

# A Study of Student Teachers' Perspectives on Development Education

## Authors

- **Audrey Bryan**, University College Dublin
- **Marie Clarke**, University College Dublin
- **Sheelagh Drudy**, University College Dublin

## Purpose

To explore student teachers' understandings of Development Education (DE) and related forms of education (e.g. intercultural education) as well as their attitudes towards the implementation of DE in formal education settings

## Methodology

A survey designed to capture student teachers' underlying values and ideas about diversity, their own experiences of development and social justice issues, and their understandings about local and global injustices and inequalities.

Data was gathered from students in initial teacher education programmes across four institutions:

- Queens University Belfast
- St. Mary's College, Belfast
- Stramillis University College, Belfast
- University College Dublin

Phase 1 (Cohort 1) Academic Year 2006-2007

Phase 2 (Cohort 2) Academic Year 2007-2008

## Results/Outcomes

### Levels of Support for Development Education Among Student Teachers

- Student teachers are very supportive of, and responsive to, the idea of incorporating development education themes, values and ideas in their teaching.
- 74% either agree or strongly agree that development education should have a high priority in initial teacher education.
- 71% either agree or strongly agree that DE is relevant to all subject areas.
- Almost 70% agree or strongly agree that DE should be afforded higher priority within the school curriculum than is currently the case.

### Attitudes towards Social Action

- Student teachers are favourably disposed to the social action dimension of DE and are positive that a more egalitarian world order is achievable.
- A substantial majority (over 80%) agreed that their role as an educator involved striving to help their students both understand social injustices as well as encouraging them to transform society.



### Perceived Competency in Delivering DE Content and Methodologies

- A majority felt confident in their ability to deliver DE content and methodologies, with almost 62% agreeing that they felt confident in their ability to teach about development and social justice issues.
- Only 11% did not feel that active and participatory learning modalities were practical in a classroom context.

### Confidence in One's Own Ability to Effect Change

- Student teachers are generally committed to ideas of social transformation, although they do not necessarily feel confident in their own ability to enact change.
- Only 1/3 felt confident in their ability to influence decisions affecting their local area and society more generally.
- Less than 1/4 felt confident in their ability to influence decisions affecting other parts of the world.

## Implications

**'Development educators have merely explained the world; the point is to change it.'**  
(Aldred, 2005, p. 1)

Teacher Educators involved in DE need to emphasize and impart the skills required for critical and effective political engagement

## DE Offerings at UCD

### Initial Teacher Education

Lectures and workshops which provide a theoretical introduction to DE and exposure to a range of active learning methodologies to facilitate student teachers own pupils' understanding of development issues

### In-Career Teacher Education

Professional Development Specialism in DE offered to Master of Arts/Master of Education and Graduate Certificate in Education Studies Students.

Comprises two elective, semester-long modules:  
(1) Education and Development: Key Issues and Institutions in International Educational Development  
(2) Development Education: Embedding a Global Ethical Dimension in Educational Settings