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

DRAFT

(deadline for submission 19.03.21)

- **Nature of views**: On behalf of the Ubuntu Network.

- **Organisation:** Ubuntu Network, c/o School of Education, University of Limerick

- **Role in organisation (if applicable):** NA

- **Web-address:** www.ubuntu.ie

- **Freedom of information:** Responses are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and may be released in total or in part. Please indicate if there are aspects of your response that you seek to have withheld, and the reasons for same.

- **Date of posting response:**

This submission is structured around the key questions posed by Irish Aid at: https://www.irishaid.ie/what-we-do/who-we-work-with/civil-society/development-education-funding/consultations/

The submission is being made by the Ubuntu Network whose expertise is focused on the provision of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) to post primary pre-service teachers located in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) across Ireland. As such, responses to the questions are framed from this perspective within the formal education system.

Question 1: 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?

Within formal education, Irish Aid can seek to achieve this goal by continuing to support the embedding of Development Education/ Global Citizenship Education / Education for Sustainable Development (DE/GCE/ESD) across the formal education sector at primary and post-primary levels and through its support of Initial Teacher Education (Ubuntu Network, DICE).

Some considerations relating to this include:

- *Enhancing and expanding DE/GCE in Teacher Education*

  To respond to the need for lifelong learning, Irish Aid should continue their support for teacher education across the continuum (initial teacher education, induction and in-service or CPD). The multiplier effect of having DE/GCE competent teachers is paramount to achieving a broad and consistent message about education for equality, justice and sustainability. This is achieved through delivery of evidence-informed DE/GCE interventions in teacher preparation programs.

- *Establishing stronger support for DE/GCE in formal Higher Education.*

  The SDGs are becoming increasingly visible in the HEI sector, with sustainable development featuring strongly in universities' Strategic Plans.

  This is prompted by the need for HEIs to respond to global challenges, the availability of funding streams to address the SDGs (e.g. Horizon 2020, EPA, SFI), and the prominence of performances indexes such as the *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings that measures universities against the SDGs in relation to research, outreach and stewardship.

  University College Dublin, for example, published its first Sustainability Report in 2020, outlining a structured programme designed to embed the goals across the University's education, research, governance and engagement activities. This is reflected across curriculum, with all degree programmes committing to addressing the goals, and the development of a dedicated interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science in Sustainability (DN240). It is also evident in governance through key activities and polices relating to equality and sustainability.

  Similarly, the University of Limerick states that it is committed to the development and implementation of a holistic approach to sustainable development in partnership with the communities, locally and regionally and in national and international alliances. In its 2020 Sustainability Report, it indicated an intention to enable students, graduates and staff to engage as 'active citizens' who contribute to the well-being and future of our planet and our communities.

Prompted by the Department of Education and Skills National Strategy on ESD, the HEA has commenced a consultation process with HEIs on ESD in Higher Education. This process has the potential to bring together key drivers across institutions with a view to collaborative engagement towards enhancing DE/GCE/ESD.

Higher Education is a crucial milestone in citizens' lifelong learning journey. Their studies at third level education provide a basis for their professional career. It is essential that young people develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes associated with justice and sustainability as they develop their identities within their chosen area of work.

Irish Aid, in association with the HEA and partner HEIs, should consider adopting a plan for better integration of DE/GCE/ESD into formal Higher Education.

- ***Strategic Extending of Projects***

  It may be beneficial extend some existing projects to address gaps in provision. One example is to extend the work of the Ubuntu Network into Initial Teacher Education within the Further Education Sector. The term "further education" embraces education and training which usually occurs outside of post-primary schooling but which is not part of the third-level system. There are currently eight HEIs offering such programmes, see https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/teacher-education/initial-teacher-education/providers-of-initial-teacher-education/providers-of-initial-teacher-education.html

- ***Better Marketing and Communication of Work***

  Irish Aid may consider allocating budget to support marketing and communication of project outputs (e.g. Ubuntu Network). Done correctly, this would ensure that they reach a much broader audience, demonstrating about what we do, how we do it and the impact on learning. This could be done across a variety of platforms and target audiences both nationally and internationally.

Question 2: Are there other groups or organisations we should seek to work with in order to build this awareness and engagement?

- Department of Education and Skills including the State Exams Commission, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the Teaching Council of Ireland
- Department of Further and Higher Education, including the Higher Education Authority (HEA)
- Bodies involved in CPD for teachers e.g. JCT and PDST
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

- Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- Science Foundation Ireland, Environmental Protection Agency.

The continuation of cross-departmental cooperation in addressing issues around education for justice, equality and sustainability is important. Successes have been achieved during the term of the current strategy through collaboration between Irish Aid and the Department of Education and Skills. Initiatives here to broaden involvement in DE/ESD/GCE initiatives would be welcome, particularly at Higher Education.

Irish Aid may consider drawing upon the expertise generated through the Ubuntu Network across two decades to inform and support other stakeholders working in the continuum of education e.g. JCT, PDST.

Question 3: What has changed in the external environment since 2017, both in the education sector and broader societal changes nationally and globally, and how should that be reflected in our priorities, our relationships and in our revised strategy?

- The inclusion of Global Citizenship Education as a mandatory component of the Teaching Council Céim Standards for Initial Teacher Education (November 2020) presents a particular opportunity to enhance DE/GCE provision in this sector. The Ubuntu Network and its members played an important advocacy role in the consultation process and is keen to maximise the impact in the ITE sector in the reaccreditation period 2021-2023.
- Embedding of DE/GCE/ESD related learning in the Junior Cycle Statements of Learning and subsequently in subject specifications means that we now have stronger links to such themes and concepts in the lower secondary schooling.
- It is important that we engage fully in consultations relating to the ongoing review of Senior Cycle curriculum and the primary education review.
- The Department of Education and Skills is working to produce a new National Strategy on ESD from 2020. It is important the Irish Aid is an active player in planning and consulting on this.
- We now see increased focus on the SDGs within the HEI Strategic Planning. This is evident across Higher Education Institutions e.g. the development of annual Sustainability Reports and the inclusion of the SDGs in research streams. There is also an increased focus in HEIs in initiatives such as the Athena Swan Award, Universities of Sanctuary, and equality and inclusion. These adhere to similar values as DE/GCE.
- The national Climate Action Plan 2019 is significant for our work.
- Internationally, prioritising of DE/GCE and the role of the UNESCO Chair for Reorienting Education to Address Sustainability (Prof. Charles Hopkins, University of Toronto) is important, as is the UNESCO ESD Roadmap to 2030.

- Covid-19 and its impact on teaching and learning (on-line teaching etc.) and on assessment and examinations (suspension of Junior cert exams, calculated and accredited grades at LC etc).
- Brexit and the political drive to reinforce traditional British values in the UK education systems may challenge GCE there and have implications for our collaboration with the UK. It may also mean that we wish to strengthen alliances there, specifically in Northern Ireland.
- The changing demographics in schools and universities, with increases in student numbers from diverse backgrounds should be seen as an opportunity to enrich Development Education. Practice should reflect an all-inclusive approach to education. Some black Irish students may have issues about how Africa is presented from a Northern perspective. Enhancing the Southern voice in Development Education will strengthen our provision – e.g. making the local global links, challenging discourse of 'othering', working towards anti-racism and solidarity building etc.

Question 4: What do you consider to be the key areas of progress made since 2017 in the implementation of the Irish Aid Strategic Planning process? Are there any key lessons learnt or gaps in the current response?

Progress Areas:

- Enhanced delivery of Development Education in formal education through the Ubuntu Network, Worldwise Global Schools and the DICE Network.

  In post primary Initial Teacher Education, Ubuntu-supported projects delivered a total of 243 hours of Development Education to 2,251 post primary student teachers on 25 ITE programmes across 11 ITE institutions in the Academic Year 2019-2020. This involved 58 teacher educators and a number of post primary schools and NGOs. While restrictions due to Covid-19 resulted in these numbers being less than anticipated, the pattern over recent years (see table below) is for greater and deeper engagement in Development Education in post primary ITE.

Ubuntu Network Projects			
Performance Indicator	'17-'18	'18-'19	'19-'20*
# student teachers experiencing DE	1,690	2,050	2,251
# hours DE delivered through Ubuntu-supported projects	171	359	243
# institutions involved leading projects	12	11	11
# programmes impacted	24	26	25
# teacher educators involved	51	62	58

- Positioning of the concept of Development Education alongside Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and under the umbrella of Global Citizenship Education is an important development in the thinking around education for social justice, equality and sustainability, and shows openness to parallel, collaborative and complementary initiatives and developments in national and international arenas. It also allows educators greater scope to reference and demystify these related terms in the implementation of Development Education.

Lessons Learned:

- Building up communities of shared interest and practice (e.g. through the Ubuntu Network) leads to critical mass of influence and impact when policy makers seek consultation e.g. framing of new Céim Standards by Teaching Council.
- There is increased appetite for engagement and increased capacity building in Higher Education.

Gaps:

- Research – all teaching and practice should be evidence informed and contributing to the body of knowledge in the area, in terms of what works and in what conditions. This enhances visibility of DE/GCE in academic circles and in informing policy. The new Development Education strategy must include a commitment to conducting and building upon research.
- The lack of Irish Aid strategic alliances in formal Higher Ed and in post primary Initial Teacher Education is a gap.
- Enhancing marketing and communications of key ideas of core projects – reaching a much broader audience about what we do, how we do it and the impact on learning.
- Support for Development Education in ITE in Further Education.

Question 5: 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?

Under Area (3) Formal Education:

- **Post Primary Initial Teacher Education:** Irish Aid should pursue Strategic Partners to enhance Irish Aid's leverage in the post primary ITE and formal Higher Education Sector. This would see strengthening of DE/GCE/ESD in ITE both nationally and internationally, and enhanced opportunities to raise the profile of work in Higher Education. It would support the develop of a National Centre of Excellence for GCE in Initial Teacher Education that would gain international recognition.

- **Research:** Research is a crucial to enhancing the quality of education provision. It adopts rigorous and well-defined scientific processes in order to gather and analyse data for enhancing understanding and building knowledge in particular educational contexts.

Applied research should inform teaching and practice in DE/GCE/ESD. A strong research base is necessary to advise policy makers and curriculum development. On the global stage research is a core element of such approaches to education e.g. GENE https://www.gene.eu/, the Angel Network https://angel-network.net/ .

Teaching of development issues is a complex endeavour. Delivery and capacity building in this area needs to be framed by contemporary evidence of best practice. Equally, we need to inform the research base of what works, for whom and under what conditions. Much of our work is monitored, but a layer of purposeful research would add to our current practice and enhance the profile of DE/GCE/ESD in Higher Education in particular.

The new Irish Aid Development Education strategy should include a research element and the development of a Research Advisory Committee to guide and evaluate research.

Question 6: 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?

The term Global Citizenship Education is consistent with the use of terms in the Teaching Council Céim Standards for Initial Teacher Education.

A recent presentation by Professor Massimiliano Tarrozi, University of Bologna at the Ubuntu Network Assembly outlined the history of various terms and indicated that his research has indicated that in scholarly discourse, GCE has surpassed DE in Europe (according to the Scopus Database).

A position paper should be developed on the use of terms. This would map the historical relevance of the term Development Education and the justification of a move to the term Global Citizenship Education. It would also define the Irish Aid understanding of the term in light of other educational approaches including ESD and Global Education.

Question 7: What opportunities have arisen from the COVID-19 experience and how can we learn from it in order to reach a broader audience?

- While much teaching and learning has moved online, we must be wary that data does not exist to assess the impact of this learning on students' cognitive, psychomotor or affective domains. The digital divide is a concern. We must appreciate that not all learners have access to technology, broadband and space to learn effectively online. We may also query if students (and teachers) can move into the online space and operate well in it. Online and remote learning requires self-regulated learning skills, which they may not have developed. The loss of informal

learning and interaction is concerning. Learning does not only take place in formal learning spaces, it often happens in between these e.g. the after class conversations. The informal learning experiences play an important role in the social construction of knowledge among student teachers.

- The new Junior Cycle Framework which is still in early stages of enactment may benefit from Covid-19 impact, in so far as Covid-19 has lifted the traditional heavy reliance on terminal exams. The post-Covid-19 scenario may not see a full return to the former arrangements. The resultant curriculum environment is likely to be more positive for ESD and GCE.

- Technology does offer enhanced opportunity in terms of how Irish Aid projects package their outputs for wider dissemination to reach a larger audience e.g. through the use of Virtual Learning Environments and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). The Development Education Research Centre (DERG) in University College London (UCL) recently ran a 3-week MOOC on Global Education, targeting teachers and teacher educators. It attracted participants from around the world. To see more, click on https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/global-education-for-teachers/2/register?return=2jog7azy

Question 8: How can technology and digital outreach help us?

- Technology can be used to augment delivery and maintaining communities. It may address shortfalls in geographical reach, hence ensuring a more democratic and participatory engagement for all. However, online technology and digital learning should not be used as a permanent solution. Not all students have laptops and a learning environment that is conducive to positive engagement. Some are watching lectures on mobile devices and there is certainly variation in the quality of internet connection. To depend on technological delivery may serve to accentuate the inequalities that we seek to challenge in Development Education. There is a social justice issue here and a danger of student drop out in Higher Education because of these circumstances.