



Social Justice Ireland

National Social Monitor 2015



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Introduction

It is important to monitor society's progress. *Social Justice Ireland* understands progress as being principally about promoting the wellbeing of individuals and society as a whole.

At present, across the world in general and in Ireland in particular, the emphasis in policy-making is primarily focused on economic growth and how the market economy is developing. However there is far more to progress than getting the market right. A balance is required between the various aspects of life if the wellbeing of this and future generations is to be secured. *Social Justice Ireland* presents this National Social Monitor as a contribution to the public debate that is urgently needed on Ireland's future and how Ireland is performing in terms of promoting the wellbeing of all in society.

In this 2015 National Social Monitor, *Social Justice Ireland* outlines the present situation on a range of policy issues that impact on people's well-being. The issues presented are:

1. Healthcare
2. Education
3. Housing
4. Public Participation
5. Income Distribution
6. Taxation
7. Work and Job Creation
8. Rural Development
9. Sustainability
10. Global South

All of these issues have implications for Ireland's economy and how the market performs. However, they also have implications for the well-being of all of Ireland's population and for Irish society as a whole. Society's values guide its decision-making. Its decisions shape how resources are distributed. Its

values, decision-making and resource distribution guide how relationships are organised in society.

The policy areas presented in this Monitor are ones that most people would identify as crucially important for their well-being. While there has been some improvement since the crash of 2008, many of these indicators have been moving in the wrong direction.

On the positive side, GDP is growing, the number of jobs has increased and unemployment has fallen.

On the negative side Ireland continues to have high national debt levels, growing pressure on public services and major infrastructure deficits. Ireland has a sustained problem with poverty, particularly child poverty and faces challenges in terms of literacy, numeracy and information processing skills deficits among adults. Despite recent welcome improvements, long-term unemployment is now seen as structural in nature.

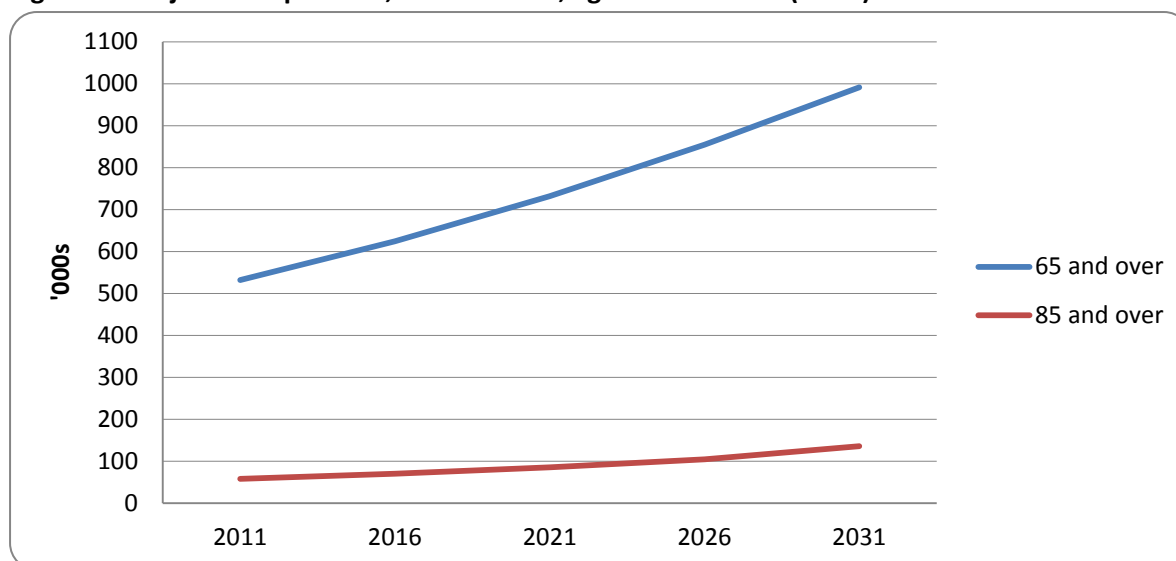
Social Justice Ireland has long advocated a new guiding vision for Irish society; one based on the values of human dignity, equality, human rights, solidarity, sustainability and the pursuit of the common good. These values are at the core of the vision for a nation in which all men, women and children have what they require to live life with dignity and to fulfil their potential: including sufficient income; access to the services they need; and active inclusion in a genuinely participatory society. These are not minority views as is sometimes stated, but reflect the aspirations of the majority of Irish citizens.

The indicators presented in the following pages show that Ireland has a long way to go to achieve such a vision.

But building such a society is possible. On the one hand it requires recognition of the fact that a future based on the primacy of the market is not likely to be either just or fair. On the other hand it requires that priority be given to the common good.

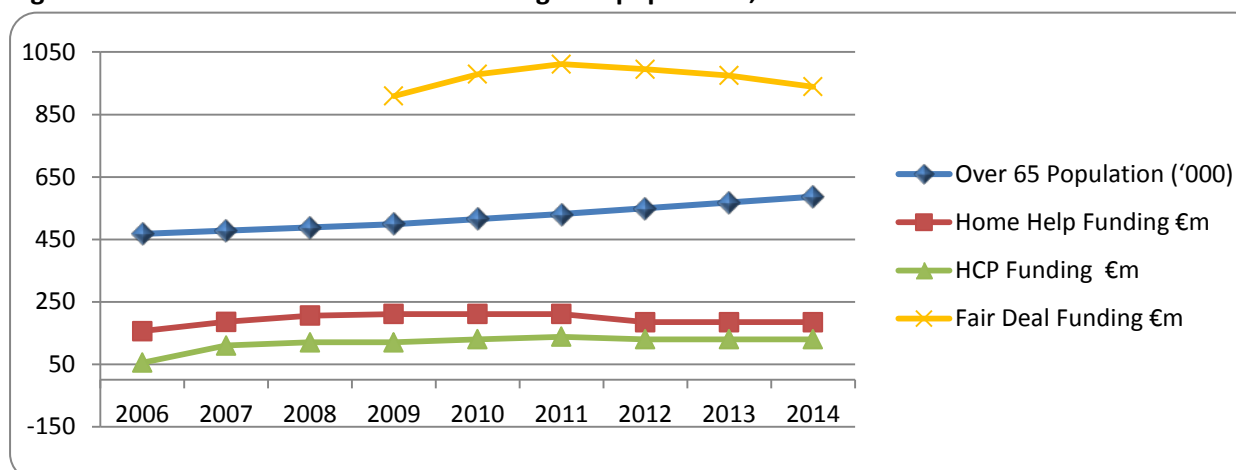
Healthcare

Figure 1: Projected Population, 2011 to 2031; ages 65+ and 85+ ('000s)



Source: Department of Health 2014, Table 1.4. Actual figure for 2011

Figure 1.1: Fair Deal and Home Care Funding: 65+ population, 2006-2014 - €m.



Source: Health Service Executive Reports – Various years

Table 1: HSE Support to Older People in the Community, 2007 - 2014

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
People in receipt of home help (000's)	54,736	55,366	53,971	54,000	50,986	44,387	46,454	47,061
Home Help Hours delivered (million)	12.35m	12.64m	11.97m	11.68m	11.09m	9.8m	9.73m	10.3m
People in receipt of Home Care Packages (000's)	8,035	8,990	8,959	9,941	10,968	10,526	11,873	13,199

Source: December Performance Reports, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012; 2013; 2014. November Performance Report, 2010 and HSE Annual Report 2010.

Healthcare

Although Ireland's population is young in comparison to those of other European countries, it is still ageing.

- There will be nearly 1 million aged 65 and over by 2031 – an increase of 86.4 per cent;
- There will some 136,000 people aged 85 or over by 2031, an increase of 132.8 per cent;
- The old age dependency ratio (the ratio of those aged 65 years and over to those aged 15-64) is projected to rise to 30 by 2031¹.

Demographic challenge

This level of population ageing will be associated with higher levels of disability and long-term ill-health and this requires planning and investment. There is a strong link between disability and increased age with the percentage of the population aged 85 and over who have a disability at 72.3 per cent (CSO, 2012 'Our Bill of Health').

Planning to meet this challenge requires a comprehensive approach to care services that would include integrated services across the areas of GP care, public health nursing, home care supports, acute hospital care, rehabilitation and long-term care.

Despite the steady growth in population, the public bed stock capacity has reduced by 29% since 2008 inclusive of an 11% reduction in short-stay beds and a 35% reduction in long-stay beds. Reduction has been a feature of the available resources across these key areas of service provision at a time when the population of older people is increasing.

Community Care and Home Care

Support for people to remain in their own homes is a key and appropriate policy objective and coincides with the wishes of most older people. But this commitment does not appear to be supported in practice

¹ The old age dependency ratio is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 65 and over by the number of persons aged 15-64. It was 17.3 in 2011.

when we note the significant decrease in the provision of home help hours in recent years² especially at a time of population ageing. As Table 1 shows, there were approximately 8,300 fewer people in receipt of home help support in 2014 than there had been in 2008 and there was a decrease of 2.34 million in the hours delivered. During the period 2008-2014, the number of people in receipt of Home Care Packages increased by some 47 per cent, but the funding for this scheme has remained static.

The 2015 Health Service Executive National Service Plan envisages additional spending in this area (including on Home Care Packages for 600 people) but also acknowledges the risk that overall the amount allocated for older people is not sufficient to address increasing demand.

Over the past six or so years, changes in public services (such as in home help hours and community nursing units, reductions in the Fuel Allowance, cuts in the Household Benefits Package, abolition of the Christmas bonus, and increases in prescription charges as well as decreased frontline staff and services within the healthcare sector) have all adversely affected older people, falling most heavily on poorer groups without the income to compensate and especially, of course, on poorer people with disabilities or illness.

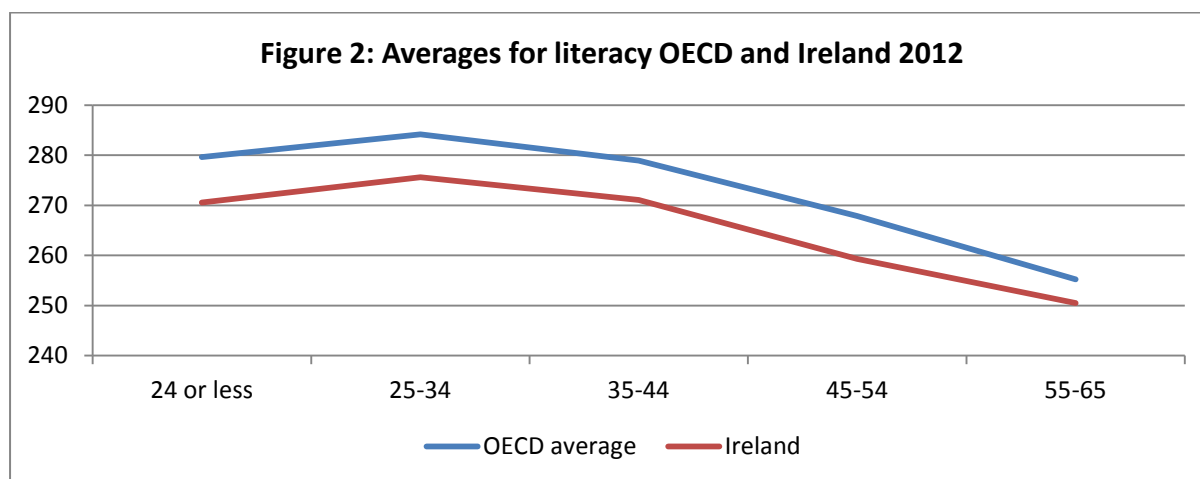
A commitment to supporting people at home is only aspirational if funding is not provided for home help services, day care centres and home care packages – some of which have received serious and unwelcome cuts in recent Budgets at a time when they should, on the contrary, be the subject of investment to address population ageing.

Policy Priorities

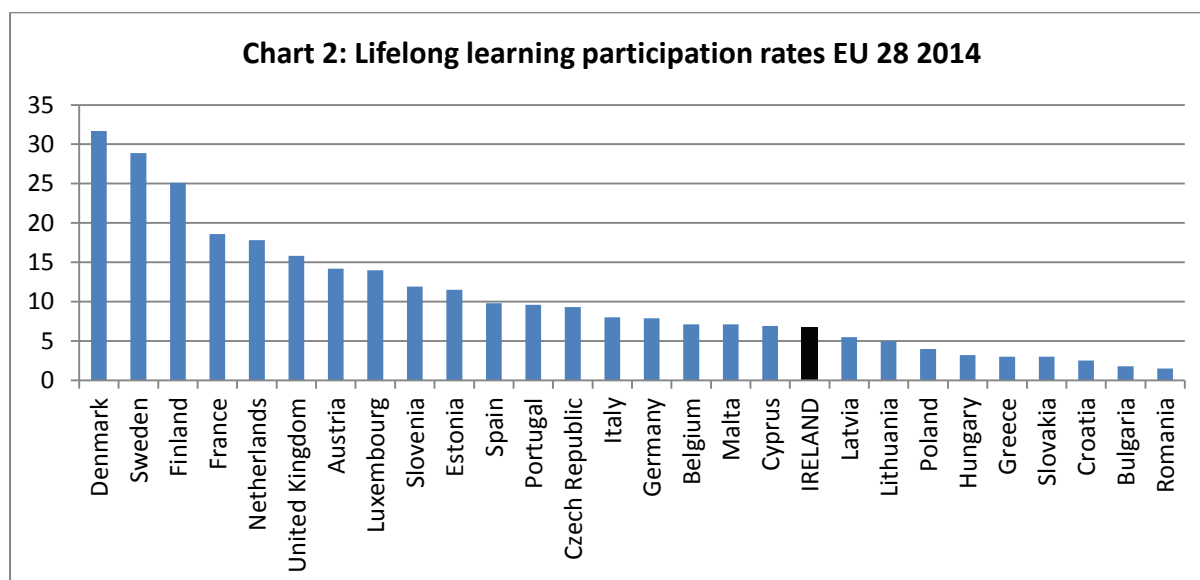
- Give far greater priority to community care and restructure the health budget accordingly. Ensure that the increased allocation does not go to GMS or drug subsidy scheme.
- Provide additional respite care and long stay care for older people and people with disabilities.

² HSE reports make it clear that older people are the main beneficiaries of Home Help services and Home Care Packages.

Education

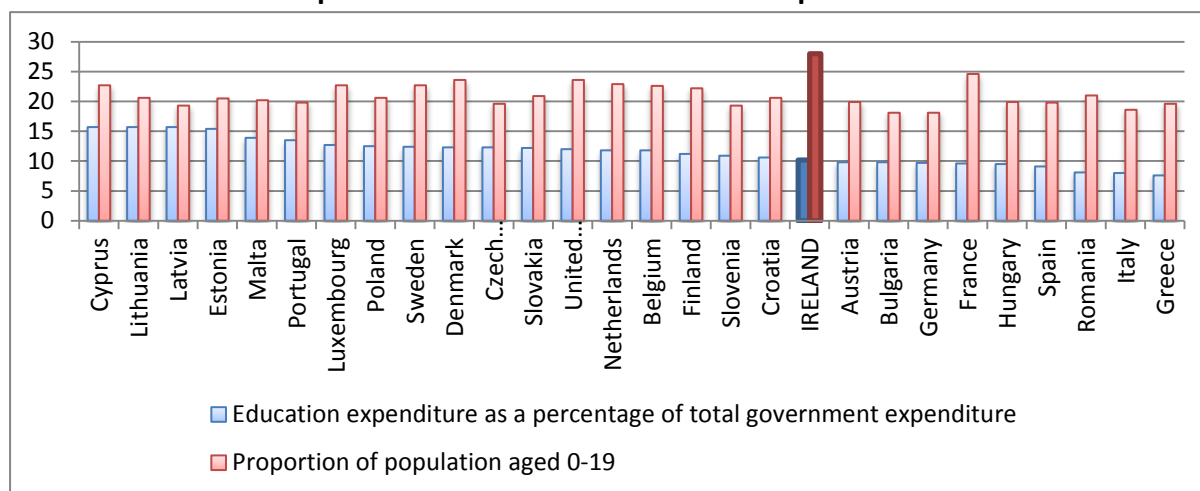


Source: OECD PIAAC



Source: Eurostat, 2014

Chart 2.2: Education Expenditure as % total Government Expenditure EU 28 2013



Source: Eurostat

Education

Education is widely recognised as crucial to the achievement of our national objectives of economic competitiveness, social inclusion and active citizenship. However, the overall levels of public funding for education in Ireland are out of step with these aspirations. This under-funding is most severe in early childhood education and in the areas of lifelong learning and second chance education – the very areas that are most vital in terms of the promotion of greater equity and fairness.

Education and training are crucial to achieving the objective of an inclusive society where all citizens have the opportunity to participate fully and meaningfully in social and economic life. The development of the education and skills of people is as important a source of wealth as the accumulation of more traditional forms of capital.

Planning for demographic pressures

Despite Ireland having the youngest population in Europe with 28% of the population aged 0-19, Ireland spends relatively limited amounts on education. Government expenditure on education as a proportion of total government expenditure is the ninth lowest in Europe (chart 2.1). However, demographic pressures will require a significant increase in expenditure on education in years to come.

The Department of Education now projects the following possible increases in enrolment across the system:

- an additional 44,000 places will be needed at primary level between now and 2017¹;
- an additional 25,000 places will be needed at second level between now and 2017²;

- at third level, the number of full-time students is expected to continue to rise every year between 2015 and 2028³.

Adult Literacy

The 2013 OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)⁴ provides the most up to date data on adult literacy in Ireland. On literacy, Ireland is placed 17th out of 24 countries with 18 per cent of Irish adults having a literacy level at or below level 1. People at this level of literacy can understand and follow only basic written instructions and read only very short texts. On numeracy, Ireland is placed 19th out of 24 countries and in the final category, problem solving in technology rich environments, 42 per cent of Irish adults scored at or below level 1.

A very significant proportion of Ireland's adult population does not possess the most basic literacy, numeracy and information-processing skills considered necessary to success in the world today. In terms of literacy mean scores, Ireland is consistently below the OECD average, in every age cohort (see figure 2).

Investment in, and the promotion of lifelong learning should be seen as a basic need in this context. Second chance education and continuing education are vitally important and require on-going support.

Policy Priorities

- Investment is required in quality Early Childhood Education and Care.
- The promotion of and investment in lifelong learning should be a priority.
- Long-term planning and increased expenditure is required to meet projected increased demand at all levels of the education system whilst ensuring quality education services at all levels.

¹ <http://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2014-Press-Releases/PR14-12-18.html>

² *ibid*

³ <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Statistical-Reports/Projections-of-demand-for-Full-Time-Third-Level-Education-2014-2028.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/site/piaac/>

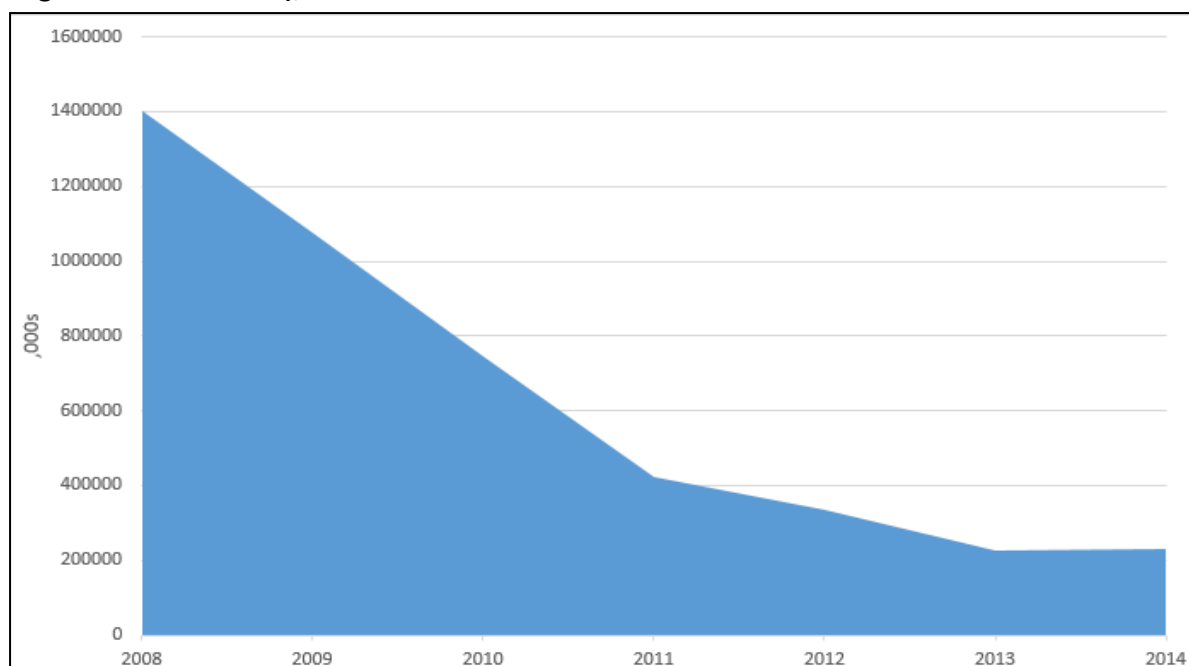
Housing

Table 3: House Completions, 2005-15

Year	Local Authority Housing	Voluntary / Non Profit Housing	Private Housing	Total
2005	4,209	1,350	75,398	80,957
2006	3,968	1,240	88,211	93,419
2007	4,986	1,685	71,356	78,027
2008	4,905	1,896	44,923	51,721
2009	3,362	2,011	21,076	26,420
2010	1,328	741	12,533	14,602
2011	486	745	9,295	10,480
2012	363	653	7,472	8,488
2013	293	211	7,797	8,301
2014	158	357	10,501	11,016
2015 Q1	20	117	2,492	2,692

Source: Department of Environment Housing Statistics 2015

Figure 3: Capital Expenditure Provision, Social and Affordable Housing (including Urban and Rural Regeneration Schemes), 2008-14*



Source: Extracted from Dáil Debates, Written Answers, Tuesday 17 June 2014, www.oireachtas.ie *2014 includes €50 million provision included in Budget 2014

Housing

The right to adequate housing should be a basic human right recognised and respected by every State. Unfortunately, there is no legal entitlement to housing in Ireland.

In its Summary of Social Housing Assessments 2013, the Housing Agency identified 89,872 households which were assessed as qualifying for social housing. Of these 60% (54,045) were on the housing list for more than two years and 55% (49,179) were families.

Table 3 shows house completions in the various sectors from 2005 to Quarter 1 2015. While the rate of private housing completions has seen a moderate increase in 2014, local authority and voluntary/non-profit housing remains low. The rate of house completions is insufficient to deal with the scale of the housing crisis in Ireland.

A report carried out on behalf of the Housing Agency¹ indicates that an average of 15,932 units per annum will be required across urban settlements in the period 2014-18, with an average of 7500 of these being required in Dublin. An analysis by the ESRI² found that the number of households in Ireland increased by 12.6 per cent in the intercensal period 2006-11 and, taking into account increased population age and migration factors, project annual household growth of between 19,000 and 33,300.

How then are these increased households to be accommodated? In 2006, 93,149 housing units were constructed in Ireland, with 19,470 of these in Dublin. Since then this number has fallen year on year, with only 8301 new units constructed in 2013, 1360 of which were in Dublin. While figures released up to Quarter 1 2015 indicate a slight rise in

construction activity³, construction remains far below demand.

Securing sufficient finance to provide the scale of Social Housing required is a major challenge. The Government's Social Housing Strategy (SHS) is very welcome. It is on a scale that Ireland has not seen for many years. Despite this, however, it is not going to meet the demand unless a new approach is taken to securing the necessary finance.

The key challenge is to increase the supply of housing generally and of social housing in particular.

It is clear that the Exchequer cannot provide the funding necessary to deal with the current demand and more sustainable solutions are required. *Social Justice Ireland* recommends that Government put in place an off-balance sheet mechanism that could access low-cost finance required to address the lack of supply of social housing sufficient to eliminate waiting lists.

One possibility might be to use a vehicle such as NAMA which has expertise in developing such a mechanism. Given the fact that there are about 107,000 social housing units owned by Local Authorities and paying rent regularly it should be possible to put together a proposal that meets the Eurostat conditions for an acceptable off-balance sheet initiative.

Policy Priorities

- Explore off-balance sheet financing structures aimed at generating sufficient capital to adequately finance social housing need.
- Ensure that adequate resources are allocated for the effective implementation of tenancy regulation to protect the rights of tenants.

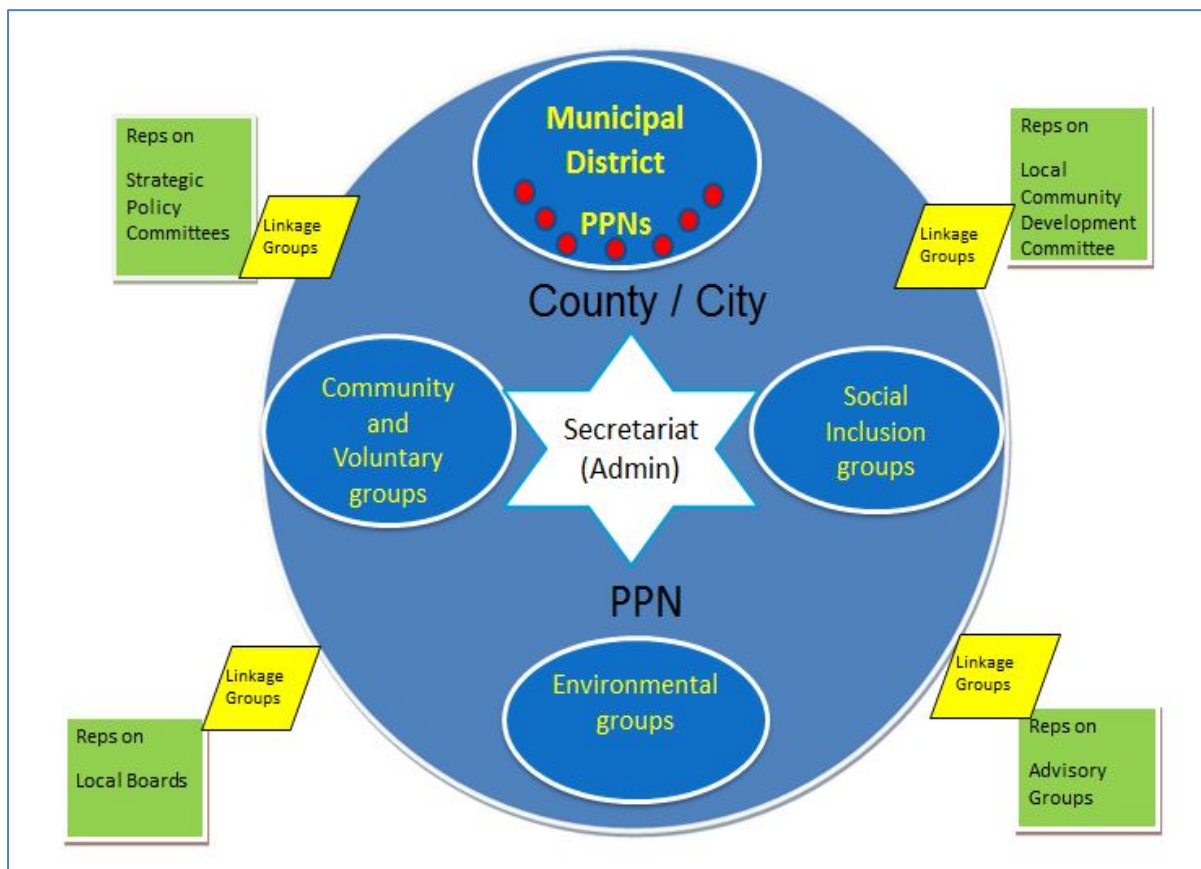
¹ http://www.futureanalytics.ie/p_HAhousing.html

² Duffy et al (2014) *Household Formation and Tenure Choice*. Dublin: ESRI

³ Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Housing Statistics 2015

Public Participation and Citizen Engagement

Figure 4: Public Participation Networks



Public Participation and Citizen Engagement

People have a right to participate in shaping the decisions that affect them and in developing and shaping the society in which they live. *Social Justice Ireland* believes that **a new social model for Ireland must be founded on the idea of deliberative democracy**. A deliberative decision making process is one in which all stakeholders are involved, but the power differentials are removed. In such a process, stakeholders are involved in the framing, implementing and evaluating of policies and measures that impact on them.¹

¹ See Healy and Reynolds (2011) for more on the concept of deliberative democracy.

In October 2012 the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government published '*Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government*'. The document outlines a vision for local government as 'leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably' (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012²). One of the stated aims of this process of local government reform is to create more meaningful and responsive local democracy (Department of Environment Community and Local Government 2012³) with options

² Putting People First p.iii

³ Ibid p.148

for citizen engagement and participative democracy outlined in the report. The new framework for public engagement and participation, introduced after the local and European elections in May 2014 is called “The Public Participation Network” (PPN).

Public Participation Networks (PPNs)

Public Participation Networks provide an opportunity for real engagement between local people and local authorities. PPNs have been established in all local authority areas in 2014/15. Membership is open to ‘not for profit’ groups in the social inclusion, environmental and general community and voluntary sectors. The aims of PPNs are to

- Facilitate the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner in decision making by
 - Encouraging and enabling public participation in local decision making and planning of services.
 - Facilitating the selection of representatives from the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors onto city/county decision making bodies.
 - Supporting a process that will feed the broad range of ideas, experience, suggestions and proposals of the PPN into policies and plans being developed by agencies and decision makers.
- Strengthen the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate by
 - Actively supporting the inclusion of socially excluded groups, communities experiencing high levels of poverty, communities

experiencing discrimination, including Travellers to enable them to participate at local and county level and to clearly demonstrate same.

- Sharing information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion & voluntary sector and act as a hub around which information is distributed and received.

Key to this structure is the development of Linkage Groups with interest and expertise in a particular area who will support their PPN representatives on boards and committees.

The PPN structure embeds the need to develop sustainable communities and to consider the well-being of communities at the heart of the local decision making process. A deliberative democracy structure and framework embedded into the citizen engagement and local government structures can enhance community involvement in decision making and the policy making process at a local level.

Policy Priorities

If this new structure is to succeed in improving participation and engagement it is imperative that:

- PPNs are adequately resourced in each Local Authority area to ensure that they can build appropriate capacity, gather and represent the views of their members while maintaining their independence from the Local Authorities.
- Local Authorities and other agencies engage openly and constructively with PPNs to facilitate real participation.
- The development of wellbeing statements for each Municipal District and Local Authority Area can feed into a long term sustainable vision for a better Ireland for this and future generations.

Income Distribution

Table 5: The Minimum Weekly Disposable Income Required to Avoid Poverty in 2015, by Household Types

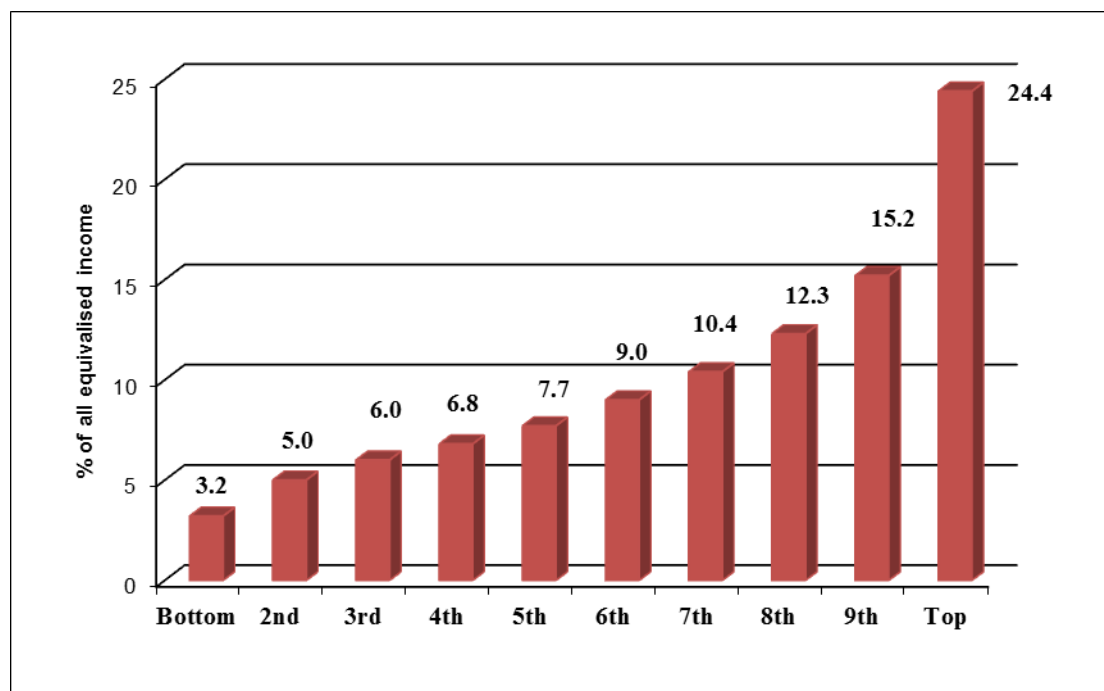
Household containing:	Weekly poverty line	Annual poverty line
1 adult	€208.08	€10,850
1 adult + 1 child	€276.75	€14,430
1 adult + 2 children	€345.41	€18,011
1 adult + 3 children	€414.08	€21,591
2 adults	€345.41	€18,011
2 adults + 1 child	€414.08	€21,591
2 adults + 2 children	€482.74	€25,172
2 adults + 3 children	€551.41	€28,752
3 adults	€482.74	€25,172

Table 5.1: The numbers of people below relative income poverty lines in Ireland, 1994-2013

Year	% of persons in poverty	Population of Ireland	Numbers in poverty
1994	15.6	3,585,900	559,400
1998	19.8	3,703,100	733,214
2001	21.9	3,847,200	842,537
2003	19.7	3,978,900	783,843
2004	19.4	4,045,200	784,769
2005	18.5	4,133,800	764,753
2006	17.0	4,232,900	719,593
2007	16.5	4,375,800	722,007
2008	14.4	4,485,100	645,854
2009	14.1	4,533,400	639,209
2010	14.7	4,554,800	669,556
2011	16.0	4,574,900	731,984
2012	16.5	4,585,400	756,591
2013	15.2	4,593,100	698,151

Source: Calculated using CSO on-line database population estimates, Whelan et al (2003:12) and CSO SILC reports (various years). Population estimates for April of each year.

Chart 5: Ireland's Income Distribution by 10% (decile) group, 2013



Source: CSO SILC 2015

Income distribution

The purpose of economic development should be to improve the living standards of all of the population. The persistence of high rates of poverty and income inequality in Ireland require greater attention than they currently receive. Tackling these problems effectively is a multifaceted task. It requires action on many fronts, ranging from healthcare and education to accommodation and employment. However, the most important requirement in tackling poverty is the provision of sufficient income to enable people to live life with dignity. No anti-poverty strategy can possibly be successful without an effective approach to addressing low incomes.

Measuring poverty

In trying to measure the extent of poverty, the most common approach has been to identify a poverty line (or lines) based on people's disposable income (earned income after taxes and including all benefits). The European Commission and the UN, among others, use a poverty line located at 60 per cent of median income. The median disposable income is the income of the middle person in society's income distribution. This poverty line is the one adopted in the *SILC* survey.

Table 5 presents the 60 per cent median income poverty line updated to 2015 levels. It shows what income corresponds to the poverty line for a number of household types. The relative income poverty line for a single person is €208.08. It is the minimum weekly disposable income (after taxes and including all benefits) that one adult needs to be above the poverty line.

Income distribution

In 2013, the top 10 per cent of Irish households received 24.4 per cent of the total income while the bottom decile received 3.2 per cent. Collectively, the poorest 60 per cent of households received a

very similar share (37.7 per cent) to the top 20 per cent (39.6 per cent). Overall the share of the top 10 per cent is almost 8 times the share of the bottom 10 per cent.

The data presented in chart 5 is equivalised meaning that it has been adjusted to reflect the number of adults and children in a household and to make it possible to compare across different household sizes and compositions. It measures disposable income which captures the amount of money available to spend after receipt of any employment/pension income, payment of all income taxes and receipt of any welfare entitlements. Income distribution data for the last few decades suggested that the overall structure of that distribution has been largely unchanged.

Without social transfers, 49.8 per cent of the population would be at risk of poverty¹. This figure highlights the importance of social transfers in addressing income inequality in Ireland. It also exposes the underlying income inequality that is inherent in Ireland.

Government should ensure that all members of society have an adequate income support whilst simultaneously planning to meet future challenges that Ireland will face. These challenges range from planning for demographic challenges and future pensions needs to adapting to the ever changing nature of work and the polarisation of many parts of the labour market.

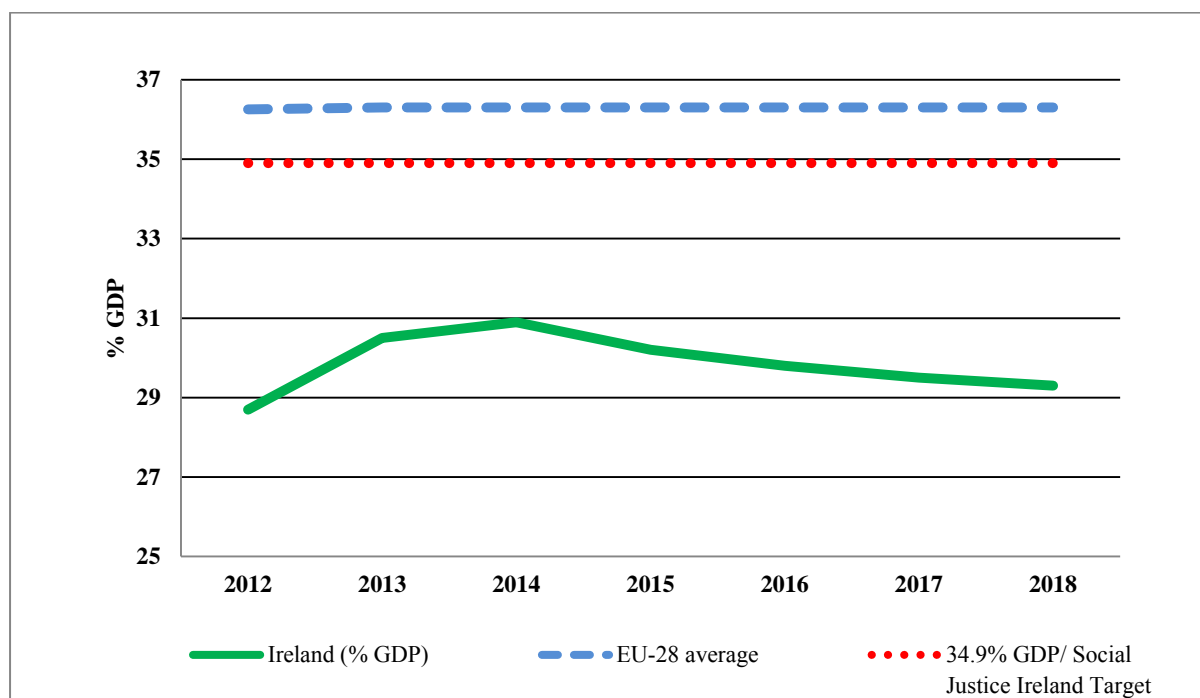
Policy Priorities

- Increase social welfare payments.
- Make tax credits refundable.
- Introduce a universal state pension.
- Introduce a cost of disability payment.

¹ CSO 2015 Survey on Income and Living Conditions 2013

Taxation

Chart 6: Ireland's Projected Taxation Levels to 2018 and comparisons with EU-28 averages and Social Justice Ireland target



Source: Calculated from Eurostat and Department of Finance Note: EU-28 average was 36.% GDP 2012 and this value is used for all years.

Table 6 : Ireland's projected total tax take and the tax gap, 2014-2020*

Year	Tax as % GDP	Total Tax Receipts	The Tax Gap**
2014	31.1%	€57,659m	€7,045m
2015	30.4%	€60,276m	€8,922m
2016	29.8%	€62,252m	€10,654m
2017	29.5%	€64,244m	€11,760m
2018	29.2%	€66,379m	€12,958m
2019	29.0%	€68,701m	€13,977m
2020	28.9%	€71,318m	€14,807m

Source: Calculated from Department of Finance, SPU April 2015. **Notes:** * Total tax take = current taxes + social insurance fund income + charges by local government. ** The tax gap is calculated as the difference between the projected tax take and that which would be collected if total tax receipts = 34.9% of GDP. The Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (IFAC) propose an alternative measure of national income for measuring the tax-take (H). The 34.9% of GDP target is equivalent to approximately 38% of their H measure.

Taxation

Taxation plays a key role in shaping Irish society through funding public services, supporting economic activity and redistributing resources to enhance the fairness of society. Consequently, it is crucial that clarity exist with regard to both the objectives and instruments aimed at achieving these goals.

Social Justice Ireland believes that over the next few years policy should focus on increasing Ireland's tax take to 34.9 per cent of GDP, a figure defined by Eurostat as 'low-tax'. The Tax Gap, as outlined in Table 6, is the difference between this benchmark and the planned level of overall taxation by Government is an average of €12bn over the next five years. Indeed, if Government were to maintain overall taxation levels at their 2014 level (31.1% of GDP), rather than pursuing the planned reductions highlighted in the table, the state would collect an average of €4.1 billion per annum in additional taxation revenue between 2016 and 2020.

Future taxation needs

Government decisions to raise or reduce overall taxation revenue needs to be linked to the demands on its resources. These demands depend on what Government is required to address or decides to pursue. The effects of the recent economic crisis, and the way it was handled, carry significant implications for our future taxation needs. The rapid increase in our national debt has increased the on-going annual costs associated with servicing the national debt.

Despite favourable lending rates and payback terms, there remains a recurring cost to service this large national debt – costs which have to be financed by current taxation revenues. The estimated debt servicing cost for 2015 is €7.38 billion¹. Furthermore, the erosion of the National Pension Reserve Fund (NPRF) through using it to fund various

bank rescues (over €20billion) has transferred the liability for future public sector pensions onto future exchequer expenditure. These new future taxation needs are in addition to those that already exist for funding local government, repairing and modernising our water infrastructure, paying for the health and pension needs of an ageing population, paying EU contributions and funding any pollution reducing environmental initiatives that are required by European and international agreements.

Collectively, they mean that Ireland's overall level of taxation will have to rise significantly in the years to come – a reality Irish society and the political system need to begin to seriously address. Chart 6 presents Government's projected taxation levels to 2018 and compares them to the EU Average and *Social Justice Ireland's* target of 34.9% GDP.

Reform of the tax system

Social Justice Ireland believes that there is merit in developing a tax package which places less emphasis on taxing people and organisations on what they earn by their own useful work and enterprise, or on the value they add or on what they contribute to the common good. Rather, the tax that people and organisations should be required to pay should be based more on the value they subtract by their use of common resources. Whatever changes are made should also be guided by the need to build a fairer taxation system, one which adheres to our already stated core policy objective.

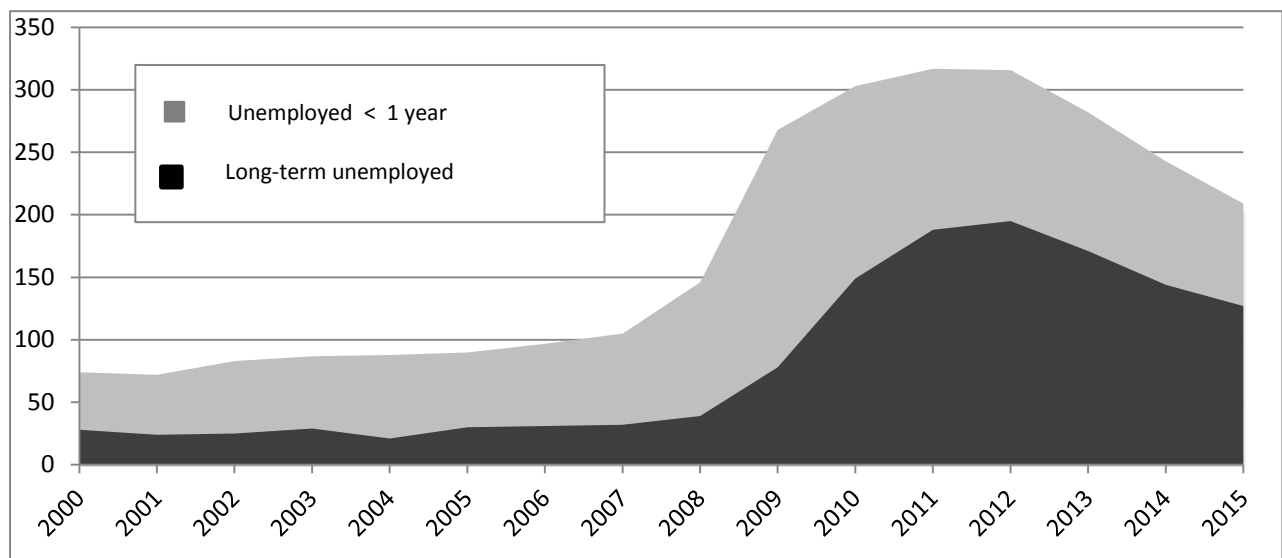
Policy Priorities

- Increase the overall tax take
- Adopt policies to broaden the tax base
- Develop a fairer taxation system

¹ Department of Finance, 2014 *Budget 2015*.

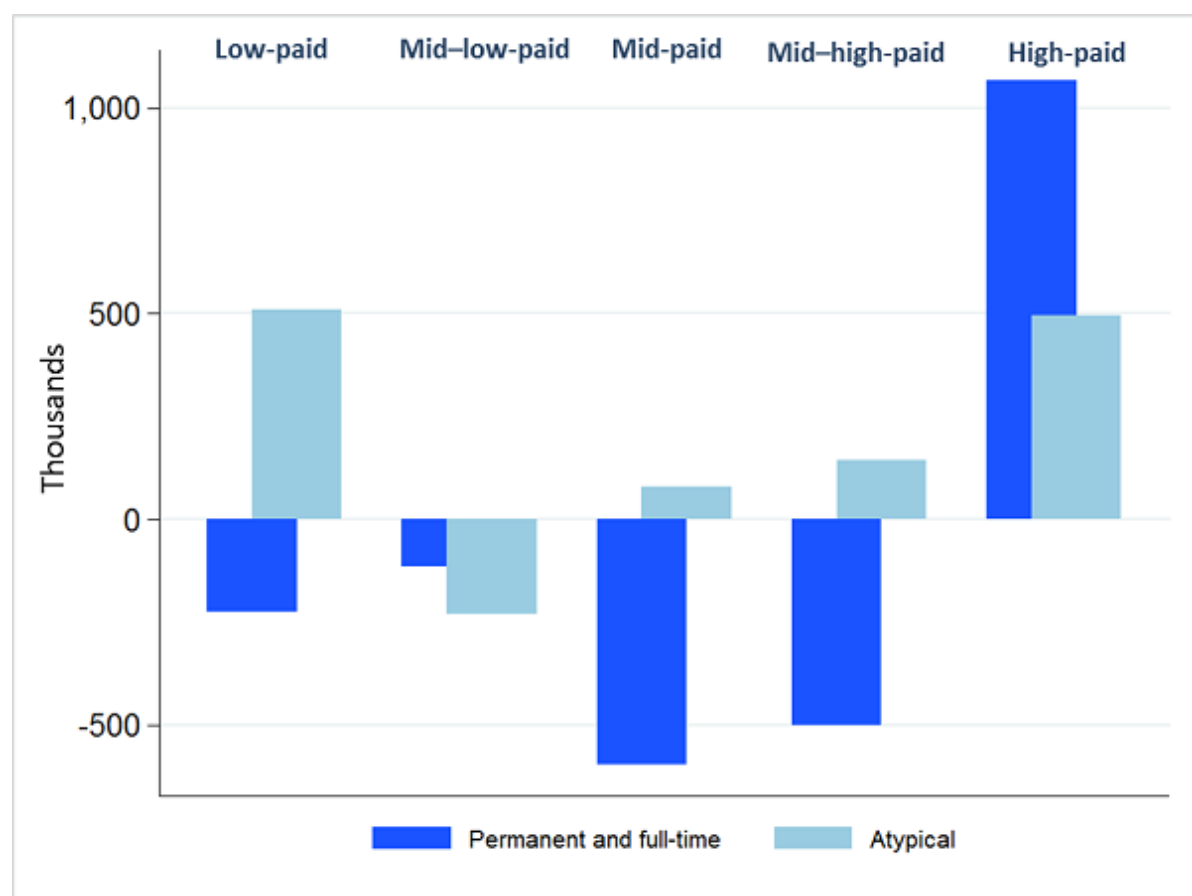
Work and Job Creation

Chart 7: Unemployment 2000 – 2015 (000s)



Source: CSO QNHS online database

Chart 7.1: Employment shifts (in thousands) by job-wage quintile and employment status, EU, 2011 Q2–2014 Q2



Source: Eurofound (2015) European Jobs Monitor

Work and Job Creation

Unemployment has fallen below 10% in recent months. This is a major improvement on the situation at the height of the crisis when it exceeded 14%. However, it is a lot worse than the situation before the recession when it stood at 4.7% in 2007.

The key facts make sobering reading:

- There are 272,000 fewer full-time jobs in Ireland today compared to 2007 (-15%).
- The number of people in part-time jobs is 55,700 higher than in 2007 (+14%).
- More than a quarter of part-time workers are underemployed (115,000).
- Between 2010 and end-2014 the number long-term unemployed fell by 48,700.
- But, in the same period the net loss of Irish people to emigration was 123,800.
- 58% of those unemployed are long-term unemployed (more than one year).

While unemployment has been falling the proportion of those who are long-term unemployed has risen to 58%. The situation is particularly difficult for those under 25 and over 55 who find it difficult to return to employment. The key problem is that those seeking jobs far outnumber the jobs available. Reskilling of unemployed people must be at the core of policy.

Precarious and part-time employment

Of the 446,000 people with part-time jobs more than a quarter (115,500) are underemployed (wishing to be employed for more hours). While some of this can be explained by the recession it is clear that we are seeing the emergence of a greater number of people in precarious employment situations. The growth in underemployment, the limited hours and the uncertainty of work times have huge negative impacts on the well-being of individuals and families and add to the working poor challenges. The

rise of precarious employment requires an immediate response.

This trend is not just confined to Ireland. Recent research from Eurofound highlights the worrying trend of a decline in full-time permanent jobs across Europe. The report finds that the traditional, standard employment contract is increasingly being replaced by non-standard or atypical forms of employment – part-time and temporary work, as well as self-employment.

As chart 7.1 shows atypical employment (part-time work, temporary work, and self-employment) increased in four out of five categories across Europe, with significant growth in the top and the bottom categories. This finding suggests that full-time, permanent employees have been replaced by non-standard workers, especially in low-paid but also in mid-paid jobs.

The growth in the number of individuals with less work hours than ideal, as well as those with persistent uncertainties on the number and times of hours required for work, is a major labour market challenge. Aside from the impact this has on individuals and their families, it also impacts on their financial situation.

Policy priorities

- Resource the up-skilling of those who are unemployed and at risk of becoming unemployed through integrating training and labour market programmes.
- Seek at all times to ensure that new jobs have reasonable pay rates and adequately resource the labour inspectorate.
- Launch a major investment programme focused on creating employment and prioritise initiatives that strengthen social infrastructure.
- Introduce refundable tax credits to benefit the 'working poor'.

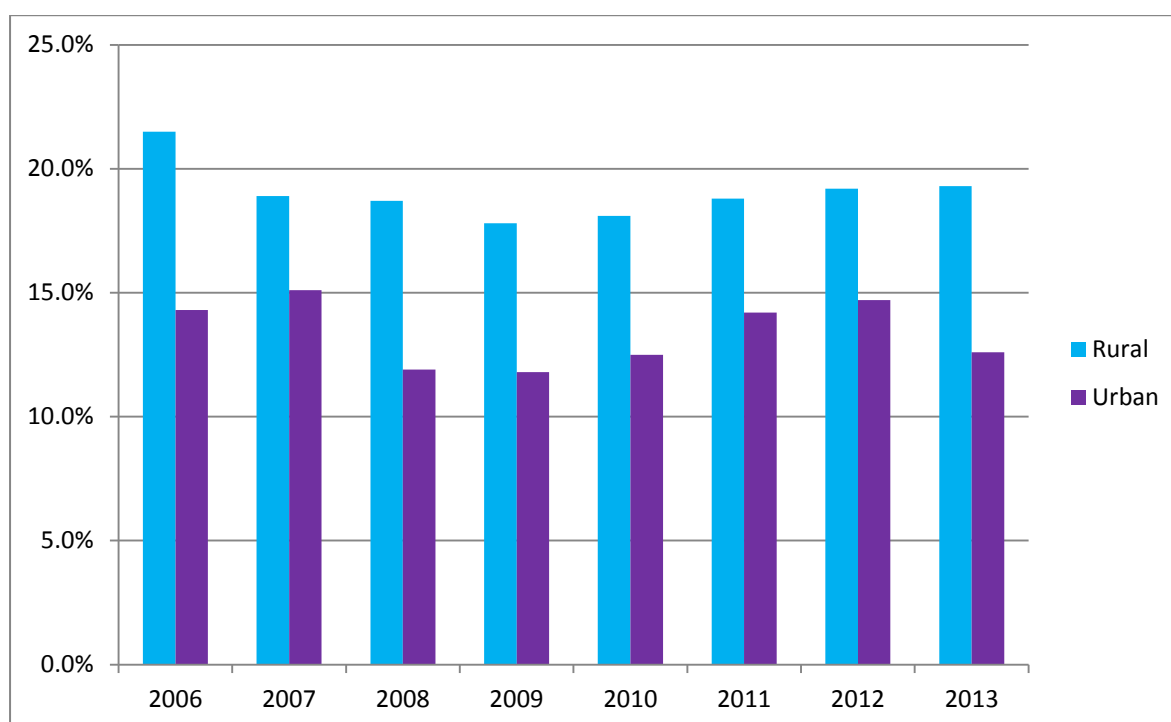
Rural Development

Table 8: Permanent Full Time Employment all Companies by Region 2005 - 2014

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	% Change 2005 – 2014
BMW	73,873	74,593	75,295	73,517	65,708	63,816	64,810	66,175	68,682	71,635	-3.0%
Midlands	13,586	14,175	14,252	14,253	12,215	11,671	11,478	11,752	12,408	12,920	-4.9%
North East	17,771	18,026	18,503	17,688	15,283	14,630	14,599	15,071	15,720	16,816	-5.4%
North West	13,678	13,336	13,254	12,992	11,705	11,012	11,138	11,195	11,339	11,629	-15.0%
West	28,838	29,056	29,286	28,584	26,505	26,503	27,595	28,157	29,215	30,270	5.0%
Dublin	100,305	107,607	110,973	109,924	101,101	98,452	100,333	104,439	109,240	115,768	15.4%
Rest of South & East	134,269	138,372	138,854	135,458	120,676	119,162	120,447	123,318	126,251	132,194	-1.5%
Mid East	31,684	31,687	30,979	29,289	26,336	26,585	26,312	26,865	27,747	29,001	-8.5%
Mid West	27,944	30,032	29,985	28,458	23,741	23,010	22,742	22,945	23,452	24,489	-12.4%
South East	29,552	30,842	32,135	31,489	28,189	27,570	26,626	26,625	26,562	27,415	-7.2%
South West	45,089	45,811	45,755	46,222	42,410	41,997	44,767	46,883	48,490	51,289	13.8%
All Regions	308,447	320,572	325,122	318,899	287,485	281,430	285,590	293,932	304,173	319,517	3.6%

Source: DJEI Annual Employment Survey 2014

Chart 8 'At Risk of Poverty Rate' rural Ireland and urban Ireland 2006 - 2013



Source: CSO SILC, Various

Rural Development

The economies of rural areas have become increasingly dependent on welfare transfers, with the 'at risk of poverty' rate in rural areas being 6.7 percentage points higher than that of urban areas (see chart 8). In 2013 the 'at risk of poverty' rate in rural areas was 19.3 per cent and 12.6 per cent in urban areas.

The economic recession and restructuring of agriculture and subsequent decline in off farm employment has led to a narrowing of the economic base in rural areas. Low-paid, part-time and seasonal work and long-term underemployment are significant factors in rural poverty and exclusion.

The majority of farm families rely on income support and payments from the state to supplement their income. Solutions to falling farm incomes require broader strategies, both for farm and non-farm rural families. This will require both economic and social supports and broader skills development strategies to find employment and it requires policy planning.

Employment

This focus on relying on FDI to generate employment in rural areas will not create the sustainable employment required in these areas. A focus on rural niche investment and supporting rural start-ups in this area is also required. The Action Plan for Jobs (APJ) 2015 contains a welcome commitment to 'Delivering Regional Potential' with nineteen headline actions. Regional Action Plans for Jobs are also being developed which is a welcome move by Government. However it is unlikely that sustainable employment will be generated on the scale required in rural areas without the roll-out of rural broadband.

Employment and enterprise policy should have a rural specific element designed to support local enterprises, rural specific jobs and be cognisant of the need to create full-time, high quality jobs with career

progression opportunities. Approximately 90 per cent of enterprises in the regions employ ten people or less and underemployment and flat career structures are particular features of rural areas that require attention.

Broadband

The CEDRA Report¹ notes the strategic role of broadband and calls on Government to ensure the delivery of 30Mbps to all rural areas by the end of 2015. The headline action on broadband in the APJ 2015 is to issue the tender for the delivery of high speed broadband by Q4 2015. This means that rural areas and rural businesses will continue to be disadvantaged by poor broadband infrastructure in the coming year and that Government will not meet one of the key recommendations of the CEDRA Report.

Lack of quality broadband in rural areas is a considerable barrier to the diversification and growth of the rural economy in Ireland.

Policy Priorities

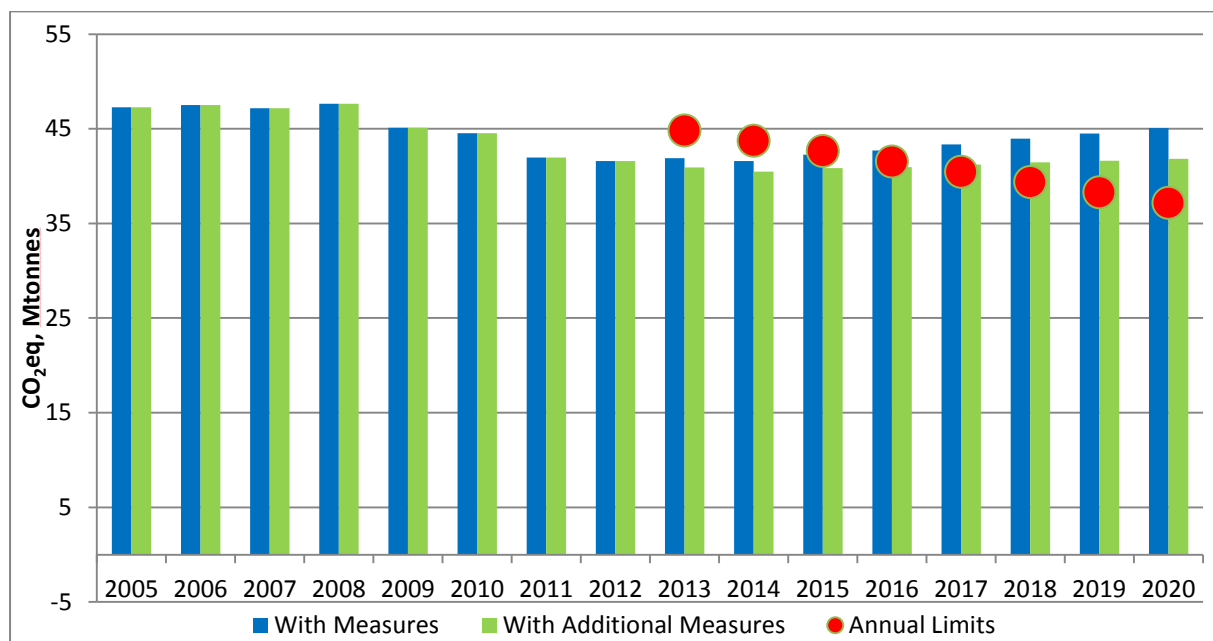
- Prioritise rolling out high speed broadband to rural areas.
- Develop new national rural strategy. This strategy should make up a part of a new national spatial strategy.
- Utilise the new apprenticeship system to address the issue of training and unemployment in rural areas.
- Ensure all decisions around services and provision of services are made in the context of a national spatial strategy.

¹

http://www.agresearch.teagasc.ie/rerc/CEDRA/CEDRA_Report.pdf

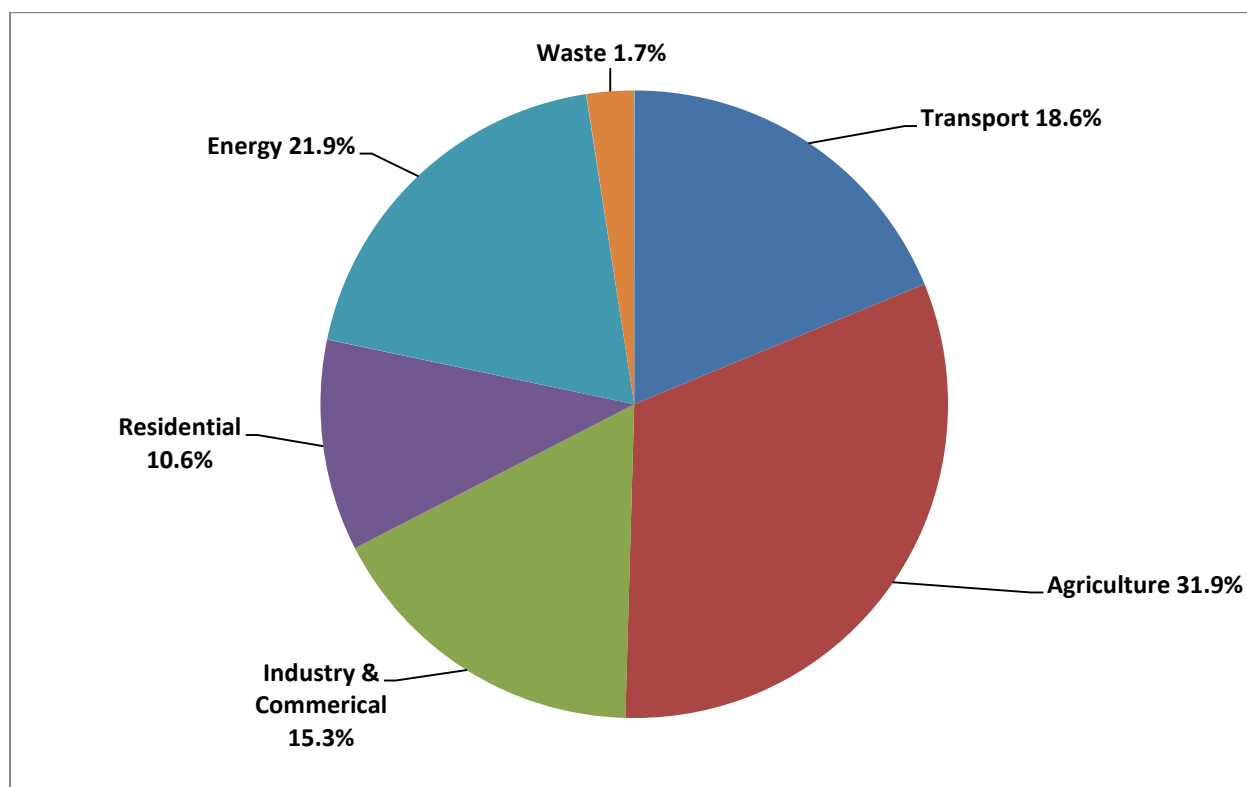
Sustainability

Chart 9: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections to 2020



Source: EPA, Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2014-2035

Chart 9.1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector 2013



Source: EPA 2014

Sustainability

Ireland's emissions profile is dominated by emissions from the energy supply, transport and agriculture sectors¹. The immediate challenge for Irish climate policy is to meet the EU 2020 targets for the domestic sector², which is a reduction of at least 20 per cent on the 2005 emission levels by 2020. If achieved, the projected strong growth in the agriculture sector set out in the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food vision *Food Harvest 2020* will likely result in agricultural emissions increasing by 7 per cent by 2020. There is a significant challenge for Government in achieving the binding EU 2020 targets whilst also pursuing its *Food Harvest* agenda.

Agriculture accounts for the largest proportion of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions, 31.9 per cent of the total. Pursuing Food Harvest 2020 and increasing milk production in 2015³ means that emissions from agriculture are likely to continue to increase over the coming years.

Agricultural emissions increased between 2012 and 2013 and are driven by higher animal numbers reflecting plans to expand milk production (EPA, 2014). A recognition of the 'limited' mitigation potential of the sector must not reduce efforts to reduce agricultural emissions and meet international targets and obligations.

Climate change

Climate change is one of the most significant and challenging issues currently facing humanity. Ireland produces an estimated 160,359 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every day (EPA, 2014). Increased levels of greenhouse gases, such as CO₂, increase the amount of energy trapped in the atmosphere which leads to global effects such as increased temperatures, melting of snow and ice and raised global average sea-level.

If these issues are not addressed with urgency the projected effects of climate change present a serious risk of dangerous and irreversible climate impacts at national and global levels. Food production and ecosystems are particularly vulnerable.

The latest research from the World Meteorological Organisation has ranked 2014 as the hottest year on record, and finds that fourteen of the fifteen hottest years ever recorded have been in this century. In Ireland, six of the ten warmest years on record have occurred since 1990⁴.

Among the predicted adverse impacts of climate change are sea level rise, more intense storms, increased likelihood and magnitude of river and coastal flooding, adverse impacts on water quality, and changes in distribution of plant and animal species⁵.

Policy Priorities

- A common understanding of sustainability should underpin all public policy decisions.
- The economic value of biodiversity must be accounted for in all environmental policy decisions.
- Shadow national accounts should be developed to move towards a more sustainable, resource efficient model of growth.
- A progressive and equitable environmental taxation system should be developed in a structured way that does not impose a disproportionate burden on certain groups.

¹ EPA (2014) Ireland Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector.

² Agriculture, transport, residential and waste sectors.

³ Milk Quotas in the European Union were abolished in 2015.

⁴ <http://www.epa.ie/climate/>

⁵ *ibid*

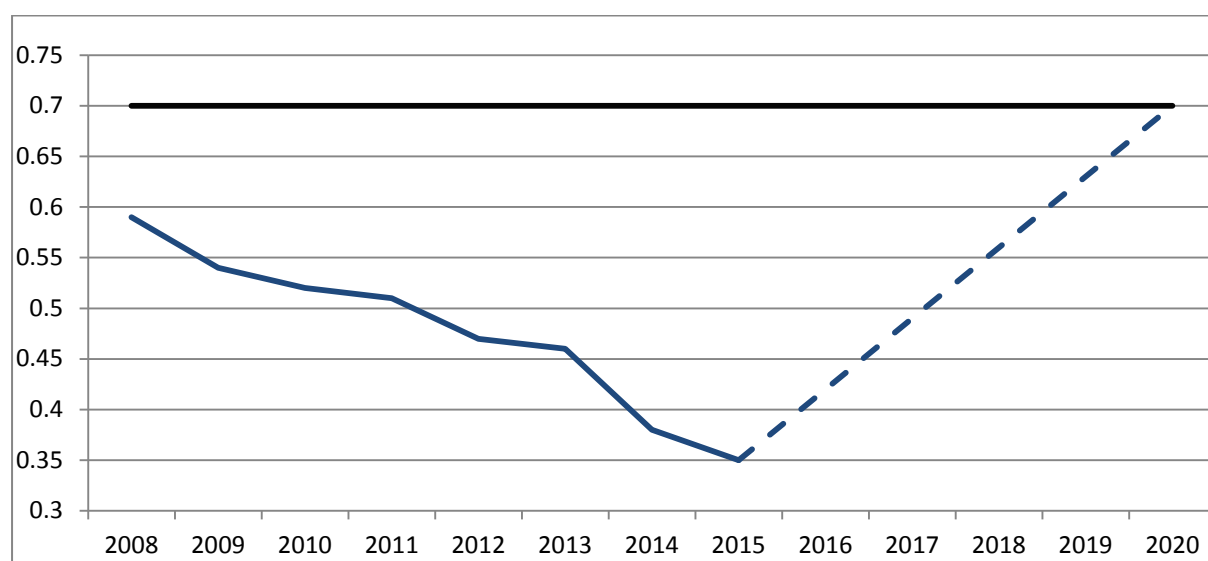
Global South

Table 10: Ireland's net overseas development assistance, 2005-2020*

Year	€m's	% of GNP
2008	920.7	0.59
2009	722.2	0.55
2010	675.8	0.53
2011	657.0	0.50
2012	628.9	0.47
2013	637.1	0.46
2014	601.6	0.43
2015	602	0.38*
2016	742	0.42*
2017	893	0.49*
2018	1053	0.56*
2019	1221	0.63*
2020	1398	0.7*

Source: Irish Aid (2012:73) and various Budget Documents.* Projected figures based on adjusted figure of GDP and GNI as introduced in 2015 by Eurostat. 2016-2020 numbers set out a possible pathway to reaching 0.7% target by 2020.

Chart 10: ODA as % GNP Ireland 2008 – 2020*



*(2015-2020 projected)

Global South

Sustainable Development Goals

2015 is the European Year for Development (EYD). Within the EU, this means development issues are subject to increased awareness and publicity campaigns for 2015. In planning for the post-2015 development agenda, *Social Justice Ireland* believes that the international community needs to play an active role in developing the proposed UN Sustainable Development Goals and in assisting less developed countries achieve their potential. Rebuilding our commitment to ODA and honouring the UN target should be important policy paths for Ireland to pursue in the years to come. Not only would its achievement be a major success for government, and an important element in the delivery of promises made, but it would also be of significance internationally. Ireland's success would not only provide additional assistance to needy countries but would also provide leadership to those other European countries who do not meet the target.

Inequality in the Global South

The UN Human Development Report 2014¹ (UNHDR) notes that there are 1.2 billion people living on \$1.25 a day or less and 2.7 billion living on less than \$2.50 (HDR 2014, p.71). In a world with resources many times what is required to eliminate global poverty this situation is intolerable.

The report warns that “there is evidence that the overall rate of progress is slowing—and this is worrying.” (UN HDR 2014, p.33²) The report notes that “to tackle vulnerability, particularly among marginalized groups, and sustain recent achievements, reducing inequality in all dimensions of human development is crucial³. The key emphasis within the 2014 report rests on vulnerability and individuals ability to respond to the shocks and uncertainties of a globalised

world, in terms of climatic, economic and political upheavals. Whilst greater numbers around the world are emerging from poverty, “more than 2.2 billion people are either near or living in multidimensional poverty. That means more than 15 percent of the world's people remain vulnerable to multidimensional poverty⁴.”

Overseas Development Assistance

The Irish Government regularly cites the positive assessment international bodies give of Irish overseas aid. The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review of Ireland noted how Ireland's “institutional structures enable it to deliver co-ordinated, quality development co-operation and to be a pragmatic and flexible partner” (*OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Ireland 2014*, p. 17).

Since 2008, Ireland's ODA expenditure has significantly decreased (see chart 10). The cumulative impact of these successive cuts to the ODA budget is to limit the resources tackling extreme poverty, hunger, human rights abuses etc. If ODA contributions continue to decline aid programmes- and poor communities in host countries- will suffer.

The Irish government needs to recognise the mutual benefits in trade and stability from ODA that translate into security and prosperity and commit to reach the UN target of 0.7% GNP by 2020. In the context of Ireland's current challenges it is important to bear in mind that many people in the world are in a far worse situation and have been in this situation for a very long time.

Policy Priorities

- Commit to reaching the UN target on ODA of 0.7% GNP by 2020.
- Take an active role in developing and promoting the Sustainable Development Goals.

¹ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-2014>

² Ibid p.33

³ Ibid p.2

⁴ Ibid p.3

Social Justice Ireland is an independent think-tank and justice advocacy organisation of that advances the lives of people and communities through providing independent social analysis and effective policy development to create a sustainable future for every member of society and for societies as a whole.



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