

DÓCHAS

The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

15 September 2009

Irish aid agencies praised for the quality of their work

**EU research shows that Irish NGOs
are at the forefront of accountability and quality control**

An EU report published this summer shows clearly that Irish NGOs are setting the norm when it comes to quality standards in overseas aid.

The report, commissioned by the European Commission's DG Justice and researched by the European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law, details the various mechanisms for NGO regulation that currently exist within the EU. The researchers found that most EU member states regulate the activities of NGOs through a combination of government regulation and self-regulation by the NGO sector itself.

The report contains many positive mentions of Ireland's regulatory model, and highlights three areas in particular: the Charities Act 2009, the Code of Good Practice for Charitable Fundraising, and the Dóchas Code on Corporate Governance, which it characterises as containing a "modest but nevertheless highly professional set of standards".

The authors highlight that government interest in NGO regulation has tended to emphasise financial accountability, and under-prioritised the need for NGO accountability to all stakeholders, not in the least their beneficiaries. In this context, it is important to note that the size and diversity of the NGO sector in Europe - while posing challenges in terms of regulation - is worth protecting.

Dóchas has welcomed the delayed publication of the report.

"In the past number of years, Irish Development NGOs have invested heavily in initiatives that enhance their accountability, and they have strengthened quality control and professional standards for their work. It is very encouraging that the EU has noticed our leadership in this area, and is holding one of the Dóchas Codes of Conduct up as an example of best practice" said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas.

The Dóchas Code of Corporate Governance for Development NGOs, developed in partnership with the Corporate Governance Association of Ireland (CGAI), is quoted extensively, and the report states the Code "represents a new level of professionalism in promulgating standards of NPO governance."

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Notes

- The full text of the EU's research report, entitled "Study on Recent Public and Self-Regulatory Initiatives Improving Transparency and Accountability on Non-Profit Organisations in the European Union", can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/terrorism/docs/initiatives_improving_transparency_accountability_npos_avr09.pdf
While finalised in April this year, the report was not made public until this summer.
- The Dóchas Code of Corporate Governance for Development NGOs is available at <http://dochas.ie/pages/intro/default.aspx?id=42>

For further information, see www.dochas.ie

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Dóchas is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 44 members, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues. For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie

Dóchas Member Agencies

1. ActionAid Ireland
2. Action from Ireland
3. Africa Centre
4. Aidlink
5. Amnesty International-Irish Section
6. Bóthar
7. Camara
8. Centre for Global Education
9. ChildFund Ireland
10. Children in Crossfire
11. Christian Aid Ireland
12. Christian Blind Mission Ireland
13. Church Mission Society Ireland
14. Comhlámh
15. Concern Worldwide
16. Friends of Londiani (Ireland)
17. Galway One World Centre
18. Gorta
19. International Service Ireland

20. Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation
21. Irish Commission for Justice and Social Affairs
22. Irish Council for International Students
23. Irish Family Planning Association
24. Irish Foundation for Cooperative Development
25. Irish Missionary Union
26. Irish Red Cross
27. Kerry Action for Development Education
28. National Youth Council of Ireland
29. Oxfam Ireland
30. Plan Ireland
31. Progressio Ireland
32. Self Help Africa
33. SightSavers International
34. Skillshare International Ireland
35. Suas Educational Development
36. The Hope Foundation
37. Trócaire
38. Vita
39. Voluntary Service International
40. Voluntary Service Overseas
41. Volunteer Missionary Movement
42. War on Want Northern Ireland
43. Wingspread International
44. World Vision Ireland