



Thanks to Martyn Turner for his kind permission to use this illustration

## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Welcome to the 8th edition of INDEX, the Irish Newsletter for Development Education Exchange.

'In the fight against Third World Poverty the Western Media is more hindrance than help', was the motion before the house in Concern's last national debate between Laurel Hill Secondary School and Coláiste Bride. The motion was passed after powerful and passionate arguments from both sides.

But, do we all agree with this assertion? Is the media really 'more hindrance than help'? This question has concerned Development Educators for many years. On one hand, it is argued that the media is out there to make profits for their shareholders at the expense of the type and quality of information the public receives. On the other hand, the media is a tool for reaching the public and raising people's awareness about issues that would not have otherwise been raised without their intervention. This, we have seen, has motivated people to become active, as was demonstrated by the massive public response to the Asian Tsunami.

The contributors to this issue of Index, both from the media and the Development Education sector, provide us with much food for thought on the complex topic of 'The Role of the Media in Development Education.' They use the coverage of December's Asian Tsunami as the main point of focus.

"Can't live with them, can't live without them" is how Paul Cullen, on page 2, summarises the feelings toward the media of those working in development and aid relief. He looks at the factors that drive media coverage and talks about how priorities are set in times of crisis. In addressing the question of 'how can the media serve development education positively' Rodney Rice suggests "an alternative position from which to start" and provocatively inverts the question to "how development education can serve the media positively" on page 4. From the Development Education perspective, Stephen McCloskey stresses that with the kind of power which the media wield over shaping public attitudes towards development issues comes "an enormous responsibility to ensure that [these] are accurately reported". Ultimately suggesting

constructive approaches to the Media and Development Education, both journalists and development educators propose developing cooperation between the two sectors, which is inspiring and certainly the way forward!

Talking about the way forward - find out about the latest on CONNECT... ing development education and broadcast media on page 8. Also on page 8, Michael Doorley offers us a 'review lesson' on the European Code of Conduct for NGOs on the use of images and messages relating to the Third World. Claire O'Grady Walshe from AFRi, gives us a 'wake up call' and looks at the lessons learnt from the Asian Tsunami in environmental terms (p. 3).

Don't forget to check out Index Links (p.6-7) and what's new in DE on page 8- Comhlámh Media Production's innovative way of bringing Southern voices to complex issues. Finally, our resource review section features Claire O'Neill's practical insights on the use of an internet resource: Oxfam's 'Cool Planet for Teachers'.

# CONFLICT SITUATIONS AROUND THE WORLD: ARE WE LOOSING SIGHT?



Photo from [www.sxc.hu](http://www.sxc.hu)

**Paul Cullen** looks at some of the factors that drive media coverage in situations of crisis

**L**ike the Lord, the media works in mysterious ways. It can ignore a story for ages, profess heartless indifference to the most tragic of situations, then suddenly devote massive resources to the same issue - from overlook to overkill in less time than it takes to power a laptop.

Confusingly, the media's many strands can simultaneously emit different messages, from the racist to the right-on, from the shallow and superficial to the complex and intricate.

Development workers are forever trying to understand this many-headed, modern-day monster. "Can't live with them, can't live without them" might accurately sum up the feeling those who work in the humanitarian relief and development business have for the media. Journalists get out vital messages to the broader public but in doing so, they can distort, sentimentalise, miss the point, over-emphasise the Western angle and generally filter the story through their own, often selective, prisms.

Or so many aid workers tell me. Those in the field generally regard journalists as an encumbrance in their busy lives - while never failing to extend much-needed hospitality - in contrast to headquarters staff who measure the value of publicity in donations given and pledges made.

The massive tsunami that hit many parts of Asia last Christmas has once again highlighted the role of the media in publicising some humanitarian crises, while ignoring others. Why so much focus on Sri Lanka and Thailand, it is asked, when other crises such as Dharfur, the Congo and Iraq prompt "a more ambivalent and less enthusiastic reaction," in the words of the editor of INDEX when commissioning this article.

There are some simple part-answers to this question, and these relate to the way the media work. Convenience, accessibility, size and relevance are all important criteria used by media outlets in assessing whether to cover a particular story, and the tsunami scored high on all counts.

This story happened at Christmas, when no other news was on the agenda and a

## **Convenience, accessibility, size and relevance are all important criteria used by media outlets in assessing whether to cover a particular story, and the tsunami scored high on all counts**

captive turkey-eating audience of millions sat before television screens throughout the Western world. It hit parts of the world, such as Thailand and Sri Lanka, which are major tourist destinations and are therefore easy to fly to. These countries have relatively good telecommunications infrastructures, so television crews were able to beam their pictures back to Europe without any difficulty. This explains why Aceh, which was worst hit, was also the last to get coverage.

It reminded me of an earthquake near Istanbul which I covered for *The Irish Times* one August some years ago. Similar earthquakes which took place at busier times of the media calendar in less accessible parts of eastern Turkey received only a fraction of the media coverage this one got.

Another key factor driving the level of coverage of the tsunami was the level of identification western audiences had with the places and victims featuring in the disaster. Many of us had been to Phuket or Galle and were horrified to see what had happened to our holiday destinations. Some of our neighbours, friends, and colleagues were out there when the wave struck and ended up as victims, eye-witnesses or relief helpers.

The result was a dream media story, a global epic with local angles for every country, town and village. The victims of this tragedy were frequently described as "blameless," a choice of words which of course reflects badly on the victims of other tragedies. Nonetheless, the disaster was caused by what we refer to as an "Act of God"; consequently, the dead were accorded the sort of respect the media usually only reserves for those killed by falling trees or drunk drivers.

The tsunami was also notable for being a unique event, unique at least in our

lifetimes or in the lifetime of the electronic media. The same could hardly be said of war.

All these factors combined to generate substantial coverage of the tsunami in the early aftermath. But another factor - the tipping point - then came into play. The tsunami was a constantly unfolding story that grew bigger by the day. Suddenly, one of those rare consensi was reached, and the disaster was the only show in town.

But what about Dharfur, the Congo, Iraq, I hear you ask. Well, none of these tragedies scores highly on the criteria mentioned above. They are complex, messy, multi-factorial, distant, not capable of easy resolution. It is invidious, too, to lump them together, as they are also very different.

Western audiences have no points of connection with the lives of Sudanese or Congolese villagers, and few enough with the inhabitants of Iraq. Many would ask why these problems cannot be resolved at a regional level. Irish audiences can legitimately disclaim any responsibility for the mistakes made by colonising nations in these countries.

These are uncomfortable truths, but truths they are. Africa will matter, in media terms, only when it matters economically.

Development educators can continue to build awareness, press for a change in policies and increases in aid spending, and hope the media shows an interest in their far-flung interests. But ultimately, they must be prepared, every once in a while, to be overwhelmed by a story such as the tsunami. It may have been sentimental, it may often have been superficial, but the coverage struck a very human chord with millions of people throughout the world.

*Paul Cullen is Development Correspondent for The Irish Times*

# TSUNAMI DISASTER AND WAKE UP CALL

**Clare O'Grady Walshe** reflects on the lessons learned from the Tsunami and highlights the necessity of consultation between environmental and development NGOs in order to minimise the impact of development on the environment and limit the devastation of such future disasters.



The Banda Aceh shoreline before and after the tsunami (Photograph: [www.digitalglobe.com](http://www.digitalglobe.com))

**M**ore than two months have now passed since 330,000 people lost their lives as the “megathrust” quake 160 miles off the Sumatra coast sent 500mph tsunamis swelling out into the Indian Ocean. We watched, helpless, as amateur video images showed the devastation while waves hit the brutally oppressed Indonesian Province of Aceh and Africa.

Despite the devastation, stories of survival and solidarity reveal aspects of the human character that are truly heroic. And that heroism and tragedy cut across class, creed, gender and culture. In the eye of the storm, Mother Nature is not discriminatory. We have something to learn from this.

## LESSONS LEARNT

In planetary terms the movement of the two giant tectonic plates was like a little shudder, according to geologists, a small event in a long violent history of a planet with a molten core, where entire continents have disappeared and then reformed. The Indian left plate has been sliding under the Burmese right plate at the rate of a few centimetres a year. On December 26th the top plate suddenly springs up, lifting perhaps 60 feet along a 1,000-mile ridge. The quake jolted the earth's rotation enough to take a few microseconds off the clock, but it unleashed trillions of tons of water in a matter of seconds causing the tsunami, tsunami, Japanese meaning port and nami meaning wave, a wave with the energy of a hydrogen bomb.

So nature can be ferocious. But we have to work with it too. One of the most

salutary lessons from the recent events is the call by leading ecologists from the UN as well as the indigenous groups on the ground that damage could have been greatly reduced if more coastal areas had maintained their protective shields of mangrove swamps and coral reefs, and if warning systems had become operational. Mangroves grow in thickets along tropical coastlines and their complicated root systems help to bind the shore together, effectively providing a shield against destructive waves. “They act as shock absorbers for the types of flooding and the tsunami that we saw”, according to Simon Cripps, head of the Worldwide Fund for Nature's marine programme.

Up to half of the world's mangrove swamps have disappeared in the last 20-30 years because of the development of tourist resorts, transport infrastructure and commercial prawn fishing. The Mangrove Action Program based in Washington, estimates that there are only 16,000 hectares (40,000 acres) of mangroves left in the world. This makes coastal areas more susceptible to flooding, as has been seen recently in Bangladesh, which no longer has a protective shield of mangroves. They hold the structure of the land and coastline together.

## A CALL FOR ACTION

In India, the Chennai-based Mangrove Swamps Swaminathan Research Foundation has been playing a key role in the setting up and empowering of local people to run knowledge centres in the restoration of mangrove forests in participation with village communities and

government departments. They point out that in Pitchavaram, where there is a four-km stretch of mangrove forests over 1,400 hectares, over 3,000 families in six villages were protected from the tsunami waves. Villages on either side suffered heavily. Similarly at Veerampattinam, the Panchayat leaders announced an evacuation through the public address system of the village knowledge centre and continued asking people to move to safer places.

These groups are now calling for the rehabilitation of degraded mangrove ecosystems and the creation of community mangrove nurseries to enable mangrove afforestation programmes. The preservation of traditional wisdom both in human and natural terms is vital at times like this. The application of our aid and assistance must follow this wisdom. It will not always save us from a sometimes violently erupting planet. But it is the path towards recovering our reverence for creation and protecting basic human rights in the process. Environmental and development organisations have received a wake up call from the tsunami disaster also. They must work evermore in tandem. They are well placed to apply the lessons. More of the same type of development, without due regard to basic principles of environmental protection, will deliver more of the same type of disaster, and that is inconceivable for everyone.

*Clare O'Grady Walshe*  
*Afri - Action from Ireland*  
[www.afri.buz.org](http://www.afri.buz.org)

# HOW CAN THE MEDIA SERVE DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION POSITIVELY?

**Rodney Rice** challenges the Development Education sector to understand the way that media works and asks whether DE does enough to “make good the gap.”

The village looked across Lake Kivu towards the provincial capital, Bukavu. “This is where the 242 people died when the boat sank, said my Congolese interpreter as we drove past the small, surprisingly shallow harbour.

“Really,” I said. “When was that?”  
“You don’t remember?”

“I never knew.” He was shocked. “Two hundred and forty-two dead and you never knew. You are a journalist, you must read the newspapers.”

I told him that I could be almost certain that the accident was not reported in any Irish newspaper; that it was probably not mentioned in even the Guardian; that the Daily Telegraph – which I don’t read – may have given it a paragraph. He sat in stunned silence.

And wasn’t he right? Imagine those 242 had been white, dying more likely in an air crash. It would resonate almost to this day, especially had it happened in a hostile environment like the Democratic Republic of Congo.

You see, we’ll never admit it, but somehow collectively we have a graduated scale of the value of human life. Africans are distant; Africans are poor; Africans die younger than us, and for a variety of reasons unlikely ever to face us.

That’s a shocking comment to make, distressing words to write. Harsh and seemingly void of emotion. Most will deny it. But in reality we do chose what to care about. And we are victims of emotionalism: the tsunami reverberates still round a million collection boxes; raising money to end preventable diseases is more of a slog.

So is the media to blame? Well, as with many subjects, responsibility for unpalatable matters is often transferred to the media. And, as in many of these cases, the reporters and broadcasters are defensive about their role.

Let’s look then at what the media does and doesn’t do about meaningful development education. In Ireland, the answer is: far from enough. For a country which prides itself on regular claims of

being the highest per capita cash contributor to an immediate distant crisis, we – populace and journalists - accept with little protest our media’s regular silence on the ongoing underdevelopment of the poorest of the poor.

A news desk might look at the continuing misery of HIV/AIDS in Africa and say: “there’s nothing new here, we’ve heard it all before.” But the features desk ought surely to see that there are new ways to tell the story, new angles from which to demand that the world make a more forceful and urgent response to the pain of such wholesale death.

I will not in this short piece single out any media organisation, including the one for which I work. Each can point to moments of civic concern, but none has a coherent policy on development education.

Development Co-operation Ireland at the Department of Foreign Affairs and associated bodies attempt through various interventions to encourage dev-ed media cover across a range of approaches. The relevant NGOs press for publicity for their own specific projects. This is an essential fund-raising tool, but can result in an easy but narrow focus on emergency aid rather than pushing the challenge of development issues. And negative voices often find a more open access than thoughtful if critical supporters of the long-term challenge.

So that’s some of what’s wrong. How can it be put right? If I knew that, I would have patented it long ago. But if the journalists are imperfect, let’s also see if the shoe fits the other foot. I was requested to provide these comments under the heading “How the media can serve development education positively”.

Maybe there’s an alternative position from which to start. Maybe it should first be: How can development education serve the media. Serve at least in the sense of assisting. Most of the stories in newspapers, radio or television are generated from outside the minds of journalists. Events happen, people have issues and agendas which excite some interest. Even

investigative journalism comes from a suspicion that something that has happened has not been fully exposed or concluded.

So does the development education community sit back too comfortably and expect us to come to them? I believe this is the recurring reality behind the constant postulating of the original question. Look at the issue as frankly and uncomfortably as I posed the hypothesis at the beginning of this piece that African lives are somehow seen as less valuable than ours.

Journalists are not required, by citizenship or profession, to feel a personal responsibility to cover, or argue for the cover, of every matter of concern to humanity. So if you have a bee in your bonnet, it’s up to you to put it into mine. This means you must learn to understand the media. You must know what buttons, and whose buttons, can be pressed.

This a period of media proliferation. There have never been so many radio stations in the country from national to local to community outputs. There is an increase in newsprint into freesheet and community publications. In some of these outlets, access is readily available: development education practitioners could contribute especially to the organs in the community sector.

To achieve publicity always requires some work. It is right for practitioners to push journalists to try to enhance our knowledge of, and respect for, the underprivileged, the wretched of the earth. But don’t always expect the journalists to do it all alone.

It is not the business of journalists to serve development education. It is the job of journalists to evaluate and then report on the basis of a news or interest judgement. We’ve done a bit, but not enough. Have you done enough to make good the gap?

*Rodney Rice - presenter and producer of RTE Radio’s Worlds Apart programme*

# THE TRUTH IN THE NEWS?



Photo: Jose A Warietta - www.sxc.hu

**T**he massive international response to the recent Tsunami disaster in Asia left many in the Irish development sector both overwhelmed and bewildered in equal measures. The generosity of the public, locally and internationally, in generating funds and material aid for the Tsunami appeal was staggering and quickly forced many Western governments into increasing their aid pledges for the countries affected. But why did the Tsunami have us organizing fundraisers, sending aid shipments or parting with our cash on an almost unprecedented level? The world, after all, is not short of human tragedies, conflicts and natural disasters worthy of our money, activism and aid.

Among several factors in the success of the Tsunami appeal perhaps the most influential was the extensive coverage afforded it by the media. The Tsunami commanded blanket international coverage which stands in stark contrast to that normally afforded hugely important issues like trade and debt that are much more

conflicts and how they are sustained in a system of international relationships, then their level of interest can dramatically increase". But do media outlets provide the kind of measured and contextualised reportage that will generate and sustain public interest in development issues?

The most recent surveys of national attitudes and knowledge of development issues in Ireland (commissioned by Ireland Aid and DEFY) reveal a mixed picture of strong public support for overseas development but a limited engagement with issues beyond donations to emergency appeals. As O'Loughlin et al suggest 'the media, and subsequently the public, are more often interested in that side of the developing world which feeds support for short-term or simple rather than long-term or complex solutions'. This assertion needs more thorough testing through qualitative research but surveys in Ireland and elsewhere repeatedly reveal the media as the main source of public information on the developing world. With this kind of

an increasing number of media outlets it hasn't necessarily enhanced coverage of development issues or provided a platform for diverse views and perspectives. All too often development NGOs rely on committed journalists with a personal interest in the developing world to push a story rather than having open access to receptive media organisations.

As the political spectrum of opinion narrows in Western democracies we have witnessed the print and television media become more enthralled and less critical of governments and their agencies. This in turn has paved the way for greater centralization and monopolization of international media by highly chauvinistic conglomerates like Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. With more newspapers and television networks in fewer hands we find journalists working toward a fixed ideological brief which reduces the Fourth Estate to the role of political cipher.

Development educators clearly have a responsibility to open up the media to in-depth discourse on development issues and resist the facile and hackneyed treatment of developing countries that persists in too many outlets. This involves sustained engagement with television, radio and print organs and a willingness to provide a more progressive, informed and in-depth treatment of issues where possible. We are not inviting journalists to provide this perspective in isolation but do expect their willingness to work in partnership with the sector.

Development Co-operation Ireland is playing its part with the provision of a Media Challenge Fund to ensure that more programmes on development issues are aired around the country. This is a small but significant beginning and should be augmented with more training in the development education sector on how we can work with the media to maximum effect. However, it is equally important that the media, as the main source of information on development issues in Ireland, does not reserve its best coverage of the developing world for natural disasters like the Tsunami.

*Stephen McCloskey is Director of the Centre for Global Education Belfast - [www.centreforglobaleducation.com](http://www.centreforglobaleducation.com)*

## **Development educators clearly have a responsibility to open up the media to in-depth discourse on development issues and resist the facile and hackneyed treatment of developing countries that persists in too many outlets.**

damaging to developing countries than natural disasters, even those on the scale of the Tsunami. Rather than contextualise the underlying causes of poverty, the media dwells upon its effects in a creeping 'tabloidisation' of our news coverage that has increased public frustration at their perceived inability to influence events.

The Glasgow University Media Group is an independent research unit that monitors media coverage of local and international issues and its study *Media Coverage of the Developing World* shows "the limited nature of coverage of the developing world and how the focus on disaster and conflict produces negative attitudes and a very partial understanding amongst audiences". However, it also suggested that "when audiences do understand the history of

power over public attitudes comes an enormous responsibility to ensure that development issues are accurately reported which means researching the story, checking facts and consulting with key parties.

Alas, all too often we see international news reported through wire services like Reuters with complex stories reduced to highly circumspect generalities. This can be particularly prevalent in Ireland where media organs either lack, or refuse to commit, the resources necessary to report directly from the developing world. International news coverage is expensive and has been a primary victim in the growing competition between media services in an increasingly deregulated market. While de-regulation has spawned

# INDEX LINKS

## DAYS TO REMEMBER

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**12 JUNE**  
**WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR**

**20 JUNE**  
**WORLD REFUGEE DAY**

**5 JUNE**  
**WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY**

**11 JULY**  
**WORLD POPULATION DAY**

**2005-2015**  
**UN DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION  
'WATER FOR LIFE'**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

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**INTRODUCTION TO SOCIO-CULTURAL  
ISSUES IN LATIN AMERICA**

**28TH MAY 2005**

Venue: LASC, 5 Merrion Row, Dublin 2 (above Centra)

Price: €40/€30 LASC member, unemployed, student or OAP.

This workshop is aimed at those who are new to studying about the region, and want to learn more about it for the purposes of activism, travel, volunteering or similar.

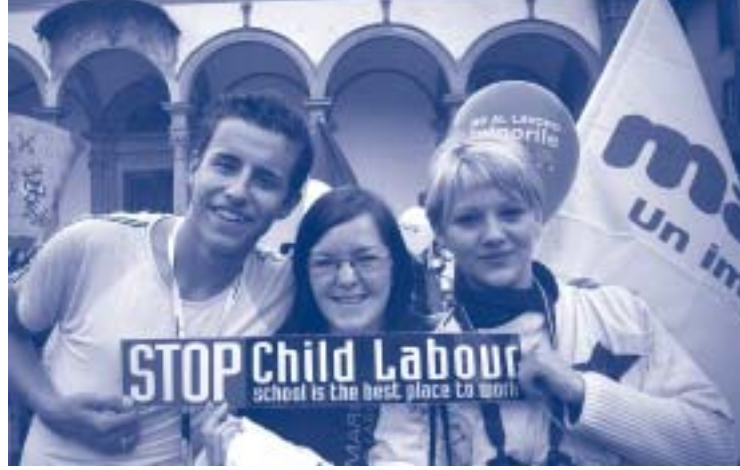
**DEEEP SUMMER SCHOOL (SWEDEN)**

**6-13 JUNE - FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE [WWW.DEEEP.ORG](http://WWW.DEEEP.ORG)**

**7TH ANNUAL NGO FORUM ON HUMAN  
RIGHTS**

**11 JUNE (VENUE TBC)**

This event is organised by the Department of Foreign Affairs Human Rights Unit and further information is available from Leah Hoctor, Human Rights Unit, DFA, Tel 01 4082364.  
E-mail: [leah.hoctor@dfa.ie](mailto:leah.hoctor@dfa.ie).



Irish and German delegation at Global March. Photo supplied by Concern.

## MEETING GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES: IRELAND'S WHITE PAPER ON DEVELOPMENT AID

15 JUNE TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Meeting Global Development Challenges: Ireland's White Paper on Development Aid is the theme of a half day conference, organised by the Institute for International Integration Studies (IIIS), to be held on the morning of 15 June in Trinity College, Dublin. The occasion is intended to provoke a wide discussion and debate on what should determine Ireland's development aid strategy, stimulated by international speakers who have the relevant authority and experience to inform and challenge our thinking. Speakers include: Bjorn Lomborg, organiser and editor of the Copenhagen Consensus (2004); James Mackie, European Centre for Development Policy Management; and Mary McClymont, recently retired President and CEO of InterAction (an alliance of US-based international development and humanitarian NGOs).

## COMHLÁMĦ'S COMING HOME WEEKEND (BELFAST)

FRIDAY JUNE 17-19

This weekend-long event is for overseas development workers who have recently returned to Ireland. Coming Home Weekends are free, residential weekends offering an opportunity to meet others who have worked overseas, and to relax and have some fun while sharing tips on readjusting to the 'culture shock' of being home.

## ANTI-RACIST/ INTERCULTURAL WORKSHOP (DROGEHDA AREA)

MONDAY 20 JUNE (WORLD REFUGEE DAY)

For further information see: [www.youthdeved.ie](http://www.youthdeved.ie) or contact NYCI at 478 4122 or by email: [deved@nyci.ie](mailto:deved@nyci.ie)

Check your calendar in advance!

## FESTIVAL OF WORLD CULTURES, DUN LAOGHAIRE

26-28 AUGUST

## ISSUE IN FOCUS

If you want to find out more about development issues, you can get in-depth information in Comhlámh's Focus Action magazine. To get a copy, contact Comhlámh at 01-478-3490 or get one at Eason's bookstores

# CONNECT...ING DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION AND BROADCAST MEDIA

**CONNECT** is a Working Group which came together in 2003 in order to create and promote an expanded environment in which global development stories can be told in new and creative ways through broadcast and new media.

**C**ONNECT is a new organisation which aims to create greater awareness of the importance of global development among the Irish public, its primary aim being to engage the attention and support of the Irish media in this enterprise. Chaired by Mr Bob Collins, CONNECT will be formally launched in summer of 2005.

*Working together to create and promote an expanded environment, in which global development stories can be told in new and creative ways through broadcast and new media*

The new organisation has been born out of a collaboration established in 2003, when a number of agencies and government departments formed a Working Group with the purpose of working together to create and promote an expanded environment, in which global development stories can be told in new and creative ways through broadcast and new media. This group now comprises ActionAid Ireland, Bóthar, Comhlámh, Christian Aid, Concern, Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI), Department of Communications Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR), Dóchas, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), Oxfam, Self-Help Development International, Trócaire, UNICEF and World Vision, and is chaired by Ms. Emma Lane-Spollen.

Since its formation, CONNECT has been driven by a desire to enable a new and constructive dialogue between the development community, media professionals and others who actively shape

Irish society, in order to promote deeper critical analysis of global issues within the media, discover ways to increase understanding of the wider world in which we live and support innovation in the area of awareness-raising through all media, and in particular through broadcast media.<sup>i</sup> This initiative aims to create a new 'ethos' vis-à-vis global development issues, going

beyond the agenda of the development sector itself. It recognizes that active citizen engagement and participation, both of which are key elements of development education, can more effectively achieve Ireland's development objectives than development aid alone.

As it has evolved the original Working Group grew and expanded with the name, a logo and core aspects of mission and identity being agreed upon. In the early months, inputs were taken from external sources including journalists, producers and industry. By autumn 2003 the CONNECT working group, under the umbrella of Dóchas, was used as a mechanism to input into the Broadcasting Funding Bill and the public consultation on Public Broadcasting. By spring 2004 CONNECT made a submission in its own name to the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) on the implementation of the new broadcasting fund.

**A**t the end of 2004, agreement was reached on a business plan for CONNECT, which takes this initiative to a new level, with the creation of a new independent entity designed to transform the public and policy engagement with the development agenda.

In working to achieve its mission, it is envisaged that CONNECT will seek to:

- \* Provide a coordinated hub of information for media professionals
- \* Engage and seek to influence broadcasting policy and regulation
- \* Explore the potential for journalist training and promote scholarships and fellowships
- \* Partner with academic institutions vis a vis content and attitudinal change research
- \* Initiate Media Awards in recognition of excellence in development coverage
- \* Encourage the use of new technologies to raise awareness

*For further information contact:  
Olive Towey - CONNECT Coordinator -  
01 417 8044*

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<sup>i</sup> The results of 'Attitudes Towards Development Cooperation in Ireland' DCI, 2002 show that a significant majority of people get their information on development issues from television. The same research shows in Ireland a high level of goodwill towards overseas development but low levels of awareness of the underlying issues.



# THE EU CORNER: THE DEV ED'ICI CODE\*

## Michael Doorly of Concern gives us a review lesson on the EU's Code of Conduct on the use of Images and Messages about the developing world.

**A**ll right then class, hands up all of you who know the name of the European NGO code of conduct that was adopted in 1989? Keep your hands up if you can locate a copy of the code within the next 5 minutes. OK now for a special prize; hands up those of you who can quote from at least three of its sections... anyone?

Hmm... looks like we may have to do some revision.

The Code of Conduct on Images and Messages relating to the Third World was adopted by the General Assembly of European NGO's in April 1989. It was written in order to challenge and guide NGOs to be especially attentive to messages that over-simplify or concentrate on the apocalyptic or sensational aspects of life in the Third World, whether in education, public relations or fundraising activities.

The code has some good things going for it: it is short (just 4 pages long), it is clear, it includes well laid out objectives, along with sensible (although somewhat vague) guidelines, recommendations and conclusions, and it is brave. Not only does it appeal to the 'converted' among the Development Education community, but it also asks those 'nasty' fundraisers and PR people to 'review their working methods so as to put an end to notions of 'emotional shock' and disaster relief in order to ensure that the right kind of public education is undertaken.'

Despite such a well intentioned 'crie de coeur' it is hard to say how much of an impact the Code has had among its target audience. On the one hand, it appears as though it has had none at all. Take for

example the section that states NGOs should avoid the following: images which generalise and mask the diversity of situations, images which foster a sense of Northern superiority, and images which fuel prejudice, and the use of apocalyptic or pathetic images. In all honesty, are we really much better off now in 2005 that we were sixteen years ago? On the other hand though, it would be true to say that NGOs have been better at promoting the work of Southern partners, that we are less reliant on the voices of 'Northern' aid workers in crisis situations, and that with easier access and affordability of printing costs, websites and film production, huge efforts have been made at describing the complexity of development issues.

In a recent survey of public attitudes to development<sup>1</sup>, 54% of the Irish public stated they wanted to see more information about development on television and they want that information to be about progress or improvements being made in the developing world, and to see where the money is going. Television was far and away the most preferred means of communication with only 6% seeking information from NGOs themselves. Given the 'sound-bite' nature of TV and given the complex causes of poverty in the world this raises something of a dilemma for NGOs wishing to improve public knowledge of developing countries. Rather than merely blaming the media, NGOs themselves must look at the supremacy (budgets, staff, resources etc.) of their own marketing functions over that of Development Education in their organisations. It poses a serious question to agencies signing on to any revised 'code of conduct'.

All of which has led us to the present day, where after a call in the DEEEP Summer School of '04 to review the relationship between Development and the media, it was agreed that our starting point should be to locate, dust off and review the code of '89. The Irish platform (Dóchas) has agreed to lead the process. A researcher is being hired to consult with other platforms across the EU, codes of conduct in related areas of the media, government and other 'major players' will be examined, and perhaps most importantly special attention will be paid to ensure that the recommendations at which we arrive form the basis of a 'minimum standard' in development education and public awareness raising practice.

Such a standard it is hoped will ensure that the code is not left alone atop a dusty shelf but rather will incorporate mechanisms that allow for those who sign up to it to be monitored and audited in their public awareness and education activities. Such a standard could also be used by funders, partners and networks as a condition for 'working together'. It is clear that whatever form the revised code takes it will be essential that we find ways to make it a 'living' document that holds all its signatories to account.

*Michael Doorly, Development Education Coordinator, Concern*

\* Apologies to Dan Brown

<sup>1</sup> Attitudes to Development Cooperation in Ireland, 2002

# NEW TO DEV-ED: FOCUS AUDIO



To bring voices from the developing world to Ireland with new vividness, Comhlámh this month launches the first “Focus Audio” CD.

The CD contains stories from the emerging movement for global justice, told whenever possible in the words of people from the front lines: Malawian farmers come to understand the role of the international economic structures in 2002 famine, much as happened in Ireland following the Irish Famine; movements for trade justice across the world come together in India to coordinate a worldwide mobilisation of unprecedented scale; African civil society travels to Europe with a call for action and solidarity.

It also contains critique of structural injustices that undermine the development opportunities of Southern countries trapping billions in poverty: The IMF orders Malawi to sell its strategic grain reserves to pay foreign debt on the eve of a famine; the European Commission plays power politics to open up Africa markets for European Corporations.

All development educators know the difficulty of making far away people and places real – and urgent - to a local audience, and narrating their complex issues accessible. Outside formal DevEd settings, these difficulties are amplified – how do you casually engage friends or colleagues over coffee? Or journalists or politicians for whom the developing world may quite understandably appear very remote?

This CD is designed as a tool in addressing these challenges: bringing dynamic Southern voices to Ireland, locating these voices within narratives accessible to an Irish audience and within opportunity for solidarity.

And if some afternoon you’ve piqued the interest of a friend/ colleague/ relative/ journalist/ politician over coffee, armed with a CD, you can suggest they listen to more while doing the dishes, or riding the bus, or walking the dog sometime.

The pilot Focus Audio CD is now available from Comhlámh. Feedback on its application in DevEd is most welcome. Further information can be found at [www.comhlamh.org/media](http://www.comhlamh.org/media) or contact: [comhlamhmedia@yahoo.ie](mailto:comhlamhmedia@yahoo.ie)

## IDEA - The Irish Development Education Association

*Seeks Facilitator to work on Strategic and Operations Plans*

### Background

The Irish Development Education Association was set up in 2004 at a general meeting in Dublin. It grew out of expressed demand within the sector for an association to represent and develop the sector. At the meeting various members were elected to the National Council with a mandate to produce a strategic plan for the AGM in September 2005. The facilitator will work to produce the strategic plan.

### Purpose of task

- \* To facilitate a process in close consultation with IDEA members leading to a 3-5 year strategic plan for IDEA. Within this process, to offer opportunities for the development education community to come together, improve communications and cooperate in planning its future.
- \* To explore the current capacity in IDEA membership, recognising strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations on how this capacity might be strengthened by IDEA.
- \* Upon conclusion of the strategic planning process, to develop operational plans for the first two years of the strategic plan.

Applications for this post are welcomed in electronic format only. The start date for this project is July. Interested candidates should submit their CVs along with proposed work plan for implementing the TOR by Tuesday 14th June 2005.

For information about the terms of reference, the application process and the post please contact Michael Doorly at: [michael.doorly@concern.net](mailto:michael.doorly@concern.net) or Darran Irvine at: [darran.irvine@ireland.com](mailto:darran.irvine@ireland.com).

## INDEX

[www.comhlamh.org/index](http://www.comhlamh.org/index)

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The editorial committee are: Stephen McCloskey, Johnny Sheehan, Barbara O'Toole, Maria Barry, Michael Doorly, Caroline Maxwell and Astrid Pérez Piñán.

The Committee, which plans the content of the newsletter, welcomes your ideas on further themes for INDEX.

### INDEX

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# RESOURCE REVIEW: WWW.OXFAM.ORG.UK/COOLPLANET



The role of the internet in the provision of information and consequently the forming of opinions and perceptions should not be underestimated in today's technological era. For many involved in education, the internet is a valuable tool and useful to both teachers and pupils.

What expectations might teachers have as they log on to educational resources on line? Some are attracted to sites that offer lesson plans; others will want more in depth information on issues and others, yet again, will want to access a range of activities and methodologies. All teachers will be concerned that lessons plans are educationally sound and fit in to the broad curriculum guidelines. It is important that sites clearly differentiate between educational content as distinct from campaigning and fund-raising materials.

I chose, on this occasion, to look at OXFAM's 'Cool Planet for teachers' website as, in my opinion, it scores high on the above criteria.

Easily accessible from the home page of Oxfam's website, Cool Planet leads you into a menu of topics in a very 'easy to follow' format. Topics are often related to the main media stories of the day e.g. the Tsunami disaster; Sudan and Crisis in Darfur; the Iraq war, as well as other development issues that may be linked to OXFAM's current campaigns – Fair Trade - 'Make Poverty History' etc. From a teacher's point of view, it is useful to find resources for the classroom that are linked to current affairs and happenings in the world and that can tell the story from the 'other' or Southern perspective' in an accessible way for children and young people. This enables children to become exposed to a wider set of perspectives and informs their thinking.

Navigating the site is easy as the topics menu appears on the left hand side of the web page. Each topic opens a series of lessons and activities with clear guidelines as to age appropriateness and objectives – for example, the topic Peace and Conflict offers a series of lessons on either Sudan or Iraq. With a varied and interesting menu like this to choose from, a teacher can plan a series of lessons, and not just a once off, in the knowledge that there will be continuity and coherence in the overall programme.

Each lesson is carefully planned, complete with an aim or learning objective, guidance as to target group, printable worksheets and a chart or information showing the cross-curricular links. They have all been classroom tested. Although the lessons, that are presented relate, in particular, to the School Curriculum of England, Scotland and Wales, they are extremely relevant to the Irish Primary and Post-Primary Curriculum. Furthermore, the age range is also clearly stated so that Irish teachers using this site do not necessarily have to familiarize themselves with the British Primary system (Key stage 1, Key stage 2, Key stage 3, etc.).

For all topics, additional background information, appropriate for the target group is available and accompanies the lesson (in other websites this is not always the case – a number of sites I visited did not have this information to hand – and the links often caused unnecessary trawling which were time consuming). Cool Planet for teachers also has easy links to the Cool Planet children's page where up to date case studies on children's lives in specific places around the world are available.

As an educator, working in the area of development education, this website, scores

high (is strong on) on 'good practice'. It contains reliable information which is regularly updated. It has made available on line high quality resources for introducing a global dimension into the primary curriculum - all free! Each resource outlines the key messages that the lesson hopes to impart and also emphasizes the importance of the 'process'. The involvement of children in their own learning is a feature of the range of activities that are suggested in the development of the various themes. The activities chosen also encourage skills such as questioning, collecting information, critical thinking and communicating.

As a teacher, what impresses me most about the site is Oxfam's attention to maintaining the educational agenda. There is no unnecessary plugging of the organisation's campaigns or fundraising, but where appropriate Cool Planet will point to links to its campaigns and activities.

In its current portfolio, Cool Planet presents a detailed profile of over 14 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, each with a gallery of photographs, and facts and figures that would grab the attention of any child.

The website also contains lessons plans for post-primary as well as teaching resources for those working with teachers in service groups. This comes under the CPD (Continuing Professional Development) link on the home page.

*Claire O'Neill, Education Officer, DICE Project (Development and Intercultural Education), hosted by The Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines*

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