

### THE WAY AHEAD

Welcome to the third issue of INDEX, the Irish Newsletter for Development Education Exchange, published by Comhlámh. This edition reflects on a busy and interesting period for the development sector following the publication of the government's new strategy plan for development education, *Deepening Public Understanding of International Development*. The publication of this document has coincided with the superseding of Ireland Aid with Development Co-operation Ireland (DCI) and the launch of a new survey on attitudes toward development co-operation by DCI. Moreover, we now have the Development Education Unit (DEU) within DCI as the lead government body in development education and an Advisory Group established to support its work. Development educators have therefore been adjusting to a new political landscape and this issue of INDEX focuses on what these changes mean for the sector.

The government's strategy plan featured prominently in discussions at a development education seminar held in All Hallow's College, Dublin on June 5<sup>th</sup>. The aim of the conference was to advance plans for a national development education structure in Ireland which could enhance the capacity and representation of the sector. In her article on the outcomes of the conference, Carol Doyle says that 'it is clear that policy-makers would like a body to engage with (but) creating this body remains a significant challenge given the diversity of the sector'. In the absence of a national structure, it seems that the NGO sector has struggled to respond to the government's strategy with one of its own. This point is central to Colm Regan's informative review of the Ireland Aid Strategy Plan for development education in which he suggests that 'In the absence of other, publicly available strategic plans for DE, there is a danger that this (the DCI) plan, becomes *the* national DE plan'.

What the government and NGO sectors most definitely agree on is the need for development education. The recent national survey on *Attitudes Towards Development Co-operation in Ireland* commissioned by DCI shows public goodwill for Irish support of developing countries but a questionable level of knowledge about those countries. Most respondents to the survey learn about the developing world through the media and in her review of the survey, Morina O'Neill suggests that we need to find ways 'to get development education to a wider audience, especially in relation to the media'.

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One of the ways to raise public consciousness through the media is by popular protest – a tactic successfully taken to new levels by the trade justice movement. This is a theme taken up by Stephen McCloskey in an article about the Irish Social Forum, a movement closely attuned to the methodology and ideological underpinnings of development education. The ISF is a new social movement aimed at increasing public understanding of development issues and engendering action with a local (e.g. privatising transport services, racism against ethnic minorities) and global (e.g. trade, debt, conflict) focus. McCloskey urges development NGOs to join the ranks of the Social Forum's supporters and get involved in grassroots movements for change.

INDEX is therefore presenting opportunities for development educators to effect change at government and grassroots levels thus reinforcing the need for the sector to produce its own strategic approach to 'deved' which allows our work to continue and expand. As Colm Regan suggests: 'a diversity of approaches and plans is vital to the effective delivery of DE nationally'.

# A Common Voice For Development Education

**Carol Doyle** on the recent seminar that took place in All Hallows College: 'Development Education in Ireland - Challenges and Opportunities'.

**ON** JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup> 2003, DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION practitioners from around the country met in All Hallows College, Dublin to determine the way forward for the sector at the second seminar on *Development Education in Ireland – Challenges and Opportunities*. Fifty-nine individuals participated in the seminar from forty-four organisations representing, among others, community and solidarity groups, NGOs, trade unions, women's groups and youth organisations. Participants expressed their commitment to establishing a body that would speak with a common voice for the Development Education sector and input into the changing local and national environment to ensure the sector remains vibrant from grass roots to third level, both formal and non-formal.

## **Aims of the Seminar**

The seminar aimed to address some of these challenges, rethink the priorities for the sector and establish the commitment in terms of time and resources that organisations throughout the country are willing to contribute. In the past year there have been many changes in the development education landscape, particularly in Ireland Aid, now Development Cooperation Ireland. It was felt there had not been much involvement from Development Education practitioners in making those decisions. However it is clear that policy makers are looking for a body to engage with. Creating this body remains a significant challenge given the diversity in the sector.

Initially, Michael Doorly, chairperson of the Dóchas Development Education Group and member of the task group that organised the seminar, welcomed participants.

The keynote address was given by Dr Peadar Cremin, chairperson of the Development Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) of the Development Education Unit (DEU) in Ireland Aid. He set the scene, addressing the contemporary issues facing the sector. He outlined the role of DEU and DEAC and identified challenges facing the sector including the lack of integration of development education into the formal sector, which he identified as a focus point for the DEU. Other challenges identified were the definition of

development education, the risk of a shifting focus based on trends, and the sector's capacity to adapt to a changing environment. He concluded by reinforcing the importance of the role development education has to play in a globalised society. He commented that to be an educated person in today's world is to be globally literate and felt that "Global literacy is as essential now as literacy was in the 1900's".

## **The Task Group**

Johnny Sheehan gave an overview of the work that had been carried out by the task group set up in May 2002 as a result of the first All Hallows seminar. He identified the members of the task group and outlined the possible models for a strong new independent development education association that the task group had considered. The task group faced a number of challenges, not least the lack of resources and coordination and time constraints on individual members leading them to drop out of the process. The task group also had doubts about the approach of establishing a structure without first considering the issues affecting the sector. In conclusion, Johnny urged the gathering to reconfirm their commitment and effort to establish an association.

## **Capacity Building**

Capacity building in a diverse sector was addressed by Connell Foley from Concern. The Dóchas report in 2002 and the Ireland Aid Development Education strategy plan both identify capacity building as a key need in the sector. He suggested that capacity building needs to be addressed at different levels – within individual organisations, between agencies, with the creation of new structures or bodies and individual professional development. Connell proposed that the sector engage in institutional mapping to clearly identify the capacity building needs in order to develop the sector.

The presentation by Connell Foley informed the morning working group sessions. Working group sessions examined the benefits of and alternatives to a representative body, as well as the contribution organisations were willing to make. Participants were divided according to the type of organisation they

belonged to and all groups clearly identified the need for a representative structure for information sharing and networking, lobbying, capacity building, and to provide a voice for the sector.

After lunch, Theresa Galvin introduced the Sociological Association of Ireland (SAI) as an example of a Professional Association. The SAI is open to individuals and is run by an executive committee that meets every six weeks. It provides a forum where sociologists can meet, a platform for practical issues affecting sociologists and maintains a watching brief on ethical issues arising in terms of research or funding. One of the main achievements of the SAI has been to gain greater recognition for sociologists in the eyes of the media. The SAI model aroused interest from a number of participants. However it was also pointed out that an organisation consisting of individual practitioners would lose out on negotiating power at national level.

The decision making part of the day was led by a panel discussion on Building a Strong Development Education Body. The panel consisted of Theresa Galvin SAI, Maeve Taylor from Banúlacht, Morina O'Neill from Comhlámh and Hans Zomer from Dóchas who challenged the audience with questions concerning the future of the sector.

### **The Future**

The success of the seminar was evident in the commitment expressed by participants at the seminar. Given the diversity in the sector, achieving a common voice and eventually establishing a body will be a substantial challenge. The Task Group established at the 2002 seminar which organised this year's seminar highlighted the importance of responding to current issues facing the sector rather than focusing too intensely on the actual structure of a representative body.

The seminar concluded with an air of confidence and consensus that the diversity of the sector is a strength and the future lies in a common voice. As there was broad agreement to establish a common body, two task groups were set up to look at defining a vision for a new association and developing a constitution. The groups will present their recommendations in the autumn.

*Carol Doyle assisted in the organising of the 2003 seminar 'Development Education in Ireland - Challenges and Opportunities II'.*

# Vox Pop

## Comments from the Seminar

"Practitioners have to be part of agenda-setting rather than merely responding to the agendas of funders. In particular, organisations in the non-formal sector have to ensure that our perspectives and ways of working are not lost in structures dominated by the formal sector. The most useful thing to come out of the conference would be a sense of the collective responsibility of development education organisations to enter into dialogue with policy makers. A group of people volunteered to draw up a Constitution and develop a Vision for a possible representative body. Much of this work has already been done by the Task Group. While they are understandably keen to hand over the task, I believe they have to stay involved over the next phase, so that their work is not lost." Maeve Taylor – Banúlacht.

"Reflecting on All Hallows 2, I am tempted to say that sequels (apart from Godfather 2!) are never quite as good as the original. This is especially true where no major development of the story line is evident and you get what is basically a rehash. As somebody who occasionally participated in the task force, I accept some responsibility for what was, for me, a very frustrating day. This is not a criticism of my fellow 'task forcers', many of whom put in a lot more effort than I did. However, I feel we could have done more in terms of presenting some of the work we did manage to do since last year in terms of types of structures etc. Having said that, I also agree that we need to look at what kind of vision this structure should have and not to confuse it with other development structures out there. We are not setting up in competition with Dochas, Trade Matters, Debt and Development etc. We need a body to address purely development education matters. Not all participants seemed particularly aware of this. Why such an apparently obvious task is so difficult to get together is for me the knub of the question for 'the sector'. For myself, I have to ask, how will such a body help me in my job of trying to integrate development education into trade union training? My level of involvement will be proportionate to the degree to which I am convinced. I suppose many others would share such a view." David Joyce – ICTU.

"While gatherings of this nature are important, I'm not sure how far we moved toward the new proposed national structure for development education. We now have plans for a new Task Group and remain at the early stages of establishing a Development Education Association. Everything is still up for grabs but a year on from All Hallows 1, we probably should have developed our thinking on to a much higher plane. All Hallows may have benefited from a more solid platform for discussion. In the plenary we ended up discussing the intricacies of membership for a new structure when we still hadn't a firm idea as to its rationale, aims, values and functions. Participants probably needed more guidance and a draft constitution to work from. A more rounded and detailed draft proposal for a structure to begin with may have produced more dividends. I know we weren't sure that participants fully supported a new structure but enrolment and attendance at the event could have been taken as a statement of intent. The notion of a structure probably plagued All Hallows a bit. The question being how far do we focus on organisational framework as opposed to issues and functions? Of course, these areas are all interconnected and we've probably been blinded by structures at the expense of issues. The key issue now is can the new Task Group get us to the point where issues can be addressed in a sustainable way by a structure or model in which we can all be stakeholders".

Comment from a Development Education Centre Worker.



# Ireland Aid Strategy Plan – A Review

**Colm Regan** reviews “Deepening Public Understanding of International Development: Development Education Strategy Plan 2003-2005, Ireland Aid”.

**I**N SHORT, THIS IS AN APPROPRIATE, WELL-structured and useful strategic plan covering what is, in effect, the Government’s strategy for development education. The plan concisely outlines Development Co-operation Ireland’s (in its latest livery, DCI, the organisation formerly known as Ireland Aid) mission statement for DE, its aim and its objectives, a number of cross-cutting themes as well as a set of principles underpinning its approach.

The latter are worthy of careful consideration and debate as they form a potential basis for the effective linking of development education and development co-operation. They also clearly begin to define the specificity of development education and what distinguishes it from other related social and political educations.

## Plan Objectives

In short, the Plan’s cross-cutting issues are capacity building for the DE sector, research needs in a variety of contexts, the promotion of links between Ireland and developing countries and the integration of both global and justice perspectives into allied social and political educations. The 6 key objectives of the plan include:

- 1) the integration of DE into existing education and development policies of different government departments, principally DES and, interestingly, the plan proposes to initiate dialogue on DE with DfID, the EU and the Council of Europe (however, the latter two dimensions read as a ‘wish list’ rather than a plan);
- 2) prioritising the integration of, and support for, DE in teacher education, curriculum development, the Third Level, youth work and community education – this objective is the most detailed within the plan;
- 3) supporting civil society organisations (in the broadest sense) engaged with DE;
- 4) facilitating capacity building within the DE sector via not just funding but also ‘structured dialogue’ (its not clear in the plan what this means), training opportunities etc;

5) media focused work and ongoing research into public attitudes to development issues;

6) maximising opportunities for public engagement with the DCI development co-operation programme.

## Key Aspects

From a DE perspective, it may be worth noting the following aspects of the plan (there are many others but space precludes addressing them):

› its strong emphasis on development within development education, especially key issues such as poverty reduction, the Millennium Development Goals, Ireland Aid’s priority issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS, debt, governance, democracy and human rights etc.) plus its cross-cutting themes of gender and environment. Development educators would do well to carefully consider such issues in our approaches in the coming years – DCI’s definition of DE is, in many ways, much more development focused and specific than that adopted by many in DE.

› The plan highlights DCI’s view (via extensive reference to the Kenny and O’Malley report for Dochas - strangely ignoring many other reviews and reports which take a different view to these authors) that the sector lacks capacity, appropriate standards, lack of models of excellence (is this really true?), a lack of coherence and leadership etc. Unfortunately, the plan quotes the entirely inaccurate statement by Kenny and O’Malley that ‘there is no group willing to champion the development education sector’. DE activists need to discuss, debate and, in my view, challenge some of these assertions. However, I come to one conclusion from this section of the plan – DCI does not view our sector positively. What is our response to this?

› The plan is at its most detailed and specific when referring to the formal sector of education – it is relatively weak with reference to community and youth education. This reflects the relative success of initiatives in the formal sector at a variety of levels and its adoption of DE as against our relative lack of equiva-

lent success in the non-formal sector. Again, how do we see this issue, especially post DEFY?

› The plan highlights the necessity of greater use of mass communications and the media as a means of addressing the Irish public on both development issues per se as well as the Aid Programme itself. Throughout the plan there are references to public awareness, public ownership and public participation. However the model implied smacks of a very didactic, 'top down', 'experts led' view of public engagement – the 'Mummy knows best' approach to public information.

Again, space precludes a more considered review and response to the plan but there are two key issues I wish to raise – the context in which the plan will be implemented and the ability of the DE sector to creatively and effectively engage with DCI on DE in the immediate future.

### **Context**

The unfortunate decision to abolish NCDE (thus, with a stroke of a pen, abolishing real civil society participation in the programme with all its related rights and responsibilities) and to integrate the new DE Unit within DCI has major implications. For this plan to be implemented, it will require a very high level of effective, informed and pro-active engagement with the sector. The recent decision that all staff replacements within the Unit will be with career civil servants is a matter of concern – I cannot foresee circumstances in which civil servants will be allowed to engage with DE around the country. This situation is compounded further by the view endorsed in the plan that the DE sector is weak, poorly managed, lacking in leadership etc. In such circumstances, I am left to wonder if the plan is really real.

### **Diversity**

My second concern relates to the DE sector itself and its current malaise. In the absence of other, publicly available strategic plans for DE, there is a danger that this plan becomes the national DE plan. A diversity of approaches and plans is vital to the effective delivery of DE nationally. The Government is to be congratulated for delivering its plan and the rest of us are to be berated for not doing likewise. In the absence of alternatives, the 'government' view is likely to overly determine the agenda of DE. In such a scenario (think of the approaches of the Italian and Spanish governments) whether the much lauded and much hyped civil society response?

*Colm Regan is Co-ordinator of 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World – the Bray-based development and human rights education NGO. 80:20 also has offices and programmes in East Belfast and Zambia. Colm is editor of the publication 80:20, Development in an Unequal World.*

# News & Notes

## **Debt Training for Trainers**

Debt and Development Coalition Ireland are offering training for development educators 'to expand your horizons and deepen your understanding' of the debt crisis and how to tackle it.

The first of the four modules looks at the existing situation, the roles of stakeholders and decision-makers and how decision-making can be democratised. The second examines the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) process and whether it has increased democracy and participation. Module 3 focuses on effective lobbying, identifying where, when and which bodies make key decisions and on giving debt activists the tools to get appropriate messages on the table at the right time. The final module will address how to keep the Debt issue alive on the media's agenda.

For further information contact Debt and Development Coalition Ireland, All Hallows, Grace Park Rd, Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Tel: 01-8571828, Fax: 01-8573140, Email: [ddc@connect.ie](mailto:ddc@connect.ie), website: [www.debtireland.org](http://www.debtireland.org)

## **Global Youth Work**

The One World Centre in Belfast has made a new appointment to support development education work in the youth sector. The post of Youth Officer has been filled by Jackie Balmer who will be responsible for delivering a new validated Global Youth Work course in the north of Ireland.

The course will provide youth leaders and workers with a qualification in global youth work and enhance development education practice in the youth sector. Jackie will also deliver training on development issues to youth groups and organisations, and carry out advocacy work designed to enhance statutory support for development education practice in the youth sector.

For further information on the project contact: One World Centre, 4 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR. Tel: 0044 28 9024 1879.



# Index Links

## Volunteering Ireland Training Courses

### **Supporting Volunteers – Wednesday September 17th**

Coleraine House, Dublin 7. Time: 10:00 to 16:00.

### **The Key to Retaining Volunteers – Wednesday October 22nd & Designing Volunteer Roles for Results – Thursday October 23rd**

Master classes with Rick Lynch, international author on volunteer management.  
Coleraine House, Dublin 7. Time: 10:00 to 16:00.

### **Volunteers on Management Committees – Saturday November 8th**

Coleraine House, Dublin 7. Time: 10:00 to 16:00.

Contact: Clare or Anne-Marie on (01) 872 2622 or email [anne-marie@volunteeringireland.com](mailto:anne-marie@volunteeringireland.com)  
website: [www.volunteeringireland.com](http://www.volunteeringireland.com)

## One World Centre, Northern Ireland

### **Options and Issues in Global Development Work – Saturday September 20th**

9:30 to 17:00 at the Ulster People's College, 30 Adelaide Park, Belfast BT9 6FY.

This one day seminar organised by the One World Centre is for individuals who are interested in getting involved in development work at home or overseas.

The aims of the seminar are:

- To provide information on options for working in developing countries.
- To increase awareness of development issues.
- To increase involvement in international development work in Northern Ireland.

The cost is £10 waged/£5 unwaged.

Contact: Roisin McLaughlin, One World Centre, 4 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR.  
tel: 028 9024 1879, email: <mailto:roisin@owcni.org.uk>

## Comhlámh – Development Workers in Global Solidarity

### **Open Evening – Tuesday September 23rd**

19:00 in the Comhlámh office at 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2.

An evening designed for new members, or people who want to become more active in Comhlámh. Hear about the work of the different Comhlámh groups and how you can get involved.

### **Facilitation Skills Course – Weekend of September 27th & 28th, Dublin.**

This course is designed for people interested in global development issues, who want to gain the facilitation skills to work with groups more effectively on these issues.

No previous experience of group work is required.

Cost: €50 (members) / €75 (non-members).

### **Globalisation and Trade Course – October 14th to November 11th**

Five-week course with speakers including leading campaigners and academics.  
The course runs for five Tuesday nights from 19:00 to 21:00 each evening.

Cost is €50 for non-members

or €25 for Comhlámh members and recently returned development workers.

Contact: For further information on Comhlámh courses see [www.comhlamh.org](http://www.comhlamh.org)

## **Comhlámh** (continued)

### **Options and Issues in Development Work – Weekend of October 4th & 5th in the Tipperary Institute, Tipperary.**

This is a course designed for people who are considering becoming involved in development work, whether overseas or in Ireland.

### **Coming Home to Ireland from Overseas – Weekend of October 11th & 12th**

The Coming Home Weekend is for people who have returned to Ireland following an assignment overseas as a development or aid worker. The weekend offers an opportunity to meet with others also returning, share experience and stories, network, unwind and have craic. The weekend will be held in **All Hallow's College, Dublin**. Accommodation and travel are provided for people whose assignment has been for over 100 days.

### **Development Forum – Wednesday October 8th, November 12th & December 10th**

An evening meeting aimed at providing an opportunity to discuss and debate key development issues. Meetings take place at 19:00 in the Comhlámh office at 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2.

## **Irish Social Forum**

### **Fundraising screening of *Chavez Inside the Coup: Director's Cut* – Thursday October 9th**

Organised by Attac and Comhlámh, and with an introduction by Donnacha O'Briain, Co-Director, this screening will feature the extended edition of the documentary. Funds raised will go towards the Irish Social Forum which will take place on the weekend of October 18th–19th. It is hoped that the event will support bringing a speaker from a developing country to take part in the Irish Social Forum.

Venue: Chief O'Neill's Auditorium, Chief O'Neill's pub, Smithfield, Dublin 1.

Tickets at €12 are available from Attac and Comhlámh and at the door (depending on availability).

Contact: (01) 478 3490

## **Galway One World Centre**

### **Global Issues – A Human Perspective**

This is a 10-week Adult Education course starting **Tuesday September 29th at 19:30 to 21:30** in **The Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUIG, Galway**. The aim of course is to explain simply and objectively key global issues, to explain how they impact on the lives of people, and to relate these issues to Ireland.

### **Global Issues – A Scientific Perspective**

A 6-week Adult Education course starting in **September** in **GMIT, Galway** – check for details of dates and times. The course aims to explain simply and objectively key global issues of Global Sustainability.

Contact: Peter Butler or Susan Bradley on 091 530 590

## **Development Cooperation Ireland**

The Development Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) to the Development Education Unit within Development Cooperation Ireland will host a forum for development education practitioners, groups and organisations entitled '**A new context for a new Development Education**' specifically discussing the role of the DEAC.

The Forum will take place on **Wednesday, 22nd October** in DCI, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2 from **10:30 - 15:30**. Further information from Justin on 01 478 9456.

# Attitudes Towards Development Cooperation in Ireland: A Challenge for Development Education

**Morina O'Neill** outlines the findings of research into the effectiveness of development education initiatives in the formal sector.

**K**EY TO DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION ACTIVITY IS the examination of existing attitudes to, and understanding of, the reasons for global inequality. To be able to do this most effectively, we need to know how these attitudes are formed to begin with. A new national survey, *Attitudes Towards Development Cooperation in Ireland*, launched in June will be of interest to all those involved in development education. The survey, which was commissioned by Development Cooperation Ireland (Ireland Aid's new name) and the Development Education Unit within DCI, aimed to measure and evaluate the opinion of Irish people towards development issues, development cooperation, aid and Ireland's role internationally within this.

I will not attempt to present all of the findings of the survey here; you can obtain a copy by contacting the Development Education Unit of DCI (see details below). I will instead highlight some of the ways in which this report may be of interest to those involved in development education, especially in relation to the media.

This survey shows that there is a high degree of goodwill for Ireland's support of developing countries (51% indicated that they were 'very much for' helping countries in the developing world, with a further 39% being 'on the whole' in favour of helping). This indicates a strong base for development cooperation from Ireland. However, it's interesting to see what level of knowledge and understanding this support is based on.

## Information Sources

Eight percent of respondents claimed to 'know a lot' about developing countries, with another 8% claiming that they 'don't know anything' about them, and 81% claiming they know 'something' about developing countries. Of course, we can't tell what exactly those who claim to know 'a lot' do know. What the survey does tell us is that 92% of respondents say that they get their information about developing countries primarily from the TV News, followed by newspapers, other TV programmes, with Third World Charities coming fourth. We have no way of knowing

from this survey the quality of the information on which they are basing their knowledge.

Based on recent coverage of the 'War against Terrorism', we know that TV is not always the most reliable source of balanced information about global issues. In fact, in relation to this, 60% of respondents themselves believe that information from the media is only 'fairly reliable'.

## Understanding

Thus the amount of information provided does not necessarily reflect the level of understanding of the roots of global inequality. The following findings may give us an example. The top three reasons why developing countries are poor, according to respondents, are disease/lack of healthcare, war and conflicts and lack of education and training. When asked what the most serious problems facing developing countries are, one fifth said they didn't know.

It's disappointing that there was no question aimed at highlighting the effects of the actions of northern countries and institutions on the daily lives of people in the global south. The option which came the nearest to this, that '*The better-off countries take advantage of the Developing Countries*', came near the bottom in a list of 14 possible answers to this question. This is no surprise: a challenge in development education has always been to communicate effectively the complexity of the issues which perpetuate global inequality.

The report states that, overall, respondents seem satisfied with the amount of information they currently receive on developing countries although over half of the respondents would like to get further information. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for development educators. The public wants more information and wants it through the media: preferred sources were TV news, newspapers, followed by Third World charities.

## Channels of Education

What the respondents know about development issues must reflect the information provided to them from the sources on which they most commonly rely.

This raises an important question for those in development education about media ownership and access, on both a national and international scale. It also raises questions about the messages which development NGOs send out in their fundraising work.

It seems that information on development issues has found its way to the public, rather than them finding their way to our development education workshops or resource centres. People are not turning on the TV news in the evening in order to learn more about developing countries, they are not *actively selecting* to learn specifically about the lives of people in developing countries. What can we learn from this? Can we mainstream the complex development reality into TV news, radio (oddly not mentioned in the survey, although 28% of the adult population tunes into RTE Radio 1 alone every weekday) newspapers, magazines. Isn't it time that we rise to that challenge more effectively?

### **A Wider Audience**

Development education is, of course, about more than a TV headline or newspaper article, but these can open peoples' minds to critical thinking about development issues and encourage them to challenge some of their existing attitudes to and understandings of the reasons for global inequality. There is much excellent development education happening throughout Ireland, and this survey challenges us to respond in creative and effective ways, to get that development education to a wider audience, especially in relation to use of the media.

The survey covers a wider range of findings than those highlighted here. It essentially raises as many questions as answers, but it is a good foundation on which to build a body of research attitudes to development and aid in Ireland. It will prove a useful yardstick by which we can measure the effectiveness of development education in the future.

*'Attitudes Towards Development Cooperation in Ireland' is the report of a national survey of Irish adults which was carried out by MRBI in 2002. It was edited by John A. Weafer, and includes various commentaries on the findings.*

A copy of the report can be obtained by contacting:

Development Education Unit,  
Development Co-operation Ireland,  
Bishop's Square,  
Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2.

Phone: +353 (0)1 478 9456 (main)  
Phone: +353 (0)1 478 9457 (direct)

*Morina O'Neill is the Development Education Officer with Comhlámh.*

# News & Notes

## **Development Course Guide**

The Development Studies Association of the UK and Ireland (DSA) have produced a web based Course Guide for Development Studies related courses, provided by academic institutions throughout the UK and Ireland. There are currently nearly 40 participating institutions with a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate and short courses as well as a list of potential sources of funding for such study. The guide is at <http://www.devstud.org.uk/courseguide>

For more information please contact Frances Hill at [frances.hill1@btconnect.com](mailto:frances.hill1@btconnect.com).

## **Fundraising Handbook**

The 5<sup>th</sup> edition of The Irish Fundraising Handbook is now available. Produced by Create (formerly CAFE), it contains updated contacts details of 750 organisations and sources that will provide almost €2bn in funding and other support in 2003. This includes local, regional, national, EU and international sources, both public and private, and new sections on awards, scholarships and social finance opportunities. It includes advice on fundraising, applying for charitable status, legal structures, tax incentives, lotteries and collections, corporate sponsorship, and more besides. Available from CAFE Publications for €20 (plus €2.50 p&p). Tel: 01-4736600.

## **Global Solidarity Website**

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, Eric Lee from Labourstart launched a new website produced by ICTU. The new website, [www.ictuglobalsolidarity.org](http://www.ictuglobalsolidarity.org), is part of the campaign to foster a greater understanding within the trade union movement on the island of Ireland about the causes and effects of global poverty and inequality. Focussing on what are known as the 'core labour standards' of the International Labour Organisation, the website will serve as a useful starting point for anybody seeking information and ideas for action in pursuit of workers rights in the global economy and to promote a globalisation that serves the needs of all the world's peoples.

# The Irish Social Forum: Development Education in Action

**Stephen McCloskey** on how the Forum presents an opportunity for Dev Ed.

THE PUBLIC PROTESTS AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ and neo-liberal global economics raise interesting issues for development educators. A rose-tinted view of recent events might suggest that development education has succeeded in contributing to public debate and action on international issues. After all, the protesters are putting development education into practice by engaging in shared learning techniques and reflective action toward social transformation. So, have we finally worked the oracle after all these years or are other factors responsible for the largest popular movement to emerge on a global scale since the 1960s?

## Popular Protest

It is more likely that the massive anti-war movement has ridden on the back of the trade justice and anti-globalisation protests which have swept the globe since Seattle in 1999. These protests in turn have been a reaction to several factors – the conservatism of political systems, the injustices of neo-liberalism, the opportunities presented by global telecommunications, enhanced mobilisation by non-governmental actors etc. But has our role as educators changed in the light of recent events? Development education often seeks to effect change from the top down by lobbying government departments, statutory bodies and international structures. We do this despite the fact that these structures and bodies regularly fail us.

## Inequality in Ireland

Clear evidence of the current government's failings can be found in the 2003 *Human Development Report* which states that Ireland has the highest level of poverty (15.3% of the population) and inequality in the West outside of the United States despite having the fourth largest per capita income in the world. We don't fare much better in the international arena with the government reneging on a promise to increase the overseas aid budget by actually reducing it. Ireland has also breached Irish neutrality during the Iraq war by facilitating the refueling of American aircraft at Shannon. It is hardly surprising therefore that large swathes of the public feel let down by their political representatives and have taken to the streets in protest.

The dominance of American hegemony and economic liberalism on the world stage combined with a hawk-

ish intent in Washington to enforce its ideology with a reckless militarism has united millions of activists throughout the world in opposition. This opposition is more pro-internationalist than anti-globalisation and has started to formulate ideas for an alternative world vision that prioritises social equality and justice over market forces.

## Social Forum

The World Social Forum (WSF) is an annual gathering of activists from around the world with the aim of sharing ideas on alternative paths to development where 'the economy would serve people, and not the other way round'. The WSF was first held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001 and its success inspired the organisation of a European Social Forum in Florence last year which was attended by an estimated 50,000 activists. Over the past six months, individuals from a range of backgrounds in Irish civil society have taken part in a consultation process toward establishing a Social Forum in Ireland. This process has rapidly attracted the interest and participation of people throughout the island to the point that an Irish Social Forum was launched on July 6<sup>th</sup> in Dublin. Speaking at the press launch of the Forum, Colm O'Cuanachain, Secretary General of Amnesty International's Irish Section, said that:

"The Social Forum, from Porto Alegre to Florence, from Mumbai to Dublin, is the most positive global movement emerging in our time. It is about people pursuing their human rights through their own power with an unstoppable passion. We need an active civil society in Ireland if human rights are to become a reality for all and the Social Forum movement provides the vehicle to stimulate and focus this activism."

## World Economic Forum

The World Social Forum has emerged as a counter weight for NGOs, human rights groups, and other civil society organisations to the World Economic Forum (WEF) – an assortment of some 400 industrialists, transnational corporations, academics and politicians 'widely credited with being the organising force behind capitalist globalisation'. Many of the world's leading TNCs affiliate to the WEF at membership fees of around \$25,000 with a further \$6,250 required to participate in the annual Forum. Only

corporations with a turnover in excess of \$1 billion need apply for membership and the rollcall of existing members includes familiar companies from all facets of global business and enterprise – McDonalds, Shell, Nike, Philip Morris, Nestle and Coca-Cola among them. The WEF is credited with playing a crucial role in establishing the World Trade Organisation, that underwriter of unfair trade rules, and is essentially a think-tank designed to extend the political, social and economic influence of the private sector over public services and decision-making processes.

Given that Ireland has a highly globalised economy, largely dependent on overseas investment, it came as no surprise to find the government agreeing to host a planned European Summit of the WEF on 20 and 21 October. Indeed, the prospect of this meeting in Dublin added greater urgency to the formation of the Irish Social Forum with a view to organising a counter summit based on co-operation between civil society groups both locally and globally. With plans for a counter summit well advanced, the WEF suddenly announced in July that it was canceling its European summit offering the lame excuse that reports on 'competitiveness', the theme of the summit, would not be ready in time. It is more likely that the WEF was running scared of the protests being organised by the ISF in tandem with its partners overseas. In fact, the abandonment of the WEF summit is best interpreted as the first major success of the Irish Social Forum.

The ISF counter summit in October will go ahead as scheduled but with a greater emphasis on awareness raising and building alliances against the privatizing agenda of 'corporate-globalisation'. The summit will include workshops and debates on global justice and economic issues while enabling participants to formulate actions that challenge the worst excesses of neo-liberalism. These events will be organised and supported by four Social Forums that have been established regionally throughout Ireland – North East, North West, South East and South West – in the space of a few months. While the October events have provided an immediate focus for each of the Forums, they are also intent on sustaining their work over the long-term and providing an open space for debate on issues such as cutbacks in health services, the privatization of public transport and growing racism toward ethnic minorities – issues with a local and global resonance.

### **Development Education**

The ISF is essentially promoting a development education agenda – it is educating the public on international development issues and encouraging action toward positive social change. But how far is the development education sector engaging with the new forces for progressive change in Ireland and elsewhere which should be its natural constituency? When we discuss strategic partnerships outside our sector it is

usually in the domain of government and statutory bodies rather than grassroots organizations. We haven't begun to formulate our thinking in relation to the emerging popular movements that have so stunningly engaged popular imagination and participation around the world. It seems extraordinary that a pedagogical process which emerged from the Third World with a view to eradicating poverty and marginalisation has not yet considered how it can contribute to grassroots development movements.

Development education has a radical agenda – education toward action and social transformation – but has remained an insular sector that is arguably still a marginal factor in the education of young people, much less wider society. Yet we have entered a period of real opportunity for development NGOs to forge new partnerships in civil society and broaden the social base for action that can eradicate poverty at home and overseas. The development sector should participate in the Irish Social Forum and identify how we can bring about change from bottom up, as well as the top down. The mantra of the World Social Forum is *Another World is Possible!* Lets work in partnership with the Social Forum to make that world a reality.

*Details of how to get involved in the Irish Social Forum are available from the ISF web site at [www.irishsocialforum.org](http://www.irishsocialforum.org) Information is also available from [www.indymedia.ie](http://www.indymedia.ie)*

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**index**

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