

# Act Now on 2015

Deliver Ireland's Aid Promise

## Annual Report 2012

### **In Figures**

- Supporters sent **4,459** emails to TDs in the months before Budget 2012.
- **2,263** supporters on the Act Now email list
- **1,268** fans on Facebook
- Sean 2012 campaign video viewed over **4,700** times on YouTube
- **602** followers on Twitter
- **68** TDs asked parliamentary questions about development, including **15** TDs who asked questions about 0.7%

### **In Words**

*"The legacy of the Famine is that we bear witness. When we see human suffering, we don't linger behind the scenes and depend on anonymous process. We go to what we believe is our proper haunt.... as human beings and as Irishmen and Irishwomen: the front-line. For us, food security, humanitarian aid are not just political matters. We make them our personal business because they run so deep in the Irish heart, the Irish experience, the Irish psyche. It is that generational memory that supports Irish Aid and all aid agencies, to bring not just food but hope, self-reliance, compassion and dignity across the Developing World."*

Enda Kenny, May 2012

*"Ireland must continue to make progress towards the UN target of spending 0.7% of national income on overseas aid by 2015. It is in Ireland's interest to strengthen the foundations of a stable and sustainable international economic order, by investing in overseas aid. Ireland can contribute to building a new global community and build partnerships that will benefit us now and into the future."*

Irish Congress of Trade Unions, November 2012

*"Ireland has some of the best targeted overseas aid in the world, and remains an inspiration to other EU countries. It is important that people in Ireland who are having a hard time know that Ireland's aid money is among the best spent in the world. It is an enormous credit to the nation,"*

Jamie Drummond, One Campaign's Executive Director, May 2012

**This report outlines the activities, achievements and challenges associated with the **Act Now on 2015** campaign in 2012.**

**We invite the campaign's member organisations to reflect on their own involvement and to suggest improvements as the campaign moves forward into 2013.**

The **Act Now on 2015** Campaign was re-launched at the Dóchas AGM on 3 May, with the support of 69 Irish anti-poverty organisations. This was the third year of the campaign, which is a continuation of the **We Don't Care Less** campaign which was launched in 2009 in response to a series of deep cuts to Ireland's overseas aid budget.

At its launch, member organisations were asked to assign a contact person and to make commitments to contribute to specific aspects of the campaign. The campaign coordination group and campaign coordinator were both changed from the 2011 campaign. The campaign was coordinated by Dóchas through these bodies, and executed by its member organisations.

This was the second year of campaigning following Ireland's bailout by the EU and the IMF. The campaign took place in the context of repeated austerity budgets, and in an environment in which dozens of other organisations are campaigning publicly and lobbying the government to minimise cuts in their sector.

## **Objectives of the campaign**

**That Ireland reaches a minimum of 0.7% of GNP in ODA by 2015 at the latest.**

Long term objectives in support of that goal–

- Binding annual targets for spending on ODA to deliver a minimum of 0.7% by 2015 at the latest
- Legislation that ensures more predictable allocations in ODA spending, in place by the earliest date possible in order to guarantee Ireland's aid commitment
- Ireland plays an active role at EU level in advocating for ambitious collective and individual targets between now and 2015.

## **Activities**

### **1. Political Lobby:**

The Campaign Coordination Group and certain member organisation CEOs met with various TDs, Senators, political advisors and the Tánaiste, and their core messages to them were emphasizing the importance of not cutting the aid budget further ahead of our EU Presidency and the positives of our aid.

Dóchas commissioned an Ipsos/MRBI poll which found that 79% of respondents agreed it was important for Ireland's international reputation that the Government keeps its promise to spend 0.7% of national income on overseas aid by 2015 at the latest. Respondents were asked if Ireland should continue to support overseas aid even with its current economic difficulties. The results showed strong support for overseas aid, with 79% of respondents agreeing that it was important.

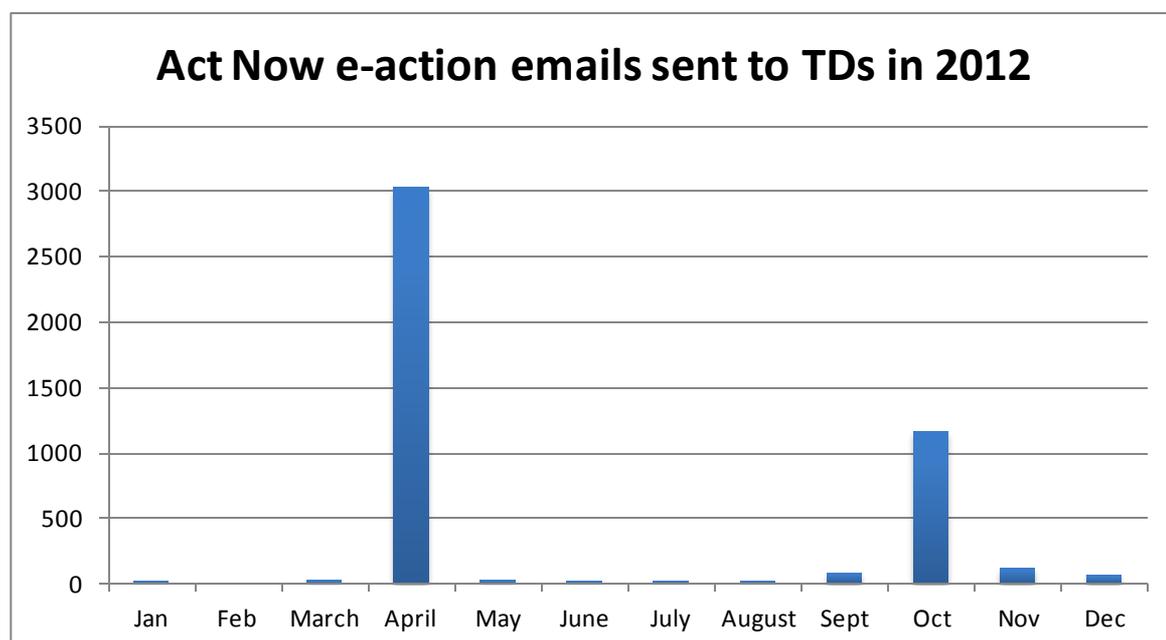
A formal pre-budget submission was made to the Government.

On 1 March, Dóchas was invited to present its submission to the White Paper Review to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade. On Tuesday 6 March, Dóchas members presented their work at an evening in Leinster House, attended by 23 TDs and Senators, and on 7 March, the Joint Committee held a debate on Irish Aid funding to NGOs. Indications of the success of the event were given at the Joint Oireachtas committee hearing the next day, where several deputies referred to the evidence of the impact of Irish NGOs presented the night before. Maureen O’Sullivan TD said:

*“The theme last night of the wonderful presentations was that aid works, not in a patronising way but in a real way.”*

In follow up correspondence with Dóchas, Padraig MacLochlainn TD said:

*“I am particularly proud to be Irish when I think of the work of our NGOs and missionaries overseas.”<sup>i</sup>*



### Sean 2012 Video

In April 2012 three **UCD Volunteers Overseas** members created the Sean 2012 campaign and video which encouraged people to take the Act Now on 2015 website’s e-action. By the 16th of April, the Sean 2012 video had 3,862 views (in just 5 days). Over 3,000 emails were sent to TDs in these five days.

In terms of media coverage it was the Curator’s choice on Storyful.com (and remained on their home page for five days), Sean 2012 was the most commented story on Broadsheet.ie, it was featured on the Huffington Post, there was a live radio interview on Phantom 105.2 fm and we had Tweets of support from Concern, Trocaire, VSO Ireland, Dóchas, Comhlamh and 2fm DJ Rick O’Shea. It was also featured in the College Tribune newspaper. Links to these are below:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01irkqbfPoU>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/217623121671921/>

<http://storyful.com/stories/25412>

<http://www.broadsheet.ie/2012/04/12/sean2012/>

<http://daraint.org/2012/04/12/3461/huffington-post-sean-2012-invisible-childrens-kony-2012-inspires-new-video-tackling-irelands-overseas-aid/>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/12/sean-2012-invisible-children\\_n\\_1421021.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/12/sean-2012-invisible-children_n_1421021.html)

## 2. Coordination of Communications:

The campaign worked to develop and disseminate clear, shared messages to be repeated and advanced at many levels. In the lead-up to Budget 2012, the campaign's key message to the government was a call to show visible progress towards 0.7% in the budget, with 0.55% as an interim target for 2012.

## 3. Member Activities:

Member organisations were asked to independently organise campaign activities, with the support of the campaign team. The level of involvement in the campaign by member organisations was lower than in previous years.

These events included –

- Photo shot with Joe Costello celebrating 88% of Irish people proud of our reputation as an aid donor. <sup>ii</sup>
- [Trocaire](#) roundtable event: Beyond 2015: Where next for the [MDGs](#)? Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012. <sup>iii</sup>
- A group of 15-20 Irish, Bulgarian and Finnish young people "acting now for 2015" with **Development Perspectives** at a workshop.<sup>iv</sup>
- **VMM** AGM and day long workshop with various speakers for their supporters and board members and a few other invitees. Talk by Mark Cummings from Trocaire on beyond 2015. They promoted Act Now with leaflets, posters and brief talk.
- **Sari** Soccerfest: Photos and video with Olympic medalist John-Joe Nevin and other celebrities including Gary Cooke from Apres Match, John Kilraine from RTE News and Oscar Sibanda from Galway United and Act Now on 2015 sign. Match played with Act Now team t-shirts. MDG football game for children.<sup>v</sup>
- Act Now on 2015 photo shoot on Stephens Green with photographer Mark Stedman. Paul Lang (Oxfam volunteer), Joe Jennings (Concern), David Moriarty (Oxfam), Cecilia Fourie (Oxfam volunteer), Hans Zomer (Dochas), Ross McCarthy (Act Now 2015), Joanne McGarry (Trocaire), Orla Quinn (Trocaire), Lizzy Noone (Concern) and Paul Ralph (Oxfam volunteer) took part. <sup>vi</sup>
- Tweet Thursday event in October was seen by tens of thousands of people on Twitter and, along with targeted emails from member organisations to their supporters, ensured that over 1,000 emails were sent by supporters of the Act Now on 2015 campaign to their local TDs. Every single constituency and TD in the country was reached through this e-action and in most cases they were emailed many times over. The Tweet Thursday event also asked member organisations to tweet positive messages about Ireland's overseas aid.
- Bobby McCormack (**Development Perspectives**) distributing Act Now on 2015 flyers, posters and information in the Dundalk Institute of Technology and giving a talk on the campaign to two classes (60 students).
- **National Youth Council of Ireland** included Act Now information in its 2012 Resilience Document for One World Week 2012.

- **Hope foundation** include reference to the campaign in their development education literature and ensure that reference was drawn to it when they met with youth/school groups around the country.
- **Misean Cara** included an article on the Act Now campaign in their regular newsletter (MissionAid), which has a circulation of approx 2,500. <sup>vii</sup>
- Various members included reference to the Act Now on 2015 campaign and 0.7% in their budget submissions. These included **Social justice Ireland** and **The Irish Congress of Trade Unions**.
- Various members submitted pre EU Presidency documents with reference to the need to reach 0.7%.
- **Nurture Africa** used Act Now t-shirts for Uganda trip with 28 volunteers.
- Aid Debate in UCD Hans, Maurice McQuillan, **Trocaire**, UCDVO, **Suas** and **Self Help Africa**. Debate agreed aid is essential, that Ireland has a great aid programme and that we need to reach 0.7%.
- Jim Clarken of **Oxfam** spoke on Frontline in defence of our aid programme and the panel of four, which included a current Minister, a Sinn Fein TD and Brian Lucey all agreed that our aid should not be cut and in fact increased.
- **Concern** organised the launch of their 2011 Global Hunger Index in Leinster House.
- Member organisations publicising it through their newsletters and social media, by including the campaign logo and a link to [actnow2015.ie](http://actnow2015.ie) on the front page of their websites and by calling on their staff and supporters to take action.

### Post-budget analysis

In Budget 2013, the ODA budget was cut by €16m, from €639m to €621.8m. €16m was cut from the budget for International Cooperation, while the budget for other ODA was left at 2012 levels. Ireland's spending on ODA in 2013 will be €621.8m, or 0.46% of gross national income (on current growth projections which could/almost certainly will fluctuate).

This demonstrates the government's commitment to overseas development despite continued austerity measures, yet it makes the target of 0.7% by 2015 more difficult to reach.

## Member Organisations:

<p>ActionAid Ireland Afri Africa Centre Age Action Ireland Aidlink Alan Kerins Projects Amawele Amnesty International Ireland Bóthar Camara Centre for Global Education Childfund Ireland Children in Crossfire Christian Aid Ireland CBM Ireland Church Missionary Society Ireland (CMSI) Comhlámh Concern Worldwide Debt and Development Coalition Development Perspectives Dóchas ElectricAid Foundation Nepal Friends of Londiani Frontline Defenders Gorta Habitat for Humanity Ireland Hope Foundation Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) Irish Development Education Association (IDEA) Irish Family Planning Association (IFPA) (IFPA) Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation (ILCUF) Irish Missionary Union (IMU) Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)</p>	<p>Irish Red Cross Just Forests Kerry Action for Development Education (KADE) Kimmage DSC Link Community Development Misean Cara National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCII) National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) Niall Mellon Township Trust Nurture Africa Oxfam Ireland Plan Ireland Progressio Self Help Africa Sierra Leone Ireland Partnership Sightsavers International Ireland Skillshare International Ireland Social Justice Ireland Sports Against Racism Ireland (SARI) Suas Educational Development Tearfund The One Foundation The SCOOP Foundation The Society of St. Vincent De Paul, Ireland Transparency International Ireland Trócaire Value Added in Africa Viatores Christi Vita Voluntary Service International (VSI) Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM) War on Want Northern Ireland World Vision Ireland</p>
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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/2/Report\\_on\\_Dochas\\_Leinster\\_House\\_event\\_March\\_2012.pdf](http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/2/Report_on_Dochas_Leinster_House_event_March_2012.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> <https://twitter.com/i/#!/ActNow2015/media/slideshow?url=pic.twitter.com%2FTTeLUyad>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://twitpic.com/8eahfv>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=450874564952763&set=pb.124146737625549.-2207520000.1358530660&type=3&theater>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=455746681132218&set=pb.124146737625549.-2207520000.1358530660&type=3&theater>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.flickr.com/photos/32899160@N08/7975987634/in/photostream/>

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.miseancara.ie/newsletter/oct12.htm>