

**General Election
2024**

Why Overseas Development Matters

Dóchas General Election Manifesto

dóchas

The Irish Association
of Non-Governmental
Development Organisations

Introduction

Dóchas is the Irish Network for International Development and Humanitarian Organisations. We connect, strengthen and represent 56 international organisations who have a shared vision of a just, equal and sustainable world.

Ireland's international development programme is at the heart of our foreign policy and presence abroad. At a time when there are multiple intersecting climate, humanitarian and development crises, needs are rising across the world. Decades long progress against poverty is at risk of being lost.

In this troubled world, the role of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance as an expression of Ireland's values on the international stage has never been more important. Ireland's commitment to reach those furthest behind is needed now more than ever. With five years to go, the next Government must seize the opportunity to deliver on Agenda 2030.

During Ireland's General Election 2024, it is important that the issues of conflict, climate and hunger do not slip off the agenda.

There is a high level of public support, interest and trust in ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) and in development organisations across every county in Ireland.

Support for Development and Humanitarian Organisations across Ireland

The *Dóchas Electoral Snapshots 2024* demonstrate the tangible support for development and humanitarian organisations by the Irish public, and the community support for aid and development more broadly. The scope of the *Dóchas Electoral Snapshots* includes aggregated data on the amount of donations received by 27 Dóchas member organisations¹ and illustrates the level of public support, interest, and trust in aid and development organisations across every county in Ireland.

The electoral snapshots identify the number of people, businesses, schools and community groups in every constituency who are not just talking about international development but who are acting on their beliefs. They are making financial contributions to support international causes, demonstrating their solidarity with vulnerable communities around the world.

This demonstrates that there is an engaged cohort of voters in each constituency across the country who are exercised about international development and this has real electoral significance.

National Overview

348,212

Irish people donated to 27 international development organisations last year

19%

or 1 in 5 of all Irish households around the country'

This figure represents 7% of the entire Irish population, 8.2% of those aged 15 or above. In counties like Wicklow, 23.5% of households are actively engaged, while Cork and Dublin also show notable participation, with 17.4% and 28.4% of households contributing respectively.

Despite cost-of-living pressures and the tumult of recent years, Irish people continue to support humanitarian and development aid to help people overseas and tackle the most pressing global challenges, such as extreme poverty.

¹ See [Dochas.ie/election24](https://dochas.ie/election24) for methodology



Community Based Support

Group-based giving demonstrates that support for international development spans far beyond individual and household contributions into our communities, schools and businesses. Overseas development goes right to the heart of Irish communities and across their local organisations.

528

schools across Ireland contributed financially to international development organisations, representing 13.2% of all schools

1,609

businesses, 894 churches and faith groups and 115 community groups made financial contributions, highlighting the strength and depth of commitment to international values throughout Irish society



Urban Support

Ireland's urban centres lead the way in their support to overseas aid. **Dublin**, home to more than 1.4 million people, stands out for the sheer volume of donations and for the remarkable proportion of its population that gives support. With 147,423 individual donors, representing 10% of **Dublin's** population, the capital city demonstrates a clear commitment to international development. Furthermore, nearly 30% of **Dublin's** households have engaged in giving to International development organisations, showcasing an impressive level of household-wide participation.

But **Dublin** is not the only urban area showing strong support. **Cork**, Ireland's second-largest city and county, also emerges as a leader in international giving, with 36,829 individual donors, or 6.30% of its population. What is particularly striking about **Cork** is the percentage of its households involved - over 17% - a clear indicator that a significant portion of the county's population values contributing to international causes on a household basis.

In both **Dublin** and **Cork**, engagement is also buoyed by strong institutional support. Schools, churches, and businesses in these areas are heavily involved, with **Dublin** reporting contributions from 752 businesses, 229 schools, 337 churches and 47 community organisations. **Cork** follows with similar institutional engagement, revealing a vibrant community of support for international development.



Rural and Suburban Solidarity

Beyond the urban hubs, a host of smaller counties tell a different, yet equally compelling story. Counties like **Kildare** and **Wicklow** stand out for their particularly high levels of household engagement. **Kildare**, for instance, sees 6.75% of its population engaged as individual donors and over 20% of households are estimated to have contributed to international development organisations. **Wicklow** takes this commitment even further, with over 8% of its population donating individually, equating to approximately 23% of households.

Other counties, such as **Meath**, **Louth**, and **Galway**, also exhibit strong levels of individual and household engagement. With individual donor rates hovering around 5-6% of the population and household involvement well over 16%, these regions demonstrate that charitable engagement is not limited to Ireland's largest urban centres.



Commitment of Smaller Counties

While large urban areas and suburban counties dominate the overall numbers, smaller counties also make their contributions known. **Leitrim**, **Roscommon** and **Monaghan** all boast individual giving rates near or above 5% of their populations, with household involvement ranging from 12% to over 14%. Although the absolute numbers of individual donors may be smaller in these regions, the relative level of engagement reveals a strong commitment to international development. In **Leitrim**, for instance, 5.43% of the population is recorded as giving financial support to development organisations, equating to 14% of households.



Community Organisations Nationwide: The Broader Ecosystem

While individual giving is noteworthy from a numerical standpoint, contributions from other groups like schools, faith organisations and community groups are widespread throughout the country.

Dublin, again, has the highest number of organisational contributors with 1,365 overall community organisations involved but it is also worth noting that these numbers reflect the fact that many national organisations and businesses are headquartered in **Dublin**.

Counties that are host to Irish cities like **Limerick**, **Cork**, and **Galway**, where schools, churches, and international development organisations mobilise to amplify their collective numbers, also reflect this trend. In counties with smaller populations, such as **Leitrim** and **Carlow**, the number of schools and churches contributing is relatively lower but not insignificant.

The Dóchas Electoral Snapshots 2024 highlights a deep and broad commitment to international development among the Irish public, reinforcing the message that Irish society values global justice.

**See a breakdown
of all counties at
[Dochas.ie/election24](https://dochas.ie/election24)**

Support for ODA across Ireland

The *Dóchas Electoral Snapshots 2024* are also consistent with the nationally-representative *Worldview* research.² This longitudinal research reveals the vast majority of Irish people continue to support Irish Government spending on Overseas Development Aid (ODA) - a finding that has remained consistent over the past four years.

Human Rights, Shared Humanity and *Humanitarianism* are the top three reasons cited as to why we help those in developing countries. This too has remained consistent over the past four years. Nearly 3 in 5 people (57%) say we have a moral obligation to support overseas aid.

At a time when we are witnessing the direct and devastating impacts of conflict, climate and hunger in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia, it is clear that Irish people recognise the vital support that is provided through overseas development assistance, and see a need to continue this assistance.

76%

of the Irish public support giving ODA to developing countries

77%

believe ODA makes a positive impact on recipient countries

70%

of Irish people are concerned about the level of poverty in developing countries

² This is the 4th wave of *Worldview* research on Irish attitudes to overseas development aid and associated sustainable development issues, undertaken by Ipsos Behaviour and Attitudes with a sample of 2,515 adults conducted in October and November, 2023. The first wave of research was conducted in February, 2021.

A county-by-county overview of support to international development organisations

County	Individual Donors	Total Population	% Population	Total Households	% Households	Schools	Faith & Community Groups	Businesses	Totals
Longford	1,742	46,751	3.7%	16,229	10.7%	1	7	18	1,768
Cavan	3,175	81,704	3.9%	28,845	11.0%	3	15	22	3,215
Offaly	3,537	83,150	4.3%	28,923	12.2%	9	8	19	3,573
Laois	3,921	91,877	4.3%	31,232	12.6%	6	9	17	3,953
Donegal	7,241	167,084	4.3%	61,780	11.7%	11	43	27	7,322
Monaghan	2,864	65,288	4.4%	22,958	12.5%	11	10	19	2,904
Wexford	7,298	163,919	4.5%	59,389	12.3%	6	33	24	7,361
Carlow	2,840	61,968	4.6%	22,238	12.8%	7	11	13	2,871
Kerry	7,353	156,458	4.7%	58,317	12.6%	17	27	26	7,423
Roscommon	3,356	70,259	4.8%	26,021	12.9%	5	6	14	3,381
Westmeath	4,707	96,221	4.9%	34,087	13.8%	4	10	31	4,752
Mayo	6,757	137,970	4.9%	52,114	13.0%	7	20	25	6,809
Kilkenny	5,136	104,160	4.9%	36,787	14.0%	3	14	31	5,184
Limerick	10,388	209,536	5.0%	76,472	13.6%	18	43	45	10,494
Tipperary	8,387	167,895	5.0%	62,232	13.5%	19	24	54	8,484
Waterford	6,368	127,363	5.0%	47,778	13.3%	6	13	35	6,422
Clare	6,453	127,938	5.0%	46,553	13.9%	4	8	29	6,494
Leitrim	1,912	35,199	5.4%	13,630	14.0%	6	5	10	1,933
Meath	12,500	220,826	5.7%	72,977	17.1%	9	17	35	12,561
Louth	8,125	139,703	5.8%	49,424	16.4%	13	17	32	8,187
Galway	16,196	277,737	5.8%	98,922	16.4%	19	43	71	16,329
Sligo	4,264	70,198	6.1%	26,855	15.9%	3	19	19	4,305
Cork	36,829	584,156	6.3%	211,362	17.4%	57	145	146	37,177
Kildare	16,714	247,774	6.8%	82,793	20.2%	27	36	55	16,832
Wicklow	12,726	155,851	8.2%	54,211	23.5%	28	42	40	12,836
Dublin	147,423	1,458,154	10.1%	519,023	28.4%	229	384	752	148,788
Unknown	3,800					0	0	0	3,800
TOTALS	348,212	5,149,139	6.8%	1,841,152	18.9%	528	894	1,609	355,158

See a breakdown of all counties at: [Dochas.ie/election24](https://dochas.ie/election24)

Dublin

supports overseas development aid

147,423 Individual Supporters

28.4%

Households



10.1%

Population



1,365 Groups & Organisations

229

Schools



384

Faith &
Community
Groups



752

Businesses



Cork

supports overseas development aid

36,829 Individual Supporters

17.4%

Households



6.3%

Population



348 Groups & Organisations

57

Schools



145

Faith & Community Groups



146

Businesses



Galway

supports overseas development aid

16,196 Individual Supporters

16.4%

Households



5.8%

Population



133 Groups & Organisations

19

Schools



43

Faith &
Community
Groups



71

Businesses



Wicklow

supports overseas development aid

12,726 Individual Supporters

23.5%

Households



8.2%

Population



110 Groups & Organisations

28

Schools



42

Faith & Community Groups



40

Businesses



A Manifesto for Overseas Development

In 2015, Ireland committed to reaching the UN target of spending 0.7% GNI on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2030. In 2023, we reached 0.32% GNI excluding in-country refugee costs. The next Government should fulfil our commitment to fund development, humanitarian and climate budgets by creating a clear pathway to achieve this, and account for any costs incurred in responding to the needs of refugees in Ireland as additional expenditure.

In the next programme for government, we must:

- **Realise Ireland's commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on Overseas Development Assistance by 2030**
- **Publish a clear spending pathway to achieve 0.7% GNI by 2030**

Ireland's core values are working for peace, human rights, sustainable development and providing life-saving humanitarian assistance. Our values must be matched by our commitments, and our ability to deliver upon them.

Dóchas wants to see the following measures in the next Programme for Government:

1

Effective and Inclusive Development

Dóchas members and their local partners are supporting communities to address their own development needs and realise their rights. However, the percentage of Irish ODA that is provided to civil society organisations has reduced year-on-year since 2020. It is essential that we fund and support civil society organisations who can deliver effective community-led solutions and are on the frontline of response.

- **Commit to providing at least 30% of Ireland's ODA to and through civil society across humanitarian, development and climate programmes and funding**
- **Target ODA effectively by prioritising funding to locally-led organisations which focus on realising the rights of the most marginalised, including women, children and people with disabilities**
- **Ensure that the empowerment of women, minorities, children and people with disabilities is mainstreamed into all ODA policies and programmes**
- **Ensure all our ODA upholds humanitarian and human rights principles and promotes human development at the centre of EU ODA policy-making and funding**
- **Make Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Response a priority, ensuring it is integrated across policies and adequately financed**
- **Ensure the protection of civil society space both at home and abroad**

2

Climate Action

Despite an increase in finance over the past three years, Ireland falls significantly short in delivering upon our ‘fair share’ of climate finance and Loss and Damage funding. A transformative climate agenda that reflects our principles and values, and reaches people and communities on the frontline of the climate crisis across the world, is needed.

- **Provide transformational climate finance that:**
 - Meets our ‘fair share’ per annum (at least €500m in 2024 and set to increase under the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG))
 - Is new and additional to 0.7% GNI ODA as required under UNFCCC rules
 - Is given in grants and not loans
 - Is gender-sensitive, rights-based, inclusive and locally-led
 - Introduces new and innovative financial instruments including global taxes on polluters
- **Publish a clear pathway for financial support to the Loss and Damage Fund**
- **Reduce polluting emissions across all sectors and phase out fossil fuels in accordance with Paris Agreement commitments and national climate action legislation**
- **Address the billions in bonds and shares flowing through Ireland’s FDI to fossil fuel industries and agribusiness in the Global South, as recommended by the UN International Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, and amend the Fossil Fuel Divestment Act to achieve this**

3

End Hunger for People and Planet

Conflict, inequality, climate change, combined with a dysfunctional global food system, has meant that hunger and malnutrition has grown to devastating levels - affecting 700 million people. Ireland has a strong legacy in leading the fight against global hunger and we need to demonstrate this in our funding commitments over the next five years.

- **Champion sustainable food systems by leading on global reforms to regulate prices, break monopolies, reduce debt and support just transitions**
- **Advocate for fair and equitable trade arrangements that enable countries in the Global South to pursue their own paths to food security and support local farmers and small producers**
- **Deliver on Ireland’s pledge of €800m over five years to support nutrition and prevent food insecurity, ensuring that this commitment is fully allocated and effectively targeted to the most vulnerable populations, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected regions**
- **Elevate Ireland’s leadership at the 2025 Nutrition for Growth Summit by announcing an increased commitment to tackling hunger with a focus on innovative, long-term solutions that address child wasting, build climate-resilient food systems and strengthen multilateral partnerships for sustainable impact**

4

Promote Peace, Stability and Effective Humanitarian Response

Against a backdrop of over 120 armed conflicts worldwide, the ‘rules of war’, including the protection of civilians, are rapidly being eroded and ignored. As we mark the 75th Anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, we must ensure that Ireland is at the forefront of promoting peace, stability and protection for those caught in conflict.

- **Champion International Humanitarian Law (IHL), also known as the rules of war, across all contexts including the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian workers**
- **Lead efforts to highlight the importance of respect for IHL at the UN and the EU, and ensure compliance with all IHL treaty obligations**
- **Oppose the development and use of new and devastating weapons of war, and support accountability mechanisms which deliver justice to victims of war crimes**

5

Policy coherence for Sustainable Development

Ireland’s role in reaching the ‘furthest behind first’ through our ODA programme and our commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial. However, we need to proactively address our development policy’s coherence with other government policies, ensuring that our commitment to sustainable development, human rights, and ending structural inequalities is effective across government.

- **Develop a robust cross-government mechanism for policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) with effective oversight by the Oireachtas**
- **Conduct new, independent and comprehensive ‘spill-over analyses’ assessing the human rights and environmental impacts of Ireland’s tax and agri-food policies**
- **Support the development of the proposed UN Tax Convention to design a fairer international tax system and tackle tax avoidance**
- **Prioritise PCSD and ensure its effective implementation through the establishment of an Irish Commission for the Future**
- **Enforce legislation in Business and Human Rights whilst applying a human rights-based approach and ensuring policy coherence**
- **Fulfil our commitment to Global Citizenship Education in Ireland by prioritising increased investment and taking a cross-departmental approach**

Dóchas is the Irish Network for International Development and Humanitarian Organisations.

Full Members:

ActionAid Ireland

Afri

Aidlink

A Partnership with Africa

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Bóthar

CBM Ireland

Centre for Global Education

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Development Perspectives

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Front Line Defenders

GOAL

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Irish Development Education Association

ILCU International Development Foundation

Irish Red Cross

Irish Rule of Law International

Misean Cara

Nepal Leprosy Trust Ireland

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SeeBeyondBorders Ireland

Self Help Africa

SERVE in Solidarity Ireland

Sightsavers Ireland

STAND

Tearfund Ireland

The Hope Foundation

Trócaire

UCD Volunteers Overseas

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Associate Members:

Development Studies Association Ireland

ECO UNESCO

Global Action Plan

Irish Family Planning Association

Irish National Teachers Organisation - Global Solidarity Network

National Youth Council of Ireland

Special Olympics Europe / Eurasia

YMCA Ireland

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