



A Resource for Higher Education Educators

Developed by Dr Gertrude Cotter, School of Education, UCC. September 2024.

TRANSCRIPTION

Programme 8: Development Education today and in the future

Guests: Aine Dooley, Heather Campbell and John Smith

Gertrude Cotter (GC):



You are listening to Community Radio Youghal 104 FM. My name is Gertrude Cotter, and you are listening to the Global Hub, the program that deals with social justice issues at home and abroad. You are very welcome to the program. This program is the first in a series of eight programs which documents the history of development and global citizenship education in Ireland. The Global Hub is funded by Trócaire, the International Development Agency. But it must be said that

Trócaire has not influenced the editorial position of any of these programs. Trócaire has a long-standing development education program, and they have funded the Global Hub since 2015.

Through funding different groups like Community Radio Youghal, they help us all to educate ourselves about complex global social, economic, political, and environmental issues. There is a very strong activist and academic tradition in Ireland whereby people in all walks of life, sometimes in a paid capacity, sometimes not, bring attention to and take action on global justice issues. This series of programs aims to tell the story of this tradition in Ireland through the voices of some of those who have formed and continue to work in this area. Some might have been involved in an activist capacity, some as teachers in primary, secondary, or preschool, some as academics, lecturers, and researchers at third level. Some might work in the statutory sector, for instance, in Irish Aid, the statutory agency that funds much of the work in the sector in Ireland. Some work in the youth, community, and voluntary sector.

Development education is referred to by many names, so it can be very confusing. For instance, in this series, you will hear the terms development education, global learning, global education, or global citizenship education, and other terminology as well. But no matter what terminology people use here, they all have a similar agenda: educating for a just and sustainable world. Keeping this as our central focus, we can now hear about the development of the ideas around development education or global citizenship education in Ireland through the voices of those who have contributed and continue to contribute to its development.

This series of eight programs paints a picture of a particular slice of Irish life with personal and professional stories that need to be told. It is particularly important to capture the earlier history of development education in Ireland, since we did not have the kind of communication we have today. Back then, we didn't have the internet, we didn't have recordings from Zoom and Teams and Skype, and so on. Indeed, it must be said that we did have radio, and I am happy to recognize the enduring power of radio to tell powerful stories, and particularly the power of community radio to include and reach out to hear our voices in a democratic way.

My thanks to Community Radio Youghal for facilitating this series of shows, and I acknowledge the work of Tom O'Keefe and Paul Daly in patiently editing these programs. We will look at the development of development education in Ireland through the decades, starting in the 1950s and coming up to the present day.

GC:



So, with me now is Áine Doody. Áine is the head of Global Citizenship Education at Irish Aid in the Department of Foreign Affairs. She's worked at Irish Aid for the last 15 years now, including most recently, spending four years as head of cooperation at the Irish embassy in Kampala, Uganda. Before I start, Anya, I just want to say you're very welcome to the Global Hub programme and thank you for being with us.

Áine Doody (AD):

Thanks, Gertrude, for having me on. I'm delighted to be here.

GC:

I really appreciate it, because Irish Aid obviously has a very important role in the sector, clearly. So it's lovely to have a representative of Irish Aid here in this series of programs, which, as you know, is about the history of development education or global citizenship education in Ireland. For those listeners who are new to this area, would you like to tell us what the work of Irish Aid is about, particularly your work in development or global citizenship?

AD:

Sure. Thanks, Gertrude. I work for Irish Aid, which is part of the Department of Foreign Affairs. That's the first point. It's a section of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and Irish Aid manages our international development cooperation program, which is paid for by the Irish taxpayer. So, all of the work we do is paid for by the Irish taxpayer. Most of the work we do is overseas, in some of the world's poorest countries. We work in about 90 different countries across the globe, and in 2019, our budget was just under 900 million. We have a target of reaching 0.7% of ODA (Official Development Assistance), but we're not at that target yet. We're still aiming to get there by 2030.

We work with lots of different partners, including multilateral agencies like the World Health Organization, especially during the COVID response. We also work with NGOs, some local and some Irish, like Concern and Trócaire. And, importantly, we work with governments. For example, in Uganda, we worked closely with the Ugandan government. Our priorities are gender equality, climate action, governance, and humanitarian response. Part of what we do is work in Ireland on development education or global citizenship education, and that's a really important part of our

work—to build awareness and understanding among the Irish public, of all ages, of global issues. That’s where development education fits into our broader work.

GC:

Could you expand on that a little in terms of development education?

AD:

Sure. As you know, we recently changed our name from “development education” to “global citizenship education,” and we engage with the Irish public of all ages. We work in formal education, with primary and post-primary schools, as well as the third level sector. Recently, we’ve become more engaged in the non-formal sector. For example, we’re working with the National Youth Council of Ireland on a new strategic partnership in the youth sector, focusing on climate change and global poverty. We also work in the adult and community sector. For instance, our partner SAOLTA works with public participation networks to integrate global citizenship into county and city development plans, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Even though we’ve changed our name, our work is still underpinned by what we call the “code of good practice” for development education, which emphasizes the root causes of poverty, linking the local and global, and taking personal and collective action. Global citizenship education is participatory, focusing on active methodologies.

GC:

Going back to the origins of development education in Ireland, from a state perspective, when did this work start?

AD:

Well, there are probably people with a longer engagement in the history of development education, but Irish Aid was founded in 1974, and a year later, APSO (the Agency for Personal Services Overseas) was established, acting as a volunteering agency. We also had Comhlámh, a membership-based NGO supporting returning development workers. During the 1970s, Trócaire and the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace played critical roles in embedding development education into official development cooperation. For example, in 1978, the Irish government introduced a dedicated budget line for development education. It was only 35,000 pounds at the time, but it marked a start.

Over the years, structures evolved. In the 1990s, there was a National Committee for Development Education, which later became the development education unit within Irish Aid. Today, global citizenship education is very much at the heart of our overall program.

GC:

In the early 90s, I know there were some changes in how Irish Aid worked with the sector. Could you describe those changes, particularly in relation to strategic partnerships?

AD:

Sure. In addition to small and medium-sized grant schemes, we realized the need to build deeper, longer-term relationships with a few key partners who had the potential to create significant impact. We now have seven strategic partners. One example is the DICE program, a partnership with four

teacher training colleges aimed at embedding global citizenship education in the initial training of primary teachers.

GC:

What are some of the challenges you see for the sector in Ireland?

AD:

One challenge is the risk of preaching to the converted. In our new strategy for 2021-2025, we aim to engage with new audiences, including marginalized groups, the business community, and local government. Cross-government coherence is another challenge. We've been working closely with the Department of Education and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth, among others, to align strategies, such as the national strategy on education for sustainable development.

Measuring impact and change is another big challenge. It's difficult to measure shifts in people's attitudes, as our work focuses on hearts and minds. We're trying to improve how we support partners in measuring change and communicating the effectiveness of our work.

GC:

Do you have a piece of music you'd like to share with us?

AD:

Yes, I'd like to request "Black is the Colour" by Christy Moore. It's a beautiful song that I love.

GC:

Thank you, Áine. Let's listen to that now.

(Clip of Black is the Colour by Christy Moore plays)

GC:



With me now, we have a very important guest today, and her name is Heather Campbell. Heather is from Middleton. Hello, Heather.

Heather Campbell (HC):

Hi.

GC:

How are you doing today?

HC:

Good.

GC:

And how old are you?

HC:

I'm seven years old.

GC:

I think that you might be our youngest guest so far, which is great. It's lovely to have you here, and thanks for coming down with your mom, Lorna, who's here in the studio with us. So, you live in Middleton, and where do you go to school?

HC:

Educate Together.

GC:

Do you like it?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

You like school. Are you in a big class or in second?

HC:

Second.

GC:

Are you in a big class or a small class?

HC:

Middle.

GC:

And you like school, do you?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Do you think school is important?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

What kind of things do you learn about at school or at home from your mom and dad about other parts of the world that you think are important to talk about to people who are listening? Like things like education for girls—do you think that’s an important thing to talk about?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

What have you been learning about education and girls in parts of the world? Have you been finding that it’s kind of hard for some girls in some places to get into schools?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Tell me about it.

HC:

Well, I was reading about a girl, and she played soccer in school, and it helped her to stay in school.

GC:

Really? It helped her stay in school? Why? Because she just loved going to play soccer?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Do you think it’s unusual for girls to play soccer in some places in the world?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

And you thought that was a good idea? Sounds like a good idea to encourage a young girl to come to school. How old was she? Around your age?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Fabulous. So that was a good idea. Did you talk to people, like your mom, about how some people can’t go to school? Do you know why some girls can’t go to school in some parts of the world?

HC:

They might have to help at home.

GC:

Very good. They have to help at home. Do you have to do that? I mean, you still go to school, do you?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

You don't have to not go to school so that you can help at home, right? Do you think you're lucky?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

What are those girls missing out on?

HC:

They're missing out on learning.

GC:

Yeah, and then they don't really have the chance to do the things they might want to do because they don't know the things?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Absolutely. So, it means that they don't get to go places in their lives or do things they'd like to do. Where did you talk about this, in school or at home?

HC:

Well, we mostly talked about it at home.

GC:

Your mom and dad are interested in talking about education, are they?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Do you enjoy school? Are there a lot of children in your class who are from other parts of the world?

HC:

Well, there's one boy in our class from Syria.

GC:

He's from Syria. And in other parts of the school, are there children from other places as well, or is he the only one?

HC:

Well, in another second class, his friend is in his class too, and he's from Syria as well.

GC:

Are you friendly with them?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Were you picked out by any chance to be friendly with them and show them the way around?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

What did you do to show them around? Did you hold hands or bring them playing?

HC:

I kind of played with him in the yard.

GC:

Did you introduce him to the others? Was it hard to talk to him at first because of the language?

HC:

He had a bit of English, but he couldn't understand that well.

GC:

That must have been hard. Can you imagine what it would be like if you arrived in Syria?

HC:

Yeah, very hard.

GC:

He speaks good English now, does he?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Are you still friends?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Did he show you new games from his country? Did you show him games we play here?

HC:

We showed him lots of games, and he likes them.

GC:

Great! Why do you think the teacher thought you'd be good to be friends with him?

HC:

I don't know.

GC:

Do you know, the same thing happened to me when I was at school. A girl came from China, and I was picked to be her friend. I felt special, like I'd been chosen for something important, like making sure someone wasn't lonely. It was important to have someone looking out for you, wasn't it?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

Tell me, have you learned about Malala? What do you know about her?

HC:

She went to the dump and saw children who should have been at school. When she asked her dad why they were there, he said they didn't have the chance to go to school. They were getting things to sell.

GC:

What happened to her later?

HC:

She was on a bus when the Taliban stopped it. They shot her, and she was taken to England for treatment.

GC:

How long was she away?

HC:

Six months, I think.

GC:

And what did she do when she came back?

HC:

She spoke about education for girls and how it should be equal.

GC:

Yes, she's been speaking out about girls' rights ever since. What could girls like you do to help her?

HC:

We could write letters, protest, or just tell people about it.

GC:

That's exactly what you're doing now, talking about it on the radio. You're helping her. Well done!

HC:

Thanks.

GC:

Malala wrote a book, didn't she?

HC:

Yeah, about a boy with a magic pencil. He could draw things he needed, like food when he was hungry, and it would appear.

GC:

If you had a magic pencil, what would you wish for?

HC:

I'd wish for climate change to stop.

GC:

You've been talking about that at home too?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

You live in a family where people are really interested in the world. That's fantastic! Do you have brothers or sisters?

HC:

I have a little sister named Maya.

GC:

Hi, Maya! How old is she?

HC:

She's two.

GC:

Let's say hi to your dad, too. Hi, Dad! I heard Malala got married recently. Did you know that?

HC:

Yeah.

GC:

What else do you talk about at home? Trócaire, maybe?

HC:

Yeah. They help people in countries where there's war or where people don't have enough food. Every Christmas, we buy a global gift, like chickens or goats.

GC:

Would you like to live in another country for a while, like your mom and dad did?

HC:

Yeah, I'd like to go to Africa.

GC:

Following in their footsteps! How would you like the world to be in the future?

Heather Campbell: I'd like people to stop using so many cars and walk or cycle more.

GC:

That's really good advice, Heather. And what else? What about people?

HC:

I'd like people to talk about things instead of fighting.

GC:

That's fantastic advice. You're so right—people should listen to you. Do you think boys and girls should have the same opportunities?

HC:

Yeah, everyone should be equal and have the chance to go to school.

GC:

Simple, right? That's great advice. Heather, you picked a song for us. What's it called?

HC:

It's called "Grateful."

GC:

What's it about?

HC:

Being happy for what you have.

GC:

That's a beautiful message. Introduce the song for us.

HC:

My name is Heather, and I'd like to introduce the song I picked, "Grateful."

(Clip of Grateful plays)

GC:



With me now, I have John Smith. John is the Director of Public Engagement with Trócaire, which, as I said earlier, is the organization that funds this series of programs. First of all, John, thank you very much for coming to talk to us, and you're very welcome to Community Radio Youghal and the Global Hub.

John Smith (JS):

Thanks very much, Gertrude. It's a pleasure to be here, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to talk to you this afternoon. I know this is a really interesting project, and I've been looking forward to our conversation.

GC:

Great, and yes, I feel like I've been through quite a journey here. We started with Enid and the 1950s, talking to people who have been involved with development education from then right through to today, including young people and even children like Heather. It has indeed been a journey and a very interesting one. A part of that journey, an important organization has been Trócaire. Trócaire has been mentioned in almost every episode, and it is very much recognized for its work in development education. Now, you've been with Trócaire for a good few years. But before we get into that, I'd like to ask you about your own background. What brought you to this kind of work?

JS:

Sure, I'm happy to share that. It's always interesting to reflect on how people come to work in the development sector. Many of my colleagues in Trócaire came through what I'd describe as more traditional routes, with experience working overseas in places like Africa, Central America, or Asia. But my own background is a bit different. I studied computers and economics in college and went on to work for an American multinational. My first job was in IT and logistics. I travelled quite a bit, mostly to the US, around Europe, and even to Japan. But after about five years in that career, I realized it wasn't the path for me. I had always been interested in international development, and I felt a strong pull toward working in that area.

So, while I was still working in IT, I decided to do a Diploma in Development Studies at UCC by night. That's actually where we first met, Gertrude—you were running the course back then.

GC:

That brings back memories! Yes, I was involved in running that course. It's wonderful to hear that connection again.

JS:

Absolutely. And that course was really pivotal for me. I remember the brilliant speakers we had, people who spoke about social justice issues like the genocide in Rwanda or the challenges facing Irish travellers. That year really opened my eyes, and I decided to go back to university full-time to do a Master's in Youth and Community Development. My focus quickly shifted toward development education. I was hooked, and it became the core of my studies. After completing my Master's, I was considering going overseas for a while, but then I saw a job opening at Trócaire for a Development Education Officer. It was like it was meant to be, and luckily, I got the job. That was 18 years ago, and I've been with Trócaire ever since.

GC:

That's fascinating. It's interesting to hear the different backgrounds that lead people to this sector. Your route into development education is definitely unique, coming from IT and logistics, but it clearly brought you to where you belong. You mentioned earlier that you were "hooked" by development education. I think that's a common experience in this sector. Once people engage with it, it gets into their blood. Would you agree with that?

JS:

Oh, absolutely. For me, and for many people I know, once you start looking at the world through a global lens—understanding interdependence, how everything is connected—you just want to keep learning and digging deeper. It's about understanding the bigger picture, not just in terms of economics or politics but in how all the parts of the world are interconnected. Development education opened up that world for me. And the methodologies used in development education are engaging and participatory, which I think is why it resonates so deeply with people.

GC:

Yes, the methodologies are key. They draw people in because they are so engaging, even though they deal with very serious issues. Let's talk about Trócaire's role in development education today. You've been with the organization for 18 years, and Trócaire has been a leader in this field for decades. How have things changed over the years, and where do you see Trócaire's role now?

JS:

Trócaire has a long history in development education, and while many things have changed, some core principles remain the same. From the very beginning, Trócaire took a partnership approach. That was important both for our overseas work and for our work in Ireland. In the 1980s, we worked with the Curriculum Development Unit, Muintir na Tíre, and various other organizations to bring development education into schools. That partnership approach has continued and evolved over the years.

Today, we're still building partnerships, but we're also responding to new challenges and opportunities. One of the biggest changes in recent years has been digital engagement. The rise of digital technology has allowed us to reach new audiences and engage with people in ways that weren't possible even ten or fifteen years ago. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we

couldn't do in-person workshops, but we brought our Southern partners into classrooms and public forums via Zoom. That digital connection is something we've embraced and will continue to build on.

Another key area for Trócaire is bringing the Southern voice into development education. We believe it's critical to amplify the voices of our partners in the Global South, ensuring that their perspectives are heard in classrooms and communities here in Ireland. We've also seen a growing emphasis on localization—giving more power and resources to our partners in the South, allowing them to take the lead in their own communities.

GC:

That's a really important shift. It's about empowering people on the ground, isn't it? The idea of localization seems to be gaining momentum across the sector.

JS:

Absolutely. Localization is key to making sure that the people most affected by the issues we're addressing have the power to make decisions. It's about giving more autonomy, more control, and more resources to local partners. We've seen this happen with our partners in places like Uganda and Malawi, and it's made a huge difference in the impact of our programs.

GC:

You've touched on some of the big changes in the sector, like digital engagement and localization. But I want to come back to something you mentioned earlier about development education methodologies. They are participatory and action-oriented, which is a big part of what makes development education so powerful. How do you see the balance between the more activist side of things and the professionalization of development education?

JS:

That's a really good question. There's always been a bit of a healthy tension between development education and activism. Development education is about critical engagement and reflection—it's about getting people to think deeply and question assumptions. Activism, on the other hand, is about action, often with a clear goal or demand. The two are connected, but they're not the same.

At Trócaire, we've tried to find a balance between the two. In the past, our development education and campaigning work were more integrated, but we've since separated them into distinct areas. Development education needs to remain true to its principles, allowing people to critically engage with global issues. But we also have a campaigns team that focuses on specific advocacy goals, like climate justice or human rights.

That said, I do believe that if you do development education well, it naturally leads to action. People who critically engage with global issues will often feel compelled to take action, whether that's through campaigning or other forms of activism.

GC:

Yes, that's something I often say to my students—that action is a natural outcome of development education. It doesn't always have to be direct activism, but it often leads to people wanting to make a difference. Finally, John, looking to the future, where do you see development education going in Ireland? What do you think the future holds for the sector?

JS:

I think the future of development education in Ireland is very bright, but there are always challenges. We've made huge progress over the years—subjects like Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) are now part of the curriculum, and there's greater awareness of global issues among young people. The introduction of subjects like Politics and Society at Leaving Cert level has been a big step forward, offering students a chance to engage with global issues in a structured way.

But there's always more to be done. One of the biggest challenges we face is ensuring that development education reaches beyond the "usual suspects." We need to engage new audiences—people who might not be exposed to these issues through traditional education pathways. That's where digital engagement and community-based education will play a crucial role.

At the same time, we need to continue building partnerships and working across sectors. Cross-government coherence is something we're constantly working on, making sure that development education is integrated into policies on education, climate change, and equality.

In a world where populism is on the rise, and where civil society is often under threat, development education is more important than ever. It helps to foster critical thinking, empathy, and a sense of global responsibility. I believe that with the right support and continued commitment, development education in Ireland will continue to thrive.

GC:

That's a hopeful vision for the future, John. Thank you so much for joining me today and for all the work that you and Trócaire continue to do. It's been a pleasure talking to you.

JS:

Thank you, Gertrude. It's been great to be part of this conversation.

GC:

And before we go, John, I know I ask all my guests to choose a song. What have you picked for us today, and why?

JS:

I've chosen "Jerusalema" by Master KG. It became a viral hit during COVID, and I love how it brought people from all over the world together through music and dance. It's a beautiful example of how something positive can connect us across borders, and it always lifts my spirits when I hear it.

GC:

That's a wonderful choice. Let's end the show with "Jerusalema" by Master KG. Thanks again, John, and thanks to all our listeners. Until next time, take care.

(Clip of Jerusalema by Master KG plays)