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Honorary Patron, Mary Robinson.

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Correspondence

Comhlámh, 2nd Floor, Ballast House
Aston Quay, Dublin 2
Ph 01 4783490
E-mail: info@comhlamh.org

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Editorial team

Fleachta Phelan, Ida Haugland, Izzy Fox, Hannah Hamilton, Caroline Connolly, Deirdre Kelly, Fionnuala Power, Alfred Hickey M'Sichili, Janet Horner, Miren Maialen Samper, Anthony Leddy, Jodie Neary, David Traynor, Sharon Commins, Niamh Clowry, Jeannie McCann

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Charity alone will never change the world



Join Comhlámh: take action for global justice

In a world that seems so unfair, don't you wish that Ireland would stand up for justice? Yet there have been moments to be proud of when Ireland helped make a difference:

- against **apartheid**
- for the freedom of **East Timor**
- for **debt cancellation**

But these breakthroughs only happen because people - like you - **demand change and make justice matter.**

For **35 years**, Comhlámh (Irish for 'solidarity' and pronounced 'co-law-ve') has been **educating** and campaigning for global justice in **solidarity with the developing world.**

Our members **challenge the root causes** of injustice and inequality - **globally and locally.**

You can join in campaigns

- for **Trade Justice**
- against **racism**
- for **aid that makes a difference**

Comhlámh can also offer **advice on overseas volunteering.**

Sign up for membership at www.comhlamh.org

Join our activist network at www.myspace.com/comhlamh

Action: Remind your MEP About Trade Justice

Stop Europe's Unfair Trade Deals

For developing countries to move out of poverty sustainably, they need to be able to develop economically, and trade fairly with richer countries. But the rules of global trade, and the kind of trade deals rich countries look for, often aren't fair on poorer countries.

Two years ago, in June 2009, we asked you to take advantage of elections to the European Parliament by talking to your MEP about trade justice. Many of you wrote to, spoke to, or even met with your MEP candidates. You told them of your concern about Europe's unfair trade deals and policy. You asked wannabe MEPs to sign a pledge to speak out on trade justice during their term representing you in Brussels, to help bring about a fairer approach to Europe's trade with developing countries.

So. Two years on, it's time to check back in with our MEPs and see if they kept their promises!

In the past two years a lot has happened. Europe is still in crisis as more EU member states, including Ireland, struggle with huge debts and have become borrowers from the IMF. Amazingly though, in spite of this ongoing financial crisis, European trade policy has continued on as normal, as if nothing was wrong! The EU is unwilling to admit that the current international economic system doesn't work, and is bad for poor people at home and in developing countries, and for the planet. Unfair trade deals are part of this problem, and Europe's policies risk making things worse, and impoverishing more people in developing countries.

Get Involved - Act now for Change!

It's time to remind our MEPs that we still care about trade justice. Even if you didn't take part in the campaign originally, you can still contact your MEPs now, to encourage them to speak out on trade justice.



Write to or Meet your MEPs

If your MEP signed our trade justice pledge then ask them what they've been doing since June 2009 to keep their promises.

For example, have they:

- Raised trade justice issues in any committees they are members of?
- Raised trade justice issues with the Trade Commissioner (Karel De Gucht), the President of the European Commission (Jose Manuel Barroso) or other Commission officials?
- Voted against trade agreements that would be bad for development, human rights, or the environment in the parliament?
- Tabled amendments supporting trade justice to reports and other legislative documents?

Tell them why you think the EU's current trade strategy is wrong and ask them what they can do to represent your views in the European parliament in the coming years. Even if your MEP didn't sign the pledge in 2009 you can still remind them of why this issue is so important, ask them to reconsider, and raise the issue on your behalf in the European Parliament.

For info about some important trade justice issues see here <http://www.comhlahm.org/campaigns.html>

To see who signed the pledge in 2009 see here - <http://www.comhlahm.org/14-mep-candidates-support-a-rethink-of-europes-trade-strategy-to-support-development..html>

Bloom is:



50% of MEPs supported our campaign

We were delighted with the response to our campaign in 2009. 14 MEP candidates signed our pledge, across all political parties. Most importantly, 6 of the 12 elected MEPS signed up. Many of you found it empowering and eye-opening to engage your political candidates in dialogue on this issue. One campaigner said “I got to understand better the workings of the EU and [...] was able to have the courage of my convictions and approach the MEP candidates with confidence”.

Even the candidates were interested - one MEP candidate wrote to their constituents saying “I think that it is of the utmost importance that people such as yourself bring your concerns and these issues to our attention”.

What should I ask my MEP to do?

Ask your MEP to be vigilant about the impact of European trade policy on developing countries. The EU continues to push poor countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to sign free trade agreements they don't want to sign.

MEPs now have the right to vote against trade agreements in the European Parliament. There are also other things they can do, such as write a report, ask a parliamentary question, make amendments to reports and legislative documents, host meetings, visit some of the countries involved to learn more, raise the issue with their European party spokespeople etc.

Over the coming months there will be key discussions taking place at European level, on the issues of raw materials and on the link between trade and development. These are moments when your MEP can speak out in support of developing countries' right to trade justice. Please ask them to do so on your behalf.

“You've voted them in power. Your government is doing this in your name, so as citizens of Europe you have a huge responsibility to ensure that these bad policies do not go through”

Meena Raman, Environmental Activist, Malaysia

Any queries? Email us at fleachta@comhlamh.org. If you want to speak to someone in person, please call us on 4783490.

Europe's Unfair Trade Deals

Unable to get what it wants through the WTO, the EU is now trying to secure trade deals directly with countries or regions. Europe's trade strategy is aggressive and unsustainable. It is looking for serious concessions from developing countries, far beyond those being discussed at the WTO. The trade deals currently on the table would benefit European corporations at the expense of some of the world's poorest people.

Economic Partnership Agreements

For almost a decade, the EU has been pushing for free trade deals (called “Economic Partnership Agreements”) with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (76 countries, including 39 Least Developed Countries). These agreements are supposed to support development, poverty reduction and regional integration as their central aim. But ACP countries and trade justice campaigners have identified many problems with the negotiation process and with the content of the deals. Many countries have refused to sign up to the trade deals, because they believe they would be bad for their economic development. As a result, Comhlamh and other organisations in Ireland and Europe, have been voicing their concern about and opposition to these deals for many years.

Global Europe

As well, the EU is also looking for free trade deals with India, parts of Central and South America, the Mediterranean, and other Asian countries. Campaigners around the world are concerned about the impacts of these deals. For example, the terms being asked for on intellectual property by the EU in the India Free Trade Agreement could make the cost of vital HIV drugs much more expensive for poor countries. The EU has also signed a trade deal with Colombia, in spite of its notoriously bad human rights record.

How are these EU trade deals unfair?

These trade deals are heavily influenced by the interests of European corporations, who want access to new markets and resources to maximise their profits. However, the deals could have disastrous impacts on jobs, livelihoods, human rights and the environment in the developing countries involved. The deals will ‘lock in’ a series of policies that will prevent these countries from providing for basic needs, reducing poverty, and developing their economy in a way that is sustainable and protects the environment.

“European citizens must understand the misery unfair trade creates. If we are unable to benefit from our resources, Africa will remain poor and racked by conflict”

Claude Kabemba, Southern Africa Resource Watch

What are we calling for?

Comhlamh, is part of a global network of trade justice organisations which is calling for the European Commission to

- Stop unfair EU trade deals with Africa, Asia and Latin America
- Rethink EU trade policy so that it prioritises development, environmental sustainability and human rights
- Open up European trade policy to enable better democratic accountability and scrutiny by parliamentarians and civil society

To learn more about this issue please check out the following links:

<http://www.comhlamh.org/campaigns.html>

<http://www.comhlamh.org/resources-bits-to-help-you-campaign.html>

<http://www.comhlamh.org/Campaign-Raw-Materials-Raw-Deal.html>



Lessons from other countries

Deirdre Kelly examines the local-global links since Ireland became a borrower of the IMF. Should the development sector be doing more to highlight the experience of the Global South?



A banner in Dublin city, November 2010, Soilse

At the end of the nineties, 850,000 people in Ireland signed the Jubilee petition, calling for the cancellation of all unpayable developing country debt. The final debt relief packages agreed to by G8 leaders pledged to cancel a total of \$100 billion of debt for 42 heavily indebted countries. This fell short of the Jubilee call for a just and effective end to the global debt crisis, but it did put the debt issue on the international agenda. However, although debt relief was granted to some countries, the nature of lending did not change. And so the problem of irresponsible lending practices continued and finally caught up with us, with the IMF arriving in Ireland in November 2010. But where have those 850,000 people been during the recent protests and events calling for alternatives in Ireland, as we became a borrower of the IMF?

Why aren't we looking at what happened to other countries who have borrowed from the IMF?

The IMF is known as the lender of last resort and with good reason. Some would argue that Ireland, or other “developed countries” borrowing from the IMF, is different from the case of developing countries. However the harsh conditionalities attached to IMF assistance are a consistent feature imposed on all borrowers. *These include:*

- Reducing public expenditure, meaning governments spend less on essential services including healthcare and education.
- Opening up markets, thus enabling international companies to compete with local producers.
- Privatising public industries, meaning governments must allow private companies to run services such as water and electricity.

Conditionalities such as these have had devastating results on indebted countries in the past. In 2004 Ecuador spent 12% of its GDP repaying debts and just 3.2% on healthcare and education. In 2005 its government decided to allocate 10% of the profits from a new oil pipeline to fund these public services against IMF instructions. The IMF and the World Bank responded by cancelling an already approved loan; declaring that too much of Ecuador’s oil revenue was being spent on education and healthcare initiatives and not enough on paying back its creditors.

In Mali, where 90% of the population live on less than \$2 per day, the IMF insisted on the liberalisation and privatisation of the cotton sector as part of its lending conditions. The result was a 20% drop in the cotton price received by 3 million Malian farmers.

Malawi is one of many countries to have

had their debt cancellation process delayed when they were declared ‘off track’ in their implementation of IMF policy conditions. The Malawian government was rapped on the knuckles when it borrowed money from domestic banks to buy grain to prevent its citizens from dying during an acute drought.

Due to the arduous conditionalities attached to debt relief, some countries which qualified for it, including Laos and Sri Lanka, chose not to take part in the debt cancellation programme, feeling the economic conditions of the initiative outweighed the benefits they might receive.

Why is the development sector staying so quiet?

Those working in the development sector have for decades witnessed the impact of the IMF and its conditionalities on the poorer countries of the world. They are uniquely placed to offer wisdom from the Global South and share their valuable expertise on what to expect from the loan in Ireland. The development sector has been raising concerns about the IMF’s economic prescriptions overseas for decades, so why aren’t they doing the same here now, when Ireland is being asked to adopt similar economic policy measures?

From the point of view of consistency in the sector’s messages, the silence from NGOs seems shocking to some. How can the development sector oppose the suffering of poor people of the Global South from debts they didn’t benefit from, but not speak up against poor Irish people suffering in the same way?

Some may say it is not the mandate of development organisations to deal with domestic issues. But given the sector’s unique overseas expertise, surely it’s in some way

“Debt relief is the partial or total forgiveness of debt, or the slowing or stopping of debt growth, owed by individuals, corporations, or nations. Traditionally, from antiquity through the 19th century, it refers to domestic debts, particularly agricultural debts and freeing of debt slaves. In the late 20th century it came to refer primarily to Third World debt, which started exploding with the Latin American debt crisis (Mexico 1982, etc.). In the early 21st century, it is of increased applicability to individuals in developed countries, due to credit bubbles and housing bubbles.”

Wikipedia



70,000 people formed a human chain around the G8 in Birmingham in 1998 as part of the Jubilee 2000 campaign to drop the debt.

disingenuous not to intervene with advice gained from partners in the South? Even thinking pragmatically, the IMF's insistence on public spending cuts may bring about cuts to the overseas aid budget, hindering the work of Irish NGOs overseas. Many NGOs have actively and successfully campaigned against cuts to the aid budget, so surely campaigning on the IMF loan should be on the table?

The development sector often looks for global-local links when educating the public on development issues, enabling people to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world. Ireland's debt crisis is a clear example of this global-local link and as such it provides us with an opportunity to make the connection between injustices that take place overseas and at home. It also provides a chance to challenge the injustices in the global financial system which is having negative effects in Ireland, as well as overseas, in our effort to achieve global justice.

What can we learn from other indebted countries?

Our government can look to many other countries for ideas and examples of ways to deal with a debt crisis fairly.

In 2007 Ecuador undertook an official audit of its debt to separate legitimate from illegitimate debt (debts which did not benefit the population) and calculated what it would pay back accordingly. Iceland consulted its citizens and held a referendum on the country's debt problem. Accepting the decision of the people, the country refused to pay back most of its debt, which had been

accrued by private banks. Now, two years later, Iceland's economy is growing again.

Argentina, going through economic crisis in the 1990s, did everything the IMF prescribed, and experienced an increasingly worsening economic situation. Due to popular mobilisation the country finally defaulted on its debt in 2001 and the sky did not fall in! Indeed by 2002 the Argentinean economy had returned to positive growth; growth of 8.8% was recorded in 2003, and the country's economy has continued to grow ever since. Indeed, an IMF working paper looking at countries that defaulted between 1824 and 2004 concluded that "the economic costs [of default] are generally significant but short-lived...we almost never can detect effects beyond one or two years."

For individuals and civil society, we can learn lessons from social movements in other indebted countries. In Iceland more than 42,000 of 318,000 inhabitants signed a petition calling on their government not to pay the debts. In Greece protests against austerity measures have been attended by hundreds of thousands of people and multiple strikes have taken place. For NGOs in the development sector lessons can be learnt from partner organisations working on debt issues in the South.

However we must remember that these are solutions for dealing with the debt crisis at hand. Globally, governments have spent almost \$11 trillion (a startling figure!) since 2008 bailing out the banks and trying to repair the financial system. In 2008 the total debt owed by developing countries was \$3.7 trillion. The morality of such an economic approach to

debt and financial crisis is dubious. As Joseph Stiglitz, Former Chief Economist of the World Bank has pointed out, "The net effect [of IMF policies] has been too often to benefit...the well off at the expense of the poor."

The bigger questions of how our current system allows or even pushes countries into debt, and why poor people in the Global South or in Ireland are always the ones to pay back rich people's debt will be important ones to address and resolve to avoid such crises in the future. For the moment, perhaps finding alternative ways of dealing with our own debt crisis is the first step towards changing the system within which these problems originate.

Read More:

The Cost of Sovereign Defaults, (IMF Working Paper) <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2008/wp08238.pdf>

Private Debt, Public Pain, Jubilee Debt Campaign (December 2010) - <http://www.jdc.webbster.co.uk/?lid=6671>

A Global Justice Perspective on the Irish EU IMF Loans: Lessons from the Wider World, Debt and Development Coalition Ireland (November 2010) <http://www.debtireland.org/resources/publications/imf-loan-policy-briefing/>

One World: Why Irish development educators should court controversy at home, Andy Storey, (Spring 2011) <http://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue12-perspectives7?page=show>

Some Perspectives on the IMF

“An urgent, tough, and structural redesign of the International Monetary Fund is needed, to prevent crises and help in [providing] solutions.”

Nestor Kirchner, former President of Argentina

“When the IMF arrives in a country, they are interested in only one thing. How do we make sure the banks and financial institutions are paid?[...] They’re not interested in development, or what helps a country to get out of poverty.”

Joseph Stiglitz, former Chief Economist of the World Bank

“When we come to a country having a huge deficit, there’s no other way to save the country than to reduce the deficit. Now you may do it in different ways: you may increase taxes or cut some expenditures. Cutting expenditures, you may cut one kind of expenditure or another kind of expenditure. This is the call of the government; it’s never the call of the IMF.”

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, former Managing Director of the IMF

“The IMF should end its tradition of requiring countries to implement contractionary policies in economic recessions. For instance, the IMF should ensure that expanded investment in health and education are not subjected to overall budget caps and that subsidies that cushion the impact of the crisis on poor people are not eliminated.”

IMF

“The difference is that in Iceland we allowed the banks to fail. These were private banks and we didn’t pump money into them in order to keep them going; the state did not shoulder the responsibility of the failed private banks.”

Olafur R. Grimsson, President of Iceland

“The fact that we are behind in meeting the Millennium Development Goals is a crisis. The “human bank of poor people” will need a rescue package just like any other bank. Rich countries managed to raise trillions of dollars in the last two years to rescue failing banks. The international community needs a rescue package to bail out the poor.”

Dr. Fanwell Kenala Bokos, Policy Advisor, African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD)

“At the moment conditions for lending are discussed with the treasuries of countries without the wider consultation of the public and there sometimes may be some intimidation and thumb-twisting that takes place”.

Peter Ganuku, former Executive Director of the IMF’s Africa Group One, a constituency representing 21 English-speaking African countries

“The IMF should end its tradition of requiring countries to implement contractionary policies in economic recessions. For instance, the IMF should ensure that expanded investment in health and education are not subjected to overall budget caps and that subsidies that cushion the impact of the crisis on poor people are not eliminated.”

Global Civil Society Letter to IMF, 2009, signed by over 160 organisations

“Our programmes are like medicine. Some of the medicine has harmful side-effects, and there are real questions about what the dosage ought to be. The best that can be hoped for is that we are prescribing more or less the right medicine in more or less the right dosage.”

Michael Mussa, former Chief Economist, IMF

“The reluctance of many key constituents in the development sector to engage in the debate around Ireland’s recent financial collapse and loss of economic sovereignty represented a missed opportunity to educate the public about fundamental aspects of development. It arguably undermined the sector’s credibility as a critical voice”

Stephen McCloskey, Centre for Global Education

“We lend only to governments, then the question for the governments is to implement the right policy, and then the question for the civil society people [...] is to fight against their government to make them accountable.”

Dominique Strauss-Kahn, former Managing Director of the IMF

“Our country [...] benefited in January 2006 from the cancellation of debt to the IMF in the amount of \$220 million dollars. [...] Therefore, we would expect amounts similar to that of the IMF debt cancellation to be spent on effective poverty reduction programmes and projects in the country.”

Letter of Platform for Action against Poverty, Bolivian civil society alliance to President Evo Morales

“The IMF promoted severe austerity programmes in the Philippines for more than a decade which deeply undermined our right to access essential public services. I urge the Irish people to proactively contest the IMF’s power, to fight for, and protect, their right to voice and advocate for justice centred policies.”

Lidy Nacpil, Co-ordinator Jubilee South - Asia Pacific Movement on Debt and Development

“I am very pleased that the IMF is here. The government is incompetent and corrupt.”

Margaret Shannon, Dentist, interviewed by Der Spiegel, 24th November 2010

Responsibility to Protect?

Sharon Commins writes about the need for aid agencies to professionalise their security management and take seriously their duty of care to frontline staff.

“If a frog is placed in boiling water, it will jump out. But if it is placed in cold water that is slowly heated, it will not perceive the danger and will be cooked to death.” So goes the analogy often cited to explain individual aid workers’ inability to react to significant changes in their security environment which occur gradually.

This is why the security of aid personnel ought to be the responsibility of the sending aid agency which has a ‘duty of care’ to front line staff. The concept of duty of care presumes that organisations “are responsible for their employees’ well-being and must take practical steps to mitigate foreseeable workplace dangers”, according to Lisabeth Claus, Professor of Global HR at the Atkinson Graduate School of Management of Willamette University. This responsibility takes on additional implications when the employees are working overseas.

With some 278 humanitarian workers reported to have been victims of security incidents in 2009 alone, the issue of staff security remains centre stage. The recent feature “Risky Business” by Maeve Galvin in this publication on the subject of the increasing hazards of aid work overlooked one key aspect of the security equation: the ‘duty of care’ that aid agencies have to staff. While communities in the greatest humanitarian need are often located in areas that present the greatest safety and security risks to agency staff, many of the dangers involved are avoidable or, at the very least, can be substantially reduced through good risk management, appropriate training and adherence to best practice among those involved.

“Morally, agencies have a duty of care towards their employees and colleagues. While aid work implies a certain level of risk, agencies need to be sure that all reasonable measures are taken to mitigate this risk,” according to *Humanitarian Policy Group’s* policy paper of December 2010. [The first edition of *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* was published in 2000. Since then it has become the seminal document in humanitarian operational security management, and is credited with increasing the understanding of good practice in this area throughout such agencies.]

“The legal requirement of duty of care of the employer is becoming increasingly important,” according to the HPG *Humanitarian Practice Network* (HPN), an independent forum for policy-makers and practitioners working in or on the humanitarian sector to share and disseminate information, analysis and experience. “It is the responsibility of the organisation to proactively inform employees, potential employees and associated personnel such as consultants about security risks. This allows individuals to exercise ‘informed consent’ – i.e. to accept a degree of risk after having been made fully aware of the extent of the risk.”

“Agencies should never put access to increased donor funds ahead of the security of staff on the ground. The absolute priority must be the safety of front line staff.”

Risk Management

It is now widely recognised, according to a recent study commissioned by the *Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCHA), that the objective for humanitarian actors in complex security environments is not to avoid risk, but to manage risk in a way that allows them to remain present and effective in their work.

‘Acceptable Risk’

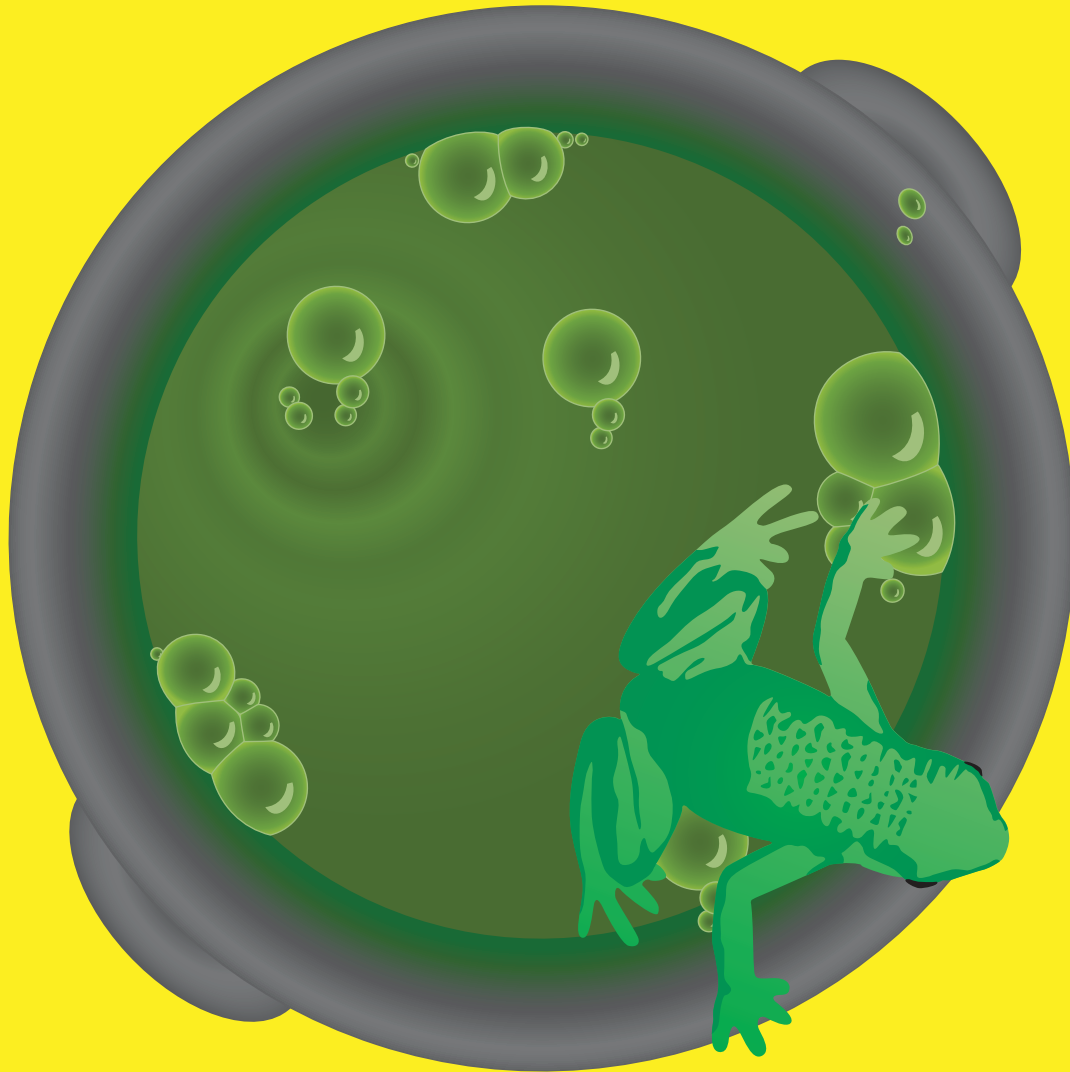
A key concept in the risk management process is the ‘threshold of acceptable risk’, defined as the point beyond which the risk is deemed too high to continue operating. The threshold is determined by the probability that an incident will occur and the seriousness of the impact if it occurs.

The onus is on each organisation to explicitly define and consciously determine its threshold of acceptable risk related to the criticality of its programme, according to the OCHA report. “It is imperative that all staff are aware of the organisation’s risk threshold in each setting and are operating on the basis of informed consent.”

The issue here, as noted by the report, is that responses to safety and security challenges vary widely across the aid sector. What constitutes ‘acceptable risk’ varies from organisation to organisation and is heavily dependent on the organisation’s culture, values, principles, management approaches, and how critical staff are perceived to be to the organisation’s success.

This is why it is imperative that humanitarian workers, especially those starting out, research the security management of agencies before they take up posts in high risk areas. Organisations that do not examine these risks carefully and show clearly the steps they are taking to mitigate them are likely to be found to be acting irresponsibly.

For example, an American aid worker recently announced her intention to sue aid agency *Samaritan’s Purse* for failing to protect her against abduction and secure her release; an unprecedented development. The aid worker claims the organisation failed to take heed of the threat of abduction in the area and subsequently put its financial and political prerogatives above her safety. This case will likely provoke



a fear among humanitarian agencies of being sued by employees and in turn trigger responsibility for aid worker safety being shifted away from the individual towards the organisation.

Agencies should never put access to increased donor funds ahead of the security of staff on the ground. The absolute priority must be the safety of front line staff.

Statistics show that nearly one-third of deaths of humanitarian workers occur during their first three months of duty. “Preparing a staff member for their assignment is probably the single most important thing an organisation can do”, according to Christine Williamson of *People in Aid*. First aid and security training on how to react in the event of a hold up or kidnapping have been described as like a “seatbelt” which, while not able to prevent the car crash, might make the difference between life and death.

While the primary responsibility for staff security lies with host governments and aid agencies themselves, the safety and well-being of aid workers is nevertheless a major priority for institutional donors internationally. Both institutional and private donors expect their money to be used responsibly. They expect NGO partner agencies to do everything they can to minimise the risk to front line staff, to have in place sound security plans, and to equip their staff to anticipate, avoid and react to problems as they occur.

While this expectation is articulated and spelled out in donor guidelines, there remains a need to ensure the greatest possible clarity as to the standards expected by donors and aid agencies alike in terms of professional humanitarian security management. Ultimately, if donors demand a higher standard of security management for staff,

and threaten to cut funding, then aid organisations which have previously not taken seriously their duty of care are likely to respond by increasing the professionalisation of their security management.

Sharon Commins was kidnapped in Sudan’s Darfur area for 106 days in 2009 when she worked with GOAL. She has subsequently accused the agency of failing to provide proper protection for staff. She is currently working in the aid sector in Ireland.

Comhlámh recently facilitated a workshop on this issue with D’talk, recognising its importance – for more info please email info@comhlamh.org. Also, Comhlámh offers a range of support services to returned development and humanitarian aid workers. These services include subsidies to access counselling sessions and personal/group and post traumatic stress debriefings. For further information contact supportservices@comhlamh.org

More reading:

- *International assignees at risk: Employers have a duty of care for workers around the globe. HR Magazine, February 2010 - <http://www.internationalso.com/en/files/DoC-lklaus.Pdf>*
- *Operational Security Management in violent environments, Good Practice Review, Number 8 (New edition), HPN, December 2010.*
- *OCHA - To Stay and Deliver, Good Practice for Humanitarians in Complex Security Environments, 2011*

The journey to peace once the guns fall silent

David Traynor explores the challenges faced by post-conflict societies when making the transition to peace.

Over the past few months many regions have experienced revolt, conflict and emerging regime change. In what has been termed the “Arab Spring” we saw revolutions throughout the Middle East, including the ongoing strife in Libya and Syria. There has been trouble in Cote d’Ivoire and the birth of Africa’s newest nation, South Sudan, after a long civil war. How can communities and nations in these regions embark on a path to peace, and transform their societies?

Post-conflict regions face the daunting task of rebuilding shattered lives and sometimes the state itself. The challenge is to rehabilitate divided communities and rebuild the social, economic, political and cultural infrastructure. Such transitional moments are critical, with the World Bank cautioning that “post-conflict countries face a 44% chance of reverting to conflict during the first five years after the onset of peace”. As a result, it is important to understand the complex role of humanitarian, and later development, assistance in such situations, which can potentially impact positively or negatively on lasting peace.

Different stages have been identified as occurring for post-conflict societies in transition. The emergency phase involves meeting the immediate needs of the population with humanitarian aid. The development phase involves improvements being made to areas such as livelihoods and education, economic and political structures. The period between these two is known as the

transition phase.

According to the UN, external assistance is crucial to support fragile ceasefires. Transitions are often complex, with movements from conflict to cessations of hostilities, disarming and demobilisation programmes to a sustainable peace, or reversion to hostilities. Any aid must respect the vulnerability of transitional societies. It should not just involve a peace agreement; it must also address the political, economic, social and cultural needs of the society. Such aid can range from UN supported institution-building to rebuilding health services by NGOs to community peace-building initiatives.

Communities must have ownership of, and involvement in, such aid programmes. Crucially, programmes to support transitions to peace must address the root causes of the conflict. For example, the successful dismantling of apartheid in South Africa was built with the involvement of the South African people. Apartheid was voted out by white South Africans and the new government received a mandate from all South Africans in the first multi-racial elections in 1994.

Characteristics of Societies in the Transition Phase

It is important to understand the immediate traumatic effects that conflict has on a society. As in parts of North Africa (including Egypt, Tunisia and Libya) and Cote d’Ivoire, there can often be intense grievances between the conflicting parties due to, for example, lack

“Crucially, programmes to support transitions to peace must address the root causes of the conflict.”

of human rights, disenfranchisement and/or unaccountable policing and judiciary. Shattered economic and social infrastructures leave few opportunities for employment and a lack of social services.

Any reconstruction of a post-conflict region must thus be undertaken with an understanding of the conflict’s dynamics, to ensure that any aid, and the peace process itself, does not fuel the conflict. Peace can be built by a comprehensive agreement which addresses the relationship of the conflicting parties and is a win-win for all sides. Interests that represent sectors vital for re-building the society must be involved in the making of any such agreement.

Key areas which need to be addressed include:

Security and Restorative Justice

As we saw in the security response of the international community in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Liberia, a concerted effort was made to ensure a secure environment through a comprehensive disarming, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programme and commitment to adhere to the cessation of



Traditional Gacaca Court in a village near Ruhango, Rwanda. Lisa Rogoff, 2009 AP Fellow

hostilities. However in Sierra Leone high unemployment rates threaten the stability of the country. With 60% youth unemployment, there is a risk of young people becoming marginalised and even moving into crime. According to the UNHCR and UNDP, such a situation helped to fuel the original conflict which the country is currently emerging from. Former combatants need to have a livelihood to which they can return post-conflict. However there is also the issue of victims and survivors. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the use of the traditional court systems in Rwanda after the genocide illustrate that there is a need to have restorative justice for victims.

Establishing Democratic Governance Structures

Structures for democratic governance should also be built towards ensuring transparency in the political system and respect for human rights. Weaknesses in these mechanisms can often be the source of conflict, as witnessed in Cote d'Ivoire and in Northern Ireland. The peace processes in South Africa and Northern Ireland involved a concerted effort to ensure that the political system addressed, and acted on, the causes of the conflict. Establishing accountable policing and judicial systems is vital. For example in Rwanda and Bosnia such mechanisms were important to bring perpetrators to justice.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

Socio-economic investment is crucial to rebuild essential services such as health, social

services, transport and to build and support livelihoods. This is all the more important as post-conflict societies often have a high proportion of unemployed young people, who may have the potential to lapse into crime without other ways of generating income.

Lessons from Northern Ireland

In Ireland we have experienced similar post-conflict challenges. Northern Ireland witnessed violent conflict, fought about religious identity and political aspirations for decades. In the nineties the beginnings of a peace process culminated in political representatives from all communities coming together to sign a peace agreement. This example illustrates how an holistic peace process can potentially build foundations for a successful lasting peace. The peace process in the North encompassed all the issues described above: ceasefires, a power-sharing agreement and commitment to democratic governance, the relationships being addressed at all levels, acceptable policing, decommissioning and restarting the economy. It can stand as a positive working example for policy makers and populations facing the task of rebuilding their states and communities.

There is also another lesson to be learned, however. With growing unemployment and socio-economic decline, many disaffected young people are easy recruits for dissident Republicans in Northern Ireland. This has been highlighted by community groups and youth workers in some of the North's most deprived areas. These areas are often located where the boundaries of the divided

“Post-conflict regions face the daunting task of rebuilding shattered lives and sometimes the state itself”

communities are located, and marginalisation can nurture sectarian attitudes and behaviour.

Neglecting one area of the rebuilding process can have ramifications for managing a sustainable peace. Once peace returns to today's conflict regions, those involved should recognise this if they are to have a bright future. The transition to peace must be owned by the people. The fact that the “Arab Spring” revolutions were started by ordinary people's desire for a voice and ownership of decision-making in their countries should be remembered during the task of building a lasting peace.

This article took ideas and concepts from a variety of sources. Recommended reading includes:

- “Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War” by Mary B Anderson
- “Handbook on Transition Assistance” by Japan International Cooperation Agency, - <http://www.jica.go.jp/english/index.html>
- “Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies” by John Paul Lederach.

Raw Materials: Raw Deal?

Claude Kabemba is the director of Southern Africa Resource Watch which works in ten countries: South Africa, Angola, Congo, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Miren Maialen Samper interviewed him for Focus Magazine when he visited Ireland.

The Raw Materials Initiative (RMI) is a new EU trade policy which aims to secure access to valuable raw materials from developing countries for European industry. You believe that it will undermine development. Can you explain?

The RMI will help Europe secure and control access to strategic resources or “rare earths”. Europe has depleted its resources so they want to access them in China, Brazil, Russia and Africa. The RMI is mainly directed at Africa given our continent’s inability to date to control and use these resources efficiently, whereas China, Brazil and Russia can protect their resources. The RMI will perpetuate the imbalance in the European-African relationship, as Europe would benefit economically to the detriment of Africa.

Has a regional alliance been established in Africa with respect to the RMI?

The RMI has not been discussed in Africa. Southern Africa Resource Watch (SARW) is promoting such discussion. We will shortly start building an African lobbying group to discuss raw materials.

What has SARW’s response to the RMI been and have you compared various country initiatives to support your case?

SARW’s response is informed by our experience, work and regional collaboration. We have a broad knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing Africa. Europe however has not discussed the RMI with their African partners. This unilateral approach represents a serious challenge. SARW aims at driving such a debate, starting with a European level workshop – a roundtable to

“European citizens must understand the misery that unfair trade creates. If we are unable to benefit from our resources, Africa will remain poor and racked by conflict.”

discuss the RMI and how to engage African civil society. We hope to organise this in Addis Ababa.

The European RMI has raised developmental, environmental and socio-economic concerns in Africa. What are your main concerns?

Our concerns span the entire value chain. Firstly, the RMI will perpetuate the ideology that Africa needs less state and more market, thereby requiring us to further open our markets, reduce taxes and allow the free and unimpeded flow of capital.

Secondly, SARW believes the RMI will affect African revenue collection as the EU wants to prevent African countries from introducing very important export taxes on specific raw materials. Historically, Africa has frequently not benefitted from its resources. The time has come for Africans to introduce restrictions on raw material access and allow taxes to be introduced to meet urgent needs. These restrictions should be seen as positive restrictions not unfair trade, as they will restructure the imbalances created by colonisation, the Washington Consensus, liberalisation and the structural adjustment programmes, which have all weakened Africa.

Beyond the tax regime, the RMI should take into account the new thinking in Africa,

regarding the importance of transformation of raw materials and other value added activities taking place here. An African industrialisation policy should be developed, to which European multinational companies should agree and positively contribute.

Will such raw material development in Africa be transparent and will there be wealth redistribution?

Africa has governance and transparency problems, which we are working hard to solve. Revenues have not been equally distributed in the past. This is a serious problem but it is an African concern, not a European one. Even with fair trade, governments may fail to distribute gains equally. Today in Africa, we are aggressively fighting corruption and working to ensure revenue earned from mining, oil, fishing and timber contribute to economic development.

Africa possesses important strategic minerals critical for European economic advancement, but Europe should access them in a fair way. We believe their approach is a reaction to China’s presence. The arrival of China, India and Brazil has created enhanced value for African minerals that did not exist when Europe had the monopoly, as now there is competition to access these minerals. Africans can decide who should have access



Claude Kabemba, Director of Southern Africa Resource Watch, speaks at Comhlámh's Development Forum in Offaly, April 2011.

to these resources and at what price. Whether Africans will benefit or not depends on how Africa restructures itself.

Are there any connections between Free Trade Agreements, EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements) and the RMI?

The EU said it will push the RMI in different forums – through EPAs, bilateral trade agreements and the WTO. The RMI is part of the EU's entire trade regime which, if implemented, might be incorporated into EPAs. EPA negotiations have shown that Africa possesses insufficient capacity to negotiate individual initiatives. The European approach to trade should be clarified.

What is your objective in coming here?

Our objectives are to understand EU thinking about the new scramble for African resources and to provide an African perspective on how the RMI could damage African resources and the Africa-Europe relationship. We think the RMI, if it fails to take into account our historical relationship, risks perpetuating the

past unequal relationship. We also want to take the debate back to Africa where Africans can engage in a positive manner.

What role can European citizens play in your efforts?

European citizens must understand the misery that unfair trade creates. If we are unable to benefit from our resources, Africa will remain poor and racked by conflict. Europe will invest a lot of money to resolve this conflict while also profiting from the sale of weapons and exporting rare earths illegally. These conflicts will create population movements and people will move to Europe to escape poverty.

Instability and poverty in Africa is an impetus for terrorism, money laundering and their consequences. European citizens must understand that unless Europe improves its relationship with Africa, this will not change. European citizens should mobilise to ensure an equitable European-African relationship.

Can you outline the importance of the sustainable use of resources in Africa to improve sovereignty?

Europe has foreign investment guidelines but they are not working. European companies do not adhere to transparency and accountability issues or work hard to protect the environment.

What do you think of the criticism of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that it "gives with one hand and takes with the other"?

If trade is imbalanced and Europe benefits more, Africa will lack the required revenue to realise the MDGs. Aid does not develop Africa, we need fair trade.

What message will you bring back to Africa?

People are not aware of the RMI. We hope grassroots movements from our communities will support our argument that the RMI should be good for Africa.

See <http://www.sarwatch.org/>

Learn about Global Justice: Sign up for one of our Brilliant Courses!

This autumn, Comhlámh will be running a range of courses on global justice and development. We will run a **super skills course**, where you can learn campaigns and media skills to help you to raise awareness, meet like-minded people and gain information about what's going on in Ireland on development issues. And there's our annual **Trade Justice Course**, where you can learn more about global trade and economics, its impact on developing countries and ways to take action for change.

Give us a call at 4783490 or check out <http://www.comhlahm.org/development-education.html> for more info.



Global justice campaigners raise awareness about the World Bank in November 2007, Comhlámh

Get Active: Join one of our Volunteer Groups

We are always looking for enthusiastic and active people to get involved in our work. There are 3 active volunteer groups, working on **Trade Justice, Focus Magazine and Options and Issues in Development**. The groups are open to anyone – you don't have to be an expert, we all learn together! All you need is an interest in global inequalities and a desire to get active and work together with like-minded people.

For more info, check out <http://www.comhlahm.org/get-involved-active-groups.html>

Bewley's First Wednesday Debates: Come along and join the Discussion

Keep the first Wednesday evening of every month in the Autumn free so you can come along to our famous first Wednesday Debates. Drop in and hear important global justice and development questions being debated by engaging speakers. Have a listen, discuss with others, and ask questions, all in the laid back atmosphere of the Bewley's Café Theatre. The debates are always lively and fun. Keep an eye on our website for the latest info on speakers and topics, or email info@comhlahm.org.



Stop the European Union helping itself to developing countries' raw materials



Stop the EU's New Resource Grab!

Our campaign is up and running and the postcards are piling up. If you haven't already put your name to some cards, then please do get active to support our campaign for trade justice.

Join campaigners across Europe and take action now!

1. Watch the video and read more about the campaign: <http://www.comhlahm.org/Campaign-Raw-Materials-Raw-Deal.html>
2. Sign our postcards. To order some, send an email to Alfred M'Sichili (alfred@comhlahm.org).
3. Once you have signed it, please send the detachable first part to your MEP, then send the second part back to us so we stay in the loop.

European Year of Volunteering



European Year of Volunteering 2011



Did you know it's the European Year of Volunteering (EYV)? The year aims "to celebrate the work of volunteers across Europe, and to encourage those who do not currently volunteer to get involved so they too can make a difference". There will be all sorts of events on across the country over the months to come. For example, the EYV Roadshow will be taking place from 22nd-28th August in the European Commission building in Dublin.

For more info check out <http://eyv2011.ie> and <http://europa.eu/volunteering/>

Returned home from development work/volunteering abroad?

Come spend the weekend sharing experiences and stories with other returned development workers and volunteers, benefit from networking opportunities, think about how to apply your skills developed overseas, and readjust to the culture shock of being home again.

And of course, make new acquaintances and have a bit of craic!

When: 15th & 16th October 2011 (Saturday and Sunday)

Where: Dublin, All Hallows College, Drumcondra

Accommodation: Residential, single rooms

Cost: 50 euro. Accommodation and all meals included - no charge for VSO returnees.

How: Places restricted to 16 so the sooner you book the better. Contact deirdre@comhlahm.org /086-3367683 for a booking from and/or more details.

Who: The weekend is open to anyone who has worked or volunteered overseas for 3 months+ in development/humanitarian/aid or human rights capacity.



TRINITY COLLEGE

The University of Dublin

Irish School of Ecumenics

M.Litt. and Ph.D. Degrees – Dublin and Belfast

Email: ressec@tcd.ie

ISE is recognized world-wide for the unique manner in which it brings the fields of politics, sociology, ethics, theology and religion into a disciplined interaction. The School offers supervision of Masters of Letters (M. Litt.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) work in a range of fields of specialization including: Religion and Politics; Interreligious Studies; Politics of Peace and Conflict; Intercultural Theology; International Relations; Ethics in International Affairs; Ecumenical Theologies and Theologies of Reconciliation.

M.Phil. in Intercultural Theology & Interreligious Studies – Dublin

Email: ecumsec@tcd.ie

Intercultural Theology & Interreligious Studies (ITIS) is a new and ground-breaking course that explores the complex realities of intercultural and interreligious relationships. Participants are enabled to draw on a wide and interdisciplinary range of scholarship – combining emerging and established fields such as comparative theology, intercultural ethics, political science and religious studies. There are four module tracks through the course, of which students choose one; Christian Ecumenical Theologies, Comparative Theology and Interreligious Studies, World Christianity and Intercultural Theology, and Religions and Ethics in a Pluralist World. Students also have an opportunity to participate in a European Intensive Programme, in which they meet and learn from scholars and other students in a variety of stimulating venues (September 9-25, 2012, the venues are Sofia/Constanta).

M.Phil. in International Peace Studies – Dublin

Email: peacesec@tcd.ie

International Peace Studies provides an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the sources of armed conflict and war. It examines the conditions for achieving sustainable peace through peacemaking and peacebuilding. The programme draws on the fields of international relations, ethics, development studies and conflict resolution. Our graduates are employed in the diplomatic service, in NGOs and international organizations such as the UN, in media and education. Others continue to PhD programmes.

M.Phil. in Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation – Belfast

Email: reconsec@tcd.ie

This programme is a unique opportunity to study in a society in transition from conflict. Students can specialise in Master courses in conflict resolution or reconciliation, or pursue a joint Master course across both areas. Conflict Resolution offers specialisation in practical skills, meeting the needs of both experienced practitioners and those wishing to enter this field. Reconciliation Studies offers an interdisciplinary approach to politics, theology and ethics and is excellent preparation for Ph.D. study.

Postgraduate Diploma in Conflict & Dispute Resolution Studies – Dublin

Email: [cdssec@tcd.ie](mailto:cdrssec@tcd.ie)

This programme interests those, in both the public and private sectors, who wish to study civil mediation and other non-adversarial dispute and conflict resolution processes (ADRs) which are increasingly a part of legislative and management structures in the EU and internationally. Through an alliance with Mediation Forum-Ireland those who complete the CDRS programme will have an opportunity to have their names included in the relevant specialist panel of Accredited Mediators. This one year programme is taught at ISE on two evenings per week over 24 weeks (September to April) with two practical, skill-based mediation training workshops held on Saturdays.

M.Phil. students can study full-time for 12 months or part-time for 24 months. The Master in Conflict Resolution will be delivered through short-block intensive modules. For further information about these programmes or all relevant closing dates please refer to the following websites: www.tcd.ie/Graduate_Studies/prospectivestudents; www.tcd.ie/ise.

Applications should be made online at www.pac.ie. Applications will be considered after the closing dates only if places remain.

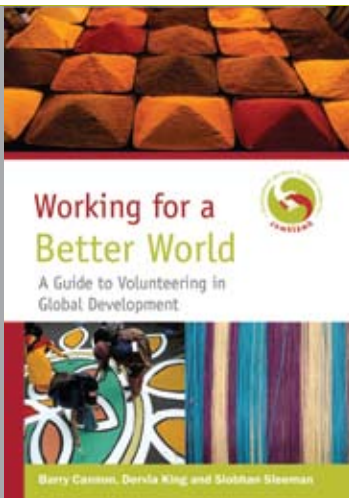
Irish School of Ecumenics, Trinity College Dublin,
Tel. +353.1.2601144, Fax: +353.1.2601158
683 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 4EG,
Tel. +44.28.90770087,
Fax: +44.28.90373986



Interested in volunteering in a developing country?



Working for a Better World: a Guide to Volunteering in Overseas Development



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www.volunteeringoptions.org