



Exploring Irish  
attitudes to overseas  
development aid



## The Worldview ‘Empathiser’ Segment

### Communications Workshop – Pre-workshop Assignment

On Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, the CEO of Alice Public Relations, Martina Quinn, will facilitate a workshop for Dóchas members, aimed at *helping you to better engage with and reach the ‘Empathiser’ segment* identified through the Worldview research.

In advance of this workshop, we are asking you to complete the following short assignment: **Identify someone in your social circle who fits the profile of the ‘Empathiser’ segment and ask them the questions below.** See our ‘Empathiser’ persona, Michelle, on the following page + further points about the characteristics of this segment on page 5. Note: Your contact does not need to meet all of these criteria exactly; they should just be broadly representative of this segment.

The purpose of this advance exercise *is to get you thinking* – in a more in-depth way – about *who* exactly the ‘Empathiser’ audience is; and how / where best to reach them. The questions above are **not prescriptive**, but are intended as a **general guide**, which will help you in surveying a friend or acquaintance who broadly meets the ‘Empathiser’ profile.

- Please feel free to include additional questions, and / or to take note of any interesting insights that emerge from your conversation – outside of the direct responses to these questions!
- **We are not seeking any identifying information** about the people you speak with, so they can be fully assured that all of their responses will be treated confidentially and anonymously. Their only purpose is to get us very focused on the ‘Empathiser’ audience during the workshop next week!
- Ask your ‘Empathiser’ contact to complete the following short survey (they can do this in conversation with you, by phone or email):
  - 1) Age:
  - 2) Family status (single / co-habiting / married and do you have children? If so, what ages are your children?):
  - 3) Do you ever listen to your **local radio station** (and what station is that)? If so, how often and in what circumstances?
  - 4) Do you ever buy or read your **local newspaper** (and what newspaper is that)? If so, how often and in what circumstances?



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- 5) Do you listen to any **national radio stations** (if so, which stations, how often, and in what circumstances)?
- 6) Do you every buy or read a **national newspaper** (if so, which newspaper, how often, and in what circumstances)?
- 7) Are there **news websites** that you visit to read about local / national and / or international news? If so, how often and what are those sites?
- 8) What **social media channels** do you use and how (i.e. do you post content yourself or just consume content from other people? Do you follow specific topics or types of accounts on different social media platforms? Do you use different platforms for different purposes?).
- 9) How much **time**, on average, do you spend on social media each day?
- 10) Do you follow any **news-focused accounts on social** media (e.g. RTÉ or a local news site, or the profiles of individual journalists)? If so, what are they?
- 11) When you see a social media post that links to a longer news article, do you tend to click through to read that news article, or do you just read the shorter social media post?
- 12) Do you ever re-post or share news-focused content that you come across on social media? If so, how often and under what circumstances?
- 13) What **celebrities and / or influencers** do you rate on social media – and why (i.e. people who are likely to influence you to do or buy something, rather than just following them out of interest)?
- 14) Apart from official news sources, where do you find out **about current affairs and issues affecting you and your family** (e.g. from your partner, from other parents in your children's school, from your friends or neighbours, etc.)? Give as much detail as possible here. What people in your life have a strong influence on keeping you informed and shaping your opinions about current affairs?
- 15) Where do you **socialise** and what do you do for fun? Are there local community spaces that you and your family frequent, for example (playgrounds, sports facilities, cinemas, etc.)?



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16) How often – if ever – do you donate to an international development charity? What influences you to donate / under what circumstances are you likely to donate?

Please take a note of all of the responses provided by your 'Empathiser' contact, and bring these with you to the workshop next Thursday.

To kick off the workshop, we will discuss the answers you have all received from your 'Empathiser' contacts, and draw insights from those on how best to engage with this audience segment.

## Meet Michelle, a Typical 'Empathiser'...



Michelle lives in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, and is a busy mum of three. She is married to John, and they are both from the local area originally.

Their eldest daughter started secondary school this year; their other daughter is nine; and their youngest – a boy – is seven.

The family lives in a housing estate on the outskirts of Clonmel.

Before having children, Michelle worked fulltime as a primary-school teacher. She took a career break when her kids were

younger but, now that they're all in school themselves, she has started doing some substitute teaching, working approximately two days per week, on average.

On the days when she's not working, Michelle picks the two younger kids up from school and brings them to a local playground. While they run around, she chats with the other parents (mostly mothers!).

At weekends, she and John have a hectic schedule, driving all three children around to various sports activities. The whole family are heavily involved in their local GAA Club and they all take part in the Club's annual 'Fun Run' fundraiser. They are also ardent supporters of the Tipp hurling and football teams, and travel to watch the teams play whenever they can.

Both Michelle's and John's parents are elderly, and live locally. Michelle spends a considerable amount of time each week checking on them and running errands for them. Once a month, she attends her Book Club, which is comprised of women of a similar age and profile to Michelle herself.

Michelle and John go out together a couple of times each month – to their local pub or a restaurant in Clonmel. She also goes for a weekly walk with her two best friends.

The family buy their local newspaper, The Nationalist, every week because the kids often feature in photographs and reports of local sporting events. Michelle can't remember when she last bought a national paper. When she's driving, she has the radio on in the background, flicking between Newstalk, RTÉ Radio One and Today FM. In her parents' house and John's parents' house, the radios are always on, and usually tuned to Tipp FM.



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Michelle is on Facebook and uses the platform to keep in touch with her brother and his family, who live in Australia. She is on Instagram too, but posts very little herself. She follows lots of celebrities, fashion brands, and people who share parenting advice. She wants to do up her kitchen, so is also following lots of interiors-focused accounts.

When they were in their early 20s, Michelle and John spent a year working in Australia. On their way back to Ireland, they travelled for a couple of months, visiting countries across South-East Asia. She would love to do more 'exciting' international travel but, for now, they usually choose family-friendly holidays in Portugal or Spain.

Michelle sometimes donates to international development charities, particularly in response to catastrophic events, such as earthquakes or floods. Most recently, she donated €50 to help children in Gaza. She feels she has no time to get more involved in international development or other volunteering activities, and – while relatively comfortable – she does not have a lot of money to donate to charitable organisations.



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## Reminder: Key Characteristics of the ‘Empathiser’ Demographic

- Empathisers represent 30% of all those surveyed for the Worldview public engagement research project (the largest of all segments year on year since 2021).
- They are predominantly **female** (61%).
- They are spread across all age-groups, but the **majority** (59%) are aged between 25 and 54, with the **highest proportion** (23%) aged between 35 and 44.
- They are pretty **evenly spread in terms of social class**: 48% are ABC1 (i.e. managerial, professional or administrative workers), while 52% are C2DE (i.e. skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, casual workers, pensioners, and those who are unemployed).
- The vast majority of Empathisers (77%) **live outside of Dublin**. The highest proportion (30%) live in Munster, followed by Leinster (26%), Dublin (23%) and Connaught / Ulster (21%). **Most (61%) live in urban areas**.
- **The vast majority (61%) of Empathisers have families**: 39% have children at pre-school, pre-teen or teenager phase, while 22% are empty nesters. A high proportion of Empathisers (29%) are single.
- Empathisers feel the most important issues facing Ireland today are **household bills, health services, housing costs, and homelessness**. They are less concerned than other segments about sustainability and climate change.
- The issues they are personally most concerned about are:
  1. War, conflict and terrorism;
  2. Economic crises, job security, wages;
  3. Immigration, migration, refugees;
  4. Education, healthcare, clean water and hunger in developing countries.
- The greatest influence on their views about the key issues of the day are **their family members and friends; social media; and TV news** (either traditional or online). They are more influenced than all other segments by celebrities / influencers. And they are less influenced than all other segments by newspapers and radio news (either traditional or online).
- The majority of Empathisers (62%) say they **most frequently use TV (either traditional or online) to source news and information**. This is followed by **social media sites** (52%) and **radio** (41%).
- Most empathisers (69%) score themselves as **Centrist** in terms of their political beliefs (only 15% score themselves as strongly left-leaning; and only 16% as strongly right-leaning).
- In relation to being active on social causes or issues over the past 12 months, the highest proportion of Empathisers (50%) have been involved in **local community issues**, followed by **mental health** (46%), **climate change and the environment** (35%), and **animal welfare** (35%).



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- The majority of Empathisers (59%) feel it is **'fairly important'** that the Irish Government provides overseas aid to help people in developing countries. 20% believe this is 'very important'.
  - 49% feel the level of Government spending on overseas aid should remain the same; 22% feel it should increase 'somewhat' or 'a great deal'.
- 58% of Empathisers are **'fairly concerned'** about poverty levels in developing countries. 18% are very concerned; and 22% have no strong feelings either way.
- Most empathisers (49%) believe **war and conflict are the main cause of poverty in developing countries**, followed by **government and private sector corruption** in those countries (39%), and **government inefficiency or incompetence** (30%).
- When asked to select three words from a list that "best align with your own view of why we should help those in developing countries worse off than ourselves", Empathisers most frequently chose: **Human Rights** (53%); **Humanitarianism** (44%); and **Empathy** (33%). **Charity** (16%) and **Sympathy** (15%) scored more highly with Empathisers than with other segments.
- In the past 12 months, the majority (72%) of Empathisers have **read, watched or listened to a news article about global poverty and development**. 61% have discussed this topic with family and friends. 48% have donated money. 30% have shared or forwarded information. Only 13% have volunteered, and the same percentage have become a member, liked or subscribed to a newspaper from a development organisation.

**ENDS**

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