



Dóchas Strategy 2022–2026

Dóchas is the Irish network for international
development and humanitarian organisations



Dóchas connects, strengthens and represents a network of international development and humanitarian organisations who have a shared vision of a just, sustainable and equal world.

Dóchas unites over 50 organisations, ranging from small specialist charities to large international NGOs with a worldwide presence.

Our members are committed to human rights, justice and the eradication of poverty, and demonstrate this through their work in international development, healthcare, protection, humanitarian assistance, sustainability, education and inclusion.

Dóchas members value collaboration and believe that through working together, we can achieve our collective goals.

Our Strategic approach in a changing world

Our world is facing threats of unprecedented complexity and order: climate change and environmental degradation are damaging the lives and livelihoods of millions of people and are a driver of poverty, drought and other disasters; conflict and displacement are growing in scale and duration, with disproportionate effects on women, girls and the most vulnerable in society; inequality is increasing in many regions, exacerbated by the global pandemic; and civil society space is shrinking.

At the same time, the potential for social, economic and environmental change is greater than ever, as technology and the mobilisation of increasingly informed and active citizens shape the decisions of governments, corporates and global institutions.

We recognise the rapid pace of change and agility required of international development and humanitarian organisations responding to these complex challenges, as well as the increased expectation of reform and improvement in terms of how they work. In this respect, we seek to support members to adapt to new demands and changing circumstances through a dynamic network that harnesses our shared knowledge, experiences and diversity of thought.





Our Vision

A just, equal and sustainable world, where every person has the right to live their life with dignity.

Our Principles

Independence

We believe strongly in the freedom, voice and legitimacy of civil society and we act independently of the state, political parties and business interests.



Integrity

Honesty, fairness and transparency will guide everything we do.



Inclusivity

We value equality and diversity and are non-discriminatory in all our actions.



Accountability

We commit to upholding the highest professional and ethical standards in all we do, and will always seek to be held to account by our stakeholders.



Our Mission

To enable international development and humanitarian organisations in Ireland to achieve greater impact by working together.

Our Values

Collaboration

We operate collectively, and leverage the value of working together as a network. Our collaborations are based on mutual trust, respect and reciprocity.

Learning

We are curious and keen to learn, and are committed to active, joint learning and exchange.

New ideas

We recognise the value in generating new ideas and ways of thinking. We will embrace opportunities to experiment and innovate, and create space for reflection.

Courageous leadership

We will inspire, engage and mobilise others behind the issues we work to address.

Agility

We will be responsive, opportunistic and willing to adapt to changing circumstances.



Our Objectives

Over the next five years, Dóchas will focus on four complementary and mutually reinforcing areas of work aimed at strengthening the overall impact of Irish international development and humanitarian organisations:



Network



Develop a strong and dynamic network that enhances opportunities for connection, coordination and collaboration.

We will develop a network that promotes new learning to bring about positive changes and improvements in policy and practice. We will coordinate our efforts with critical friends, partners, civil society groups and other networks.

Why is it important?

We recognise that the contexts and issues members are engaging with are complex and interdependent. We value the complementary and diverse roles played by different international development and humanitarian organisations in working towards a just, equal and sustainable world. By bringing together different perspectives, expertise and experience, we believe that we can increase our overall impact. There is a willingness among members to collaborate more systematically, share capabilities and engage in a network where we can learn and act together.

What are we trying to achieve?

- Greater opportunities for connection, coordination and collaboration
- Deeper collaboration by members on key issues to increase members' knowledge, expertise and impact
- Enhanced learning through diversity of thought and experiences.

What will we do?

- Develop a supportive and purposeful impact network structure for enhanced collaboration on areas of mutual importance
- Create an innovative and inclusive space to stimulate and facilitate exchange and reflect on complex challenges
- Accelerate group learning through diversity of perspective and knowledge capture
- Create and/or strengthen links with other Irish, EU and international networks for enhanced cooperation on areas of mutual interest.

What does success look like?

- Members are enabled to proactively connect and collaborate on areas of importance to them
- Members feel supported by Dóchas in their collaborations
- Dóchas' relationship with Irish, EU and International networks improves its delivery to members.



Help the Irish international development and humanitarian sector to transform by creating opportunities for increased impact.

Addressing complex issues requires experimentation, learning and flexibility. Together we will explore shared possibilities, create innovative solutions and identify critical leverage points. Dóchas will provide the space for forward-thinking, challenging and honest conversations to support sectoral change.

Why is it important?

The international development system is experiencing a period of rapid change. In light of constantly evolving power dynamics, international development and humanitarian organisations need to adapt and modify the way they work. The changing role of international NGOs, the decolonisation of aid and the shift in power and resources to local communities will be key features of the sector in the years to come. There is a growing need to rethink and interrogate the language and inequalities associated with the aid system, and the approach to local actors within it.

The challenges that members are responding to, including climate change and humanitarian needs, are increasingly multi-layered and complex. The demand for transparency, safeguarding and accountability is increasing. Dóchas has a role to play in helping its members, and the sector, to transform and respond to these issues. Dóchas can help to address them in a structured way by bringing members together to discuss and progress policies and practices.

What are we trying to achieve?

- Increased impact and effectiveness through collective learning, creation of innovative solutions and new ways of working.

What will we do?

- Catalyse change in the Irish international development and humanitarian sector regarding the shift in power and resources to the Global South, and locally led development
- Reinforce accountability within the sector through standards of practice
- Stimulate the exchange of knowledge and expertise on key issues to strengthen the effectiveness of our work. We will focus on cross-cutting policy themes where we add most value to members.

What does success look like?

- Dóchas facilitates safe spaces for members to exchange ideas and interrogate changes needed within the sector
- Collective initiatives are taken by members to progress locally led development and a shift in power to local actors
- Accountability and transparency codes and guidelines are understood, relevant and effective.

Influence



Mobilise our convening power to influence policy change and public support.

We will reinforce Dóchas' role and reputation as a leading influencer and agent for change on key topics. We will strengthen our external relations and advocacy, fostering political and public support for international development.

Why is it important?

Dóchas' strength lies in combining policy and advocacy expertise and the experience of our members with our convening power, to exert collective influence. We recognise that we are part of a wider international network of NGOs and that linking our policy and advocacy work with global agendas, alliances and networks can optimise our impact and influence. The sustainable development goals (SDGs), in particular, provide a framework for achieving a just, equitable and sustainable world by 2030.

A changing political environment in Ireland will accelerate the need to build political support for international development among parliamentarians and other key stakeholders. There continues to be strong support for international development in Ireland but it is crucial that this support increases year on year. In order to assist members in their work, there is a need to better understand the shifts in public attitudes towards international development and humanitarian work, which will in turn improve our public engagement.

What are we trying to achieve?

- Stronger influence and reputation of international NGOs in Ireland by providing an authoritative voice on key issues
- Influence on policy change and public support in Ireland through coordinated action.

What will we do?

- Be an authoritative voice for the sector on key issues, facilitating dialogue and debate in the public domain
- Be strategic and propositional in our policy work, ensuring a progressive contribution to the issues we seek to address
- Inspire, engage and mobilise members to use their voice to highlight the issues we work to address
- Build political support for international development among parliamentarians and other key influencers
- Deepen our knowledge of the perception of international development in Ireland.

What does success look like?

- The Irish Government is on track to achieve 0.7% ODA commitment by 2030
- Dóchas is recognised as the representative voice of the sector and a vital connection to the sector on all the issues and challenges it faces
- Knowledge of attitudes towards aid in Ireland enables members to improve the effectiveness of their work.

Lead



Encourage strong and diverse leadership in the Irish international development and humanitarian sector.

We will work with existing and emerging leaders in the sector to develop their capacities and skills, enabling them to champion collective issues, and lead and speak from a sectoral identity.

Why is it important?

Dóchas is reliant upon leaders within the sector to champion and further its vision of a just, sustainable and equitable world. The sector needs stronger, more confident and more courageous leadership, to push our boundaries and challenge our mindset. Sectoral leadership can strengthen our influence on human rights, justice and the eradication of poverty.

What are we trying to achieve?

- Strong, diverse and courageous leadership in the international development and humanitarian sector.

What will we do?

- Create safe spaces for existing leaders in the sector to collaborate, learn and support each other
- Create opportunities and pathways to involve emerging leaders, and nurture sector champions in our strategic ambitions
- Explore creative ways to build leadership skills within the sector.

What does success look like?

- Leaders engage in safe spaces to collaborate and connect
- Leaders are supported and feel enabled to advocate on sectoral issues
- Emerging and existing leaders can avail of guidance and support within the sector.



Enablers

We will become a more effective, supportive organisation to deliver upon our strategic ambitions.

We will diversify our funding sources to safeguard our independence and financial stability. We will create a culture that embodies our values: to be collaborative, innovative, agile, courageous and willing to learn. In order to foster connection and coordination across the network, we will evolve our systems and processes.

Resources:

- We will nurture a sustainable resource base and explore other sources of funding in order to fulfil our strategic ambitions and evolve our work.

People and culture:

- Dóchas embodies the culture and values that members envision for the sector
- We will further develop the team to support our strategic objectives.

Systems and processes:

- We will evolve our ways of working, improving efficiencies and the effectiveness of our work
- We will have an effective and accountable management and governance structure and system in place for delivering the network's strategic objectives.

What does success look like?

- Dóchas has secured long-term diversified sources of funding
- A network infrastructure that reflects members' needs is in place
- A robust management and governance structure and system are in place.





What is Different?

We will move towards being an impact network: identifying more effective ways for members to convene, connect and collaborate. We will evolve our model to apply the most appropriate structure to the objective.

We will enhance our perspective, embracing more outward-looking and diverse voices from within and outside the membership.

We will identify priority areas to be addressed regarding standards of practice, key issues and transformational work and focus on those where Dóchas has an added value in leading on, and supporting, members.

We will look at changes needed within the sector and co-design/develop solutions to complex challenges.

We will lead on navigating a changing political environment and enhancing support for international development.

We will be more strategic in our communications, advocacy and policy work, particularly in relation to global agendas.

We will encourage courageous leadership within the sector.





Members

Full Members

A Partnership with Africa • ActionAid Ireland • Addressing the Unaddressed • Afri • Aidlink • Bóthar • Brighter Communities Worldwide • CBM Ireland • Centre for Global Education • CHEEERS: Developing Healthcare Together • Childfund Ireland • Children in Crossfire • ChristianAid Ireland • Comhlámh • Concern Worldwide • Development Perspectives • Edmund Rice Development • Financial Justice Ireland • Front Line Defenders • GOAL • Habitat for Humanity Ireland • Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) • Irish League of Credit Unions International Development Foundation • Irish Red Cross • Irish Rule of Law International • Misean Cara • Nepal Leprosy Trust Ireland • Nurture Africa • Operation Smile Ireland • Oxfam Ireland • Plan International Ireland • Proudly Made in Africa • Salesian Missions – Don Bosco Aid Ireland • Self Help Africa • SERVE In Solidarity Ireland • Sightsavers Ireland • Suas Educational Development • Tearfund Ireland • The Hope Foundation • Trócaire • UCD Volunteers Overseas • UNICEF Ireland • Vita • Voluntary Service International (VSI) • Volunteers in Irish Veterinary Assistance (Viva) • World Vision Ireland

Associate Members

Age Action Ireland • Aiding Resources • ATD Fourth World • DSA Ireland • ECO-UNESCO • Global Action Plan • Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) • Irish National Teachers Organisation - Global Solidarity Network • National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) • Special Olympics Europe Eurasia • The National Council of Ireland YMCA Trust

Photo credits

Cover photo: Members of the Mama Nyuki beekeeping group in Tanzania's Hanang District. Photo credit: Dastan Kamanzi/Oxfam. January 2021.

Page 4 - 5: Fr Ubaldino Andrade working with refugees in Palabek, North Uganda. Photo credit: Salesians of Don Bosco. September 2019.

Page 8: Patrick Ghembo with his group of maize in Monyo Village, Malawi, which he planted after Cyclone Idai. Photo credit: Gavin Douglas/Concern Worldwide. February 2020.

Page 10: Consolata Anyango harvests cotton on her farm in Uyoma, Siaya County, Kenya. Photo credit: Otis Dundos/Self Help Africa March 2020.

Page 13. Ejigayehu from Kola Shara on the banks of Lake Abaya, near Arba Minch, Ethiopia. Photo credit: Misgana Gobeze/Vita Ethiopia. September 2021.

Page 15: The World Vision Beqaa WASH team is distributing door to door bleach and sanitizing products to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, while reminding the little ones about handwashing steps. Photo credit: Maria Bou Chaaya/World Vision. June 2020.

Page 16 - 17: The Maya Q'eqchi women of Sepur Zarco. Photo credit: Mark Stedman/Trócaire. February 2019.

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The Irish Association
of Non-Governmental
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