
The Development Education.ie Consortium

Strategic Plan 2018-2022



Development
Education.ie

“An **essential feature** of the Irish
development education landscape”



Background

The **developmenteducation.ie Consortium** is a group of organisations who are committed to the idea that collective partnership and collaborative action add value to the work of their individual organisations and broader development education and related sectors. The activities of the consortium are primarily driven by the delivery of the developmenteducation.ie website and related offline activities.

The strategic agenda and activities of the consortium have become a significant reference point for development education (DE) in Ireland, offering an online and offline platform of information, resources, activities, learning and support on issues of human development, human rights, development co-operation and DE. For the past two decades, the project has maintained a strong commitment to being a 'human development and related issues' learning and teaching resource, rooted in promoting awareness and understanding of global issues and, in particular, how they relate to the Developing World and our role in relation to it. Delivering this within an educational context has enabled educators across a variety of user groups in formal and

non-formal educational sectors, to engage more fully with a broad range of issues.

Consortium members are Aidlink, Concern Worldwide, Self Help Africa, the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA), the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), Trócaire and 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World.

Irish Aid has supported developmenteducation.ie through multiannual strategic partner funding. From the inception of the project, 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World has been the lead agency, managing the website on behalf of the Consortium and being responsible for associated legal, employment and financial matters.



Who we are

The **developmenteducation.ie consortium** is a group of organisations committed to the idea that partnership and collaborative actions add value to the wider development education landscape and the work of their own individual organisations in building an informed constituency in Ireland empowered to take positive action.



The Vision

To provide and amplify digital learning and related opportunities for engagement on world development issues through information, materials and resources in order to take positive action.



The Approach

- A human development, and education agenda
- Working in partnership
- Complementarity and sustainability
- A public space for ideas, resources and practices
- Supporting the development education sector
- Monitoring, impact and review
- Lead agency model



The Strategic Goals

- 1 developmenteducation.ie – a common shared platform:**
Building a central digital reference point for development education resources in Ireland that provides quality digital learning, support and added-value through four core goals
- 2 Consortium partnership working together:** Consolidating a strong, robust consortium partnership structure that will collectively deliver a high-quality DE work programme
- 3 Outreach and Engagement:** Growing an extensive, effective and ongoing interaction with users and partnership networks leading to a more informed and engaged community aware of the importance and value of development education
- 4 Securing the financial resources to implement the plan:**
Financial integrity of the project relies on developing an appropriate and sustainable funding base through diverse portfolio of mixed resources



Measurement, Impact and Review

Monitor, evaluate and deepen end-user and stakeholder engagement



Target Audience

People involved in formal and non-formal education



The Context of Our Work

The developmenteducation.ie consortium seeks to promote engagement with, and understanding of, current human development and human rights issues and challenges **from an explicitly educational perspective.**

As such, the Consortium is driven by current educational philosophies and practices as much as by development ideas, information and action. As a direct consequence of this, developmenteducation.ie deals extensively with issues and questions that are *routinely contested* in terms of both content and analysis. In keeping with educational principles and practice, developmenteducation.ie will avoid promoting narrow political viewpoints but will highlight the fact that the issues addressed by development education are, of themselves, political.

This Plan is also informed by the experience and achievements of the consortium to date including a long period of partnership based work; the strong ‘resources’ agenda of the project to date (including two resources audits and their outcomes), the ‘added value’ of the project

to the work and agendas of many other DE and related organisations and structures (this is seen to be one of the key contributions of the work), the showcasing of projects and practice via the Stories of Change case study work and the building of a network of contributors beyond the immediate membership of the consortium.

In short, the consortium has adapted and evolved in a changing context to be ‘more than just a website’ with multiple ‘anchors’ and points of engagement for our work. It is our aim to build on these achievements and extend them in this strategic plan.

The Challenges

Throughout the history of the project to date, the consortium has faced a number of challenges which it continues to manage and resolve. Some are inherent in the nature of the work itself, others are externally generated and cannot be controlled by the consortium. Other challenges are directly generated by the project itself and have been significantly resolved over time.

- **Definition of priority target audiences:** initially the project focused almost exclusively on teachers at post-primary level and this group remains a priority for the project. However, over time the consortium experienced demand for materials for primary-level teachers and students; this came from teachers themselves but also from teacher training colleges and from Irish Aid who requested that the project provide resource support to other initiatives at this level. The consortium has responded to this demand through the inclusion of appropriate materials and resources at a variety of levels.

Supporting this dimension, the consortium initiated two audits with an annotated guide to available, Irish-developed development education resources for all education sectors. The second audit completed in 2017 has identified the need to expand the relevance of the website to include the Third Level sector (formal and non-formal).

This results in our user-base becoming increasingly diverse, which is something the consortium wishes to develop further in this strategic plan.

- **Project Sustainability:** ensuring the current and future sustainability of the project organisationally and administratively remains a challenge. Considerable effort has been expended in 2016-2017 clarifying and negotiating issues of governance, the responsibilities of consortium members and those of the lead agency. Ensuring effective communication and appropriate accountability between consortium members, the lead agency (and its Management Committee) is crucial to

The Challenges

both the development and administration of the project. This dimension of the project is constantly under review and is a routine item on consortium meeting agendas.

Each strategic plan and yearly work plan seeks to address the involvement of an appropriate number of members to ensure both continuity and renewal. The consortium also constantly reviews the need to ensure an agreed balance between funding and non-funding members. Given the instability of external funding and finance contexts, this balance remains a key issue for the consortium.

- **Project Funding:** as with many similar projects, continued funding, its reliability and sequencing remains a key challenge. To date, the project has been successful in maintaining a healthy balance between non-governmental consortium members and that of Irish Aid (31% NGO-funded and 69%-Irish Aid funded). However, demands on the project and its staff and membership have grown considerably while finance remains largely unchanged. The project has managed this challenge through prioritising the work agenda

in light of funding and to extend the timeframes for specific components. The consortium has also routinely relied on additional financial support and committed staff who continue to engage in activities from the lead agency to sustain its work programme but this has very real limits.

One of the key goals in the strategic plan is to review and plan the future financial viability of the project and its funding base and to enter into discussions with current and potential funders.

- **Project Expansion:** this challenge has two dimensions – a consortium membership one and a content one. It is key to the project's continued success that it remains manageable in terms of membership size while, at the same time renewing the project through changed or expanded membership. This also important in the context of the project's credibility and acceptability across the DE and related sectors. This issue is constantly reviewed by the consortium and is reflected in the targets outlined in the yearly work plan.

The Challenges

A related issue is also that of the remit and scope of the project, especially in relation to the constantly changing contexts: within development, human rights and sustainability on the ground, as well educational (changing curricula, new subjects etc.).

- Consortium members are clear that the project is led by non-governmental organisations, has a priority focus on human development issues and agendas (such as the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development contains 17 development goals, seeking to build on the Millennium Development Goals) and cannot be simply syllabus or curriculum led.

Yet, it must balance this in the context of other issues – the changing landscape of social media and technology, user interests and demands, funder interests, the emergence of new groups and agendas and project capacity. Again, this is an issue that requires routine discussion at consortium meetings and is reflected in both agendas and work plans.

- **Innovation:** There is also the challenge of remaining ‘fresh’ and innovative (and members and funders increasing expectations in this regard) while also continuing to service established demand. A final challenge in this context is appropriately integrating the ‘action’ component in DE while also ensuring a diversity of opinions, analyses and campaigning agendas. The action component in DE and its incorporation into the work will be a feature of this strategic plan.



Our Approach

A development, and education agenda – pursuing development education and associated educational approaches (such as global citizenship education and human rights education etc.) requires prioritising and balancing work focus areas and work based on:

- International human development issues and debates
- Education and curriculum needs in formal and non-formal education sectors
- Events, issues, needs and gaps across the DE landscape

Working in partnership – the consortium/partnership approach offers considerable added-value and complementarity to the project as it brings together different organisations, sectors and levels of experience and user-base.

Complementarity - developmenteducation.ie pursues a complimentary approach that supports everyone involved. There is now a large network of people that work in the development education sector that recognise the value of a common website and it is viewed as giving added

visibility and credibility to the DE function within member organisations, rather than duplication or competition. As such, developmenteducation.ie has contributed significant 'added-value' to development education in Ireland

A public space for ideas, resources and practices

Rather than being a repository for information only, developmenteducation.ie has become a common space for ideas, resources and practices to be viewed, shared and debated...that offers an alternate, more critically engaged learning environment.

Supporting the DE sector – the wider role of the consortium within the sector and with people across the DE landscape through resources and information, and is increasingly important in terms of wider engagement, capacity building and energy in the sector beyond those immediately involved in the consortium.

Monitoring, impact and review – listening, engaging with, learning from and co-building development education. ie with users, engaged partner networks and the wider DE community in Ireland and beyond is an engine of continuous energy and accountability.

Lead agency model – The consortium uses a ‘Lead Agency’ model to implement key activities. To date, 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World has been the lead agency delivering the core work programme for the developmenteducation.ie project. The Consortium will liaise and, where necessary, negotiate with the management committee of the ‘lead agency’ to ensure that the lead agency fulfils its obligations in terms of financial and project reporting. The employment of staff and/or contractors is the responsibility of the lead agency.

Throughout the lifespan of this Strategic Plan 2018-2022 the developmenteducation.ie Consortium may consider additional and appropriate models for the delivery of various agreed actions in line with capacity of the Consortium to deliver the programme and consideration of good practice approaches.

The Consortium, therefore, seeks to add value in a variety of ways:

- providing appropriate opportunities for resource production co-ordination and engagement in DE
- maintaining a distinctly ‘development education’ website where the DE component is the priority rather than a secondary focus
- promoting a shared vision, values, ideas and activities
- providing opportunities to promote and disseminate individual partner agency resources, agendas and activities
- offering a model of co-operation and partnership and through providing a central reference point for those seeking support and information, resources and ideas in DE.



Consortium Structure – members, roles and responsibilities

The overall functioning of the consortium and its policies and practices are the subject of a detailed Memorandum of Understanding between members and between members and the lead agency.

There is also an agreed set of obligations and responsibilities of each member and the lead agency.

The documents and minutes of all consortium meetings in this regard form a key element of the background to this plan.



Key Aims

Based on the consortium's experience to date, annual project reviews, user feedback and the most recent external review, the following are the consortium's **priority aims for the 2018-2022 phase:**

The Consortium

- To maintain and strengthen the consortium base of the project in all its dimensions – relevance to its membership, energy and engagement; membership, structures, procedures and policies; funding and operational viability; administrative and technical effectiveness; relevance and capacity
- To retain, strengthen and extend the consortium's primary focus on development and educational agendas broadly defined and to do this from civil society, justice, human rights and sustainability perspectives
- To ensure the consortium remains valued and relevant across the DE and educational sectors as a key online and offline reference point for relevant resources, ideas and perspectives, appropriate research and guidance and as one that is characterised by good practice, effective communication and is directly relevant to our target audiences

The work programme and lead agency

- To develop and extend the character and variety of support activities and outreach and to use these and related activities to promote DE in general and developmenteducation.ie in particular
- To maintain and strengthen the professionalism of developmenteducation.ie in its technical, design, presentation and communications components so that it is well regarded in this context by peers
- To explore potential opportunities for the consortium in terms of social media platforms, digital opportunities and developments, additional national and international partners and enhanced professionalism
- To ensure that all necessary supports, policies and capacities are in place to achieve the above aims.



Priority Goals

Overall programme vision: To amplify and provide opportunities for engagement on world development issues through information, materials and resources in order to take positive action.

GOAL 1:

developmenteducation.ie – a common shared platform

To continue to develop and strengthen the online and offline dimensions of developmenteducation.ie as a quality DE, issues-based platform through which to deliver effective learning and engagement with relevant agendas and topics. This will be achieved through extending the core content and activities; expanding the dimensions that are of immediate interest to end users and broader consortium network (as revealed through the M&E agenda; content and technical support dimensions); developing new, appropriate and creative resources and approaches, and a programme of effective communication and outreach.

Goal 1: building a central reference point for development education in Ireland that provides quality online and offline engagement through our work

What we will do:

- Deepen the 'resources agenda' (strengthen the provision, quality and annotation of resources in Ireland), heritage and platform. Increase the resource library annotation stocks to 750 resources
- Build on digital developments - The rise of technology as a learning aid and as the primary focus point for learning continues to impact on education in formal and non-formal learning contexts.
- Engage in critical and timely content development of (broadly defined) materials and resources

- Increase the number of engaged users by 2022 by 50 per cent of the current levels, from 100,000 to 150,000 users
- Broaden opportunities for people to participate in DE ideas, practice and debates

GOAL 2:

Consortium working well together

To consolidate and extend the ‘ownership’ and ‘use’ of the site by consortium members and partners. Evidence from the previous period suggests that the methods employed by the consortium have generated growing shareholding in the project from members, partners and the DE sector. Key to this will be the direct use of developmenteducation.ie by consortium members and partners in their own agendas. developmenteducation.ie will continue to expand membership and partnership in this context. All necessary structures, policies and procedures will be in place to secure this objective and to ensure effective management. As before, consortium policies and practices will continue to be reviewed, updated and strengthened on an annual basis.

Goal 2: consolidating a strong, robust consortium partnership structure that will collectively deliver a high-quality programme of work

What we will do:

- Strengthen consortium engagement and cooperation through further online and offline collaborative ‘added value’ initiatives
- Ensure effective delivery of the programme of work in light of increased demands on transparency and accountability within the broader sector through robust and appropriate consortium procedures, frameworks and practice
- Adopt good practice accountability standards for charities
- Explore an international element re: the project and consortium

GOAL 3:

Outreach and Engagement

To build further on the monitoring and engagement experiences of the previous strategic period to seek to obtain more effective feedback from users and to establish outreach opportunities and 'added value' events. This will involve extended 'on the road' work for the consortium in addition to extended feedback from consortium members through their own networks.

Goal 3: growing an extensive, effective and ongoing interaction with users and partnership networks leading to a more informed and engaged community aware of the importance and value of development education

What we will do:

- Build a broader partnership network of teachers, trainers and educators in Ireland
- Design and deliver joint outreach opportunities and 'added value' events, including at least 2 'conference events'

- Demonstrate learning from the past and build on and improve the monitoring and evaluation systems, structures and opportunities

GOAL 4:

Securing the financial resources to implement the plan

The developmenteducation.ie consortium believes that value for money is crucial as a central pillar in delivering its work. As part of this, the lead agency, 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World ensures an effective investment in resources through the provision of strong financial controls, preparation of annual project and financial reports, consortium meeting reports and audited accounts prepared maintained.

Financial integrity of the project relies on developing an appropriate and sustainable funding base through diverse mixed sources. Most recently this has included direct support from consortium members Aidlink, Concern

Worldwide, Self Help Africa, Trócaire, 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World, and through multiannual strategic partnership support from Irish Aid, the Government of Ireland's official agency for international development.

- Review financial plan on an 18-month basis – we commit to review sources, amounts and varieties of funding streams

Goal 4: Securing the financial resources to implement the plan

What we will do:

- Achieve sustained growth in organisational support and income – time, consortium member organisational resources and finance. Financial target €160,000 per annum by 2022
- Secure multi annual funding from IA
- Secure multi annual funding from existing partners
- Develop a clear fundraising strategy that will Identify 3 potential new partners from IT/Education/ Development/Corporate Social Responsibility sectors
- Explore new avenues of funding to establish a diverse financial mix in order to help realise the ambition of the project



7. Measurement, impact and review

The project has benefited from the adoption of a results-based management system over the last 5 years and an improved monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system allowing for online and offline data collection and the measurement of change through a mix of review user groups, survey data, an interim M&E review and the work of a monitoring and evaluation subcommittee.

The M&E subcommittee will monitor and track trends from the mixed methods deployed in the M&E strategy, specifically: user-review groups with key sector actors and practitioners; an annual online survey; correspondence log of queries; customised resource library mini-survey facility; quarterly statistical monitoring through Google Analytics; social media queries and engagement. As part of this plan this approach will be strengthened and extended.

What we will do:

- Monitor, evaluate and strengthen end-user engagement
- Improve quality control and measurement and impact assessment
- Deliver a Consortium led review in 2020 to include the performance of: 1. The consortium; 2. The developmenteducation.ie programme of work and 3. The lead agency
- Consult key partners involved in the project review M&E strategy in 2018
- Review new M&E trends that might support impact and measurement

Reference documents

- *External Evaluation*, Áine Fortune (2016), developmenteducation.ie, and *Evaluation: 2013-2015 Executive Summary: An essential Feature of the Development Education Landscape* (2016), developmenteducation.ie, based on DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance.
- *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015), United Nations
- *Irish Aid Development Education Strategy 2017-2023* (2016) Irish Aid
- *Governance Policy* (2015), developmenteducation.ie
- developmenteducation.ie consortium *Memorandum of Understanding* (2016) signed by all consortium members

The developmenteducation.ie consortium is a group of organisations committed to the idea that partnership and collaborative actions add value to the wider development education and global citizenship education landscape in building an informed constituency in Ireland empowered to take positive action.



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