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We would like to thank all the participants who made time to share their experiences and insights with us. We also wish to acknowledge our appreciation for the contributions and support received from the Reference Group comprised of Nina Sachau (Suas), Anne Barrington (Suas), Anne Payne (Irish Aid) and Áine Doody (Irish Aid).

# Executive Summary

The STAND Programme is Suas's global citizenship programme aiming at empowering third level students to understand and challenge the root causes of global justice issues and building the capacity to become active participants in the creation of a fairer future.

This report is an evaluation of the STAND programme and the Global Citizenship Education (GCE) aspect of Suas's International Volunteer programme from 2016 to 2020. The following areas are considered in this evaluation: effectiveness (Q1), efficiency (Q2), relevance (Q3), internal and external coherence (Q4), impact (Q5), and sustainability (Q6).

## FINDINGS

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The STAND programme has not only achieved its objectives but has also exceeded the targets set on a yearly basis. It has continued to play a leading role in the areas of GCE and empowering third level students to gain practical skills to become active participants in the local and global context.

In addition, Suas, through the STAND programme, has created a strong community of knowledge and solidarity among participants which promotes engagement well beyond the length of its courses and activities. In 2020 there were 13 campuses in 2021 this increased to 14 with the inclusion of the University of Limerick improving STAND's presence on campuses. Suas has increased its effectiveness with regard to their objective of raising awareness and engaging an increasing number of students in their global citizenship experience and journey. While it must be recognised that Suas were negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, they did successfully migrate STAND activities to the virtual space. Suas has demonstrated itself to be an adaptable and resourceful organisation.

Another area in which Suas has excelled is in its participatory youth led ethos and delivery. In 2020 Suas established the STAND Student Advisory Panel to ensure that students have an input in all programmes and campaigns. Their Volunteer Programme was the most affected by the pandemic and it was cancelled because of global restrictions. Suas is using the pause to reflect and update the programme to reflect current discourse on international solidarity programmes.

Suas's has continued to strategically position itself by entering into partnerships with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) which has been an effective means to deepen and increase their engagement with students. Suas continues to develop relationships and pursue a wide range of partners. Signatory to the IDEA Code of Good Practice, Suas has gone through two self-assessments against the Code of Good Practice for Development Education, both received very positive feedback.

Finally, it is worth signposting from reports and interviews, both STAND and Volunteer Programme participants were appreciative of the impact that activities had on their perspectives, understanding of global justice issues and, indeed, shaped future career paths.

## RECCOMENDATION

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Suas are in a transition phase and while the outcomes and outputs have been impressive, they need to reflect and consider ways to ensure their sustainability. The overriding recommendation from this evaluation is that there is a need to increase and diversify funding streams so that staffing levels can rise from 5 to 7, and programmes can expand. Without this necessary first element, Suas and its STAND programme will not be able to expand and will likely experience continued high turnover of staff. Management and oversight are clearly focused on addressing the need for further income and support through partnerships and collaborations.

# Overview of the Context

Established by students at Trinity College in 2002, Suas was initially run by student volunteers. Eventually Suas grew to reach other third level colleges around Ireland, was able to hire staff and it has developed several strategic partnerships, including Irish Aid.

The Irish Aid strategic partnership with Suas focuses on third level engagement through the STAND Programme. The STAND Programme is a non-formal engagement for third-level students promoting global citizenship. The work contributes to building a broader sense of global citizenship in Ireland as it is in line with the Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025.

Another key partnership for Suas is their collaboration with the Union of Students in Ireland. This relationship was developed in 2019 and led to STAND programme campus expansion by strengthening their ability to engage student groups in smaller and remote campuses.

<sup>a</sup> Until the end of 2020, Suas also facilitated a literacy and numeracy programme delivered in Ireland. To focus operations and establish an identity devoted to global and global citizenship education, the decision was taken to merge the literacy programme with Camera Ireland which is now called Kinia. Kinia are now the steward for the numeracy and literacy work which has been completely divested from Suas.

The result of this merger has meant that Suas can focus on the core activities of global citizenship education programmes and, with the opportunities presented by the global pandemic pause, assess and re-invigorate their Volunteer programme.

The STAND Programme is Suas's global citizenship programme aiming at empowering third level students to understand and challenge the root causes of global issues and building the capacity to become active participants in the creation of a fairer future for all. STAND activities include:

**STAND Student Festival:** consists of an exhibition and student-led events focused on global justice brought to campuses across Ireland for a week every autumn since 2013. **The festival aims at raising awareness about current issues and events shaping the global context.** STAND Festival is an important means of engagement. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it migrated to the virtual space temporarily and is now back to in-person engagement on 14 campuses.

**STAND News:** An online news platform with up to 60 contributors. It is run by volunteer students and the format **seeks to address international development interests, justice, and equality.**

**STAND Global Issues Courses:** Evening courses, offered at 4-week duration and six week duration designed to introduce students from different disciplines to learn about **global justice issues and understand the interconnectedness of the local and global.** The course delivery is participatory and includes interactive learning, debate, action, and critical self-reflection, due to the pandemic it was also taken online.

**Ideas Collective: STAND social incubator programme,** is a three-month summer term programme (migrated to online delivery due to restrictions) that brings together **students from different campuses to develop and implement their own ideas and projects on global justice issues.**

**#10000Students:** An online platform with a social media presence to encourage third level students throughout the island of Ireland to come together and act for a fairer and better world. **This is an important campaign due to the wide reach to universities and higher education institutes on the island of Ireland.** The initiative is the result of the partnership between Suas and the Union of Students in Ireland.

The need to adapt engagement quickly and effectively in response to restrictions imposed by the C19 pandemic have led Suas to review its overall engagement strategy. Suas has assessed where online engagement increased reach, engagement, and impact. They have identified areas where there is benefit from focused online engagement as well as areas where online engagement proved to be detrimental to delivery goals. Recognising that there cannot be a blanket

approach to the various Suas interventions, Suas worked with the Student Advisory Panel to develop a “Hybrid Engagement Model” addressing each of the STAND programmes activities and these will be implemented going forward.

Between 2002-2020 Suas has organised 1,300 volunteer placements to Kenya, India, and Zambia through its volunteer programme. The Volunteer programme stood out among its equals in the sector due to the educational aspects included with participants. Participants on the programme were required to participate in 6 days of training workshop prior to departure, topics included global perspectives in relation to climate, justice, gender, and sustainability. On their return they were invited to take part in a debriefing session to allow a space for discussion of experiences and including guiding participants to think about how they could share and cascade their learning to others in Ireland. The impact of the global pandemic has led to a pause of the Volunteer programme, offering a space for reflection and redesign moving forward. Suas are taking this opportunity and they are currently considering wider discourse on the shortcomings of traditional volunteer models with a view to creating a new opportunity for exchange between the global north and south with a focus on linking global student peers across campuses that is more equitable and reflective of the need to decolonise traditional volunteer models. Suas are currently setting up a temporary small advisory working group which will include national and international members in a “design thinking” process to explore new models of a solidarity based international global citizenship education programme. Complimentary to this process is Suas’s participation in a 6-month research project that is led by the Sociology Department of Maynooth University and Comhlámh. This research advisory and learning group which includes IDEA and Development Perspectives is exploring emerging new models of active global citizenship and solidarity. The outcomes of this process will be included in the process of designing the new model of solidarity based international global citizenship education programme.

As an organisation Suas are well respected in the global education and development sector and they are active members of both the IDEA and the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice network as well as signatories to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages. Evidence of the organisation’s alignment is readily found in Irish Aid’s recently published Global Citizenship Education Strategy which demonstrates that the model of Suas interventions is in line with the Irish Aid definition of Global Citizenship Education.

Irish Aid defines Global Citizenship Education (GCE)<sup>1</sup> as “a lifelong educational process, which aims to increase public awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, inter-dependent and unequal world in which we live. Through GCE engagement, Irish Aid seek to achieve<sup>2</sup>

- A broader sense of global citizenship in Ireland, encouraging the public to engage with and learn about the issues that will define the 21st century – including climate change, hunger, peace, global inequality, and injustice.
- A public that are encouraged to act, individually and collectively, to help build a fairer and more sustainable future.

STAND Programme activities, clearly in line with the Irish Aid definition of GCE, are universally founded on encouraging third-level students to:

- STAND against injustice and inequality in all its forms.
- STAND together with those who are oppressed.
- STAND up for a better, fairer world.

Suas has engaged this evaluation with the overall aim being to contribute to learning about effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, internal and external coherence, impact, and sustainability of their work, highlighting lessons-learned, gaps and outlining opportunities and clear recommendations for future strategic use to continue to deliver content that raises

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<sup>1</sup> Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025, p.7

<sup>2</sup> Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025, p. 5

awareness, engages, and educates young people in third-level contexts. The Stand Programme's overall goal is that through the provision of global citizenship education, third level students in Universities and Institutes of Technology will be empowered to analyse and challenge the root causes and consequences of global hunger, poverty, inequality, injustice, and climate change, inspiring and enabling them to become active global citizens in the creation of a fairer and more sustainable future for all.

The Stand Programme Objectives are:

1. **Objective 1:** To increase students' awareness of, and action on, global justice issues
2. **Objective 2:** To increase students understanding of, and capacity to critically engage with, global issues
3. **Objective 3:** To support students to take informed, constructive action for development in Ireland and internationally
4. **Objective 4:** To support student bodies to actively support/ coordinate the delivery of a range of DE activities on campus
5. **Objective 5:** To enable students' awareness of, participation in, and progression through STAND activities year- on-year.

# Methodology

**Purpose** - This is an evaluation of Suas **Irish Aid funded** STAND programme and the Global Citizen aspects of the Suas international Volunteer programme from the year 2016 to 2020. In line with the guidelines of the request, this evaluation assesses the following areas: effectiveness (Q1), efficiency (Q2), relevance (Q3), internal and external coherence (Q4), impact (Q5), and sustainability (Q6), of the programme. In addition, this report outlines lessons learned and gaps with a view to making recommendations for future strategic direction.

**Documentation** reviewed included:

- Previous external evaluations in particular the evaluation undertaken in 2016
- Annual reports and project reports (2016 -2020)
- Monitoring data, quantitative and qualitative
- Good practice self-assessments submitted to IDEA and Comhlámh
- Strategic proposal submissions to Irish Aid
- Ideas Collective Evaluation (2021) and Impact Case Studies (2021)
- Course content updates and reports (by 80:20 2020)

**Data** was gathered according to the six criteria questions (Qs) for every year of the evaluation scope. For each criteria question (Q) information was collected regarding achievements, risks/opportunities, learning and recommendations, and projection for following year. This information completed the information deriving from interviews and focus groups.

**Question Framework** - With the agreement of the Evaluation Reference Group (formed by Irish Aid and Suas representatives<sup>3</sup>) a question framework was designed with the objective of collecting data on the criteria questions (Qs) indicated above. Congruent with the range of activities and numerous stakeholders involved in the STAND programme and the Global Citizen aspects of Volunteer Programme questions were tailored according to 12 categories. Each interviewee was asked four questions except for those in the category of Management who were asked eight questions. The questions of each category were selected to answer some or all criteria questions (Qs) to ensure that all criteria questions were answered. As in:

Category	Criteria Questions (Qs)
<i>Awareness Raising</i>	Q1, Q3, Q6
<i>Educate</i>	Q1, Q5, Q6
<i>Engagement</i>	Q1, Q4, Q6
<i>Suas Staff</i>	Q1, Q3, Q6
<i>Management</i>	Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6
<i>Oversight</i>	Q2, Q4, Q5, Q6
<i>Irish Aid</i>	Q1, Q5, Q6
<i>Volunteer Programme Educational Aspects</i>	Q1, Q5, Q6
<i>IDEA and Comhlámh</i>	Q1, Q4, Q6
<i>ICOS</i>	Q3, Q4, Q6
<i>UCDVO</i>	Q4, Q6
<i>University Lecturers</i>	Q4, Q6

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<sup>3</sup> Áine Doody, Anne Payne, Anne Barrington, Nina Sachau



9 Interviews (to one or two people together) and 5 focus groups were organised. In total, 30 people participated in the process. Some relevant stakeholders included: staff (prior and current), board members, partners, facilitators, coordinators, programme participants, etc. Information gathered was organised according to criteria questions (Qs). Recommendations were also collected as well as any additional comment the participant wished to make.

While the documented information was comprehensive, some members of staff and volunteers joined the STAND programme recently and were unable to provide historical or empirical data which limited this evaluation somewhat.

## Effectiveness (Q1)

The Suas global citizenship programme, STAND, aims at supporting third level students to become global citizens by assisting them to develop knowledge, skills, and actions in relation to global justice Issues. The activities organised under the STAND programme to **raise awareness are the STAND Festival and the STAND News; to educate and increase knowledge, the Global Issues courses; and to build students' capacity to take action the STAND programme have the Ideas Collective and the Volunteer Programme.** All relevant SDGs are embedded in STAND activities. Suas, through the STAND programme, also seeks to forge partnerships with student bodies and to support them their global citizenship education activities on campus as well as their progression year on year.

*In my mind, Suas has always been that NGO with a very, very central global citizenship education ethos and outlook.... Suas would be very much situated within action...learning through action seems central to the Suas model of the learning experience.*

(NGO Partner)

The programme has consistently achieved successful outcomes every year since 2016 and it has continued to do so through the pandemic in 2020 when SUAS was forced to migrate the STAND activities to the online space for 2020 (see table below). They did so promptly and smoothly and ended the year with positive outcomes. Moreover, the changes to the virtual space yielded benefits including greater diversity and wider accessibility for students. During the period of all activities migrated to the virtual space, Suas also found that the engagement of students deepened As a result, Suas has planned a hybrid strategy aimed at maintaining the added gains from the online engagement for the future and blending it with in-person experiences.

		2018	2020
<b>Objective 1: To increase students' awareness of, and action on, global justice issues</b>	Festival	7 campuses	14 campuses
<b>Objective 2: To increase students understanding of, and capacity to critically engage with, global issues</b>	Global Issues	6 campuses	11 campuses
<b>Objective 3: To support students to take informed, constructive action for development in Ireland and internationally</b>	The Ideas Collective, Volunteer Programme	99 <sup>4</sup> participants	55 <sup>5</sup> participants Applicants from 11 different campuses

<sup>4</sup> 83 volunteers, 16 participants. "Global Citizenship Programme Report to Irish Aid", February 2019

<sup>5</sup> 32 volunteers, 23 participants in The Ideas Collective. Annex 1 Strategic Partners – Annual/End of Project Narrative Report (26/02/2021)

<p><b>Objective 4: To support student bodies to actively support/ coordinate the delivery of a range of DE activities on campus</b></p> <p><b>Objective 5: To enable students' awareness of, participation in, and progression through STAND activities year- on-year.</b></p>		<p>Stand on campus supported 26 students from 6 Universities<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>Partnered with 13 Student Unions, partnered, 19 college societies (hosting &amp; promoting STAND events) and 4 STAND Societies<sup>7</sup> A total of 3,159 students expressed an interest in STAND activities<sup>8</sup></p>
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The virtual space gave Suas the opportunity to increase their offer of extracurricular activities including 16 sustainable development workshops and panel discussions which saw 387 students in attendance. These events were co-facilitated with students from USI, 7 SUs (TU Dublin, UCD, WIT, ITC, UCD, UCC, MU) and 4 college societies (UCD LGBTQ+ Society, UCC Feminist Society, Trinity Environmental Society, NUIG Style Society).

Between 2018 and 2020 the online participation with the STAND Programme increased from 5,036 to 11,823 and engagement increased from 4,908 to 41,660; this upward trend is continuing for 2021. **STAND News** which is an important multimedia source of information on global justice issues currently engages 60+ student volunteers to produce regular content.

**The STAND Student Festival** has grown from 7 campuses in 2018 to 14 campuses in 2021 (the University of Limerick's came on board in Q4 of 2021), exceeding their targets. Furthermore, the migration of programme activities online during the pandemic allowed SUAS to reach out to 17 higher education institutions (HEI) during 2020.

**The Global issues courses** has also grown from being offered to 6 main campuses to 11 campuses in 2021. **The Ideas Collective**, the STAND social incubator programme has expanded every year with higher number of participants representing wider geographic and cultural diversity. In 2021, the course counted participants from 11 different campuses.

While the 2020 **Volunteer Programme** was shaping up to be a particularly strong year regarding participation with 86 volunteers having begun their training journey, the deployment of volunteers to India and Zambia was cancelled in March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. A remote volunteering opportunity in addition to online Global Perspectives workshop was offered to volunteers, however the uptake was lower than expected, with 32 volunteers remaining actively engaged through the summer. This represented 32% of the total group.

*I studied social policy and the things that I learned in STAND, like taking a global citizenship approach to local issues and think global, act local" have made me focus more on engaging with individuals and groups.*  
(STAND Participant)

The number of **STAND societies grew from two in 2019 to four in 2021** (TCD, MU, DCU and NUIG). This stronger presence of STAND on campuses permitted a stronger collaboration with the many societies operating across campuses. In addition to this, in 2020 the number of Student's unions and societies getting involved with the STAND programme increased significantly and SUAS partnered with 13 Student's Unions on various activities.

Since 2020, the Suas partnership with the **Union of Students in Ireland** (USI) saw stronger collaboration with the launch of their flagship initiative in February 2020 **#10000Students**. The campaign encourages students to pledge an action which works towards creating a world that is inclusive, equitable and sustainable for all. The campaign engaged Student's Union and students across 32 HEIs in Ireland and Northern Ireland. To date students have pledged 1202 actions

<sup>6</sup> According to the Global Citizenship Programme Report to Irish Aid, February 2019  
<sup>7</sup> Annex 1 Strategic Partners – Annual/End of Project Narrative Report (26/02/2021)  
<sup>8</sup> Annex 1 Strategic Partners – Annual/End of Project Narrative Report (26/02/2021)

on campuses. The #10000Students platform has been linked to 7 campaign themes including, for example, **Free the Flow** (December 2021), **Migrant Minds Matter** (October 2020) and **Black Lives Matter** (June 2020). In the Autumn of 2021, the #10000Student campaign was linked more firmly to the festival and included the **#RiseUp** theme.

In their endeavour to keep student interests at the heart of their work, in 2020 SUAS established **the STAND Student Advisory Panel** to ensure that students drive STAND all programmes and campaigns.

The interviews and focus groups organised for the purpose of this evaluation have provided consistently positive feedback about the STAND Programme and its activities. One of the points that was often repeated by respondents was that **the STAND programme created and encouraged a great sense of community** among participants and that it facilitated personal connections. Regarding the Volunteer Programme, one respondent involved in the coordination of the programme made the point that the educational aspect of STAND separated Suas from other organisations because it empowered students by promoting critical thinking. The Ideas Collective was widely recognised by respondents as a programme that set it apart from most other global citizenship education programmes in that it built the capacity of participants with practical skills to take action.

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## KEY LEARNING

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### THE GLOBAL DIMENSION:

#### STAND News

Some interviewees felt that STAND News articles tended to be very “western focused” or local and expressed a desire for more global and international issues coverage. This concern was also noted by staff and plans have been implemented to ensure the global dimension.

#### STAND Festival

The STAND Festival in 2020 and 2021 had the theme of climate enforced migration and resilience respectively, both were readily linked to a global dimension and connected naturally to global issues.

#### Ideas Collective

Several respondents noted that while efforts were taken to embed the global dimension in all projects, students tend to identify local issues which may be more readily impacted by their action.

#### Online Space

While there was a high online engagement during the pandemic this interest decreased somewhat after a few months due to **zoom fatigue** among students exposed to continuous online learning and this impacted the festival attendance. The 2021 return to campuses has revitalised the lower attendance the STAND FESTIVAL experienced in September 2020.

The lower-than-expected number of volunteers that stayed involved with the adjusted Volunteer programme offering (cancelling of the trip abroad) demonstrated that **travelling** is a very important aspect for those who signed up for the **Volunteer Programme**.

#### Partnerships

Several respondents noted that the mobile nature of students challenges the stability of engagement with the STAND programme. Student Union Officers and Student Society Committee members change every year and with them their relationship with the STAND programme. This rotating nature of student engagement means that new relationships must be built annually.

## Efficiency (Q2)

There is a consensus among respondents that Suas delivers a considerable amount of engagement, education and awareness raising on quite modest income. Some respondents even noted that the reach and outcomes of the STAND programme were impressive given the resources available to them.

As demonstrated in the table below, while the Irish Aid funding remained at €250,000 per annum over the last three years, the programme has grown enormously in terms of online engagement, increased numbers from online participation, STAND presence on campuses and STAND festivals, the number of course delivered, etc. Resources and reach between 2016-2020 are illustrated in the table below:

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Suas Total Expenditure</b>	€377,355	€407,488	€433,382	€462,109	€339,812
<b>Irish Aid Contribution &amp; % of total Expenditure<sup>9</sup></b>	€220,000 65%	€220,000 54%	€220,000 51%	€250,000 48%	€250,000 74%
<b>Suas Outreach/Engagement Estimates (excluding online engagement) Young People Engaged with Suas Activities</b>	~13,670	~15,350	~16,300	~16,939	~9,400 ~11823 participation ~41660 engage online
<b>STAND Third-level Engagement (no locations)</b>	7	7	7	13	17 <sup>10</sup>
<b>STAND Staff &amp; Suas Staff</b>	2.5 + 2 Volunteer Programme Staff +part-time Management Hours	3 + 2 Volunteer Programme Staff +part-time Management Hours	3 + 2 Volunteer Programme Staff +part-time Management Hours	3 + 2 Volunteer Programme Staff +part-time Management Hours	3 + 2 Volunteer Programme Staff to Sept +part-time Management Hours

2021 core staffing levels remain at 4 (3 coordinators, 1 Management staff part-time hours to manage STAND).

As the above illustrates, increase in outcomes is not proportionate to increase in income, demonstrating the organisations ability to be responsive to external influence and to use staff, volunteer and financial resources to their maximum benefit. It is worth noting that many respondents also noted that Suas lacks the capacity to consolidate and scale their work beyond what is being achieved at present due to the limitations that the level of income means with regard to number of staff that can be employed.

<sup>9</sup> Extracted from annual "Suas Educational Development, Global Citizenship Programme", Reports to Irish Aid

<sup>10</sup> This was an exceptional number due to moving the festival online which will likely revert to 14 in 2021 with the festival's return to face-to-face. 32 HEIs are reached through the #10000Students campaign

With the exception of 2020<sup>11</sup>, **the trajectory of outreach and the increase of STAND Presence on campuses has been achieved** with considerable staff turnover and total staff numbers that have remained by and large static. Challenges noted for 2021 have included the continued need to engage students online. Online engagement has proven to require more staff time to develop and maintain relationships and to support volunteers to deliver on their commitments. Again, the issue of capacity is something that needs to be addressed if growth is desired ahead.

One question that emerged during the interviews was the efficiency of the **STAND Festival** in relation to its impact. While agreeing that the festival is very important to STAND, the activities take considerable time to be organised and require huge engagement of staff to support volunteers. Given the small Suas team, one of the respondents questioned the efficiency of the activity noting that while the festival is considered to be a good way to raise awareness and to engage students further with the STAND programme there may be more effective ways to raise awareness,

As a means of addressing the above, Suas are planning to continue to have a touring campus exhibition which in the past was organised by local STAND festival coordinators who organise campus events. From 2022 onwards Suas plan to recruit festival volunteers who can set up and crew a small stall for the duration of the week-long campus hosting of the travelling exhibit. The volunteers will be tasked to engage passers-by to tell them about the Festival and STAND activities they can join and to collect student contact information and build relationships with students.

In order to amplify engagement, Suas linked the #10000Students autumn campaign to the STAND festival for the first time. This has resulted in increasing pledges on the campaign website and contributed to the team's effort to connect individual activities more than ever before.

Of all programmes, the **Volunteer programme** was noted to be the most expensive aspect delivered but this has been offset by the participants requirement to raise funds to participate. The Volunteer programme's educational aim is to educate participants through course delivery and experience with the intention that they become 'Alumni advocates', cascading their experience, and learning to wider local communities and STAND programme events. This aim is not always achieved through the Volunteer programme Alumni. Suas do not have the capacity or staff resources to engage with Alumni of both the Volunteer programme and the STAND programmes consistently and effectively. If resources were available, Alumni could complement the STAND programme through sharing of experiences, programme facilitation or as participants in STAND activities (Ideas Collective or supporting and action with the #10000Students initiative for example). 2022 operational plans for Suas include an examination of how lifelong learning opportunities and Alumni engagement can be harnessed ahead.

The Suas response to Covid 19 restrictions saw a reduction in transport and event costs as activities moved to online forums. As things moved to a virtual space additional costs in marketing and online-delivery were also incurred. In 2020 the variance between amount budgeted and actual expenditure was €17,250 caused by the cancellation of the deployment phase of the Volunteer Programme. In 2021 the board directed Suas to pause the programme as a space to review and design new opportunities in light of global discourse on volunteering generally. The cancellation of the programme led to the departure of two staff members in September 2020.

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## **KEY LEARNING**

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### **Competitiveness**

Respondents who had been involved in Suas cost efficiency monitoring believed that the various components of the STAND programme were "low cost" in general and that this is something that has assisted in maintaining

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<sup>11</sup> An extraordinarily challenging year due to the pandemic that saw a considerable decrease in festival outreach but much higher numbers in online engagement.

competitiveness in the sector. Having recognised this cost efficiency, it must be noted that it comes at a cost to the organisation in the form of staff burnout and staff turnover. Looking ahead, it could also come at the cost of expansion, Suas is clearly committed to quality of service and without further staffing, expansion will be beyond the reach of the existing staff capacity.

### **Staff**

A consistent theme emerging from almost all interviewees in the management category is the need for investment in staffing to increase the organisation's capacity to expand and support existing programmes.

In addition to heavy workload, salaries and employee benefits are modest<sup>12</sup>. This context may account for the high turnover of staff in the organisation (though it must be noted that high turnover in the sector is not particularly unusual). The decision to create a hybrid model of engagement with third-level students allows Suas to more efficiently reach students, reduces staff's need to travel and creates more flexibility for student participation in events and allows cross-campus activities to be organised. The hybrid model also offers a modest reduction in operational costs.

Suas has plans to use any cost savings offered by the hybrid model of engagement to grow STAND engagement on campuses and contribute to the cost of additional part-time staff member if additional funding can be sourced. If successful in raising funds, the new staff member will be tasked with supporting STAND news, which will free the Engagement coordinator's time to focus on students and campus engagement.

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<sup>12</sup> This is being addressed through staff management, introducing pay scales that include progression, and benefits and the employee handbook are being reviewed.

## Relevance (Q3)

**The STAND Programme has proven to be both responsive and resilient.** Two ready examples of this can be found in 2018 and 2020. In 2018, monitoring of engagement led Suas to reconsider how it engaged students online. As students lost interest in Facebook and turned to other social media platforms, Suas intentionally redirected resources to market programmes through referral campaigns, physical marketing on campus, and engaged with emerging social media platforms. This marketing strategy also included forming an alliance with USI, increasing engagement from 7-13 campuses in 2019. Recognising that activism for young people is predominately through online engagement, STAND/USI created the #10000Students initiative which seeks to encourage campus action on global issues and has to date lead to actions in 21 third-level campuses in the Republic of Ireland and 11 campuses in Northern Ireland. During 2020 the Stand programme have collaborated with 21 student societies which included the NUIG Style Society, the TCD Environmental Society, UCC Feminist Society and UCD LBGTQ+ Society.

*STAND has managed to explore current issues, for example in relation to racism and other topics that have acquired relevance internationally.*  
(STAND Participant)

In 2020, the global pandemic resulted in the need for most STAND programme activities to be delivered online. The staff and STAND volunteers had to develop new ways to engage, educate and raise awareness with wider student bodies. By all accounts, the STAND activities were moved online quickly and smoothly. Furthermore, **Suas has significantly increased their online offerings** over the past 2 years, this meant that they have established a much wider and active online presence. Social media, in particular Instagram, has provided Suas the opportunity to publish infographics related to climate,

ethnic cleansing, and racism. Some respondents noted that Instagram is becoming a less used platform and there were suggestions that TikTok and other emerging platforms should be explored.

Adjustments during 2020 included reducing the length of the STAND Festival from 7 weeks to 2 weeks. In 2020 the STAND Festival took place over two-week period from 12th - 24th October and through its online platform it was available to all higher education students. 2020's STAND Festival included 21 online educational events which included 4 virtual documentary screenings; 9 panel discussions; 2 career clinics; and 6 creative workshops. Records show that ~2,542 students engaged with the activities. While this is below the number that would have been achieved prior to pandemic it is worth noting that respondents and reporting note that the quality of engagement was deeper than previous STAND Festivals.

*STAND has done a brilliant job of adapting work to very current needs and issues. STAND has really adapted to changes - altering approaches for online/hybrid learning and the festival has been evolving throughout the year.*  
(STAND Staff)

Due to the 2020 general increase in activism among the world's young people in relation to anti-racism and democracy. During 2020 Suas was inspired by the general increase in activism among the world's young people in relation to anti-racism and democracy and launched Black Lives Matter and Migrant Minds Matter campaigns on the #10000Students platform in collaboration with USI. They also created content on STAND News and social media.

STAND News, courses and online networks also included topics and discussions related to misinformation and fake news.

Turning to the Volunteer programme, the Covid-19 pandemic led to cancellations of volunteer placements in India and Zambia. In response to this unexpected circumstance Suas offered participants a remote volunteering opportunity in addition to online a Global Perspectives workshop. Uptake on this remote option and virtual learning was lower than expected, but it is worth mention that 32 volunteers remaining actively engaged throughout the summer with the programme. International partners were able to engage in varying degrees when the programme migrated online. 17 of the 32 Irish participants who remained engaged worked on action projects between June and August with the following four partners:

1. Development Action Society (DAS), India: Proposal and fundraising support
2. Vikramshila, India: Social media support
3. Caleb Centre, Zambia: Special needs resources support

#### 4. Gatato School, Kenya: Physical education and music support

The imposed hiatus on the Volunteer programme has given Suas the opportunity to examine a way to create a new kind of engagement around common international action, the joint delivery of practical skills and more equitable exchange for all involved.

**STAND have been consistent in their practice of adaptation to reflect student interests.** Since 2020, for the first time, Suas delivered training to STAND societies to provide them with skills and support for the delivery of their own global citizenship education activities on campus and online. 2020 also saw the creation of the Student Advisory Panel which includes Ireland fellows from developing countries. STAND staff are engaging the Advisory panel on a regular basis to ensure STAND alignment with student interests and remains current and relevant to young people.

*STAND has been excellent in adapting to changes over the last 6 years...It was challenging to operate in this "in between" year 2021 when campuses are open but in person events were restricted.*  
(STAND Staff)

In 2020, Suas refreshed and improved their global issues courses and 80:20 was commissioned to develop the framework along with session plans and related materials for facilitators to use and these were rolled out in 2021.

Finally, the decision to make **STAND Programme activities hybrid engagements demonstrates the commitment to ensuring engagement is relevant** through its accessibility and the recognition of the means of communication and sharing that is a normal part of young people's world.

## KEY LEARNING

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### **STAND programme Resilience and Adaptability**

All respondents agreed overwhelmingly that Suas has always been a responsive and adaptive organisation, and also noted that it adapted to changes imposed by the pandemic well, in both internal and external context. Internally, while Suas has continued to experience a high staff turnover, the outcomes of the programmes have not been negatively impacted and the core values/ethos of the STAND programme have been maintained.

Respondents also agreed that the STAND programme adapted well to the challenges of 2020 restrictions due to the pandemic. While there were some technical issues in setting up the online format at the outset<sup>13</sup>, overall, the STAND programme moved smoothly and quickly to the online space.

*Our Student Advisory Panel make sure we stay relevant, we have continuous feedback and consultation with students from different backgrounds, genders, campuses, and age groups on campus which does make sure we're relevant.*  
(STAND Coordinator)

### **ZOOM fatigue**

After months of overexposure to the online space experienced by the students, Suas noted the decrease of interest in engaging with activities online due to their online fatigue. Moreover, it was noted by respondents that 2021 was challenging as they had to operate in a *in between* year 2021 when campuses are open but in person events were still restricted.

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<sup>13</sup> There were issues with accessibility to the festival activities with smartphones which was resolved.



## Coherence (Q4)

Coherence refers to the synergies and linkages between the STAND programme and partners and other organisations. In this respect, the STAND programme has managed to position themselves well by contributing positively to areas including development, global citizenship, and international volunteering. The STAND programme has maintained relationships through three main avenues:

**Dóchas:** Suas are members of the Dóchas Development Education Working Group; Small Members Working Group; the HR Working group and the Public Engagement Working Group.

**Irish Development Education Association (IDEA):** Suas are active members engaged with the Adult and Community Education Working Group and the Impact and Quality Working Group. Suas also benchmark STAND programmes against IDEA's Code of Good Practice for Development Education<sup>14</sup>.

**Comhlámh:** Suas are signatories to the Code of Good Practice for Irish Volunteer Sending Agencies<sup>15</sup> and active in the Code Network.

Not only has the STAND programme supported and worked towards achieving external coherence but it has also fostered internal coherence through its own synergies and interventions. The most impactful strategic partnership to date has been the alliance with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), established in 2019, and one of the key drivers to the Suas expansion from a presence on 7 campuses in 2018 to 14 campuses and engagement with 17 HEI<sup>16</sup> by the end of 2020.<sup>17</sup> There were 14 HEIs participating in 2021 and through #10000Students, the reach includes 32 universities, colleges and HEIs. In 2022 Suas intend to build on this successful relationship by continuing to work closely with the National Council team (the annually elected executive body of the Union), the Students' Union Officers on USI-affiliated campuses and class representatives. The relationships will be used as multipliers for the work of STAND and to facilitate them to host global citizenship activities of their own across campuses. Continued promotion of the global issues awareness raising campaigns through the established #10000students online platform which also serves to raise brand awareness will be another area of focus in 2022.

*Regarding the Code of Good Practice in Development Education (Code) both IDEA and Comhlámh noted that Suas's engagement with the Code was positive and that programmes delivered were in line with Code guidelines. Within the tiered levels of compliance with the CODE, Suas are at the advanced level. (Recognising the various levels of member engagement with the Code: beginners, intermediate and advanced levels).  
(NGO Partner)*

Other partnerships for events have included Afri, Fairtrade Ireland, Creativity and Change, and World Vision as well as individual key influencers, social enterprises, student unions and student societies. The year ahead, 2022, will also include intentional identification and development of lecturers and staff at universities who can act as multipliers for STAND programme activities. This complements existing training of student unions and societies.

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<sup>14</sup> The Code of Good Practice for Development Education was created by IDEA members, it includes 12 Code Principles and Indicators for Development Education actors to benchmark design and implementation of Development Education programmes

<sup>15</sup> Every Volunteer Sending Agency, which is party to the Code of Good Practice, commits to the implementation of the Code's five values that underpin the work of international volunteer programmes. Under each value, there are a set of principles and indicators which provide guidance for the development and implementation of volunteer sending programmes.

<sup>16</sup> Higher Education Institutions (HEI) through #10000students

<sup>17</sup> At the time of this evaluation, figures for 2021 were not available, however, we have been made aware that figures for 2021 will demonstrate higher engagement. Figures for this will be available in January 2022.

Suas management and oversight are united in the belief that Suas needs to focus on delivery of the STAND Programme and to consider the future of a new form of international exchange alongside the development of further partnerships as priorities moving forward. In 2020 the Suas board and Camara Ireland began exploration of a merger between Suas Ireland (a division of Suas Educational Development) and Camara Ireland. The merger completed in January 2021. Respondents from oversight and management agree that this merger has allowed Suas to focus solely on global citizenship and the volunteer programme.

Strategy plans for collaboration and partnership are currently being actively explored and developed with the following organisations:

**Irish Council for International Students (ICOS):** Contact has been made between Suas and ICOS to begin conversations concerning areas of complementarity. During the interview period of the evaluation, it was clear that both organisations are open to collaboration and partnership with each seeing areas of complementarity between their programmes. In addition to including Ireland fellows in STAND programmes where they can share experiences, participate in panel discussions, and facilitate sessions as well as participate in STAND Programmes (like the Ideas Collective or engaging with #10000Students), they are exploring joint funding opportunities for collaborative projects. University of Limerick: Suas is currently developing closer relationships with the University of Limerick (they are not USI affiliated). In Q4 of 2021, STAND delivered the festival exhibition on their campus and look toward further student engagement in 2022<sup>18</sup>.

Gorm Media: Suas is working with Gorm Media to develop engaging online video content for the STAND News. Gorm Media are a digital media company which is led by a team of PhD students and recent graduates who are interested in addressing social issues and sparking movements of unity and shared understanding.

**Suas filed this year as compliant with the charity regulators Governance code and engage regularly with accepted checks and balances to monitor performance and delivery. They are committed to compliance** with the following: the *Irish Charities Tax Reform Group (ICTR) Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising*, the *SORP reporting principle for Charities*, the *Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages*, and the *Irish Aid Guidelines for NGO Professional Safety & Security Risk Management*. In addition to this assurance of good practice, Suas benchmark annual programmes against the *Code of Good Practice for Development Education (Code)* through use of the *Self-Assessment (SA) and Action Plan for the Code of Good Practice for Development Education*.

Respondents from IDEA and Comhlámh agreed that Suas are among the top in the sector as far as compliance and active engagement with the Code. This was further supported by the Suas Self-Assessment (SA) and Action Plan for the Code of Good Practice for Development Education submission in the third quarter of 2020, the feedback noted:

*Suas continues to engage strongly with the self-assessment process, taking on board the comments from the IDEA feedback letter in June and addressing them through this current workbook. This self-assessment clearly sets out the scope of your work providing useful details on STAND and the Volunteering Programme (VP). This self-assessment illustrates Suas' strong commitment to the Code journey. The organisation is reflective on your DE practice and organisational structures. There is a clear desire to mainstream DE and good practice throughout your work and there are gaps identified along with potential ideas to address such gaps. Suas clearly undertakes the SA process in a spirit of continuous improvement.*

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<sup>18</sup> We have recently made aware that a relationship is also being built with TU of the Shannon.

### **Strategic Placement**

The annual change of Student Union Officers and turnover in student bodies was universally identified as a challenge, not only for engagement but also for continuity.

Some respondents were cautious when discussions turned to the possibility of developing more formal STAND courses and modules as many saw the non-formal approach as one of the special characteristics of Suas engagement. Having recognised this view, efforts should be made to bridge the gap between formal and non-formal global citizenship education on campus. This strategic direction is supported by the new Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy which encourages partnerships in HEI education with GCE on campuses in both the formal and non-formal space.

There were a proportion of non-academic respondents who saw the possibility of linking the STAND programme to university curricula. Some believed that it has a space in formal third level settings through the development of different types of curricula or through offering continued professional development opportunities to assist in the incorporation of sustainable development goals, global citizenship skills and global citizenship education to existing materials.

While they are often invited, it was noted that NGOs do not necessarily have an entitlement to present their work in the formal education space. It is likely that this perspective would be common with formal third-level lecturers. Moreover, it was noted by a lecturer that academics would find it more difficult to support Suas if they do not modernise their model of volunteering.

Lecturer respondents agreed that **for lecturers who are not experts in global citizenship education, Suas can provide a very valuable support**. One noted that they could see **multiple areas where there could be collaboration in the future**, referencing that the delivery of a lecture or workshop on critical thinking would complement their formal learning and help to teach students to become actors in local and global change. The existing relationships with key lectures are providing a space for Suas to explore opportunities, currently being examined with other NGOs in the sector.

## Impact (Q5)

According to Suas' key performance indicators in relation to **long-term outcomes** there is greater accessibility, quality and effectiveness of development education within the **non-formal** space in the higher education sector. Although capturing attitudinal and behavioural changes as a result of Global Citizenship Education can be challenging, Global Issues Course participants who responded to a survey, recorded positive results. Some examples of measurement and monitoring of long-term impact can be found in the table below<sup>19</sup>:

Key Performance Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021 Target
Number of students signing up/participating - STAND Global Issues online network	5,036	6,871	11,823	12,000
Number of students engaging more proactively	4,908	8,803	41,660	40,000
Global Issues Course Participants	60	141	119	150
Percent of course participants who responded to survey who can give an example of how participating in the course has influenced their attitudes	57%	65%	88%	80%
Percent of course participants who responded to survey who can give an example of how participating in the course has influenced their behaviour	86%	96%	100%	100%
Percent of students who responded to survey who report a change in their understanding of the root causes, consequences and solutions of global poverty and inequality	83%	95%	81%	83%

In relation to the Ideas Collective, Suas commissioned an evaluation report (2015-2020) which was published in February 2021. The report produced 9 case studies of participants that developed projects including a documentary film; a sustainability fashion and clothing business; a peer mentoring scheme to empower global women; design of initiatives against discrimination of refugees and migrants; and the establishment of environmental and activist networks and projects. The evaluation report identified the following three learning areas highlighted in the pie chart below as the most impactful for participants:

What have I gained from Ideas Collective?



**Skills in project management and creating change**  
**Personal development: self-confidence, motivation**  
 Understanding of global issues and how they relate to me

<sup>19</sup> Extracted from "Part F: Results Framework (January 2019-December 2021)", Higher Education Sector Strategic Partnership, Application for extended project duration: January to December 2022.

From this report some long-term impacts can be gleaned and are shared below in participants own words, below:

- *“I am open to possibilities where I could continue to address these issues on a policy level. The Ideas Collective experience has changed my academic and personal journey in major ways!” Kashfi Ahmed*
- *“Through Suas I have seen how the way we live affects people across the globe and have since been determined to create systematic change which I hope will lead to better respect for both people and the environment around the world.” Aisling Byrne*
- *“My participation in the Ideas Collective led me to connect individual dietary choices to climate justice, which further encouraged me to explore the attendant issues of injustice, such as gender inequality, environmental racism, colonialism, and extractive and exploitative economic systems.... This orientation has been pivotal in terms of determining my career choices as well as how I engage in activism personally.” Meaghan Carmody*
- *[The Ideas Collective] “increased my self-confidence and motivation to make the world a better place. I have always been aware that I had a voice, but I am more confident now in my actions and plans.” Lorraine Lally*

*To this day, [Alumni volunteers] still have periodic fundraising going on. It doesn't happen all the time, but in the last year, some of our Alumni who stayed connected with an NGO from their volunteer programme put on a big fundraiser to support them during Covid. One thing happening currently is that some of [our Alumni volunteers] are fundraising to help school in Kenya that they had volunteered with.*  
(Suas Board Member)

Adding to the above there are many actions that have been implemented by STAND which have the potential for long-term impact. Some of which are:

- 2020 launch of the **STAND Student Advisory Panel** which consists of 13 members from 6 different college campuses. Membership will change annually.
- 2020 Courses were updated and reviewed to ensure that they met student’s needs which will assist in establishing long-term impact from their experience.
- 2021 saw the festival return to face-to-face events, but the online festival delivery provided the opportunity to make a greater impact through the ability to invite speakers from across the world<sup>20</sup> to take part in a range of

*Three key impacts I'd perceive as being directly related to global education activities are: Self-reflection on attitudes and beliefs, observable mindset changes and career choices.*  
(STAND Coordinator)

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<sup>20</sup> In 2020 Suas hosted politicians, activists, journalists, researchers, and authors from all corners of the globe with speakers from Fiji, Kiribati, Russia, Arctic Circle, Alaska, Mexico, Chad, Kenya, and Uganda. Some notable speakers included: Former President Anote Tong (Republic of Kiribati), Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim (Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad), Vanessa Nakate (Ugandan climate activist), Emma Dabiri (Author), Constance Okollet (Climate Wise Women), Tanaya Dutta Gupta (Climate Refugee Stories), Kristy Drutman (Brown Girl Green podcast & media series).

panel discussions and talks. While the STAND Festival is back to face-to-face engagement, the learning from the experience has been taken onboard. Suas plan to potentially include people from the global south in the #10000Students campaign, the Global Issues course and Stand News. This new form of inclusion in all activities is likely to produce a greater impact as participants can hear directly from people who are impacted by global issues, the experience offers invaluable learning and impact to participants.

- Online engagement has increased considerably, and this development facilitates the probability of continued long-term impact for those who have been engaged in STAND activities.

*Now two years on we have still going a WhatsApp group, and many of them are promoting advocating, almost independently. You know that was organic and was cultivated, they've kind of taken off there - and that was a long-lasting impact of the global issues course.*  
(Global Issues Course Participant)

Finally, there is a clear **need to establish long-term monitoring frameworks** and it is worth noting that Suas are not alone in this challenging area. Suas are engaged in addressing this challenge through their membership in IDEA's Quality and Impact working group which was set up specifically to address monitoring frameworks best as sectoral discussions around the best possible means of measuring long term impact regarding global citizenship and education has been a topic of discussion for many years. Long-term impacts need to have clearly defined key performance indicators (KPIs) with clear measurements and consistent monitoring and engagement with Alumni. The Saolta Development Education Evaluation Toolkit could be a useful starting point for the development of Alumni long-term impact assessment moving forward.

*It's thanks to the STAND course and my subsequent role as team coordinator with Suas that my career took the route that it did, and I've now been working in an NGO for over 2 years as the Global Citizenship coordinator. So, while the course was short, it definitely had a long last impact on me.*  
(Global Issues Course Participant)

Another, more concrete long-term result is the Suas Alumni Facebook page with 672 members. The page was created 14 years ago and while engagement isn't at a high level the last posting found was in November 2021. Content on the Page includes sharing of globally focused events, articles, career opportunities and people asking for advice on global education. Suas has also recently created a Suas/STAND Alumni page on LinkedIn. Reinvigorated engagement on social media platforms to engage Alumni may be worth exploration, though current staff levels would only be able to achieve a limited measure of engagement.

## KEY LEARNING

A recurring topic of conversations during interviews and evident in the annual reporting was the difficulty of capturing longterm attitudinal and behaviour changes; measuring this qualitative aspect of raising awareness, educating, and engaging students around global issues remains a challenge in the whole sector.

Recognising the above, respondents who have been involved with STAND or Suas for an extensive length of time note some of the most important impacts from STAND participation that they have experienced and witnessed in others:

1. Suas/STAND programme has changed participants' lives and careers. It has been a positive impact in their future careers whether they work in the development sector or in the government sector.
2. It has changed the way participants see people and see the world around them, how they relate to people and new places is some of the learning that they take with them beyond participation with STAND and the Volunteer programme.
3. It has challenged individual unconscious models of *saviourism* through critical analysis of individual notions of charity and engaging with people from other contexts and cultures. The STAND process has challenged individual motivations and assumptions.

4. It has connected people and created a sense of community from working together in STAND activities. This connection has remained beyond participation in STAND activities, or the Volunteer programme as evidenced in other sections of this report.
5. Participants of the STAND programme gain a deep and nuanced understanding of global education.

## Sustainability (Q6)

Suas recognises the value of maintaining relationships with **Alumni** (of both the STAND programme and the Volunteer Programme) but they have not had sufficient staffing to engage in Alumni relations on the level that they would like to realise. Increasing staff numbers would not only be beneficial with Alumni relations, but it would also assist in tracking medium to long-term benefits of participation in the STAND and Volunteer programmes.

Another challenge over the period covered by this evaluation (2016-2021) has been **staff turnover**, risking a loss of institutional memory. Drivers for turnover include staff leaving for better salaries and employment packages and leaving due to extreme workloads to deliver on programme goals. One of the most notable impacts of staff turnover is the risk to continuity of programme delivery and the impact on external relationships. Having recognised these risks, Suas has managed to maintain extraordinary engagement with volunteers and maintained good relations with external partners despite internal changes. It is also worth mentioning that Suas staff turnover is not unusual for the NGO sector, but the reasons identified signpost areas for organisational attention.

The **challenges to staff capacity** results in little time to set organisational goals and strategies. With the need for staff to meet varying roles there is a constant tension between time to consider strategy and meeting the requirements for day-to-day operations. The lack of space for strategic thinking may led to opportunities being missed and less opportunity for creativity in delivery. Suas management and board do address strategy and have dedicated strategy time scheduled for 2022. Currently operating without a programme manager due to financial constraints, the day to day running of programmes and management of staff are roles that the Director has by necessity needed to manage. If a programme manager came on board this would free time for more concentration on strategy, networking, contribution sector discourse and research and policy influencing.

Measures to address the two circumstances above, capacity to engage Alumni and staff turnover, are currently being intentionally addressed by management and oversight. Staff packages are being reviewed and attention is being directed at developing improved conditions. Regarding the risk of institutional knowledge loss, management are presently auditing campus by campus relationships to capture what works best in each location and signposting of contacts alongside other key information. This decentralisation of knowledge will not only ensure continuity if current staff leave the organisation, but it will also give better oversight, offering a “big picture” analysis of existing campus environments, inform future engagement and assist in the development of new campuses for the STAND Programme.

Suas management and oversight also clearly recognise the need for more capacity to meet the dual needs for consolidation and goals of expansion on new campuses. They are working to meet the challenges of annual student turnover by developing stronger relationships with lecturers and other staff champions to have them become multipliers for signposting to students STAND opportunities. The need to focus some resources on capturing long-term impact and retaining relationships with Alumni is another area that will receive concerted attention in 2022.

*I am thinking about what I learned - What can I do, how can I make follow-ups on what I learned when I go back to my own country. I will definitely continue with what I learned even after college.*  
(Student Advisory Panel Member)

Successful collaboration with student unions and societies is heavily dependent on the person who is the **Student Liaison Officer** and the mix of students in each campus society. This annual change endangers continuity with each new year. Another challenge to sustainability is the model of working with other societies and the USIs to establish a STAND presence on campus. At present there are 4 dedicated STAND societies which offer a good opportunity to consolidate the work of STAND programme, although the ever-present challenge of changing committees and officers is one that will always remain. Having dedicated societies could assist with continuity and brand recognition.

Finally, **a key risk to sustainability is the heavy dependence on Irish Aid funding**, which has hovered at +/-50% of Suas income prior to 2020. Previously, both the International Volunteer Programme and the SUAS Ireland volunteer programme (a division of Suas Educational Development) had been contributors to operational costs. With the current



pause of the former since 2020 and the departure of the latter in February 2021 (after merging with Camara and forming Kinia), Suas will have to look to other sources of income. Again, management and oversight recognised the need to diversify funding streams and explore other possibilities to ensure that the STAND programme can continue to deliver and expand activities. Partnerships, collaboration, and strategic alliances<sup>21</sup> are high on the agenda for the organisation as a means of addressing funding diversification, increased income, and maximising impact. Strategic conversations with complimentary organisations are already underway and ongoing identification of opportunities to address core and delivery costs more sustainably will remain a focus for the organisation. Some examples of these strategic collaborations include ICOS, UCDVO, and a research project with MU and Comhlámh<sup>22</sup>. An area that management are keen to increase is Suas's influencing activities and investment in research around GCE. Suas has already successfully contributed to policy influence and global citizenship education good practices successfully. If a higher level of core costs can be covered, Suas can commit the resources needed to be influencers which will also raise the overall profile of the organisation which can lead to further strategic partnerships and funding streams.

## KEY LEARNING

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### Staff

Respondents who have previously worked for Suas or that are currently working for Suas have all identified the risk of burnout due to extreme workloads to deliver on programmes. All noted that while targets achieved are increasing, staff numbers have not. All interviewed recognised that this was not a sustainable situation. They noted that even maintaining the level of current work was difficult, increase output would not be feasible. The desired way forward is to capitalise on the existing campus presence by deepening the engagement and support that Suas are currently offering them rather than expansion; however, to do so, more staff would be required. Some staff respondents stated that there could be a risk that Suas may not be able to keep up with the commitments that the organisation has made due to this lack of resources and enough staff.

In the same vein as above, there was a consensus among previous and current staff respondents that the outcomes achieved by STAND/Suas should be consolidated before any further expansion. Some respondents felt that STAND was strained by the need to grow year-on-year. Given existing staff resources, they see embedding work into existing campuses as a priority over taking on further expansion.

One respondent's personal opinion was that while the partnership with USI was very meaningful and valuable it could push STAND in the direction of advocating which might represent a slight shift from the overall aim of the STAND programme. At the same time, the respondent noted that an important part of the process was allowing students to drive the work towards their interests.

*Relationship building between staff and volunteers is important, we need more time, because we're not on campus, it's all virtual, staff are spending much more time making those relationships somehow happen. We have an engagement coordinator who is just working on those relationships. People are much more likely not to do what they say with this virtual engagement.*  
(Suas Staff)

### Volunteer Programme

Across the board, from STAND Alumni to facilitators, conversations centred around the fact that the previous model of volunteering must be rethought and changed to reflect current discourse on meaningful exchanges between the global north and south. As mentioned earlier, Suas are in the process of exploring new types of programmes and are exploring ways to link student peers across campuses from north and south.

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<sup>21</sup> For example, ERASMUS+ and the EU's Development Education and Awareness Raising Programme

<sup>22</sup> Participation in this research is voluntary and does not provide any income to Suas

## Accreditation

There is a recognition that students often prefer programmes that can offer recognition and accreditation for participation. For example, UCDVO offer credits for participation on volunteer programmes. This appetite for recognition cannot be met by existing STAND programme activities.

However, some respondents felt that “formalising” STAND to ensure funding or sustainability would see the programme lose some of what makes it stand out from other offerings in the sector. Many interviewed commented that the participatory and active engagement model that is particular to STAND’s delivery is one of the key elements that sets it apart from others in the sector. These elements could be at risk if seeking formal curriculum recognition.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

**Suas and the STAND programme are well respected in the sector and viewed by others as experts for non-formal engagement in formal third level spaces.** The STAND programme’s establishment as experts in this area offer many opportunities for further engagement and expansion on existing and new campuses (including HEIs).

Their **reputation for delivering quality action-based education and global citizenship skills** to participants has been recognised by all that have engaged with the STAND programme and Volunteer programme. One recurring theme from interviews and previous evaluation exercises is the sense of community that develops between staff, volunteers, and participants. Empowerment of youth was another area that was consistently remarked on by respondents and the STAND practice of allowing youth to lead on festival content and the Ideas Collective support for students to identify what matters to them is worth mention. This youth led model and community ethos are two of the most remarkable qualities of STAND; the STAND model of engagement and connection is one that really sets them apart in the sector.

**The STAND societies (4) already established will further strengthen the STAND programme’s presence on campus** by assisting with the challenges of student and officer turnover. While it is important to consolidate the engagement through the existing STAND societies it is important that SUAS remains alert to other emerging opportunities across campuses. The establishment of the Student Advisory Panel is a clear indicator of STAND’s commitment to maintaining programmes that are informed by young people’s interests.

Suas has proven that it’s engagement can be adapted in challenging times. Their ability to take programmes to the online space and maximising this online space through their presence on social media, has led them to address delivery methods moving forward. As a result of recent years’ experience **a hybrid plan for delivering STAND online and in person** has been developed which recognises the strengths of each method of engagement. This will maximise engagement and impact moving forward.

While the Ideas Collective was valued very highly by participants, the report commissioned by Suas in February 2021 noted two areas for improvement. The first recommendation was the lack of clear global dimensions in the delivery and the need for coaching of participants once the Ideas Collective workshops are completed. STAND have responded to these identified areas, and they have put in **measures to ensure that global dimensions are consistently tied into the actions chosen by participants**, and they are currently exploring models for coaching of Ideas collective participants beyond the workshops.

The overriding recommendation from this evaluation is that **there is a need to increase and diversify funding streams so that staffing levels can be increased, and programmes can both consolidate and expand.** Some ways to address the need for further income and support can be found through increased funding from existing supporters, identification of other funding streams, partnerships, and collaborations. The considerable growth of campus engagement since 2018-2019 has required considerable staff attention, if further funding can be found, another staff member could free time to consolidate all programmes and relationships with campuses. Furthermore, increased management spending would allow Suas to invest more time in policy and strategy. The learning from Suas’s third level engagement could also be cascaded through the sector to advance Irish Aid’s Global Citizenship Education Strategy. From all engagement with

staff, management, and oversight it was made clear that Suas would like to deepen existing relationships with campuses moving forward.

Other recommendations in line with STAND's areas of work are listed below and separated between strategic and operational actions.

### **Alumni**

- Develop a strategy for deeper Alumni engagement – Alumni from STAND Programme activities and the Volunteer programme. This would require additional staff.

### **Higher Education Institutes (HEI)**

- Consider using the #10000students platform to promote select STAND activities with the 32 HEIs engaged with the platform.
- Research HEI's to establish context and operating environment and identify 3 best possible fits for expansion of presence.

### **Networking/Partnerships**

- Lead in the establishment of an IDEA working group of relevant sector NGOs for third-level engagement given the Suas's extensive experience in the sector.
- Seek to network with other active global issue groups, for example, the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition and Coalition 2030 that operate within universities and HEIs.
- Continue to seek partnerships and collaboration with different stakeholders across universities such as strengthening and widening relationships to key lecturers and organisations on campuses.
- Continue to engage with ICOS to develop aspects of STAND programmes that will best meet Ireland fellows experience and age profile.

### **Policy Influencing and GCE quality pedagogy**

- Continue to share Suas expertise to shape policy frameworks that are relevant to global citizenship education.
- Invest in the development of quality global citizenship education frameworks to ensure that Suas continue to be on the cutting edge of global citizenship discourse.

### **STAND Brand**

- Consider the addition of a tagline or logo that reinforces STAND's *global focus* message.

### **STAND Festival**

- Invest in quality engagement with Festival footfall through the provision of hosted stalls during events and exhibitions to capture student interest and raise awareness.
- Focus resources on consolidating existing festival engagement prior to continuing the rapid campus expansion.

### **STAND News**

- Connecting STAND News to programmes to reinforce global connections, for example using activities of the Ideas Collective as content for amplifying global context of local actions and invite editors that can bring diversity and non-western perspectives.
- Widen awareness of STAND News for example, through linking with the #10000Students and promotion of STAND News during festival activities to encourage wider readership beyond STAND participants and Alumni, this could be achieved by showcasing other campus societies through the development of more video content.

### **Volunteer Programme**

- Reframe volunteering in the design of a new engagement between the global north and south to be more aligned with STAND programme principles and continue to explore leaderships programmes as already planned.

## Wider Student Body

- Identify and attach to other university campaigns and events such as themed days or weeks<sup>23</sup>.
- Building on the increased diversity of participants experienced in 2021, create a strategy and implement engagement for wider diversity in programme uptake to include disability, gender, ethnicity, and geography.
- Further develop the increased inclusion of Ireland Fellows.
- Connect with studentvolunteer.ie to advertise festival volunteering opportunities.

## OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

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### Alumni

- Continue and enhance engagement with Alumni as a resource to contribute to STAND Programmes and serve as role models and mentors for other students to ensure continuity and sustainability.
- Agree on key indicators for the assessment of impact and sustainability regarding Alumni.
- Engage with Suas Alumni to develop internship opportunities for ICOS and Ireland fellows with internship opportunities.
- Use engagement to assess the long-term sustainability and impact that STAND activities had on Alumni.

### Facilitators

- Bring together all Suas facilitators<sup>24</sup> for a workshop providing them with the opportunity to understand where their contribution sits within the wider framework.
- Ensures facilitators know about the IDEA Code of Good Practice and what it entails.
- Use the workshop as an opportunity for the facilitators to:
  - discuss how their contribution can complement each other and ensure there is a global dimension in the Ideas Collective delivery
  - Provide an opportunity for facilitators to understand all aspects of the STAND programme and identify how they can promote other STAND activities during their delivery

### Monitoring and Evaluation

- Reconsider the efficiency of activities by agreeing on key indicators for reach vs. depth of engagement at STAND festival activities.
- Build on existing plans for stall presence during festival events and ensure that volunteers are aware of the purpose of their engagement, e.g. collecting information and contact details.
- Invest in and institute systems, for example, purchase of a CRM system, to ensure regular monitoring and evaluations cycles.

### Networking/Partnerships

- Contact and engage identified lecturers and staff who are potential STAND supporters and demonstrate that STAND is a resource and support for their work.

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<sup>23</sup> For example, campus activities around: Trinity week (and other Universities weeks); International Human Rights day; EU's Global Accessibility Awareness Day, International Women's day, etc. Campus calendars could inform most strategic choices

<sup>24</sup> Facilitators include staff, freelance/consultants and other paid externals from NGOs

- Identify potential research collaborations and funding opportunities, like the recently joined research project (Maynooth University, Comhlámh and IDEA) and collaborations to make it more accessible to diverse groups of students. This should include undergraduate research opportunities.

## STAND Societies

- Invest in staff to be able to better support existing STAND societies to be more impactful and to develop a stronger presence on campus of more structural engagement and communication.
- Train STAND Society members to provide training to club and society leaders on campus (for a range of interest groups) – focus could be incorporating an interest-specific global lens through a participatory workshop (or series of workshops).
- As planned for 2022, Cross-connect STAND societies in a summit to help them to network and join campus activities.
- Cross-connect STAND societies, other societies, student unions and volunteers to help them to network and join campus activities through the identification of existing networking opportunities.

## USI, Societies and Coordinators

- Continue to engage USI over summer months when yearly planning is underway to embed STAND activities early in the process and see to integrate with USI team planning and Student Union Training (annually delivered during summer months).
- Continue and increase support to the USI to create direct links between themselves and other campus societies through the provision of materials to help them to promote STAND programmes and initiatives on campus.
- Continue hosting a participatory workshop at the close of each year to identify what worked best and what support should be instituted ahead.
- Establish a calendar of team check-ins to ensure accountability, provide the opportunity for networking across campuses and to flag members who need extra support to deliver.
- Provide a menu of activities, guidelines, checklist, and a template for the STAND programme at the beginning of engagement each year (see ENGAGE). Menu should not be prescriptive but offer ideas of what has been done previously with the intention of guiding students to design what would work for their campus.

## Volunteer Programme

- Consider establishing a working group of other volunteering organisations to lead the discourse of decolonising volunteer models and creating more equitable exchanges.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

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Regardless of any internal or external challenges over the period of this evaluation report, within the NGO sector **Suas' have maintained a solid reputation for delivering quality action-based education and global citizenship skills** through non-formal engagement with third-level students. It was also clear from interviews and focus groups that **staff, and volunteers alike are committed to quality delivery and the overarching ethos of the STAND Programme**. Looking forward there are many opportunities to network and collaborate with NGOs within the development sector as well as to engage with wider University staff to complement existing campus activities. To seize opportunities for expansion and the need to consolidate and deepen existing engagement, the overriding recommendation from this evaluation is that **there is a need to increase and diversify funding streams so that staffing levels can be increased, and programmes can both consolidate and expand**.



## **Question & Focus Area Guidelines for Evaluations<sup>25</sup>**

**Q1- Effectiveness-** to what extent is the programme achieving, or expected to achieve, its objectives?<sup>26</sup>

**Q2- Efficiency** – to what extent does the programme deliver, or is likely to deliver results in a timely and cost-efficient way?

**Q3. – Relevance-** to what extent is the programme relevant to the external context, including the local and global policy context, and how does it respond to the needs of the target group? Has the programme adapted to changes in the external context?

**Q4- Coherence (both internal and external)** - what are the synergies and linkages between the programme supported and other aspects of the work of the partner (as well as other members of the Consortium if relevant)? Is the programme coherent with other external similar programmes or projects working on the same or similar issues? How does the programme co-ordinate and harmonise with other actors to avoid duplication of effort? To what extent is the programme consistent with agreed norms and standards in the sector? (E.g., Code of Good Practice for Development Education (IDEA 2019).

**Q5- Impact-** to what extent has the programme generated, or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended long-term results?

**Q6- Sustainability** – to what extent are the benefits of the programme likely to endure over the longer term? How resilient are the systems and capacities which have been built up? Are there key risks to sustainability which have not been addressed?

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<sup>25</sup> These questions have been adapted from the OECD publication “Better Criteria for Better Evaluation- Revised Evaluation Criteria and Principles of Use”

<sup>26</sup> Effectiveness is concerned with more closely attributable results, while impact looks at broader changes to which the interventions may be contributing,



## QUESTION FRAMEWORK

### Stand News & Festival – Awareness Raising

1. To what extent do you think the STAND.News/Festival goals have been achieved?  
Please explain
2. Do you believe the STAND News/Festival have embedded the global dimensions throughout?  
If yes/not, please explain how
3. How do you think the STAND programme compares to the other programmes and events happening on your campus?
4. What recommendation would you make to further the impact/raise awareness about STAND programmes with students?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

### Educate – Course Coordinators and Facilitators

1. With regard to your activity, how effective do you think the STAND programme has been in achieving its goals?  
Please explain why
2. Do you believe the STAND Programme and Volunteer Programme have embedded global dimensions throughout the courses and activities?  
If yes/no, please explain why
3. In your view, what impacts (short and long term) have the STAND education activities had on participants?
4. Do you have any recommendations that might help the STAND programme to improve its courses and other education activities?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

### Engagement – Partnerships and Student Panel

1. To what extent have the goals and aims of your partnership with the STAND programme been achieved?  
Please explain your answer
2. Are there any other links that could assist the STAND programme to expand its reach and engage students?
3. Could you suggest other activities that would strengthen the collaboration between the STAND programme and your union/society in the future?
4. Do you think the name STAND conveys the message of the programme?  
Please explain

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

### Suas Staff

1. In your area of work, how effective do you think the STAND programme has been in achieving its goals?  
Please explain
2. Do you believe the STAND Programme and Volunteer Programme have global dimensions embedded throughout?  
Please explain and provide examples
3. Do you think the STAND programme has been able to adapt to the changes that it has experienced over the past 6 years both internally and externally?  
If so /if not, why?
4. What are the challenges that you and the STAND programme might face in the future?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

### Management

1. To what extent has the STAND Programme been effective in achieving its goals?  
Please explain
2. In seeking to achieve STAND programme goals, do you think the activities organized under the STAND programme are planned and run in the most cost-effective manner?  
Please explain why you think they are/aren't
3. Since its beginning, to what extent has the STAND programme adapted to external and internal changes?  
Please provide examples
4. Thus far, do you think that the STAND programme has placed itself strategically to be a relevant actor in the areas of global justice and equality?  
Please explain why you think it has/hasn't
5. What do you think are the most important risks the STAND programme will face in the future?
6. The temporary cancellation of the Volunteer Programme due to COVID has provided SUAS with an opportunity to think about refreshing and improving the programme. What aspects of the programme would you change and what would you keep?  
Please explain why
7. Do you think the STAND programme will continue to be relevant in third level students' life?  
If not/if yes, please explain how
8. What type of actions or planning does the STAND programme implement in order to achieve lasting impacts on students?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

### Oversight

1. In seeking to achieve STAND programme goals, do you think the activities organized are planned and run in the most efficient and cost effective?  
Please explain why it is so/not so
2. Thus far, do you think that the STAND programme is strategically placed to be a relevant actor in the areas of social justice, equality, and global citizenship education?  
Please explain your answer
3. The temporary cancellation of the Volunteer Programme due to COVID has provided SUAS/STAND with an opportunity to think about refreshing and improving the programme. What aspects of the programme would you change and what would you keep?  
Please explain your answer

4. In your view what are the most important impacts that the STAND Programme has made since 2014 with regard to:
  - a. Students
  - b. Environment
  - c. SUAS

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

#### Irish Aid

1. Do you think that the STAND programme has been successful in implementing Irish Aid goals/mandate?  
Please explain your answer
2. Regarding Irish Aid's objectives, what aspect of the STAND programme do you consider most valuable?
3. How does the STAND programme fit into the future plans of Irish Aid?
4. What do you think are the challenges that the STAND programme might face in the near future?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

#### Volunteer Programme (VP) – Education Aspect

1. Do you think the STAND programme's educational elements (training, in-placement support, and workshops) have achieved their educational objectives?  
If yes/not, could you specify in what way they have/haven't?
2. In your experience, what are the impacts that the programme has had on participants? In the short-term, in the long-term?
3. Do you think that participants have had any impact on other people or communities? If yes, please explain.
4. The temporary cancellation of the Volunteer Programme due to COVID has provided SUAS/STAND with an opportunity to think about refreshing and improving the programme. What aspects of the programme would you change and what would you keep? What other recommendations would you make for future volunteer programmes?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

#### Comhlámh/IDEA

1. To what extent do you think have both the Code of Good Practice for Development Education (IDEA) and the Code of Good Practice for volunteering (Comhlámh) shaped the STAND programme and the Volunteer programme (including its Development Education element)?
2. Do you think that SUAS has placed itself strategically to be a relevant actor in the area of development education/international volunteering for students? Where are gaps that they could fill or need to consider?
3. What recommendations would you make to SUAS so that it can remain relevant in the area of development education?
4. The temporary cancellation of the Volunteer Programme due to COVID has provided SUAS/STAND with an opportunity to think about refreshing and improving the programme. What recommendations would you make to SUAS in this respect? (What aspects of the programme would you change and what would you keep?)

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

## ICOS

1. Where do you see Suas's STAND programme and the international volunteer programme in relation to ICOS work across campuses?
2. Do you think that SUAS has placed itself strategically to be a relevant actor in the area of student engagement across campuses?
3. What ideas for activities do you have that could build collaboration between the STAND programme and ICOS?
4. What role do you think Irish Aid fellows could play in the STAND programme and/or connecting to SUAS alumni?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

## UCDVO

1. Where do you see Suas's STAND programme and the international volunteer programme in relation to UCDVOs work?
2. In your opinion what are the challenges that programmes like the STAND and the SUAS Volunteer programmes will face in the future?
3. Do you have ideas for activities that could build collaboration between the STAND programme and UCVO?
4. What recommendations would you make for future volunteer programmes?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

## University Lecturers

1. Where do you see Suas's STAND programme and the international volunteer programme in relation to your university?
2. Do you think that SUAS has placed itself strategically to be a relevant actor in the area of student engagement across campuses?
3. What ideas for activities do you have that could build collaboration between the STAND programme and your university/campus?
4. What steps would you recommend SUAS to take to further establish links with students in your campus?

Are there any comments or observations that you would like to add?

## Focus Group and Interview Participants

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### **Focus Groups:**

Focus Group 1 - Staff:

Catriona Rogerson  
Aislin Lavin  
Madeline Campbell

Focus Group 2 - STAND Society, Student Advisory Panel, Student Unions

Calvin Odhiambo  
Rachel McGonigle  
Ruairi Weiner  
Criomhthann Morrison  
Katie Smirnova  
Benita Murinda

Focus Group 3 – USI

Lorna Fitzpatrick  
Caoimhe O’Carroll  
Clare Austick

Focus Group 4 – STAND Festival Coordinators/Brand Ambassadors

Emily Murphy

Focus Group 5 – Educate, Facilitators and Coordinators

Tony Daly  
Jen Harris  
Dave Dunn  
Nicholas Armstrong  
Owen Sheehy  
Jessica Sargeant (by email)

### **Interviews:**

Interview 1 - Volunteer Programme:

Alex Brocks

Interview 2 - Irish Aid:

Áine Doody  
Anne Payne

Interview 3 - ICOS:

Derrie Murray

Interview 4 - Comhlámh and IDEA

Mark Cumming  
Frank Geary

Interview 5 - Staff/Management

Nina Sachau

Interview 7 - Previous Staff

Joanne Mulligan  
Joanne Malone

Interview 8 – Oversight Board Members

David Moffitt  
Niamh De Loughry

Interview 9 – UCD

Hiliary Minch

Interview 11 – Lecturers

Anca Minescu, University of Limerick  
Eilish Dillon, Maynooth University