



## Education Policy and Strategy

Building sustainable education systems for poverty reduction

# Education

Front cover pic:

Eight year old Grace Makene writes on the blackboard in her school classroom. The classes are divided into two shifts in order to accommodate the large number of students that attend this school. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Photo: Panos/Ami Vitale

“ Education helps expand the choices and opportunities people have thus enabling them take greater control of their lives and escape the vicious cycle of poverty. ”

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# Foreword



Minister of State for  
Overseas Development,  
Michael Kitt T.D.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the new Irish Aid Education Policy: *Building Sustainable Education Systems for Poverty Reduction*. The policy highlights the important contribution of education to Irish Aid's overall goal of poverty reduction, to reduce vulnerability and increase opportunity.

It also responds to the strong desire expressed by the Irish public during the consultations on the Government's White Paper on Irish Aid that we continue to support education in our overseas programme. This desire relates in no small way to the role that education has played in Ireland's own economic and social development.

The policy builds on Ireland's long standing commitment to promote and support education in developing countries and sets out the specific areas of focus and priorities for the Irish Aid education programme in the years ahead.

For Irish Aid, people are at the heart of development. Education helps expand the choices and opportunities people have thus enabling them take greater control of their lives and escape the vicious cycle of poverty. Above all, the right to education is essential and indispensable to the achievement of all other human rights and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The significant increases in primary school enrolments over the past decade in many partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa give considerable cause for hope.

However there are still enormous challenges with more than 70 million children, the majority of whom are girls, still denied the opportunity to go to school. The quality of learning and teaching in schools is an added challenge for education systems in many countries. Supporting partner governments to improve access and quality will be a priority for Irish Aid in the coming years. This will be done in the context of strengthening national education systems which are responsive to the social and economic development needs of countries.

Partner country governments, supported by the international community, are redoubling their efforts to live up to their responsibilities and obligations to ensure that the international goals and commitments on education are met. Irish Aid is fully committed to ensuring that Ireland plays its part in this process.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Kitt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Michael Kitt**

Minister of State for Overseas Development  
February 2008

# Executive Summary

*“Education is central to development. It is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty, better understand and improve their health, create sustainable livelihoods and obtain the means to participate more fully in their communities.”*

*White Paper on Irish Aid, page 43.*

Since its establishment Irish Aid has given priority to education in recognition of its central role in poverty reduction. The White Paper on Irish Aid (2006) reaffirms that education will remain a core programme priority in the years ahead.

This policy document has been updated and revised in the light of Irish Aid’s experience in education and in response to the significant challenges that continue to face countries in their efforts to meet the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Despite many gains in the past decade, especially in increased primary school enrolments, 72 million children are still denied the opportunity to go to school. There is also serious concern about the deterioration in the quality of education being provided at all levels.

Education is a fundamental human right and the goal of the policy is to help partner countries realise this right, especially the right to basic education. Irish Aid will work collectively with partner governments, international donors and civil society organisations to achieve this goal. In doing so it will focus on the following objectives:

- > *Strengthen national education systems for pro-poor service delivery*
- > *Accelerate progress towards universal access and equity in education*
- > *Promote significant improvements in the quality of education.*

The main emphasis will be on the provision of high quality primary education in developing countries, especially for marginalized and vulnerable children who are out of school. Recognising that universal primary education can best be realised in the context of a well functioning comprehensive education system, support will be provided in ways that strengthen national education systems and the capacity necessary to effectively manage them.

Almost half of all out-of-school children live in fragile states and countries affected by conflict. In recognition of this, Irish Aid will ensure that education is an integral component of its humanitarian policy.

HIV and AIDS, gender equity and equality, environmental sustainability and good governance are key determinants of effective education outcomes and poverty reduction. These will be given priority in the implementation of the policy.

Irish Aid’s response at country level will be reflected in Country Strategy Plans. The principal modality of support will be the sector-wide approach (SWAp) aimed at developing country-led, cohesive and sustainable education plans. Irish Aid will also actively promote increased aid effectiveness through harmonising and aligning support with government systems.

As participation in education continues to expand, Irish Aid will support measures that enhance the quality of learning at all levels with a particular emphasis on improvements in teacher education and the school learning environment.

The achievement of the EFA and MDG goals at country level requires technical and financial support from a range of organisations working at national, regional and international levels. The primary channel for Irish Aid will be national governments in partner countries. It will also strengthen its partnerships with UN and international organisations that are strategically well placed to assist countries in their efforts to achieve the goals. Civil society organisations will continue to be important partners for Irish Aid, both in the advocacy role they perform and also in the delivery of education services to sections of the population who are hardest to reach.

In implementing the policy, Irish Aid will strengthen collaboration with the Department of Education and Science (DES) and draw increasingly on the extensive experience and expertise of other education stakeholders in Ireland.

Education provision is a crucial investment in the future. Sustainable improvements in education systems will require long-term commitment of resources by national governments and by the international community. Irish Aid will allocate a significant percentage of overall ODA to education in a sustained and predictable manner. It will increase financing in partner countries where it is active in the sector, as well as through appropriate global financing mechanisms.

# 1. Context

## 1.1 Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right, central to the realisation of all other human rights and to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Ireland, through its aid programme, has consistently promoted education, in particular through its support for basic education and primary education. The White Paper on Irish Aid (2006) strongly endorses the focus on education and confirms that it will be a priority in the years ahead. It commits Ireland to work with developing country governments, international donors and civil society organisations to achieve universal primary education by 2015. This commitment is informed by Ireland's own experience of education as a key driver of economic and social progress.

This updated policy takes account of Irish Aid's extensive experience in education and responds to the changing context at national and international levels. It outlines Ireland's response to the challenges that continue to face countries in their efforts to meet the MDG goal of universal primary education and the broader Education for All (EFA) goals.<sup>1</sup> It builds on the deep commitment and the strong track record of Irish Aid in supporting education, and the ongoing dialogue with partner countries, particularly in Africa. It identifies priority areas for Irish Aid, specifies what Irish Aid will do in support of these priorities, and defines the ways in which Irish Aid will seek to work with partners in developing countries and with the international community. In doing so it provides a framework for investment by Irish Aid in education in the future and a benchmark against which our partners in Ireland and internationally can measure our performance.

## 1.2 Education as a human right

*"The right to education is a fundamental human right and is essential and indispensable to the understanding of all other human rights."* White Paper on Irish Aid, page 43.

The 1947 UN Declaration on Human Rights calls for primary education to be compulsory and free. Similarly, the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the more recent UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities reiterate the right to education and call for primary education to be inclusive and made compulsory and available free to all. Those who are excluded from education are denied the opportunity to develop to their full potential and to participate as members of their community.

## 1.3 Education and the MDGs

Education is integral to Irish Aid's overarching objective of poverty reduction. The Millennium Development Goals inform Ireland's approach to development and poverty reduction.<sup>2</sup> Two of the goals relate directly to education;

**MDG 2** Achieve universal primary education by ensuring that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

**MDG3** Promote gender equality and empower women including the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.

<sup>1</sup> The six EFA goals were adopted at The World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2000), UN Millenium Summit.

### 1.3.1 Education and poverty reduction

Education also contributes significantly to the achievement of all the other MDGs and to economic and political progress.

<b>Determinant of good health:</b>	Countries with better education systems have lower child mortality rates and fewer underweight children than countries with poorer education systems.
<b>Empowerment of girls:</b>	Increasing the education level of girls has many positive social and economic impacts, including increased status and participation in society, improved infant and child survival rates and reduced rates of fertility.
<b>'Social vaccine' against HIV and AIDS:</b>	Education can provide the knowledge and confidence necessary to avoid risks and is particularly important for girls who are more at risk of infection than boys. Studies in sub-Saharan Africa have shown a clear correlation since the late 1990s between the number of years spent in school and lower HIV and AIDS infection rates. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Driver of economic growth:</b>	Investing in education makes economic as well as social sense. We know from our own experience in Ireland that education is a key driver in promoting economic growth. It plays a critical role in the development of human capital and in increasing employment opportunities.
<b>Foundation for good governance:</b>	Education has the potential to empower individuals and foster more meaningful participation by citizens in their societies. It can contribute to state building by helping to break down barriers between groups and mitigate the risk of conflict and instability.
<b>Key to environmental sustainability:</b>	Education can increase awareness and understanding of the linkages between poverty and the environment, engender respect for the earth's natural resources and empower citizens to act for positive environmental and social change. For example, education can generate the necessary level of awareness and response required to adapt and reduce the impact of climate change.
<b>Increased understanding of development:</b>	Development Education can increase awareness and understanding of poverty and underdevelopment, social justice and human rights. It can also engage people in analysis, reflection and action for local and global citizenship.
<b>Disaster risk reduction:</b>	Getting children back into school after a humanitarian crisis can help mitigate the effects of trauma and provide a safe environment.

3 Hargreaves & Boler (2006), *Girl Power*, Action Aid, UK.

## 1.4 International context: Education for All

The emphasis on universal primary education and gender equality in the MDGs builds on and strengthens existing international commitments to education. The World Conference on Education for All in 1990 committed all nations to extend a basic level of education to all young people and adults and to eliminate gender inequalities in education at all levels.<sup>4</sup> These aims were re-affirmed at the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 when 164 national governments, including Ireland, committed themselves to securing the six EFA goals by 2015. At the same time international and donor agencies pledged that no country would be prevented from achieving the goals through a lack of resources.

### Education for All – Goals

- > Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;
- > Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;
- > Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;
- > Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;
- > Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- > Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeric and essential life skills.

### 1.4.1 Significant progress on access to education

Over the past decade there has been encouraging progress in many countries towards meeting the goals, particularly in increasing enrolments of primary school children. Between 1999 and 2004 worldwide net enrolment rates (NER) increased from about 82 % of the relevant age group to about 86 %.<sup>5</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa net enrolments increased from 55% to 65%.<sup>6</sup> These statistics translate into dramatic increases in the numbers of children enrolled between 2000 and 2006 in a number of Irish Aid partner countries in Africa.

Country	Primary School Enrolments 2000	Primary School Enrolments 2006
Zambia	1,633,292	2,549,481
Uganda	6,300,000	7,300,000
Mozambique	2,527,319	4,093,423
Ethiopia	6,462,503	11,225,311

Progress in expanding girl's education has also been encouraging. Globally there are now 94 girls in primary school for every 100 boys, up from 92 in 1999. Half of the 83 developing countries with data indicate that they have achieved gender parity at primary level.

However, significant challenges remain. The number of out-of-school children is declining globally but the pace is too slow to reach the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. An estimated 72 million children were still out of school in 2005. Girls accounted for 57% of this figure and children with disabilities amounted to almost one third of the total.<sup>7</sup> The figure also includes more than 27 million children affected by conflict who do not have access to education.

<sup>5</sup> The net enrolment rate is defined as the enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO (2006) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations; Early Childhood Care and Education*. Paris, UNESCO.

<sup>7</sup> UNESCO (2007) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008: Education for All by 2105. Will we make it?*. Paris, UNESCO.

<sup>4</sup> (1990) The World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien, Thailand.

The primary enrolment rate in many sub-Saharan African countries is currently below 70% and it is estimated that only 25% of children completing primary school gain entry to secondary level. Even in countries where gender parity has been achieved at enrolment, more girls drop out than boys before completing primary school. It is estimated that 54 countries are in danger of not achieving gender parity in primary or secondary school by 2015. Addressing the barriers that exclude children, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalised, will be critical if the goal of universal primary education for all is to be reached.

Progress towards some of the other EFA goals has been disappointingly slow. Despite the compelling evidence of the benefits of early childhood care and education (ECCE), coverage is low in sub-Saharan countries. Children from poorer and rural households, those with disabilities or who are otherwise socially excluded, have significantly less access to early childhood programmes.

Marginal progress has been made in youth and adult learning with approximately 780 million adults still lacking in basic literacy skills, two thirds of whom are women.<sup>8</sup>

### ▾ Barriers to Educational Access

- > Socio-cultural barriers such as gender equality often encourage early marriage and undervalue education for girls. When family members in HIV and AIDS affected households are sick it is mainly girls who are forced to drop out to care for them;
- > Economic barriers make even 'free' education impossible for poor families due to the demand for children's labour or the inability of parents to afford clothing and school materials;
- > Poor health and nutrition often lead to poor attendance, low retention and poor performance in schools;
- > Lack of adequate school infrastructure, clean water and safe sanitation are important factors determining school attendance. This is especially the case in rural areas and particularly with girls;
- > Physical and social barriers limit the full and active participation in school by children with special needs.

### Supporting literacy and numeracy

In Zambia, Ireland was instrumental in piloting a successful literacy programme for primary school children involving the use of local languages. The programme developed materials in seven of the main local languages to teach initial literacy and numeracy skills. Research is showing that children learn more quickly and the knowledge gained is retained, when they are taught in their own mother tongue thus setting a stronger foundation for future learning. The literacy programme has been scaled up into the National Primary Reading Programme which is now a strong part of the curriculum.



Busanga Primary School, Zambia.

<sup>8</sup> UNESCO (2005) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006: Literacy for Life*. Paris, UNESCO.

### 1.4.2 Quality of education

In spite of the rapid expansion of enrolments, there is serious concern about the deterioration in the quality of education being provided at all levels. There is increasing evidence of low learning achievement among pupils in lower and upper primary levels.<sup>9</sup> Persistent challenges include high drop out rates, repetition and low numbers completing 5 years of schooling or the full primary cycle.<sup>10</sup> Poor quality is further undermining the achievements in access by devaluing the importance of education in the eyes of parents and communities at large.

The serious shortage of suitably trained and motivated teachers is a major factor affecting the quality of education. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa need to recruit an estimated additional 1.6 million teachers by 2015.<sup>11</sup> The recruitment and retention of more women teachers must be given special priority if more girls are to participate in school.

Poor quality learning materials, inappropriate language of instruction and the lack of relevant curricula are among the other factors contributing to poor quality learning outcomes. Quality is further undermined by the HIV and AIDS pandemic.<sup>12</sup> Teachers have been particularly badly affected in many countries, leading to high levels of absenteeism and ultimately high teacher attrition rates.

### 1.4.3 Improving management systems

Meeting the human, technical and financial resources required for rapidly growing education systems poses enormous challenges for many developing countries – challenges which are often further exacerbated by conflict and emergencies. At all levels of the education system from central ministries, through to regions, districts, sub-districts and school-level there is a shortage of human capacity to plan and implement education plans. The lack of sufficient and accurate statistical information poses enormous challenges for educational planners and decision makers. Poor governance impacts on already weak systems with lack of accountability, corruption, and little say in the running of schools for parents and communities.

### 1.4.4 Aid flows and effectiveness

Scaling up access and improving the quality of education will require increased efficiency in the use of current resources. It will also require substantial increases in both domestic and external finances. Even though some governments are investing larger shares of their national budgets in education, significant financing gaps persist in many countries.<sup>13</sup>

Overseas Development Assistance allocated to basic education almost doubled in 2004 from its 2000 level. Yet current levels of ODA cover only 43% of the annual minimum estimated external financing required to achieve universal primary education by 2015.<sup>14</sup> The increased demand for post-primary education puts added pressure on already scarce resources. Much of the aid to education tends to be fragmented and unpredictable. However, there is now greater momentum among development partners to improve coordination and harmonise and align their support with government systems. The sector-wide approach (SWAp) provides a mechanism for increased alignment around national education plans.

#### The Sector-Wide Approach – SWAp

In line with the aim of strengthening national governments capacity to plan and develop comprehensive education systems, aid for education is increasingly provided in the context of a sector-wide approach (SWAp). This involves a partnership, led by government and involving other education stakeholders including civil society and donor agencies, in support of a single education sector policy and programme of work. Targets and indicators for the performance of the sector are agreed between the partners. Rigorous governance structures are agreed by all the partners with roles and responsibilities clearly defined.

Aid also needs to be provided in a more predictable manner that allows governments to plan for the longer term. The Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) has developed largely in response to these challenges by mobilising additional financing for education and helping to improve aid effectiveness.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank (2006) *From Schooling Access to Learning Outcomes: An Unfinished Agenda – An Evaluation of World Bank Support to Primary Education*.

<sup>10</sup> It is generally agreed that 5 years of schooling are needed for basic literacy to be acquired.

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO (2006) *Teachers and Educational Quality: Monitoring Global Needs for 2015* UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

<sup>12</sup> UNESCO (2003) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2003/4: The Leap to Equality*. Paris, UNESCO.

<sup>13</sup> UNESCO (2007) *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008: Will we make it?* Paris, UNESCO.

<sup>14</sup> The 2007 Global Monitoring Report stated that \$9 billion in external support is needed annually to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015.

### The Education for All – Fast Track Initiative Partnership

In 2002, the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) was launched as a global partnership between donors and developing countries to enable accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. Low-income countries which demonstrate serious commitment to achieving universal primary education can receive support from the EFA-FTI. Donors provide coordinated and increased financial and technical support in a transparent and predictable manner. Recipient countries have agreed to put primary education at the forefront of their domestic efforts, to develop comprehensive national education plans and provide more domestic resources.

### Promoting good governance in schools

In South Africa Irish Aid has been engaged in strengthening the capacity of the members of elected School Governing Boards in Limpopo Province. Under South African legislation the boards – comprising elected representatives of educators, pupils, parents and communities – have responsibility for increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of their local schools. Irish Aid is supporting capacity development of board members in financial management, policy formulation and school development planning.



Boys doing their homework outside their home in Soweto.

## 1.5 Irish Aid engagement in education

Since the early 1990s, Ireland has strongly supported partner countries in their efforts to meet the MDG and EFA goals, in particular at the level of basic education and universal primary education. This engagement has built on the long tradition in education by Irish missionaries and NGOs in developing countries. Basic education is the foundation for access to higher levels of the education system, and it is at this level that many of the poorest and weakest in society are excluded.

### Defining basic education

The following understanding of basic education has informed Irish Aid's work to date:

*'Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.'*<sup>15</sup>

In recent years, Irish Aid's approach to education has been guided by the education policy which was approved in 2001.<sup>16</sup> Since then there has been rapid growth in the range and complexity of the education programme with annual expenditure increasing from €26 million in 2001 to over €51 million in 2006.

### 1.5.1 Country level

Approximately 70% of Irish Aid expenditure on education has been allocated to partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa, namely Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia and South Africa. Support for education in countries such as Palestine and Afghanistan was also provided by Irish Aid. At country level, the emphasis has been on strengthening national systems of education and building local capacity to effectively manage and deliver education services at all levels.

<sup>15</sup> (1990) World Declaration on Education For All, Jomtien.

<sup>16</sup> Development Cooperation Ireland (2001), *Education Policy & Practice Guidelines*. Unpublished.

Irish Aid has played an important role in the development of education sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) with the result that most of its support for education is now channelled through government systems in support of comprehensive national education plans. The focus has been on primary education, including support for girl's education and for strengthening the education sector response to HIV and AIDS. There has been a corresponding fall in the number of freestanding education projects.

### Investing in teachers

Improving the quality of education is a major priority for Irish Aid. More and better qualified teachers can make a significant contribution to the quality of learning in the classroom. In Ethiopia, Irish Aid, in partnership with other agencies, has supported the Ministry of Education and teacher education institutions in the various regions for an ambitious programme of in-service and pre-service teacher education. As a result, the share of qualified teachers has increased from 32% in 2003/04 to 59.4% in 2005/06. In addition over 150,000 teachers underwent English language improvement training.



Teacher Ms Mushi used a Teacher Resource Centre to upgrade her skills, Tanzania.

### 1.5.2 International partnerships

Along with its engagement at country level, Irish Aid has established a number of strategic partnerships with organisations working at international level to advance education for all. These include UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and a number of other bilateral donor agencies. The partnership with UNESCO is focused on capacity building for education planning and monitoring progress towards education for all.<sup>17</sup> Irish Aid core funding for UNICEF ensures that the agency can coordinate efforts to accelerate progress in girls' education and to deliver basic education services especially in countries affected by emergencies and humanitarian disasters. The Irish Education Trust Fund at the World Bank supports capacity building for teachers as well as research and analysis of teacher effectiveness in Africa - a critical factor in improving the quality of education.

Ireland participates in the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), an international partnership established to support low income countries achieve universal primary education. Significant Irish support to the EFA-FTI has contributed to the delivery of basic education services to increasing numbers of children in low income countries.

### 1.5.3 Regional partnerships

The strong focus on education in Africa has led to the establishment of partnerships with a number of regional African organisations aimed at building capacity and enabling lesson learning on good practice between countries in the region. Two key partners in particular are the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Through its support for the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (GeSCI) Irish Aid assists ministries of education with the development of national and regional ICT education strategies and the deployment of ICT technology in schools.

### 1.5.4 NGO's and missionaries

Collaboration and partnership with civil society organisations, including Irish NGOs and missionary groups, has been an important feature of the programme. A broad range of Irish based NGOs and missionary organisations are supported, particularly for their education work in countries in conflict or post conflict such as Afghanistan, Palestine and Sierra Leone. Irish Aid also supports Irish based NGOs working in education through the

<sup>17</sup> UNESCO is the United Nations organisation mandated with coordinating the collaborative momentum of partners in pursuit of Education for All.

Multi-Annual Programme Funds (MAPS), Civil Society Fund (CSF) and through support to the Irish Missionary Resource Service (IMRS).

### 1.5.5 Engagement in Ireland

Irish Aid also has a long tradition of engagement with the education sector in Ireland. This includes on-going collaboration with the Department of Education and Science (DES), especially in relation to work with UNESCO.

The interest by many developing countries in learning from Ireland's positive experience in education has resulted in a recent initiative between Irish Aid, DES and the Irish Colleges of Education.

Irish Aid's Development Education Strategy Plan 2007-2011 emphasises the importance of integrating a development education perspective into education policy, programmes and interventions in Ireland.<sup>18</sup>

The Irish Aid Fellowship Training Programme has a long tradition of providing scholarships for students from developing countries. A significant number of personnel from government ministries and NGOs in Africa have undertaken postgraduate studies, both in higher education institutions in Ireland and in the Africa region.

A new Programme of Strategic Cooperation with Higher Education and Research Institutions was established in 2006.<sup>19</sup> It aims to support capacity building of higher education and research institutions in developing countries by facilitating collaborative partnerships between institutions in Ireland and those in developing countries.

### Supporting policy development

Irish Aid has been assisting the Ministry of Education in Lesotho to implement the primary education component of its 10 year Education Sector Strategic Plan. Support for the development of policies and strategies aimed at addressing the challenges of access to schooling for vulnerable children including AIDS orphans and children living in remote rural highlands have been priorities for Irish Aid.

### 1.5.6 Future priorities for Irish Aid

Drawing on its understanding of the critical role of education in reducing poverty, and its long experience of implementing education programmes, Irish Aid will pay particular attention to the following priorities.

#### ***The need for a comprehensive approach to education***

While the focus on primary education is justified, too great an emphasis on one education sub-sector ignores the essential linkages between the various sub-sectors and can lead to an overall imbalance in the system. Universal primary education can best be realised in the context of a well functioning comprehensive education system that includes early childhood, primary, post-primary, vocational and tertiary levels. For example, as more students complete primary schooling, there is increased competition for secondary and vocational education places which if not met, will have a negative impact on demand for primary schooling. Many countries in Africa are now providing increased access to quality tertiary education, essential for the development of the skills and leadership required for economic growth and development. Tertiary education has a critical role to play in delivering adequate numbers of quality trained teachers needed to reach the EFA and Millennium Development goals. Shortages of qualified personnel have serious consequences also for the delivery of public services in the health, water and sanitation sectors all of which are crucial to the achievement of the MDGs.

#### ***Increased focus on access to education for marginalised and vulnerable children***

If all countries are to meet the MDG and EFA targets it is critical that education services become more responsive to the special circumstances of out-of-school children and address the barriers that exclude the poorest and most vulnerable.

#### ***Greater focus on quality***

While access remains a challenge, efforts to achieve primary education for all will be undermined without a stronger focus on quality. It is not just a question of how many children get into or even complete basic education, but the level of core functional life skills (including literacy and numeracy), knowledge and attitudes that they have acquired.

<sup>18</sup> Irish Aid (2007) Development Education Strategy Plan 2007-2011.

<sup>19</sup> Irish Aid (2006), *Programme of Strategic Cooperation between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes 2007-2011*. The programme is managed by the Higher Education Authority (HEA).

## 2. Irish Aid education policy

### 2.1 Vision

Irish Aid's vision for education is one that is inclusive, equips people to realise their full capabilities as human beings, and enables them to contribute in a meaningful way to the development of their communities and society as a whole.

*"The principal focus of our support for education in developing countries, particularly our programme countries, will remain the provision of high quality primary education, situated within comprehensive national education plans." White Paper on Irish Aid, page 44.*

### 2.2 Policy goal

Irish Aid will support the realisation of the right to basic education by all, which is essential for poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

#### Key principles guiding Irish Aid's support for education

The guiding principles of the White Paper will inform Irish Aid's engagement in education.

##### Partnership

**Ireland's relationship with the developing world will be based on a spirit of partnership and equality.**

Irish Aid will give priority to government-led national education plans. It will align its support for education with locally owned priorities, programmes and systems, and harmonise requirements and procedures for disbursing and managing aid with other donors. It will advocate for the participation of key stakeholders in education planning and monitoring, including parents, local government, teachers, civil society and the private sector.

##### Public ownership and transparency

**We will ensure greater awareness and ownership of the programme.**

Irish Aid will strengthen linkages with Irish institutions and organisations. It will ensure that the place of education in development is reflected in Irish Aid's strategy to increase awareness of development issues. It will consult with partners on major education policy initiatives.

##### Effectiveness and quality assurance

**We will use public resources efficiently and effectively, providing value for money for the Irish taxpayer.**

Irish Aid will adopt approaches and standards based on internationally accepted best practice. It will promote increased aid effectiveness in the education sector in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Irish Aid will systematically monitor and evaluate implementation of the education policy.

##### Coherence

**We will work for a coherent approach to development across all Government Departments.**

Irish Aid will aim for coherence between the education policy and other development policies in Irish Aid; and with relevant policies of the Department of Education and Science and other Government Departments. It will also ensure greater coherence between education initiatives at global and country level.

##### Long-term sustainability

**Our interventions will be durable and will bring benefits over the long term.**

Sustainable improvements in educational systems will require long-term commitment of resources by national governments and by the international community. Irish Aid will provide predictable, long-term funding to strengthen institutional capacity and enable countries to meet the education needs of their citizens.

## 2.3 Policy objectives

Irish Aid will work collectively with partner governments, international donors and civil society organisations to achieve this goal. In doing so it will focus on three key objectives:

### Objective 1: Strengthen national education systems for pro-poor service delivery

National governments have the primary responsibility to enable all citizens realise their right to education. Irish Aid will support partner countries to a) strengthen national education systems and b) build the necessary capacity to effectively manage them.

#### In working towards this objective, Irish Aid will:

1. Help to strengthen national education systems to plan and manage comprehensive sector plans incorporating early childhood, primary, post-primary, vocational and tertiary education sub-sectors.
2. Encourage evidence-based education policies that are pro-poor and inclusive, are gender responsive, and take into account the impact of HIV and AIDS on the education sector.
3. Enhance institutional capacity for improved education planning and management at all levels.
4. Advocate for increased participation by civil society and other stakeholders in the planning, delivery and monitoring of education services.
5. Use aid modalities that strengthen national ownership and ensure pro-poor education service delivery.
6. Promote monitoring of progress towards the full participation of the poorest in education.

### Objective 2: Accelerate progress towards universal access and equity in education

Irish Aid will focus on equity in education provision by a) giving initial priority to basic education and universal primary education, and b) paying particular attention to marginalized or vulnerable groups, such as children with special needs, AIDS orphans and out-of school youth.

#### In keeping with this direction, Irish aid will:

1. Call for increased financing for basic education by the international community.
2. Encourage regular and systematic monitoring of equitable access to education.

3. Support research, analysis and knowledge sharing about the obstacles that deter children from successfully participating in a quality education.
4. Advocate for policies and strategies that help to remove barriers to educational access for the poorest and disadvantaged.
5. Support the work of civil society and multilateral organisations that advocate for and provide services for marginalised and disadvantaged groups excluded from educational services.
6. Ensure coherence with Irish Aid's work on children affected by HIV and AIDS.

### Objective 3: Promote significant improvements in the quality of education

As participation in education expands, Irish Aid will support measures that maintain and enhance the quality of learning at all levels, including improvements in teacher education and the school learning environment.

#### In working towards this objective, Irish Aid will:

1. Give priority to the development and implementation of effective in-service and pre-service teacher education policies and strategies.
2. Support improvements in the learning environment, especially increased access to and use by teachers and learners of quality instructional materials.
3. Facilitate the development of appropriate language policies that enhance learning achievements.
4. Support curriculum reform.
5. Encourage the use of systematic monitoring and evaluation of quality in national education plans and strengthen the capacity of civil society stakeholders to monitor quality learning outcomes.
6. Encourage research into the factors that lead to quality education outcomes, as well as knowledge sharing of good practices that contribute to quality improvements in education.
7. Develop a strategy for the appropriate use of ICT to improve quality learning outcomes.
8. Strengthen linkages with Irish, international and regional organisations to build capacity and improve quality at all levels.

# 3. Implementation Strategy

*“We will work with international donors, developing country governments and international organisations to help increase collective efforts to achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2015.”*

*White Paper on Irish Aid, page 43.*

This section sets out how Irish Aid will operate, the partners it will work with and the aid modalities it will use in implementing its policy objectives. The main partners for Irish Aid are national governments, multilateral organisations, civil society organisations, including NGOs and missionaries, and other like-minded donor agencies.

In implementing the policy Irish Aid will engage in policy dialogue; help to build partner capacity; promote research and knowledge sharing; provide technical support where appropriate; and contribute resources to meet the significant financing gaps which have been identified.

Irish Aid will deliver on its policy priorities primarily through its engagement at country level. As part of its commitment to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Ireland will promote national ownership of education plans, align its support for education with government and partner systems, harmonise efforts with other stakeholders, and focus on results.<sup>20</sup> Regional, global and civil society partnerships will be aligned with support at country level and provided in a way that promotes coherence across the Irish Aid programme.

To be successful, investments in education need to be long term and sustained. Irish Aid will provide a significant percentage of overall ODA funding to education in a predictable manner that allows partners to plan for the longer term.

In implementing the policy, particular attention will be given to addressing Irish Aid’s four cross-cutting issues: gender equity and equality, HIV and AIDS, ensuring environmental sustainability, and the promotion of good governance.

## 3.1 Bilateral assistance

The primary responsibility for the long term provision of education lies with national governments and this will be the main focus for Irish Aid’s support. In doing so, Irish Aid will prioritise support through the sector-wide approach (SWAp). This approach is aimed at developing country-led, cohesive, sustainable education plans, to which all stakeholders can contribute, at a pace that maximises national ownership. Financing in support of the education SWAp will be delivered through a mix of aid modalities, including general budget support, sector budget support, contributions to pooled funding arrangements with other donors, support for individual projects and through civil society organisations. Because country contexts differ appropriate priorities and the appropriate mix of aid modalities will be determined at that level.

### 3.1.1 Policy dialogue at macro-level

Channelling funds through General Budget Support (GBS) provides opportunities for Irish Aid to engage in policy dialogue at national level on issues that impact on education, such as human rights and governance.

#### Irish Aid’s strategic focus at this level will be to:

- > Promote the integration and monitoring of education targets and indicators within poverty reduction strategy programmes (PRSPs) and national development plans.
- > Encourage partner governments to invest adequate domestic resources in education and to integrate their education expenditures into national budgets.
- > Support ongoing national reform processes to strengthen education systems such as sector-wide approaches (SWAps), decentralisation and civil service reform programmes, and strengthened public financial management systems.
- > Encourage a multi-sectoral approach that addresses the determinants of poverty which impact on education outcomes. These include food security and nutrition, water and sanitation, health, environment, population, HIV and AIDS and governance.
- > Promote national policies that address the barriers to accessing basic services by the poorest.
- > Press for the inclusion of education as a component of multi-sectoral responses in national HIV and AIDS plans.

<sup>20</sup> OECD DAC (2005) Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

### 3.1.2 Sector-Wide Approach

The primary involvement by Irish Aid in the education sector at country level will be through the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp).

#### Through its engagement in the SWAp Irish Aid will:

- > Help to strengthen comprehensive national education systems including early childhood, primary, post-primary, vocational and tertiary sub-sectors.
- > Maintain a strong focus on outcomes and results, especially pro-poor service delivery and quality of learning.
- > Advocate for equitable financing between the sub-sectors, with appropriate allocations to basic education as well as equitable resource allocation within and between regions.
- > Help to build capacity of policy makers and education officials, support the development of reliable education management information systems and evidence-based decision making, as well as paying particular attention to addressing gender issues and the impact of HIV and AIDS.
- > Promote policies that address the barriers to equitable access to education for the poorest, especially girls, children from rural areas, and children with special needs.
- > Advocate for increased participation by local government and civil society in the SWAp process.
- > Support sector coordination and harmonisation procedures such as joint donor plans for capacity building, reviews and analytical work.

### 3.1.3 Support through local development

Strengthening local decentralised structures is important for the delivery of education services.

#### In this context, Irish Aid will:

- > Promote greater links between national and sub-national levels to enhance local ownership, improved service delivery and better education outcomes.
- > Advocate for the importance of education in local budget processes and ensure that local communities are consulted, informed about and participate in education sector planning, budgeting and review processes.
- > Support the piloting of national education initiatives and strategies at local level.
- > Encourage research on the factors that lead to quality education outcomes, particularly at the school level, and ensure that the findings feed into national education policy dialogue.

### 3.1.4 Project support

While giving priority to programmatic approaches, Irish Aid will continue to support a smaller number of projects. The emphasis will be on projects that:

- > Are in line with and inform national education policies and priorities, and avoid duplication.
- > Have potential for positive impacts on the quality of education.
- > Allow for lessons to be integrated into local and/or national education structures.
- > Involve multiple partners (private sector, ministries of health, labour etc.) and engage primary stakeholders (teachers, communities, parents etc.).

## 3.2 Emergencies and conflict situations

*“Increasingly, we are seeing the long-term impact of conflict and instability on countries, particularly in Africa.”*  
*White Paper on Irish Aid.*

Education provision is often severely disrupted by conflicts and natural disasters. Approximately half of the 72 million children out of school live in fragile states and countries affected by conflict. Emergencies take a double toll, damaging education services and simultaneously reducing the ability of government to respond to the education needs of children and communities.

At such times education becomes increasingly important. It helps to maintain a sense of normality and protection for children. It also provides an entry point for addressing specific health problems and disease prevention. In the longer term, education can assist in reducing conflict and instability thereby laying the foundation for good governance.

### Post-emergency education

In Afghanistan, funding was provided by Irish Aid to Unicef for post emergency schools construction/rehabilitation, for the provision of school kits and for school feeding programmes.



A school for returned refugees in the eastern province of Nangahar, Afghanistan.

Irish Aid is committed to ensuring that education is an integral component of its humanitarian policy. Support for education in humanitarian crises is based on principles of humanity, impartiality, and neutrality and includes both emergency and recovery phases. Irish Aid will work with a variety of partners, including state and non-state actors, to ensure that basic education services are maintained.

### In doing so Irish Aid will:

- > Respect the primacy of the United Nations co-ordination function in humanitarian emergencies.
- > Support implementing partners, including multilateral agencies and international and local NGOs, to deliver education services to conflict affected populations as appropriate, in the context of a needs based response and with particular attention to the prevention of HIV and AIDS and gender based violence.
- > Expect partners to adhere to humanitarian principles and the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergency<sup>21</sup> that articulate the minimum level of educational access and provision to be attained.
- > Where appropriate, support the rebuilding of national capacity to manage education systems based on international standards of best practice, linking emergency response with sustainable education systems.

## 3.3 Partnerships

The achievement of the EFA and MDG goals at country level requires support by a range of organisations working at national, regional and international levels. Irish Aid will work in partnership with selected organisations and institutions such as:

- > Multilateral organisations, especially the UN and the World Bank
- > The European Union
- > Civil Society Organisations
- > Education stakeholders in Ireland.

<sup>21</sup> Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (2003/4). *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies.*

### 3.3.1 Partnerships with multilateral organisations especially the UN and the World Bank

Irish Aid will continue to collaborate with and channel increased funding to the following selected global, multilateral and regional organisations:

- > The Education for All Fast Track Initiative<sup>22</sup>
- > The United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF) through the Framework Agreement established with Irish Aid<sup>23</sup>
- > The Irish Education Trust Fund at the World Bank
- > UNESCO through its selected institutes in particular the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the EFA Global Monitoring Report
- > The UNAIDS Interagency Task Team on HIV and AIDS and Education
- > Strategic organisations working at the Africa regional level, including ADEA and FAWE.

#### In working with these agencies, Irish Aid will:

- > Support international and regional evidence-based policy advocacy, research, lesson learning, and institutional strengthening to improve quality outcomes in education.
- > Advocate for a strengthened response to HIV and AIDS and gender equality among international and regional partners.
- > Contribute to international efforts to monitor progress and strengthen analytical and planning capacity in support of EFA.
- > Promote greater coordination and harmonisation between UN agencies and other development partners at international, regional and country levels.
- > Foster coherence between global and regional education initiatives and country priorities, especially Irish Aid's partner countries in Africa.

#### Criteria for the selection of Irish Aid Partners

- > Poverty reduction focus
- > Commitment to education reform
- > Relevance to the MDG and EFA.
- > Commitment and capacity to ensure that issues of gender equity, HIV and AIDS, governance and environmental sustainability are addressed in education
- > Proven technical capacity
- > Management capacity and transparency of reporting arrangements
- > Commitment to increased aid effectiveness.

### 3.3.2 Working with the European Union

A significant proportion of aid to education in developing countries is provided through the European Development Fund which Ireland contributes to under the Cotonou Agreement. The European Commission (EC) plays a complementary role to that of Member States and seeks to promote a coherent EU response in the sector.

#### In working with the EU, Irish Aid will;

- > Continue to promote education as a development priority at the European Council.
- > Promote best-practice approaches to support for education by all Member States.
- > Encourage the EU to take a stronger leadership role on coordination and harmonisation of education procedures and policies.<sup>24</sup>
- > Contribute to EU education policy dialogue.

<sup>22</sup> Through participation in the EFA-FTI Partnership and the provision of financing through its two Trust Funds, the Catalytic Fund (CF) and the Education Programme Development Fund (EPDF).

<sup>23</sup> Framework Agreement between Ireland and the United Nations' Children's Fund (UNICEF), May 2007.

<sup>24</sup> A leadership role by the EU in coordination and harmonisation was envisaged under the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development Commitments. The EU adopted the Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development policy in May 2007.

### 3.3.3 Civil Society Partnerships

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) will continue to be important partners for Irish Aid in the implementation of its education policy.<sup>25</sup> They play a vital role in delivering essential education services to particularly vulnerable or excluded groups where state systems fail. They play an equally important role in bringing pressure to bear on national governments, international and donor agencies to deliver on their obligations and responsibilities for achieving the MDG and EFA goals.

#### **Guided by its Civil Society Policy (2006), Irish Aid will:**

- > Continue supporting a broad range of civil society organisations to develop capacity for advocacy, coalition building and basic education service delivery that is aligned with national education plans and priorities.
- > Advocate for participation of civil society at macro-level planning and policy making through, for example, PRSPs and SWAps.
- > Support pilot initiatives that are coherent with national government education policies, as well as other initiatives aimed at increasing transparency and accountability within the sector.
- > Ensure that the issues of gender equity and equality, HIV and AIDS, environmental sustainability and good governance are addressed in civil society partner's education programmes.
- > Engage in ongoing dialogue and communication with Irish based civil society organisations and examine the scope for deeper engagement with international civil society organisations in support of advocacy for EFA and the MDGs.

### 3.3.4 Partnerships in Ireland

In implementing this policy Irish Aid will draw on the extensive experience and expertise of the education sector in Ireland. Collaboration with the Department of Education and Science (DES) will be strengthened through the newly established Inter-Departmental Committee on Development.<sup>26</sup> Strategic partnerships will be established with relevant educational institutions in Ireland especially in the area of teacher education and development.

Support for the integration of development education within the education system in Ireland will be guided by Irish Aid's Development Education Strategy Plan (2007). Irish Aid will also use its own experience to inform its work in development education and public communication in Ireland.

#### **Specifically, Irish Aid will:**

- > Facilitate lesson learning, sharing of experience and partnership building between higher education institutions in Ireland and developing countries in a way that is consistent with partner government policies and priorities.<sup>27</sup>
- > Continue to liaise with the Department of Education and Science (DES) on its ongoing support to UNESCO.
- > Through the Fellowship Training Programme, provide opportunities for professionals from programme countries to undertake further training and education in Irish higher education institutions.
- > Promote increased public awareness and understanding of the Education for All goals and Irish Aid's education programme through public information activities.<sup>28</sup>
- > Maximise opportunities for learning across the programme between the education programme and the development education programme of Irish Aid.

<sup>25</sup> Civil society organisations comprise nationally based NGOs in developing countries, missionary groups and international and Irish NGOs and their southern partners.

<sup>26</sup> The Interdepartmental Committee on Development is aimed at strengthening coherence in the Government's approach to development and to make best use of the expertise and skills available across the public service.

<sup>27</sup> Through the Programme of Strategic Cooperation with Higher Education and Research Institutes.

<sup>28</sup> Including publications and seminars and the School Linking and Immersion Scheme.

## 4. Priority issues

The contribution of education to poverty reduction outcomes will be determined by the degree to which adequate attention is paid to Irish Aid's inter-linked priority issues:

- > gender equity and equality
- > the impact of HIV and AIDS
- > good governance
- > environmental sustainability.

### 4.1 Education and gender equity and equality

Despite the significant increase in participation rates by girls in the past decade it is estimated that they comprise approximately 57% of all out-of-school children.<sup>29</sup> An estimated 54 countries appear unlikely to achieve gender parity in primary or secondary school by 2015. Even in countries where gender parity has been achieved at enrolment, more girls than boys drop out before completing primary school. This is because poverty often has a more detrimental effect on girls than boys. For example, household power dynamics, demands for labour, traditional beliefs and the costs of schooling are particular barriers to the equal participation by girls in education.

Increasing the education level of girls has many positive social and economic impacts, including improved infant and child survival rates, reduced rates of fertility and increased status and participation in society by women. There is also evidence that levels of educational attainment can be important determinants of HIV and AIDS infection rates among girls and women.<sup>30</sup>

The Irish Aid Gender Equality Policy (2004)<sup>31</sup> will guide support for measures that promote girl's attendance and retention in school and ensure equality in the learning process.

### 4.2 Education and HIV and AIDS

The HIV and AIDS pandemic increases poverty and aggravates problems of access, equity, quality and resource availability within the education sector. In sub-Saharan Africa it is estimated that approximately 15 million children have been orphaned because of HIV and AIDS with many more affected. This has resulted in a significant proportion of children, mostly girls, being forced to drop out of school either to care for sick relatives or to work in order to replace lost income. HIV and AIDS also reduces the supply of educational services due to mortality and attrition among teachers and education administrators.

On the positive side, education is widely regarded as an effective 'social vaccine' in the prevention of HIV and AIDS. It equips young people with the general knowledge, powers of reasoning and understanding required to assimilate the messages and practices needed for HIV prevention. Evidence shows that the higher the number of years spent in school, the greater the chances of avoiding infection. Increased access to schooling by all, especially girls, and improved quality of education can make the most significant contribution to combating the pandemic.

Guided by its HIV and AIDS Policy (2008)<sup>32</sup> Irish Aid will accelerate and intensify its efforts to ensure that a comprehensive approach to tackling HIV and AIDS in the sector is adopted.

#### Promoting girls education

In Mozambique gender equality in education is a high priority. There has been considerable progress in closing the gender gap in primary education with the number of girls enrolled in school almost equal to that of boys. However there are still enormous challenges in ensuring equal participation by girls at post-primary level. Irish Aid has assisted the provincial education department in Niassa to expand the education network and to ensure that schools are safer environments for girls. Within the education sector working group Irish Aid is promoting the development and roll-out of national guidelines for the protection of girls from sexual abuse in educational institutions. Emphasis is on ensuring that the experiences from Niassa are channelled into sector review and planning processes.

29 UNESCO (2006). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007: Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education*. Paris, UNESCO.

30 Girls in the 15-19 age groups are up to 4-6 times more likely to be infected than boys of the same age.

31 Irish Aid (2004), *Gender Equality Policy*.

32 Irish Aid (2008), *HIV and AIDS Policy and Strategy: Tackling HIV and AIDS to reduce poverty and vulnerability*. Governance Policy.

## 4.3 Education and good governance

Poor governance in the education sector impacts negatively on the efficient and effective delivery of education services, especially for the poor. Lack of accountability and transparency, corruption and limited participation in the running of schools for parents and communities all contribute to poor teaching and learning.

Education has an important role to play in laying the foundation for good governance within the wider society. It has the potential to equip students with the knowledge, critical skills and competencies that enable them to participate as active citizens in their societies. It increases awareness of responsibilities and rights. Ultimately it can empower citizens to hold those in authority to account for the effective realisation of those rights.

Irish Aid is supporting public sector reform initiatives to deliver effective, equitable and accountable services in education. It will work to ensure the establishment of rigorous financial and oversight mechanisms within education systems. It will also promote the participation of relevant stakeholders in education such as students, parents, teachers and communities.

## 4.4 Education and environmental sustainability

The environment has a significant impact on access to and quality of education. When the local environment becomes degraded, households spend more time collecting firewood and water. This often contributes to absenteeism from school and ultimately to a reduction in the quality of learning outcomes, especially for girls. Within schools, clean water and safe sanitation are important factors in ensuring a healthy learning environment for students and teachers. The provision of clean sanitary facilities especially facilitates attendance at school by girls at the onset of puberty.

Education provides students with opportunities to learn about the world around them and the value of the natural resources on which so many livelihoods depend. It equips them to play a more positive role in caring for the environment as they go through life.

The Irish Aid Policy on Environmental Policy for Sustainable Development (2007)<sup>33</sup> will guide interventions aimed at ensuring healthy and safe learning environments as well as the inclusion of environmental education on school curricula.

## 4.5 Education and mainstreaming strategy

The Irish Aid Mainstreaming Strategy (2007)<sup>34</sup> provides a framework to address the four cross cutting issues. Opportunities will be identified to ensure that, where appropriate, decisions on policy, planning, implementation and evaluation will be informed by and take explicit account of gender, environment, governance and HIV and AIDS.

### **In implementing the mainstreaming strategy Irish Aid will:**

- > Identify opportunities and entry points for addressing these priority issues taking into account their relevance and appropriateness in the local education context.
- > Ensure that these are included as part of Irish Aid support for national, regional and global education initiatives.
- > Provide support for capacity building of partners to develop, implement and monitor policies and strategies to address the issues.
- > Upgrade staff skills within Irish Aid and provide training and support for appropriate research and analysis to inform specific activities in the education sector.
- > Develop guidelines on mainstreaming the priority issues in the education sector.

<sup>33</sup> Irish Aid (2007), *Environmental Policy for Sustainable Development*.

<sup>34</sup> Irish Aid (2007), *Towards Poverty Reduction: Mainstreaming Strategy*.

# 5. Management arrangements

## 5.1 Management arrangements

Oversight of the education policy will be the responsibility of the Senior Management Group within Irish Aid. At HQ and country level, implementation will be the responsibility of the Irish Aid management team with technical support and advice provided by education advisers. The following steps will be undertaken to implement the policy:

- > Develop a plan for dissemination and communication of the education policy.
- > Strengthen institutional capacity within Irish Aid and ensure that adequate resources, including appropriately trained and experienced staff and, where appropriate, consultants are committed for effective implementation of the policy.
- > Ensure mutual learning between Irish Aid at national level in its partner countries and its regional and international partners.

## 5.2 Performance management

Implementation of the policy will be monitored based on performance against the policy objectives and will be an integral part of Irish Aid's monitoring activities across all the organisation.

- > Funding proposals will be appraised for their relevance to and consistency with the policy.
- > The policy will be evaluated in periodic external reviews and evaluations commissioned by Irish Aid.
- > Examples of good practice will be documented and disseminated. Lessons from reviews will be used to inform future policy. Reviews of country programmes that support SWAPs will focus on improvements in education services and learning outcomes.
- > Performance management will include monitoring and review of progress in mainstreaming Irish Aid's priority issues.
- > Expenditure on education across the Irish Aid programme will be tracked to monitor trends and as an indicator of coherence.

# Abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
CF	Catalytic Fund
CSO	Civil Society organisation
CSF	Civil Society Fund
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DES	Department of Education and Science
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EPDF	Education Programme Development Fund
EFA	Education for All
EFA-FTI	Education for All - Fast Track Initiative
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FAWE	Forum for Africa Women Educationalists
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
IATT	United Nations Interagency Task team on HIVAIDS and Education
IMDF	Irish Missionary Development Fund
IMRS	Irish Missionary Resource Services
INEE	Interagency network for education in Emergencies
JAS	Joint Assistance Strategies
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
MAP	Multi-Annual Programme
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OVCs	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
UNICEF	United National Children's Fund
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UPE	Universal Primary Education
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach

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