

# OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT AID

The region has endured devastating hunger three times in thirty years. On the previous two occasions, the world said ‘never again’.

President Michael D. Higgins



## Purpose

Explore the importance of overseas development aid through the context of Somalia.



## Materials

- Introduction to Somalia slide show
- Overseas Aid Explained by Trócaire video
- Worksheet 1: Myth Busters
- MentiMeter



## Reminder

The Introduction to Somalia slide show on the Somalia branch offers background information on Somalia, maps, photos and peoples stories.

**Note:** Please note that when exploring overseas aid, it is important to ensure that students approach this topic and view it through a human rights lens. Countries, communities and people receive overseas aid because of injustices, and it is critical that students talk about rights rather than needs, injustices rather than misfortune, and that overseas aid is a way for countries like Ireland and the UK to show solidarity with those people experiencing injustice.

## What is Overseas Aid?



### Time

20 minutes

### Step 1

Set up a word cloud on [MentiMeter](#) with the question: What is overseas aid? Alternatively, write the question on a large sheet of paper, and ask the young people to discuss as a group. Note their answers on the sheet.

From the feedback and suggestions, try to come up with a short group definition that everyone can agree with.

### Step 2

Explore the definition of overseas aid further by watching the [Overseas Aid Explained](#) by

Trócaire video located on the Somalia branch of the Tree of Justice. Ask the



young people to take brief notes so that they can reflect on what they hear in the video.

### Step 3 Myth Busters



### Time

20 minutes

There are many myths that exist about overseas aid, often because people are unaware of the facts supporting the need for overseas aid.

Split the young people into groups of four and give each group a copy of Worksheet 1: Myth Busters. Ask the groups to match each myth with its corresponding buster. The correct answers can be found on slide 16 of the Introduction to Somalia slide show. Discuss the correct answers with the young people. Did they find anything surprising? Is there anything they would like to learn more about?

### Alternative Activity

The activity can also be done as an agree or disagree activity before showing the video. One by one, read out the myths and ask the young people to stand to the left of the room if they agree with the statement, to the right if they disagree and in the middle if they are in-between. Ask for opinions and then read out the busters. Give the young people an opportunity to change their minds.



### Irish Aid

Irish Aid is Ireland's official international development aid programme. Part of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Irish Aid's job is to manage Ireland's overseas aid budget, which

is used to reduce poverty and hunger around the world, and to support emergency assistance, and longer-term development in over eighty of the world's poorest countries. Watch the following video from [Irish Aid](#) about their work.



### Extension question



**Time**  
10 minutes

Explain to the young people that the Irish government has for years been unable to deliver on its commitment to overseas aid. In 1974, when Garret FitzGerald was the minister for foreign affairs, the government pledged to give 0.7 per cent of the gross national income to overseas aid, or 70 cent out of every 100 euro. Successive governments have made the same commitment but forty-eight years later Ireland is still falling short. Current estimates are that Ireland gives 0.31 per cent to overseas aid. The United Kingdom for many years managed to deliver on its 0.7 per cent commitment, but reduced this to 0.5 per cent in 2020 due to financial pressures on the UK economy.

### Discuss

- Ask the young people why they think Ireland has been unable to reach 0.7 per cent. Can

they think of things that have happened to get in the way of this commitment?

- Who has the power when it comes to deciding how much overseas aid Ireland and/or the UK gives each year? Encourage the young people to think at different levels – personal, local, national, international. How can young people act to ensure Ireland and the UK meet their overseas aid commitments?



### Summary

At the end of the day, overseas aid alone can't solve the world's problems. Action is needed to tackle the root causes of poverty, not just its symptoms. This means putting the rights of the world's poorest at the heart of local, national and international decision-making. It means demanding a fairer world, one of peace, equality, justice and sustainability.

## Worksheet 1: Myth Busters

### Myth

Only countries in the Global South receive overseas aid.

We haven't caused these problems; it is not our problem to fix them.

Governments should provide for their own people.

Aid has no long-term, lasting impact.

Local people have no say in how overseas aid is used.

Ireland has fulfilled all its commitments to overseas aid.

### Buster

Many of these problems are linked to colonialism, conflict and climate change, which have many of their roots in the Global North.

Overseas aid is making a real impact. It has helped to save millions of lives and to reduce extreme poverty around the world. Because of overseas aid more children are in school than ever before and fewer women are dying in childbirth.

The wealthiest countries of the world each agreed to spend at least 0.7 per cent of their annual gross national income on overseas aid. This promise amounts to spending just 70 cent for every €100 on aid. Unfortunately, very few countries, including Ireland, have met this goal. In fact, in 2020 Ireland spent roughly only 31 cent for every €100 on overseas aid.

Governments face major challenges in providing basic services such as healthcare and education and cannot do this without assistance from overseas.

Ireland received overseas aid during the famine from places like India and South America.

Every country can experience hardships that require aid from overseas.

Because Trócaire works in partnership with community-based groups, local people remain the driving force for change.