

Dr Diarmuid McLean – Development Specialist, Irish Aid

Dr Diarmuid McLean, a Health Development Specialist from Irish Aid spoke to the session outlining the role of Irish Aid in assisting organisations in delivering aid in developing countries.

Dr McLean went on to explain how Irish Aid supports organisations by providing guidance through strategic direction and conducts research to identify areas of development and to track global trends. Another key service is linking partnerships and establishing networks to ensure a holistic approach in the delivery of aid.

Developing partnerships in one of the key areas of Irish Aid's work, with their partnerships extending to Governments as the principal partner in a project, with non-government organisations delivering the physical work on the ground, be they Irish, international, mission services, in-country NGOs and non-state providers. Private philanthropy such as the Clinton Foundation and Irish institutions also make a significant partner in the relationship structure supporting Irish Aid.

The type of support provided by Irish Aid varies between specific projects and programmes, and can range from direct budget support at a national level to linking partners into strategic alliances. This 'mixed modality' provides a flexible framework for Irish Aid to facilitate others to achieve the best health outcomes. Through the identification and targeting of specific populations and structures, the health outcomes can be measured with learnings applied and adapted where suitable.

Dr McLean also went on to specify where the real health outcomes are being experienced – childhood mortality is dropping, AIDS deaths are dropping, TB rates are improving, and leadership on the ground is stronger.

In summary, Dr McLean stated that the time has never been better to continue the work that has already been achieved. With this momentum, Dr McLean also mapped out where Irish Aid is focusing future efforts on, predominantly setting a global health agenda for Ireland, as the influence has already been identified on the advancement of global priorities and strategies.