

## Public Responses on Ireland Investing in Overseas Aid

September 2010

**The Government should deliver on its aid promises to the world's poorest people, according to a recent opinion poll, commissioned by Dóchas from Ipsos MRBI.**

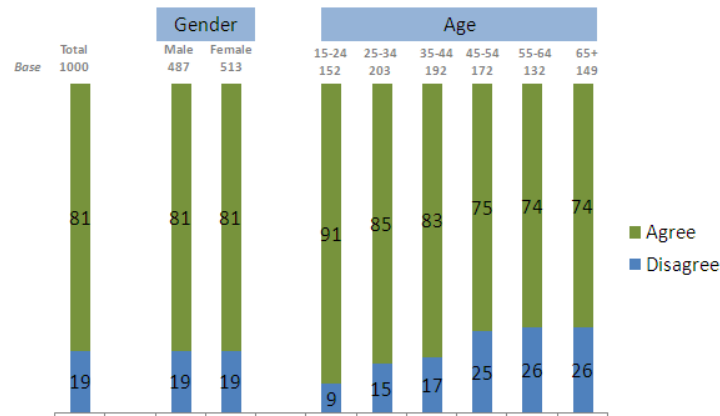
The survey, undertaken during the month of July, found that a total of 81 percent out of 1,000 respondents agreed that it was important for Ireland's international reputation that the Government delivers on its promise of spending 0.7% of GNI on overseas aid by 2015 at the latest.

The survey found that:

1. **Irish people remain committed to overseas aid. There is very strong agreement that Ireland has an obligation to invest in overseas aid in spite of our current circumstances.**
  - 84% of respondents agree that even in a downturn we had an obligation to invest in overseas aid.
  - 81% agree that it is important for Ireland's reputation to keep the promise that 0.7 % of national income should be given for Overseas Aid.
  - Younger people, especially 15-24 years olds and students are more likely to agree.

### It is important for Ireland's Reputation to Keep the Promise of 0.7% of National Income for Overseas Aid – Gender & Age

Adults 15+: 1000



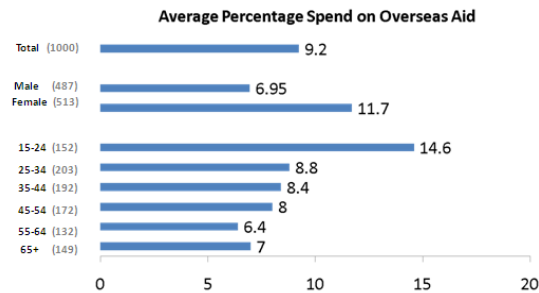
Eight out of ten agree it is important for Ireland's reputation to keep our promise on aid. Younger people are more likely to agree than older.

**2. There is a wide gap between what Irish people think the Government is spending on overseas aid and what the Government actually spends.**

- 59% think the Government spends 2% of national income, or more, on overseas aid, compared to the real figure of 0.54% of GNI.
- The average spending is perceived as 9.2% of National Income, and is highest among Females (11.7), 15-24 year olds (14.6), Students (14.5) and Unemployed (15)

**What Proportion of Ireland’s Income, in Percentage terms, do you think the Government Spends on Overseas Aid? ..... Gender & Age**

Adults 15+: 1000

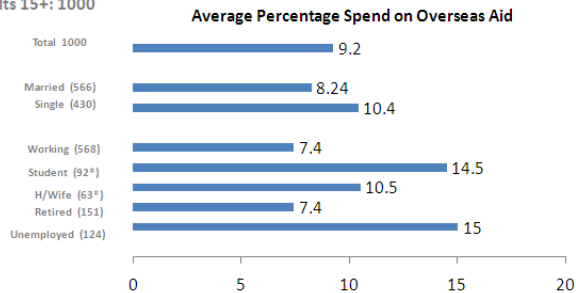


Younger respondents (15-24 yrs) and Females perceive the Government as spending more on Overseas Aid.

- Only 18% think the Government spends 1% on aid – which is closest to the actual level of expenditure (0.54%) and the Government’s target figure of 0.7%.
- 77% think the government spends 1% or more of the national income on overseas aid. That percentage is highest among:
  - Students (89%), Working (81%)
  - Younger (18-24yrs 86%; 25-34yrs 86%)
  - (Nearly one-third of Housewives, retired and unemployed answered ‘Don’t Know’ or refused to answer the question.)

**What Proportion of Ireland’s Income, in Percentage terms, do you think the Government Spends on Overseas Aid? ..... Marital & Working Status**

Adults 15+: 1000



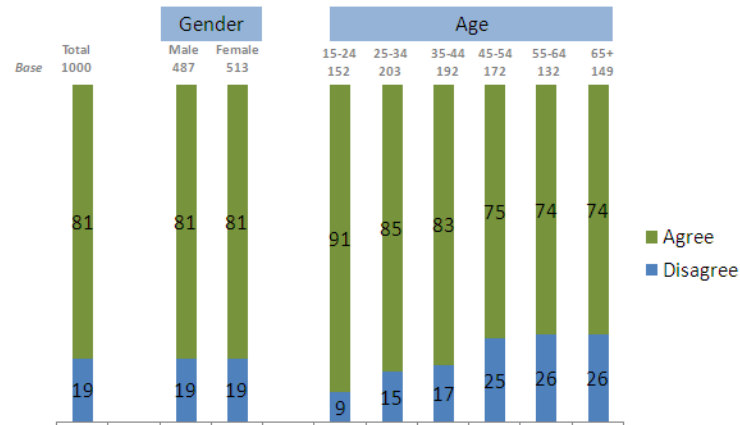
Students and Unemployed perceive the spend on Overseas Aid to be substantially higher.

3. **The vast majority of respondents feel that it is important for Ireland’s international reputation that the Government delivers on the 0.7% overseas aid commitment.**

- 81% agree that it is important for Ireland’s International reputation to keep up our promise on overseas aid.
- That percentage is highest among:
  - Students 92%
  - 15-24 year olds 91%
  - Single people 86%
  - Dubliners 85%

**It is important for Ireland’s Reputation to Keep the Promise of 0.7% of National Income for Overseas Aid – Gender & Age**

Adults 15+: 1000



Eight out of ten agree it is important for Ireland’s reputation to keep our promise on aid. Younger people are more likely to agree than older.

**It is important for Irelands Reputation to Keep the Promise of 0.7% of National Income for Overseas Aid – Social Class & Region**

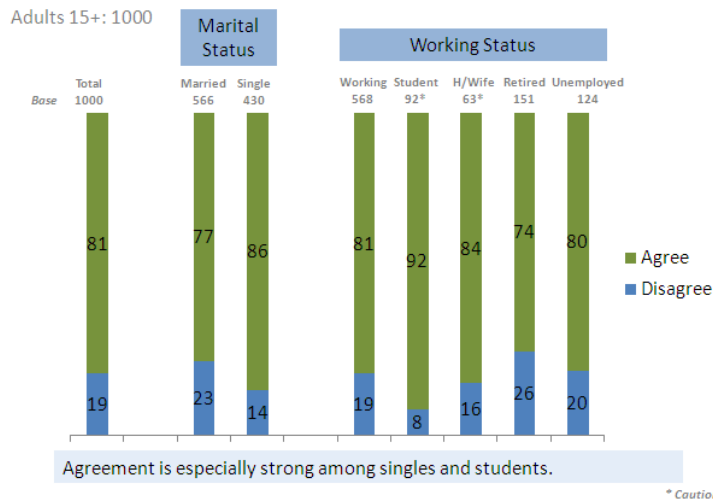
Adults 15+: 1000



Dubliners are somewhat more concerned about Irelands reputation regarding aid.

\* Caution low base

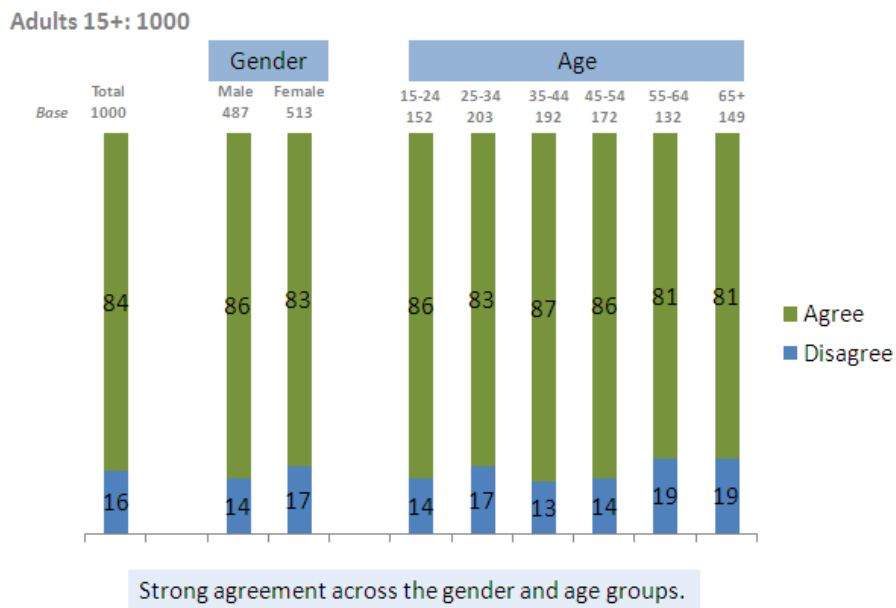
**It is important for Irelands Reputation to Keep the Promise of 0.7% of National Income for Overseas Aid - Marital & Working Status**



**4. Even when reminded of the context of the economic downturn in Ireland, the vast majority of respondents feel that Ireland has an obligation to invest in overseas aid.**

- 84% agree we have an obligation despite of the downturn in the economy to invest in overseas aid.
- Agreement is equally high across all of the subgroups.

**Agree/Disagree that we Have an Obligation to Invest in Overseas Aid Despite the Downturn - Gender & Age**



## **Conclusions**

Despite the difficult economic climate in Ireland, support for the Government's overseas aid commitment remains very strong, across all sections of society.

Even groups more vulnerable to the recession, such as the unemployed, continue to support funding of overseas aid. In reality most Irish people believe that the Government gives considerably more of the national income to overseas aid than it currently does.

This, combined with the strong level of feeling about how important our promise of overseas aid is to the reputation of Ireland, could lead to negative feelings towards the Government if it reneges on its current commitment of spending 0.7% of National Income on overseas aid.