

B. Response of Dr. Una Murray (International Development Specialist, Ireland)

B1) Introduction:

If respondents wish to include an introduction, setting out any background information to their organisation / activities undertaken to prepare their response / other relevant information, this should be kept as brief as possible

Dr. Una Murray provides consultancy services for international development organisations, UN bodies and NGOs on the following topics:

- Child labour issues (particularly in agriculture)
- Mainstreaming and organisation analysis of development organisations
- Project analysis, monitoring and evaluation; PRA/RRA & other participatory methods;
- Gender analysis in various areas such as development cooperation and aid modalities (sector programmes) microfinance; agriculture; trade; education; health; social services; migration, labour issues; child labour; transfer of technology; aquaculture, etc..
- Microfinance, Small enterprise development; women's entrepreneurship
- Distance education tutoring
- Training /facilitation/lecturing, TOT, adult education & lecturing (in development issues)
- Materials development, report writing, development education materials development. research for development

B2) Progress Made:

Has the Government been successful in implementing the commitments contained in the White Paper on Irish Aid?

See recommendations of Dr. Una Murray in Section B4)

B3) Changing context:

What are the implications of the changes in the global and domestic context for the Government's aid programme in the future and how will these affect current priorities?

See recommendations of Dr. Una Murray in Section B4)

B4) Key Issues:

How should the Government respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality? Are there other issues? Given the limited resources and the need to focus these, which issues should the Government prioritise in its future aid programming?

This submission relates to the need for Irish Aid to place a stronger focus on rural girls and education.

Rural girls and education

The World Bank summarises many reports on the returns on the investment in girls' education. Such returns include: a reduction in women's fertility rate; lower infant and child mortality rate; a lower maternal mortality rate; girl's education is one of the most effective means of reducing girls' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS; education increases women's labour force participation rate and earnings; and a mother with a few years of formal education is more likely to send her own children to school instead of to work.¹

However poverty and excessive work, particularly in rural areas contribute to a child's inability to enjoy their education rights. Children from rural areas are less likely to live close to a school. Tradition often dictates that children work in rural areas. Migrant agricultural workers and their families are often not registered and slip through the education net. Although many countries have implemented compulsory elementary education, regulations on compulsory education and regulations on child working are often and more easily ignored in rural areas. Donors can help to ensure there is a national focus on improving rural education, and also on improving education quality in rural areas (including vocational education opportunities). This could be a key focus of the next White Paper. My submission concerns how Irish Aid can ensure there is more joined up thinking around reducing the numbers of children working in agriculture and increasing access to education in rural areas.

There is a huge link between education and children working in rural areas, that is often ignored. For example, of the 215 million child labourers in the world, 60 percent are in rural areas. About one in four children are in Sub-Saharan Africa. A staggering 60% of child labourers aged between 5-17 years work in agriculture, which includes fisheries, herding livestock and taking care of smaller animals, rural domestic work and work associated with crop production (planting, weeding, spraying, harvesting). This is in contrast to 7% in industry, 26% in services, and 7% in other sectors. Gender roles and birth order dictate the types of work undertaken, and who gets to attend school. Most rural children are not in paid employment – the majority are unpaid or family workers. Even when paid, girls often receive less than boys.¹ Using a broader definition of work which includes non-economic activities (domestic chores), more girls work than boys.

¹ World Bank: *Girl's education: A World Bank priority*, available at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,contentMDK:20298916~menuPK:617572~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386~isCURL:Y~isCURL:Y,00.html>. Accessed July 2010

Irish Aid has a strong focus in the hunger task force recommendations on increasing the productivity of smallholders particularly women farmers. Without education, it becomes difficult to build a new generation of farmers and rural workers who can increase agricultural productivity and profitability and respond to a volatile global context. Children who work in rural areas instead of attending school or miss out due to the seasonal nature of their work, perpetuate a cycle of poverty for the children involved, and their families. Without adequate education, rural children are likely to remain the poor of tomorrow. Beyond productivity, the next generation of small-scale producers must be able to negotiate in modern agri-food markets. With education, cognitive skills improve. Missing out on education harms the future prospects of boys and girls and affects the development of future human capital.

Indeed a focus on increasing productivity in rural areas must be seen in terms of labour – who does what in agricultural work and how Irish Aid’s focus can help to ensure that rural people (particularly women and girls) benefit from new technologies and labour saving techniques.

Irish Aid should continue to focus on pervasive poverty in rural areas but also help to raise the profile of invisible workers in agriculture. Indeed more studies are required as the data available is scant – national agricultural surveys do not distinguish by age; labour force surveys do not distinguish tasks in agriculture.

Recommendations for integrating rural girls and education into donor’s aid programmes:

- Irish Aid can ensure that their staff and key development partners are aware of the links between education and rural children working. Irish Aid can raise the issue with staff and NGO partners during dialogue, provide them with links to briefing materials or support their capacity building on the issue.
- Irish Aid could support studies on the supply and demand reasons for children working in rural areas, the reasons why children are not attending school (particularly girls) in specific contexts.
- Irish Aid could make financial contributions towards efforts that increase the coherence and impact of international development cooperation on child labour. In this regard support can be provided to organisations that have proven capabilities to work towards the elimination of child labour through national structures (rather than small scale NGO projects that remove children, sometimes only temporarily).
- However, Irish Aid can support specific actions through national partners (including national research institutions) that have established more long terms methods to help withdraw and rehabilitate children from working in rural areas in donor’s priority countries of focus.
- Irish Aid can also integrate the need to focus on rural girls’ education into their policy dialogue with, and related support to, governments (and civil society and NGOs).
- Irish Aid can continue to ask their national partners about progress in rural education and also progress towards implementing their national policy on the elimination of child labour, particularly in agriculture. Irish Aid can increase it’s focus on education for rural children, bringing the issue to the fore in in-country

- education sector-working groups also highlighting any links between girls, working in rural areas and EFA goals.
- The recommendations from UNGEI; GAC; the UNAIDS IATT on Education; the Global Task Force on Child Labour and EFA can be studied with regard to their relevance to Irish Aid's work. Irish Aid can continue to support national recommendations arising from these reports, and encourage governments to develop a clear strategy for extending education access in rural areas
 - The acknowledgement of the widespread employment of children should be an integral part of national education planning and integrated into national education sector plans. Recognition of the factors in rural areas that push children out of school and pull them into work should be stressed in any educational sector dialogue. As mentioned, Irish Aid can assist pilot projects to address the push/pull factors.
 - Funding for targeting approaches to bridge the gap between primary school and skills or vocational education might also be necessary in many countries.
 - More support could be targeted towards vocational education training in rural areas. The lack of vocational training for agricultural and rural employment options and the male bias in such vocational training.
 - Conditional and un-conditional cash transfers have proved successful in some contexts in encouraging children to remain in school (e.g. Brazil's *Programa de Erradicaçao do Trabalho Infantil*) has successfully made children's attendance at school a condition of the cash transfer. South Africa implements a grant scheme (unconditional) for all children up to 15 years, which has had a positive impact on school attendance. Irish Aid can consider education conditionality in cash transfers and social protection measures used in rural areas. Irish Aid can recommend that cash transfer programmes for food security purposes also include a child labour dimension.
 - School feeding programmes can increase school attendance. Irish Aid could (continue to) support programmes such as those that result in children benefiting from food available at school.
 - In rural areas improvements in agricultural technology can reduce labour demands for girls for some task and help to ensure they go to school. For example improved irrigation may reduce tasks children are expected to undertake; earlier harvesting seeds before certain pests are prevalent avoids children being used for pest control, water programmes which reduce time required for fetching water. Recent calls for increased donor support to agricultural research should also include a child labour dimension in assessments around use of agricultural technologies and inputs. However care should be taken that proposed labour saving techniques are actually effective. For example some agricultural techniques may actually be more labour intensive for certain groups depending on the division of labour for the crop.
 - Although not directly involved in infrastructure support, Irish aid can advocate that infrastructure plans also result in better access to secondary schools. Water and sanitation facilities in schools should also be prioritised.

In summary, education is pivotal for rural children to be able to negotiate and respond to the inevitable shocks and changes that will occur in their lifetime. Recent research and reports highlight how dynamic agriculture will have to be in future and how volatile rural societies are to rapid changes (including climate change and scarcity of water, energy, the need to produce more from less land etc.). Starting work too early

leaves a girl vulnerable to a lifetime of low paid work, less ability to negotiate with more educated people, and more susceptible to poverty due to a lack of education. A focus on the rural girl child would in my view be important for the next White Paper and help to contribute to other development goals.

Ways of Working:

How can the Government further strengthen its ways of working in delivering an effective aid programme, with a view to delivering real results in poverty reduction?

See recommendations of Dr. Una Murray in Section B4)

Other comments:

If the respondent seeks to address other issues – of direct relevance to the White Paper on Irish Aid – they should do so in this section.

See recommendations of Dr. Una Murray in Section B4)

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¹ Gender and Rural Employment Policy Brief No. 7 Prepared by Una Murray, Paola Termine and Jacqueline Demeranville for FAO, IFAD, ILO.