

**OLLSCOIL NA HÉireann, MÁ NUAD**

MÁ NUAD, CO.CHILL DARA, ÉIRE

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, MAYNOOTH**

MAYNOOTH, CO.KILDARE, IRELAND



**ROINN AN STAIÉIR AR FHORBAIRT IDIRNÁISÚNTA**

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Submission to the Consultation Process for Development of new Irish Aid  
Development and Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021- 2024**

**Submission by Dr. Eilish Dillon**

**on behalf of the Maynooth University, Department of International Development**

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## Introduction

We, at the Maynooth University Department of International Development, welcome the Irish government's process to develop a new strategy on development and global citizenship education for 2021 – 2024. As a Department with a long history of engagement in development and global citizenship education through our work at the Kimmage Development Studies Centre and, since 2018, at Maynooth University, we encourage the government to put development and global citizenship education at the heart of its international development co-operation.

### **How can Irish Aid support life-long learning and increase public understanding of and engagement with development and global citizenship issues as well as increasing awareness of the Irish Aid programme?**

Given the importance of, and government commitments, to the Sustainable Development Goals, and in light of the growing complexity, interconnectedness and urgency of global development challenges, we see development and global citizenship education as playing a central role in creating a better, more liveable world – a world of equality, sustainability, diversity, respect and justice for all.

In short, it is imperative that people understand the complex causes of global inequalities, poverty and discrimination so that they can engage critically with the many solutions needed. This requires critical and intersectional understanding of the multiple influences on contemporary global development challenges as well of the social, political, economic and power relations shaping our world. It also requires the development of the skills to question how things are and to create more sustainable and just alternatives. Everyone has an important role to play in this and it is essential that it is not left to governments or corporations. As people are at the heart of creating a more equal, sustainable and just society, through their own actions and movements, and in their ability to call governments and corporations to account, support for development and global citizenship education is becoming more important than ever. Where once development co-operation was seen as synonymous with aid, contemporary policy (as reflected in *A Better World*), recognises this as a limited and out-dated conceptualisation. Now, we are all aware that real change requires deep and critical understanding among all people of our shared humanity, of how our decisions in one part of the world affect those in others, and of the need for just alternatives.

Development and global citizenship education across all sector, and through lifelong learning, can build this understanding and commitment to global transformation but it needs to be based on an approach which is critical, connected and democratic. It requires sustained and increased funding, greater prominence within development co-operation and education policy and practice more broadly, and integration across all education sectors.

**Critical** - Development and global citizenship education needs to be critical in the sense that it promotes understanding and action based on questioning existing inequalities and the social, economic, political and cultural factors which cause them. Building on critiques of mainstream development processes, many of which have caused the existing global development challenges we face, critical development and global education is at its most transformative when it integrates critiques of coloniality (Andreotti, 2011)<sup>1</sup>, racism and exclusion with critiques of capitalist exploitation, neoliberalism (McCloskey, 2020)<sup>2</sup> and the need for degrowth (Hickel, 2019)<sup>3</sup>. Critical engagement with and questioning of the solutions advanced to support development is also necessary. These include the SDGs, development co-operation, national development plans, economic growth strategies or migration policies. While it can seem counter-intuitive for a government to advance the kind of education which leads to questioning of its own policies and practices, it is this type of critical global education which builds solid citizen engagement, long-term committed action for justice and equality, and deep, engaged democracy (Giroux, 2015)<sup>4</sup>.

**Engaged** - Development and global citizenship education also needs to be based on an understanding of interconnectedness - of people and the planet, of local, national and global processes and power relations (Dillon, 2018)<sup>5</sup>, and of the personal and the political (Dillon, 2019)<sup>6</sup>. This is not education directed about or for development 'in the global South' but education which emphasises critical engagement in the intersecting realities and processes which affect all our lives. As such, it needs to engage with difficult issues and challenges around power, e.g., addressing over-consumption and destruction of biodiversity, white privilege, Ethnocentrism and the treatment of migrants in Europe and elsewhere. This involves integrating learning with action in a way which moves beyond an individualised, detached concept of education or public engagement to one which embraces uncertainty and diverse outcomes.

**Democratic** - As such, development and global citizenship education should be democratic in principle and practice. It needs to be at the heart of the Irish government's efforts to promote active sustainability, democracy and active citizenship through promoting education which prioritises diversity, inclusion and equality at all levels. Building on global anti-racism, feminist and human rights movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo, a concerted effort is needed to ensure that all development and global citizenship education processes and organisational structures advance inclusion, challenge racism and promote and celebrate diversity. This is ever

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<sup>1</sup> Andreotti, V. (2011) 'Towards Decoloniality and Diversity in Global Citizenship Education'. *Globalisation Societies and Education*, 9, 3 – 4.

<sup>2</sup> McCloskey, S (2020) 'COVID-19 has Exposed Neoliberal-Driven 'Development': How can Development Education Respond?', *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, Vol. 30, Spring, pp. 174 - 185.

<sup>3</sup> Hickel, J. (2019) 'Degrowth: A Theory of Radical Abundance', *Real-World Economics Review*, 87

<sup>4</sup> Giroux, H.A. (2015) 'Democracy in Crisis, the Specter of Authoritarianism, and the Future of Higher Education,' *Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs*: 1, 1, Article 7.

<sup>5</sup> Dillon, E. (2018) 'How Critical is the Global? Discursive Shifts in Development Education in Ireland', *International Journal of Development Education and Global Learning*, Vol.10, No.2, pp. 163 - 176

<sup>6</sup> Dillon, E (2019) 'Connecting the Personal and the Political: Feminist Perspectives on Development Education', *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, Vol. 29, Autumn, pp. 11-30.

more important in the context of the challenge of growing populism, racism and hate crime directed at the most vulnerable in society including migrants, people of colour and people who identify as trans or non-binary. This requires strategies to advance more diverse representation among organisations involved in facilitating development and global citizenship education and additional support for development and global citizenship education undertaken by and with migrant communities, Traveller organisations and asylum seekers, as well as other marginalised groups in Ireland. It also requires more emphasis on ensuring that the principles of justice, equality, solidarity and human rights, as outlined in the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages, are implemented across development and global citizenship communication platforms.

**With reference to the five output areas of the current Irish Aid Development Education Strategic Plan, what do you consider the key priorities for 2021- 2024 should be?**

POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND COHERENCE - An enabling and coherent policy environment for development education at local, national and European level.

An integrated and coherent approach to the promotion and support of development and global citizenship education across all government policies, curricula and education sectors is essential for its success. Though considerable work has been done in this regard over the past 10 years, especially in linking with the Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, the integration of global citizenship education within Teaching Council guidelines and the inclusion of development, sustainability and global citizenship education values and learning outcomes across a range of curricula, it is clear that this integration requires on-going work and significant resourcing.

**Sustained and Increased Funding** – Reference to the importance of policy coherence in policies and the establishment of cross-departmental and cross-sectoral working groups to advance meaningful policy coherence needs to be matched by sufficient funding to development and global citizenship education. In 2019, DE was allocated a tiny fraction of Ireland’s ODA budget - .49% (Irish Aid, 2019)<sup>7</sup>. This is less than half the proportion of funding allocated to this area in 1995 – 1.24% - and far below the recommended allocation.

As such, we believe that if development and global citizenship education is to be effective, it needs to be funded accordingly. **We recommend** that development and global citizenship education be allocated at least 3 percent of ODA, as recommended by the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) and Concord (2018)<sup>8</sup>. At the same

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<sup>7</sup> Irish Aid (2019) Ireland’s Official Development Assistance Annual Report 2019, [Online] Available from: <https://bit.ly/32gRIII>

<sup>8</sup> Concord (2018) Global Citizenship Education: How Much Do We Care? Concord. [Online] Available from: [Funding Global Citizenship Education in Europe - Report from CONCORD \(concordeurope.org\)](https://concordeurope.org)

time, my research (Dillon, 2017)<sup>9</sup> advocates the need for that funding to be allocated to critical development and global citizenship education with additional funding to public engagement and the promotion of the Irish Aid programme.

Particularly important, from our point of view, as a department in a higher education institution (HEI), is the need for more promotion of critical development and global citizenship education across all aspects and actors within higher education. This includes the Higher Education Authority, the Union of Students in Ireland, the Irish Universities Association, the Development Studies Association of Ireland and the Irish Federation of University Teachers, along with faculties and departments across the higher education sector.

**We recommend** that the strategy advances the support of strategic partnerships linking departments within and across HEIs which are focused on the development of a range of cross-curricular teaching and research programmes addressing different themes and aspects of development and global citizenship education.

(b) CAPACITY BUILDING AND COLLABORATION - Maximised capacity, collaboration, partnership and coherence of development education partners to enhance the quality delivery, impact and communication of development education.

The need for critical professional development and capacity building in development and global citizenship education across the different education sectors has long been recognised. In higher education, though significant advances have been made through the promotion and support of global citizenship education in initial teacher education (ITC), serious gaps and opportunities remain.

**We recommend** that this strategy advance the need for ongoing professional development for lecturers engaged in development and global citizenship education and curriculum development across higher education departments. At the same time, HEIs should be supported to develop professional programmes in development and global citizenship education for educators across the sectors – preschool, primary, secondary, further education, youth, adult and community education as well as in higher education. This should involve the integration of research and teaching on global development challenges and responses with a focus on critical pedagogies in different learning contexts.

(c) FORMAL EDUCATION - Further integration and mainstreaming of quality development education in formal education, curricula, programmes and structures.

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<sup>9</sup> Dillon, E. (2017) How Critical is Talk? Discourses of Development Education among Facilitators in Ireland. Doctoral Thesis. Maynooth University. [Online] Available from: <http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/9558/>

In addition to the points addressed in relation to higher education and policy coherence above, we would like to highlight the dearth of support for research in the area of development and global citizenship education in Ireland to date. While significant advances have been made with the partnership between Irish Aid and the Irish Research Council around the Coalesce and New Foundations grants, **we recommend** that priority should be given to the establishment of a similar and additional grant stream specifically focused on research on development and global citizenship education. This research should include, but not be limited to, studies on existing practice in the area.

Irish Aid should continue to fund relevant and important publications and resources in the area of development and global citizenship education including the valuable journal, Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review and the important resource [developmenteducation.ie](http://developmenteducation.ie). Emphasis should also be placed on supporting shared learning opportunities between the different education sectors through conferences, seminars and joint publications.

(d) NON-FORMAL EDUCATION - Increased integration, quality and spread of development education in non-formal education curricula, programmes and structures.

We would like to support calls on behalf of the Irish Development Education Association for increased resourcing and support for development and global citizenship education across all education sectors. This includes youth, adult education and community work settings.

(e) IRISH AID AWARENESS - Increased awareness within the education sector of Ireland's development co-operation programme and of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We believe that the emphasis in this strategy should be on development and global citizenship education which facilitates critical understanding, engagement with and action around a range of development and global citizenship issues. **While increasing awareness of the Irish Aid programme is understandably important for building ongoing support for ODA, it is not development or global citizenship education.**

Development and global citizenship education should involve critical questioning of what's happening in the world, the reasons for it and responses to it. This often includes important critical questioning of aid programmes, of development co-operation thinking and practice. As such, development and global citizenship education can play a much more long-term role in building commitment to global justice and equality and should not be conflated with the promotion of Ireland's development co-operation programme.

Similarly, though there are overlaps between development education and public engagement, where DGCE becomes increasingly associated with public engagement, its

critical role in questioning and debating relationships, policy and practices operating in the name of development can be significantly compromised.

**We recommend** that the distinctions between development and global citizenship education, public engagement and promotion of the Irish government's aid programme be made very clear in the new strategy and that the funding allocation to each area be published in a transparent manner in annual reports. In that sense, the budgetary allocation for each of the three areas should be clearly identifiable.

- **Irish Aid is considering changing the name of the programme and strategy to Global Citizenship Education, do you have any comments or concerns in relation to this suggestion?**

Throughout this document, we have used the terms development and global citizenship education together as the call for submissions has done. In our view, this composite term is important because it holds onto both 'development' and 'global citizenship'. The 'development' piece acknowledges the link between education in this area in Ireland with international and global development processes, both in its funding and location under development co-operation. It also reflects its connection with education for sustainable development and the unique role development education has played, across the education spectrum in Ireland, of raising critical awareness and understanding of global development policies, relationships and practices. Its connection with 'global citizenship' education is helpful, and resonant of greater focus on this term in recent years especially among schools and by international development NGOs in Ireland. Its strength as a term is that it places emphasis on the active citizenship necessary for achieving transformed societies based on justice, equality and human rights. It is our view that together they are stronger terms.

At the same time, we believe that the term itself is not what's most important. As outlined above, we believe that whatever term is used should embrace the emphasis we have placed here on the need for a critical, engaged and democratic understanding of development and global citizenship education. As such, these aspects need to be highlighted in any descriptors of what's involved in development and/or global citizenship education that Irish Aid adopts in the future.

End.