IRELAND LEADS THE WAY AS THIS GENERATION IS SET TO END POVERTY WORLDWIDE

It was an incredible moment in history - the gavel came down and the room full of people erupted in applause and rose to their feet in a standing ovation. An agreement had been made on how to end poverty in the next fifteen years.

At the top of the room was the Irish Ambassador to the UN David Donoghue and the Kenyan Ambassador Macharia Kamau, the two representatives who had led the UN negotiation process.

The Sustainable Development Goals had been decided upon. Together the UN member states, along with civil society groups had agreed on 17 global goals - a challenge to the world to end extreme poverty within the next 15 years. It’s not often a small country like Ireland gets to lead global negotiations at the United Nations, or to deliver an agreement that will shape the course of world development.

But 2015 is no ordinary year. This year the world’s 193 countries will sign up to a new global agreement on sustainable development. It is the largest gathering of world leaders ever seen. The agreement itself has been hailed by the United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, as an “historic turning point for our world.”

This year the Millennium Development Goals reach their conclusion. In the past 15 years extreme poverty has been halved, 9 out of 10 children in developing countries are enrolled in school and girls and boys have unprecedented equality in terms of education opportunities. A lot has been achieved in the last 15 years. Development, for the large part, is working. It is making a difference to people’s lives around the world.

On a recent visit to Ireland the UN Secretary General said, ‘I believe we are the last generation that can change this climate change impact… and the first generation that can put an end to poverty.’

Now, with the new agreement on the table, there is a roadmap to achieving this ultimate goal. This is the challenge for the next 15 years – to achieve this by the year 2030. The new agreement is called “Transforming the World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”

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People now live longer in most countries of the world. On average, lifespans have increased by 5.25 years compared to 1990, but many developing countries have achieved much more. The map shows the number of years a newborn can expect to live, if the conditions at the time of birth stay the same throughout that person’s life. This reflects the general state of health in a country, including child mortality.

hdr.undp.org/en/data/map

People now live longer and better

In Ukraine, a small team of previous refugees have set up a support centre called ‘Vostok SOS’ to help other refugees. With EU support, the team has provided nearly 11,000 people with food, shelter, clothes, and legal aid, since starting the initiative in 2014. “It’s our responsibility to help those who lost everything – their hometowns, belongings; some of them even their families,” says Kostyantyn Reutskiy a member of Vostok SOS.

Since the outbreak of hostilities in Eastern Ukraine, 1.5 million people have fled their homes. The EU helped Ukraine with €365 million of neighbourhood assistance in 2014.

People of the world have made great progress in recent years. Income, education and lifespans have increased worldwide, according to UNDP’s yearly index of nation development.

“The world situation has generally become worse during the last 20 years.” This is the belief of 65 percent of people who responded to a recent survey by YouGov. But in fact, the correct answer is the exact opposite: Real global progress has been made in the last two decades: People live longer in nine of every ten countries, four in five people can now read and write, and the least developed nations now have an average income almost three times higher than it was in 1990.

UNDP’s Human Development Index is a yearly benchmark of each country’s level of development on a scale from 0.0 to 1.0. Most European countries rank very highly in the index, but recently, countries in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have been catching up.

The world’s so-called least developed countries are now developing 4.6 times faster than the most developed countries. This means that the difference between rich and poor countries is shrinking.

For example, the average expected lifespan is rising nearly twice as fast in developing countries than in the rest of the world. Rwanda is currently in the lead, and people in this small African country can now expect to live 30 years longer on average than back in 1990. From being near the absolute bottom of the index, even before the genocidal civil war of 1994, the country has worked to get back on its feet and is now close to reaching a medium level of development.

What is the World’s Best News?

The World’s Best News is a project by Dóchas, the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations, that publishes news about progress in developing countries. Dóchas is made up of over 60 member organisations who have contributed to this newspaper with positive news of development from around the world. These stories of change are inspiring and thought provoking, proving that each one of us can be a changemaker and can get involved in the fight against poverty and injustice. People are making a difference around the world and these are just some of their stories.

Refugees help refugees

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New global goals for everyone

A world without poverty and hunger, where men and women are treated as equals, where all children get a good education, and where we take care of nature so that we leave a world in balance to our children. Does this sound too good to be true?

Actually, the countries of the world are currently working on agreeing a roadmap for the next 15 years, to make those goals a reality. To read more visit: www.globalgoals.org
Reality TV may seem an unlikely path to improving women’s rights, but it’s the positive portrayal of ordinary female farmers and the contribution they make to society that has Tanzanians watching in their droves – and is changing traditional attitudes to what women are capable of.

Women make up 75 percent of Tanzania’s farmers but often they live in poverty, don’t own the land they work on and struggle to get fair access to markets. They are also pivotal in producing the country’s food and are pivotal for the community. Ester says. “We need more discipline in agriculture if we are really determined to end food insecurity.”

The fourth series of Mama Shujaa wa Chakula, or Female Food Heroes in Swahili, began filming in August with 3,000 small-scale women farmers entering the competition. Eighteen finalists will be selected to live together for three weeks. Like Big Brother meets Farm Factor, they will live on a specially constructed farm.

The audience will vote for their favourite outstanding female farmer with the winner receiving 20 million Tanzanian shillings (approx. €8,750), as well as farming and fishing tools.

And fame is a prize that each finalist will bring home with them, using their position to create better opportunities for women in their local communities.

According to Eluka Kibona, Oxfam Ireland’s Advocacy and Campaigns Manager in Tanzania: “Their status is elevated at the community level.”

Take the example of the show’s very first winner, Ester Jerome Mtgeule from Lyenge village (pictured left).

Ester shone on the show as she explained how she managed to increase the yield of one of her crops from five to 75 bags a year by growing a drought-resistant variety instead of using the traditional one favoured by most farmers. This helped feed her whole village. Her achievement received mass-media coverage and led to her travelling internationally to talk about the vital role of small-scale women farmers.

The impact of the Female Food Heroes competition on Ester’s life has been remarkable and she’s now become the farmers’ representative on her local district council.

She’s also using her prize of a tractor to help others in her community. Ester says that farming, “like anything worthwhile in life, takes discipline and hard work.”

“Discipline is everything,” she says. “We need more discipline in agriculture if we are really determined to end food insecurity.”

One of the other trailblazers from the first season, Anna Oloshuro, (pictured above), won solar panels. But that wasn’t the only benefit to taking part. Where once men in her village told their wives to stay away from her because she was “cursed”, Anna now takes part in what were once men-only discussions and is respected as a local leader.

The invites to take part in these meetings would have been previously unheard of in her Maasai culture where women can sometimes be regarded as being the property of men.

“I believe that providing women with access to information will empower them more, make them aware of their rights and, in the process, they will change or improve their lives,” Anna says.

Other winners since then include Sister Martha Waziri from Dodoma. As a 17-year-old she found some barren unused land that none of the local men wanted. But when she asked the local authorities if she could use it, they laughed at her. “I became an object of ridicule,” she recalls.

Eventually, she fought and got her way. She has since turned 18 acres of unwanted waste-land into a thriving farm, growing sugarcane, sweet potatoes, bananas and more.

In doing so she has become a beacon of change for other local women, many of whom have now followed her example. The profits from her farm have allowed Sister Martha to support 12 local orphaned children, providing them with food and shelter.

Female Food Heroes is changing attitudes towards women and encouraging other female farmers.
**FACT:** The literacy rate among youth aged 15 to 24 has increased globally from 83 per cent to 91 per cent between 1990 and 2015.

In the past five years 22 million more young people have learned to read – that’s millions more imaginations ignited around the world.

### Books on the mobile phone create a reading boom

By JOHANNE MØLLER

In many of the world’s poorest countries libraries are a rarity, and it can be difficult to access books and teaching resources. However, most people have a mobile phone, and now the mobile phone can be used for reading books. Using a popular reading app, the library has been relocated to the pocket and this creates a zest for reading – especially among young people.

**Far from the library**

With WorldReader Mobile, a piece of mobile technology that enables people to read books on ordinary mobile phones, a new literary world has opened up for many children in developing countries. The new technology makes it possible for people with even simple telephones to retrieve books and read them on the screen. All it takes is a prepaid phone card and an internet connection, something that more and more people have access to.

Lack of access to books, libraries and teaching resources is the reality for many people, and severely hampers reading skills, especially among marginalized and poor population groups. The percentage of people in the world with reading and writing skills is increasing, but there’s still a long way to go. On average, one out of five adults and one out of eight young people in developing countries are not able to read and write.

The mobile as common property

Today, six billion of the world’s seven billion people have access to a mobile phone, and therefore the opportunity to read books on a phone can potentially have a great impact on global reading proficiency. A study run by UNESCO among mobile readers in Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zimbabwe shows that being able to read books on the phone has caused the number of reading hours and the love of reading to increase dramatically.

Versatile reading

The phones are not just used for individual reading. Parents read stories to their children, teachers use the mobile phone to read aloud to their pupils in class, and students use it as a supplement to their education. Young people especially use the service, and for young women, who generally have less access to educational materials and books than men, the mobile bookcase has made a huge difference in their reading habits.

The next step is to get the older generation to join the wave of mobile reading, so that the positive trend will continue across generations.

By having a mobile telephone handy, even people in the poorest areas can read books when they want.

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### GOING MOBILE IN MALAWI

A mobile phone information service established last year to provide timely information to rural poor farmers in a southern African country, has been used nearly half a million times since its launch. Established in Malawi by Gorta-Self Help Africa last year, the ‘321’ voice-activated service provides subscribers to the country’s largest mobile phone network with farm information and advice that they can access at the push of a button. And it’s all free.

The service is a collaboration between the Irish development organisation, Airtel Malawi and HNI, a US-based organisation seeking to promote the use of technologies to support development work. The service allows users to access voice recorded information on a range of agricultural practices via their telephones.

Content for the service has been created by a consortium that includes Gorta-Self Help Africa, representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, research scientists and other specialists in agriculture. In its pilot phase 321 answered a range of questions relating to the production of groundnuts and maize - two of the most important food crops in rural parts of the country.

As the service becomes more established it is proposed to extend the range and scope of information available, while the potential also exists to provide information to farmers on the prices they can receive for their crops,” says Gorta-Self Help Africa’s Malawi director Amos Zaindi.

A special call centre which offers up to date real time information from farm experts is currently being created as an ‘add on’ to the mobile phone service. This is targeted specifically at ‘lead farmers’, who are nominated farmer representatives utilised as the conduit for knowledge and information to the wider farming community.

Enquiries to the 321 service are currently being received at a rate of more than 30,000 each month.

In a country where only 5% of rural households have electricity, but upwards of 65% have access to mobiles, the ability of farmers to access information via telephone is invaluable. Gorta-Self Help Africa and HNI are currently in discussions with a view to rolling out this innovative phone advice service in Zambia, Burkina Faso and Uganda.

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**Do you remember what your favourite book was when you were a child?**

Can you bring your mind back to those feelings – the joy, the suspense of your favourite story, the colours of the illustrations, the feel of the pages, the stories you wanted told over and over again, and the characters you loved? We asked readers around Ireland to take a trip down memory lane and name their favourite childhood books...

- ‘It would have to be the Enid Blyton books – I think I had every Famous Five book there was!’
- ‘For me it was Lord of The Rings. My dad used to read it to me when I was a child, acting out all the different characters. I loved it.’
- ‘I loved Cinderella. It was all about the style.’
- ‘Harry Potter. Hands down. No better escapism.’
- ‘Matilda was great and James and the Giant Peach. Any Roald Dahl really’
- ‘I hate to admit it, but it was The Babysitter’s Club’
- ‘Watership Down was great! I can still see the illustrations in my mind.’

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**Mobile phones can be a valuable source of farming information for people like Emmanuel Ngonorano and Peace Ndongereye.**
When Josephine Moiba from Lungi felt a fever coming on, she was not concerned. She and her mother had been exposed to the disease, and they were both fine. So it was the rainy season in Sierra Leone, and vector-borne illnesses such as malaria were commonplace.

However, over the next few days, when her temperature kept rising, she became increasingly worried. She and her brother-in-law work as community mobilisers, telling people about the dangers of Ebola and monitoring local communities for possible outbreaks, so I am aware of the early signs and symptoms of Ebola. When my temperature reached 40.9°C, my family and I decided that I should go to the hospital to be checked.

Josephine had more grounds for concern than a very high temperature. She was in the last stage of pregnancy with her first child, and unofficially she had been regularly attending a pre-natal clinic: “There were rumours that one of the women at the clinic had contracted Ebola, so I thought that maybe I too had become infected. I was very worried for my unborn baby, as well as for myself.”

Doctors at the local hospital checked the young mother-to-be and immediately despatched her to the GOAL Ebola Treatment and immediately despatched her to the GOAL Ebola Treatment and immediately despatched her to the GOAL Ebola Treatment and immediately despatched her to the GOAL Ebola Treatment Centre (ETC) at Port Loko, where she was admitted as a suspect.

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He had very able helpers. While awaiting the results of initial blood tests on Josephine, Dr. Ahmed Aldikari, Technical Manager at the ETC, set in place a plan of action for if she went into labour. “We put teams of our doctors and midwives on 24-hour stand-by, ready to report to the ETC at a moment’s notice. Whatever complications might possibly arise during the birth were discussed, and the necessary emergency equipment prepared and set aside in a maternity box.

“The fact that Josephine and her baby might have Ebola meant that the doctors and nurses would have to wear Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) throughout the delivery. This created an extra problem. PPE can only be worn for 40 minutes during the heat of the day, and slightly longer than that at night. Beyond these time limits, we begin to run the risk of the wearer becoming dangerously dehydrated: We took this into account when planning for the birth, and had probably three- or four-times the number of people on stand-by than would be the case for a birth at an ordinary hospital.”

At 1:00am on June 20, four days after Josephine was admitted to the ETC, she went into labour, and Dr. Ahmed’s plans were set in motion. By this time, the result of her first Ebola test had come back from the ETC laboratory, and it was negative. However, Ebola is an extremely “devous” virus, and two negative results in succession are required before a person can be declared Ebola free. Dr. Ahmed was still awaiting the result of the second test. Nothing could be taken for granted yet.

The birth, attended by probably the best medical personnel in Sierra Leone, went smoothly and relatively quickly, and at 06:30am Josephine gave birth to a baby girl.

“AT the ETC, usually the best we can hope for is to sustain life, and unfortunately on many occasions we don’t succeed in that because of the nature of Ebola. On this occasion, however, we were able to bring a new life into the world. I can’t begin to tell you how happy that has made us”

– Dr. Ahmed Aldikari, Technical Manager at the Ebola Treatment Centre, Sierra Leone
On the street where you live...

This year Ireland has seen a major change in the postal system with the introduction of Eircode. Every house in the country is being issued with a special postal code. There was a time when the postman was supposed to have known every house in the neighbourhood and who was living there. This theory was put to the test recently when the Donegal postman, Vincent Deenihan, known for predicting the weather, had to deliver the letter below to its rightful recipient. Somehow, he knew exactly where to deliver the letter, even without the address! This was a lucky turn of events, but without an address it can be hard to reach people. Sometimes we may take our addresses for granted. But for many around the world just having an address is making a world of difference to their lives. There are over 1 billion people who live in urban slums, at the bottom of the pyramid, surviving on less than $2.50 per day. Without a formal address these people are ‘invisible’ and find it difficult to open a secure bank savings account, vote, apply for jobs, education, health, social benefits or even for a mobile phone or electricity account, or receive post and other deliveries.

In Kolkata India where 1.7 million people live in urban slums, Irish NGO Addressing The Unaddressed (ATU) is working to change that. Initially working in partnership with Hope Kolkata Foundation, to date ATU has addressed more than 4,500 houses where 15,000 people live in 5 slum areas and their work continues at a rate of 100 houses a week which is all their current budgets allow. The addresses, which are provided for free to the house holders, are based on GPS coordinates and are stored on an online database.

Now I can save my money without having to worry and I’ve also applied for my voter ID card using this bank passbook as proof of address. “ – Anima Kayal – Chetla slum, Kolkata

“With my new address I opened a bank account with my GO Code house number NM4C4-Q46H. After opening the bank account I am feeling financially secure.” – Tumpa Monda, Panchanatala slum, Kolkata

ATU’s plans are to continue their work in Kolkata and then move to Mumbai. In the meantime they will advise and train others elsewhere in the world to do likewise so that every person in the world has the chance to be addressed and have a recognised identity.

Photograph Roisin Henderson/Facebook

Brenda Chanda (far right) and Jenny Clail feature in the Habitat for Humanity Home.Heart.Hope installation

WHAT DOES ‘HOME’ MEAN TO YOU? #HomeHeartHope

As part of the European Year for Development, Habitat for Humanity Ireland and artist Sinéad Cullen collaborated on an interactive installation called ‘Home. Heart. Hope.’ with the aim of getting people to think about the importance of having a safe place to call home. This installation in Trinity College Science Gallery’s HOME/SICK exhibition addressed the transformative power of a home, in a world where 1.6 billion people live in inadequate housing.

The installation showcased 15 hope stories from Habitat for Humanity partner families in Ireland and around the world, where they reveal how a decent home has changed their lives and transformed their entire communities.

“I love the solid floor in our new home. It keeps out the damp and all the insects,” says Brenda Chanda from Zambia. “The kids are doing really well in school. I am currently studying to be a midwife. We now have space. I can sit in the kitchen and do college work,” says Jenny Clail, from Dublin.

At the core of Habitat’s mission is the conviction that access to affordable shelter is a basic human right. Habitat for Humanity works alongside families, communities and volunteers to give a hand-up into safe and decent housing.

Photograph Roisin Henderson/Facebook

What does ‘home’ mean to you on the street where you live…
Fashion Revolution is not just for the fashionistas amongst us. It’s for everyone who wears clothes. Everyone can get involved and that’s why it’s fast becoming a worldwide movement and way of life. This year Fashion Revolution Day took place on April 24th, and rippled across the world. All over Ireland and in 71 countries across the globe millions of people stood up for what they believed in by simply asking the question - Who Made My Clothes?

Fashion Revolution is a way of people telling big name brands that they care about the people who made their clothes and their working conditions and quality of life, raising awareness around the topic of fashion consumption and transparency within the supply chain. In this global village, we are all linked, our lives are linked to the people who made our clothes and with the internet, it has never been easier to find out who made your clothes and to put pressure on the powers that be to say you want that person to have fair working conditions and a better life. Because not doing anything is condoning the opposite.

Fashion Revolution Ireland was co-ordinated by Re-dress; the Better Fashion Initiative, who have been working to promote better practice in the fashion industry since 2008. The team were busy in the run up to April 24th spreading the Fashion Revolution message in second-ary schools across Ireland. ‘All of the students we ran workshops with were keen to ask their favourite brands Who Made My Clothes and find out more about where they came from. These are the consumers of tomorrow so it was really fantastic to see how passionate they were about the campaign,’ says Erin McClure from Re-dress.

Fashion Revolution Day 2016 is going to be an even bigger event as more and more people get involved. Re-dress will be running Fashion Revolution workshops with transition year groups. So get involved, turn your clothes inside out, check the label and ask the question #whomademyclothes #fashrev

To find out more:
www.fashionrevolution.org
www.re-dress.ie

**Ivan Vasquez**

**from picking coffee beans to fighting for global justice**

As a child Ivan Vasquez was looked after by his grandmoth-er as his mother worked to support the family as Ivan’s father had died shortly after his birth. At the age of 9 Ivan started working in a coffee plantation washing coffee plants to help support his family, working half days, and attending school in the afternoons where his grades were good enough to earn a scholarship to high school. Ivan gained experience in a variety of roles in the coffee industry, starting as a coffee picker, moving into the coffee mill where he would start work at 4:30am washing coffee. He then moved to the position of patio man where he was tasked with drying coffee to the correct humidity—all before he was 16 years of age.

During a school break he accepted a job as a simple mill hand working for $3.00 a day from Sunday to Saturday, from 7am to 12 midnight. Ivan’s various roles included; parchment assistant, cherry section, outgoing lots, roasting area, and warehouse duties, before he was promoted to ‘official cupper’.

Now an internationally respected cupper, Ivan is committed to working with the Fairtrade RAOS co-operative in his native Honduras, ensuring the co-op produce high quality coffee resulting in improving living standards for his community.

‘Cupping’ is a coffee-tasting technique used to evaluate the quality of coffee based on its flavour and aroma. Although the language may sound strange – ‘bit-ter, smoky, with a hint of lemon’ – it has real mean-ing, and cupping is a highly skilled job that requires a lot of training.

In his work as a cupper Ivan tests the coffee beans from each farm in the co-op. His analysis of a coffee sample can give farmers lots of infor-mation about the quality of their coffee – if they harvested their beans too early, if the soil needs attention, if there’s not enough moisture, and so on. Using this information, and with the assistance of the co-op’s agricultural advisers, farmers can improve the quality of their beans. Better information about quality also helps them to negotiate a better price when they sell their coffee.

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To find out more:
www.fashionrevolution.org
www.re-dress.ie
Solar energy in Mubuso

Five farmers are still at work in the fading afternoon light in the small village of Mbuso in southern Zimbabwe. They are working on a burgeon-enterprise that has transformed their ability to grow food in this dry land – the Sukaphansi Micro-irrigation Scheme.

One of the farmers at work is Njabulo Maphosa (picture above). His job is to ensure the water pump that feeds the land is in good working condition. Using electricity generated by three solar panels, the pump distributes water through a series of taps placed along the central aisle between vegetable beds.

Not only is this new system producing food – their first sugar bean crop is ripe and ready for picking – but it is doing so in a sustainable manner, using renewable and clean sources of energy for low cost production and income generation.

In a region that has seen rising temperatures and decreasing rainfall, it is especially apt to see a renewable energy project overcome the challenges presented by climate change caused by a global over-reliance on non-renewable sources.

Thiga Nanuaga (picture right) is still getting used to seeing green fields again. The 65-year-old farmer has lived his whole life near the village of Chuka in the Tharaka district of central Kenya, but increased drought over recent years was making it more difficult to survive.

Farmers in this region have traditionally relied on two rainy seasons each year. With no other way of getting water to their land, the rain was vital if crops were to grow. When the rains did not come, however, people went hungry.

"We had to wait for the rain for our crops to grow," explains Thiga. "The rains are disappearing so it was getting more difficult every year. Life was very hard. We experienced hunger very often." Thiga, who lives with his wife, Alice, and their two young children, received a lifetime earlier this year when his farm was connected to a Tocoaire funded irrigation project which brings water directly from a river to over 1,400 farms in the area.

The irrigation project means that people are no longer reliant on the rain for their crops.

"The irrigation has made a big difference," he says, proudly displaying his thriving crops. "We don’t have to wait for the rain any more so we can plant all year round. We are growing crops throughout the year." The irrigation project has transformed this community. However, across Kenya millions of farmers are still reliant on rain to grow crops. With rains becoming more erratic and less predictable, hunger is on the rise.

Melody, aged 17, is a girls rights campaigner in Zimbabwe

"Just because I am poor, it does not mean that my body is for sale. Because I am poor, it does not mean that I do not get to decide when I’m ready to have children. Because I am poor, it does not mean that I must give up my right to an education and the right to decide my own future."

The words thunder out of Melody’s mouth like bullets from a machine gun as she dances around, using her arms, legs and whole body to deliver messages to a crowd of young people and their parents. Sometimes a line with additional importance is delivered with a wave of her hand in the air or a hard stomp on the floor. 17-year-old Melody has the audience in the palm of her hand.

Melody is part of a youth group project which is supported by Plan International to inform other young people about their rights and how girls can avoid becoming pregnant while they are still children themselves. Dance and drama are some of the methods that Melody and the other youth volunteers use to successfully convey messages to their peers.
Tanzania increases rates of childhood cancer survival

Tanzania has been improving access to healthcare for children with cancer for more than a decade. In 2004, the country’s first cancer ward for children was opened at Muhimbili National Hospital in Dar es Salaam. Previous to this, rates of survival for children with cancer were estimated to be less than 5%. Thanks to specialized training of local professionals and access to state-of-the-art diagnostic services, long-term childhood cancer survival rates have increased to 50% in just over ten years. Approximately 500 new patients (plus 100’s of follow on cases) are served in the child cancer ward at Muhimbili National Hospital annually. While this reflects a significant improvement in access, estimates predict that there are over 3,000 children living in Tanzania in need of cancer treatment each year. The good news is that children’s cancer is both treatable and curable. There is help from the Tanzanian government providing basic free services and facilities for childhood cancer patients including surgery, blood transfusion, diagnostics, radiology, hospital fees, and medical consumables. Combined local and international efforts are also helping to develop child cancer services in Tanzania. Access to rapid hi-tech diagnostic services and treatments are being provided by a team of experts at Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital Crumlin. The collaboration between Our Lady’s Children’s Hospital Crumlin and Muhimbili National Hospital is part of a wider European twinning network, the ESTHER Alliance, aimed at fostering effective and reciprocal north-south and south-south partnerships for strengthening and sustaining health systems.

ACCORDING TO THE WHO, GLOBALLY THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN EVERY YEAR WITH HIV HAS ALMOST HALVED SINCE 2009

Cuba becomes first country to end mother to baby HIV transmissions

Cuba has become the first country in the world to have eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV. On June 30th the country passed the World Health Organization’s rigorous validation criteria, requiring transmission rates be less than 50 infections per 100,000 live births; the lowest possible with current medical advances. Records from 2013 indicate just two infants were born with HIV and only five with syphilis. This milestone is testament to Cuba’s strengthened health system and unified commitment to ensuring universal access to healthcare. As part of a regional initiative launched in 2010 to fight HIV and sexually transmitted infections across the Americas, Cuba has improved access to testing for women and their partners, as well as access to prenatal care, essential medicines, and skilled cesarean deliveries. Despite a recent history of economic sanctions and political strife, Cuba has maintained the prioritisation of universal healthcare coverage. Training, retaining, and exporting medical health professionals since the early 60s, Cuba now has one of the highest physician ratios, at 672 per 10,000 people. Based on preventive medicine, the Cuban health system is hailed as one of the best in the world, with strong health policy backing to support the equitable reach of its services.
Did we reach the Millennium Goals?

This year, world leaders set new goals for sustainable development, but first they must tally up the status of the eight big goals for world development, which they set 15 years ago. We have come a long way. Four out of eight goals have been reached. Three goals have not yet reached their target, but they are well on their way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reduce extreme poverty and hunger by half</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Achieve universal primary education</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Promote gender equality and empower women</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Reduce child mortality</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ensure environmental sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Develop a global partnership for development</td>
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1. Reduce extreme poverty and hunger by half
   We managed to achieve this goal in 2010, well ahead of schedule. In 1990, nearly half of the population of the developing countries had an income of less than $1.25 a day. Now, it's down to 14 percent.

2. Achieve universal primary education
   91 percent of children in developing countries are now in school. Especially Africa south of Sahara has made progress: In 1990, little more than half of children were enrolled, but now it’s 80 percent.

3. Promote gender equality and empower women
   Boys and girls now go to school equally, and there are twice as many women in world parliaments than 20 years ago. However, that’s still only one out of every five parliament seats.

4. Reduce child mortality
   Child mortality is down by more than half since 1990, when 90 out of every 1,000 children died before five years of age. Today, it’s 43 for every 1,000. This means six million more children are saved every year than 25 years ago.

5. Reduce maternal mortality
   Maternal mortality is now nearly half of what it used to be in 1990. Today, health staff is present at 71 percent of all births in the world. It used to be 59 percent.

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
   Since 2000, new HIV infections have declined by 40 percent, and malaria deaths have dropped by 58 percent. More than 900 million mosquito nets have been distributed in sub-Saharan Africa in the last ten years.

7. Ensure environmental sustainability
   About 1.6 billion people have gained access to clean water since 1990. The ozone hole is closing, and more nature is protected – nearly three times more in Latin America. But climate change continues to challenge.

8. Develop a global partnership for development
   Almost 80 percent of developing countries’ exports now reach world markets duty free. 95 percent of the world population lives in areas with cellphone coverage, and 43 percent have access to the internet. In 2000, it was six percent.

The illustration shows how much progress has been made towards the goals. Goal number eight is excluded because it does not have a set target. It's more of a political declaration that wealthy countries have agreed to follow through.
FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE...

Working for change is not always easy, especially in times of economic downturn. But this hasn’t stopped one group of determined young people from the European countries most impacted by the financial crisis - Ireland, Italy, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain, who have decided to come together to take positive action on global issues. They are leading the ‘Challenging the Crisis’ campaign and working as part of the Action/2015 movement. Here, these young activists give their advice for how people can get involved in global issues and make a positive impact in their daily lives.

1 READ, WATCH, REPEAT
There are loads of great books, videos, documentaries and online resources to get information on development. Like pages or following NGOs, charities and campaigns on Facebook and Twitter is a great place to start and you will keep your home page full of interesting articles and videos. For a list of useful online resources check out www.g20.ie or if you have some more time then watch some of the thousands of free documentaries on www.topdocumentaryfilms.com where you can search by topic or category.

2 BE AN ACTIVIST WITH YOUR WALLET
You needn’t leave Ireland to make a change for a better world, but you do need to change your shopping list. By making ethical choices over where or what you buy you can reward businesses who source or produce their goods ethically. Ensuring workers rights and the environment are respected when producing goods is essential for sustainable development and the little changes you make every day can make a huge difference. Check out www.fairtrade.ie to see how buying goods from coffee to flowers to wine that are certified by Fairtrade can help ensure workers from across the world are treated fairly. Fairtrade is part of a wider movement called the Social and Solidarity Economy.

3 JOIN A CAMPAIGN
There are loads of terrific campaigns active in Ireland for you to join for first-hand experience on how people power can change the world. Depending on what issues interest you the most you can join with like-minded people who want to turn that interest into action by raising money, lobbying the Government, changing a law or simply raising awareness to make a real difference.

4 A DEGREE FOR CHANGE
The classroom can be a great place to start making a change in the world. Whether it be just a guest speaker for your Transition Year class right through to a Masters Degree in International Development or Human Rights, using your time to learn about the world’s biggest problems can help you understand these complex global problems and help you start thinking of the solutions!

5 VOLUNTEER – AT HOME OR OVERSEAS
If all that is still not enough, and you feel you have more to give, then why not explore volunteering opportunities. There are loads of great organisations in Ireland who have partner organisations in communities that work with volunteers from Ireland. But remember, volunteering overseas can be a big step so it is important to do your research on what organisation is right for you and for the community you hope to work with overseas. Comhláthais help volunteer sending organisations in Ireland make sure they prepare their volunteers well and that they act responsibly overseas. You can also volunteer to tackle poverty and inequality in your own community, even using your time to do something simple for a neighbour.

THE WORLD’S BEST QUIZ
How well do you know the world you live in? Test your general knowledge here.

What year is the European Year for Development?
- a) 2015
- b) 2016
- c) 2050

How many Millennium Goals were there?
- a) 7
- b) 8
- c) 4,500

Which countries co-chaired the UN negotiations to agree the Sustainable Development Goals?
- a) Russia and Brazil
- b) Zimbabwe and USA
- c) Ireland and Kenya

Which country, in relative terms, has the most people enrolled in universities?
- a) Portugal
- b) Rwanda
- c) China

Where are the greatest reductions in child mortality expected anywhere in the world?
- a) Africa
- b) Asia
- c) South America

How many people in the world have been saved from malaria since 2000?
- a) 3.3 million
- b) 2.4 million
- c) 1.7 million

Which of these three regions now has more women than men enrolled in universities?
- a) Sub-Saharan Africa
- b) South Asia
- c) Latin America

In which country do all children now start school?
- a) Rwanda
- b) Bangladesh
- c) Guatemala

Which country, in relative terms, has the most people who have done banking over a mobile phone?
- a) Portugal
- b) Kenya
- c) Mexico

How many more people have gained access to water since 1990?
- a) 0.7 billion
- b) 1.4 billion
- c) 2.3 billion

Which country has most successfully managed to create growth, fight poverty, and increase equality?
- a) Russia
- b) Brazil
- c) China

For answers log on to www.facebook.com/theworldsbestnews

ACTION
AFRICA
AID
CARING
CHANGE
MAKER
CLIMATE
CHANGE
DEVELOPMENT
DIGNITY
EDUCATION
EQUALITY
FAIRTRADE
FUTURE
GENDER
GOALS
HEALTH
HOPE
HUMANITARIAN
HUMANRIGTHS
INTERNATIONAL
IRELAND
IRRGATION
JUSTICE
POVERTY
POWER
SOLAR
SUSTAINABLE
UNITEDNATIONS
WORLD

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Africa Yoga Project

Yoga has been spreading across Kenya and is a catalyst for change in communities across the country. The Africa Yoga Project educates, empowers, elevates and employs youth from different communities in the transformational practice of yoga.

Today over 6,000 people participate in more than 300 community yoga classes weekly in 80 locations. More than 100 young people, trained as teachers, are earning a living wage by teaching yoga to people who otherwise would not have the opportunity. It started as an experiment, mainly in the city slums, to see if it could bring about positive changes and help people cope with their lives. In the city, the instructors with the Africa Yoga Project are not limited to yoga studios. Many of the free classes take place in Kibera, Nairobi’s biggest slum, where most people live under the poverty line. Classes can happen anywhere and without the need of equipment. It is a powerful exercise that is healthy for mind and body.

The practice of yoga has become popular with many different communities in Kenya and now the Alasiti village, has become the first Maasai community to combine their traditional lifestyle with yoga. In the early mornings and evenings, members of the community wait for instructions from Jacob Part, a Maasai warrior, who teaches his tribe every day. He continues to teach his yoga techniques and believes that by now he has taught thousands of people to practice yoga. At night, his community gathers, eager to stretch their bodies after a long day of work looking after the livestock, taking care of their houses, cooking and cleaning.

In both rural and urban settings people are taking on this challenge of becoming yoga instructors and bringing a sense of peace and resilience to all those they teach. Through the power of yoga, people are being empowered to become leaders of their communities and to see their own potential.

IN ZAMBIA, 16-year-old Saviour (pictured below) dreams of playing for her country’s national netball team. Although her community is poor, one or two homes have a television set, allowing children to crowd in for world sporting events such as the Olympic Games. Saviour and other girls return to their play with steel determination. World Vision is helping to support communities and encourage young people through sport.

IN MONGOLIA, taekwondo has helped Buya (left) evolve from a timid girl to an Asian champion. Now, she’s using her experience to teach younger children the beauty and discipline of the sport. In a country where poverty often steals children’s dreams, Buya is an inspiring mentor for the younger children in her community.

As soon as Australian skateboarder Oliver Percovich dropped his board in Kabul in 2007, he was surrounded by the eager faces of children of all ages who wanted to be shown how to skate. Stretching out the three boards he and a former girlfriend/aidworker had brought with them, “Ollie” began dedicating himself to the creation of a small non-profit skate school in Afghanistan, Skateistan.

A group of Afghan friends (aged 18-22) who were naturals at skateboarding shared the three boards and quickly progressed in their new favourite sport—and so skateboarding hit Afghanistan. The success with the first students prompted Ollie to think bigger: by bringing more boards back to Kabul and establishing an indoor skateboarding venue, the programme would be able to teach many more young people and provide older girls with a private facility to continue skateboarding.

On October 29th, 2009, Skateistan completed construction of an all-inclusive skatepark and educational facility on 5428 square meters of land donated by the Afghan National Olympic Committee. The indoor skatepark was graciously built by IOU Ramps.

Skateistan has emerged as Afghanistan’s first skateboarding school, and is dedicated to teaching both male and female students. The non-profit skateboarding charity has constructed the two largest indoor sport facilities in Afghanistan, and hosts the largest female sporting organisation (comprised of female skateboarders). Skateistan believes that when youth come together to skateboard and play, they forge bonds that transcend social barriers. Furthermore, through creative education classes the youth are enabled to explore issues that are important to them.