

To Dóchas members,

2 September 2011

We are all aware of the extent and severity of the drought that is affecting the Eastern African Region. The drought considered to be “the worst in 60 years” has caused a severe food crisis across Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya and threatens the livelihood of 12 million people.

The Development Education Group (DEG) are aware that NGOs need to raise funds in order to work with these communities however ask Dóchas members to bear in mind the principles and guidelines of the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages . “Choose Images and related messages based on the values of respect, equality, solidarity and justice ‘and “avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate”.

We as NGOs have a duty to provide more information to promote long-term public engagement in development. On 2 June, the Dóchas development education group hosted a seminar which looked at promoting long-term public engagement in development. The key-note speaker Martin Kirk (OXFAM GB) reminded participants of public disillusionment with international aid and development. His research talks of a public which is ‘uninterested and uninformed’, and of a ‘Live Aid Legacy’ which portrays us as the powerful givers and others as grateful receivers, of a situation where the fight for solidarity, justice and fairness gets lost among messages that name cash alone as the panacea of famine and Somalia’s problems.(Please find Seminar Report http://www.dochas.ie/Shared/Files/2/Added-values_National_Seminar_Report.pdf)

Bearing this in mind we remind signatories to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages to uphold the spirit and principles of the Code. When using a photograph or creating a slogan ask yourself:

- Is this image or message a fair representation of what is happening?
- Does this image help people in Ireland to understand the situation better?
- Is it necessary to use a photo, or can we get our message across in another way?
- Is this a photo that I would feel comfortable using were it showing people or places in Ireland?

For further information on the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages go to <http://www.dochas.ie/code/>

For any queries on the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages contact Holy Ramanankasina , media@dochas.ie

For further information on the work of the DEG in terms of the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages please contact the DEG Chairperson rebecca@afriacentre.ie

Thank You

The Dóchas Development Education Group