



**The Irish Association of
Non-Governmental Development
Organisations**

ToR for Dóchas Education Working Group 2017

The Dóchas Education Working Group is a group of members who have come together to network, learn and share their resources and expertise on education in development and emergency. They also expect to engage with key stakeholders, namely Irish Aid and other relevant domestic and international institutions, in order to promote dialogue and influence matters relating to inclusive, safe, quality education priorities.

1. Background

Despite great progress in the last few years, millions of children are still denied their right to education. Restricted access to education is one of the surest ways of transmitting poverty from generation to generation. Education is a vital human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Every girl and every boy should have the right to a quality education so that they can have more chances in life, including employment opportunities, better health and the chance to participate in the political process.

Investing in education yields significant development benefits. Education reduces poverty, boosts economic growth and increases income. It increases a person's chances of having a healthy life, reduces maternal deaths, and combats diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Education can promote gender equality, reduce child marriage, and promote peace. In sum, education is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and its future.

Education is essential to the success of every one of the 17 Global Goals. The Global Goal 4 on education aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

Education is critical during times of conflict. In times of conflict and crisis, children are forced out of school, which contributes to higher drop-out rates and lower completion rates. Having a strong focus on education in these countries is critical, since education promotes stability, good governance, and peace. It can also provide a visible sign of a return to normalcy for children.

A poor quality education is almost like no education. Great progress has been achieved in enrolling children in school around the world. But it is not enough to get children in school, we also need to ensure that they learn to read, count, and acquire the necessary life skills. A special focus has to be given to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups (including children living in fragile and conflict-affected countries, children with disabilities, and girls) who are most likely to be affected because of a lack of well-trained teachers, inadequate learning materials, and unsuitable education infrastructure.

Educating girls has a multiplier effect. Educated girls and women tend to be healthier, have fewer children, earn more income and provide better health care for themselves and their future children. These benefits are also transmitted from generation to generation and across communities at large, making girls' education one of the best investments a country can make.

Children with disabilities are often excluded from education systems. In many countries, a combination of discrimination, social attitudes, poverty, lack of political will, and poor quality of human and material resources leaves children with disabilities more vulnerable to being excluded from education. It is essential that societies adapt their education systems to ensure that these children can enjoy their basic human right without discrimination of any kind.

Early childhood education is vital to lifelong success. Investing in quality early childhood education brings the highest returns from individuals, societies and countries. Children who have access to quality early childhood programs do better in primary school and will have better education outcomes later. It is vital that low and lower middle-income countries invest more in affordable early childhood programs.

2. Membership

Membership is open to any member of Dóchas who wishes to actively engage in inclusive, safe, quality education in development and emergency. Membership is based on active participation (see Section 7).

3. Areas of Focus/Main Objectives

Areas of mutual interest to member organisations, including:

Enhance sector engagement and government relationships: to facilitate dialogue, collaboration and action on inclusive, safe, quality education priorities with Irish Aid and other relevant domestic and international institutions.

Advocacy: to exploit opportunities for strategic and focused lobbying and engagement with the Irish government around education and its priorities.

Facilitate good practice, coordination and mutual learning: to utilise experience and expertise of members to build capacity, and share learning and innovation, with respect to inclusive, safe, quality education in development and emergency.

Identify appropriate policy areas where the WG would lead and/or facilitate: such as engagement at EU level with CONCORD and GPE.

Seek partnerships: with external platforms, networks and organisations in order to draw on external points of view and build on possible collaboration.

4. Methodology

The principal form of contact will be through e-mail. Four face to face meetings will be scheduled per year with the option for ad-hoc meetings in response to specific situations.

In case of interest by certain members in specific activities, sub-working groups may be established in areas of shared interest. Such sub-working groups will be responsible for establishing their own administrative and communication requirements.

5. Financing

As the group is a virtual group it has limited needs for financing. Dóchas can make funding available for initiatives developed by the group, if appropriate.

6. Coordination

A Chair will be elected from among the group members on an annual basis by a straight majority vote. A quorum of three agencies needs to be present to allow meetings and voting to go ahead. A proxy vote can be submitted to Dóchas in advance of the meeting by email. A Deputy Chair will be elected to support and work with the Chair.

7. Commitment

Active participation is required to be a member of this group. This requires a representative of an agency to be present at 50% of meetings. This group is open to members who hold an education, advocacy and/or policy function within their organisation and recognizes that attendance may change depending on the subject matter being discussed.

8. Link with Dóchas

Group members will provide office space for meetings. The Education WG will ensure that its work complements the overall priorities and strategic interests of Dóchas. Dóchas will also provide regular updates from and to the thematic working groups to ensure coherence, collaboration and sharing across working groups.

9. Review

The usefulness of the group and the workings of the group will be evaluated by the group on an annual basis.

10. Officers

January – December 2018

Chair:

Deputy Chair: