

Since it was founded nearly 40 years ago, Trócaire has worked to bring about change through two key strategies. The principal strategy involves working in partnership with a range of CSOs in the developing world and building strong, multi-faceted partnerships to achieve concrete improvements to the lives of people living in poverty. Trócaire recognises, however, that working at the grass roots level is not enough and whilst important, can never achieve lasting transformative change. Such are the structural injustices in the world today, we also need to work to achieve the global common good. Many of the big challenges we face today – climate change, international financial crisis, trade inequality – have their roots in a deeply unfair and unsustainable model of development. For this reason, we also invest resources to contribute to structural changes at a national, regional and international level. This involves carrying out policy and advocacy to achieve policy change, as well as working in Ireland and internationally to change behaviours and mobilise public opinion in favour of a more just and equitable world.

- Experiences of the effectiveness of this approach in contributing to achieving the maximum long term, positive change for people and communities living in poverty

Our belief is that this approach to contributing to change has been highly effective for a number of reasons. At the very root of our theory of change is empowerment. If communities and individuals are empowered to change their own lives and advocate for their own rights, then they have ownership of the development process.

There is a lot of evidence now that civil society in many of the countries which we have worked in for many years is growing stronger. Paradoxically, the current back lash against civil society in many countries (through repressive legislation or the criminalisation of social protest) is evidence of this growing voice. Why else would governments want to silence CSOs?

Evaluating the effectiveness of this approach to working is very challenging. Whilst it is relatively easy (though by no means simple) to assess changes which happen at a very local level through direct intervention, there are several factors which make the approach adopted by agencies which share Trócaire's philosophy difficult. This challenge emerged very strongly in the recent Leading Edge report which we published in March.

- Partnership is not straightforward to measure in terms of development effectiveness. Change takes time... sometimes decades. This was
- Our approach involves taking risks... but the frameworks we operate to

The Leading Edge Report really challenges us as a sector to face up to the fact that the wider context for development is changing – and will continue to change in the coming decades. Part of the Leading Edge Project was to look at the horizon and how we will need to adapt to change.

- The biggest issue that emerges from the horizon scanning is the impact of climate change on development. Practical implications for our work in terms of disasters, focus areas, reversals... but also a major challenge in terms of how we need to adapt our models of economic development to become more environmentally sustainable.

- The role of new major players on the global stage is another issue which comes out strongly. China and India's role...

These changes pose some searching questions for organisations like Trócaire. Such is the scale

- Ways in which the organisation may alter, adapt or solidify their approach to become more effective development actors and whether being 'Irish' deserves special consideration in that regard.