Development

By 2020…

The capacity and confidence of educators and teachers will be improved as a result of engagement in coherent, quality, research-based DE professional development.

A vibrant community of educators and teachers will be participating in DE professional development opportunities.

Actions contributing to achieving this strategic priority could include:

- A strengthening of engagement with DE by new and existing school networks through the provision of expert support, training and funding, involving input from civil society organizations.
- Continued support for frequent and integrated DE inputs in initial teacher education (e.g. DICE, Ubuntu Network and civil society inputs in Bachelors Education (BEd) and Professional Masters in Education (PME) DE modules).
- Connecting with and supporting newly qualified teachers (NQTs) to engage in DE (e.g. through the National Induction programme or with school based programmes).
- Input into phase 2 of the Teaching Council's consultation on developing a Teacher Continuing Professional Development framework and subsequent support for the roll out of the framework.
- Continued encouragement for the menu of DE projects and initiatives contributing to a whole school approach to DE.

Irish Aid contribution: to strengthen support for key strategic partners like DICE, Ubuntu, Suas, WWGS and IDEA, and other civil society actors strategically positioned to initiate or enrich professional development policies and practice.

Strategic Priority 6: Research

By 2020…

The 'value', 'impact' and 'practice' of DE in Ireland will be underpinned by diverse high-quality research that informs policies, programmes and practices of stakeholders in development, education and non-profit sectors.

Actions contributing to achieving this strategic priority might include:

- Use existing quality research as basis of DE programmes (e.g. research by Trócaire/St Patrick's College Drumcondra on DE with young children as the basis for DE in early years' settings).
- Capitalise on international research initiatives (e.g. next PISA survey (2015) will focus on collaborative problem solving, and the 2018 survey will examine students' global awareness of the interconnected world we live and work in).
- Engage in relevant longitudinal studies (e.g. tracking teachers through their careers through DICE & the Ubuntu Network).
- Audit the full extent of DE in further and higher education (i.e. Programmes and extra-curricular initiatives).
- Further the research into DE resource development initiated with Audit of Irish Development Education Resources (2013)
- Carry out research into DE methodologies (i.e. impact of methodologies on pedagogy, how specific tools impact on learner skills base and values for global citizenship etc).
- Strengthen the ability of the DE sector to design, administer, collate and analyse research data through a capacity building programmes.
- Integrate sector's research developments into ongoing DE strategy.

Irish Aid contribution: to reinstate funding for quality DE research; to enable collaboration and partnership across and between stakeholders; to adopt a flexible research agenda that can respond to short, medium and longitudinal work; to support and build a strong research community in DE.

Appendix 1: Members of IDEA's Formal Education Task Group who contributed to this written proposal

Name	Organization
Tony Daly Ciara Regan	80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World/developmenteducation.ie
Mella Cusack	A Partnership with Africa (APA)
Aoife Titley	Amnesty
Moira Leydon	ASTI
Aidan Clifford	Curriculum Development Unit of the City of Dublin Education and Training Board
Pam McHugh Brian MacNeill	Childfund
Donna McFeely	Children in Crossfire
Evanna Craig Michael Doorly	Concern
Siobhan Sleeman Katherine Byrne	DICE
Elaine Nevin	ECO-UNESCO
Aida Gebremeskel	Friends of Londiani
Brian Tubbert	Froebel, NUIM
Vicky Donnelly	Galway One World Centre
Louise Merrigan	Goal
Patsy Toland	Gorta - Self-Help Africa
Ruth McKeever	Green Schools programme
Eilish Dillon	Kimmage Development Studies Centre
Benjamin Mallon	PhD student, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Maurice Hurley	Global Citizenship Schools
Darran Irvine	Schools Across Borders
Maria Barry	Centre for Human Rights & Citizenship Education, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
Joanne Malone	Suas
Sean Coakley	Teacher
Jen Murphy	Trocaire
Deirdre Hogan	Ubuntu Network
Siobhan McGee	Value Added in Africa/UCD School of Business
Mary McCarthy Aishling McGrath Lizzy Noone	Worldwise Global Schools (WWGS)
Barry Peak Rachel Collier	Young Social Innovators