

# development dp perspectives



## **Measuring the Impact of Development Perspective's Insight Programme on Participants' Active Citizenship**

A Report for Development Perspectives

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6<sup>th</sup> April 2015

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## **Executive Summary**

The Development Education sector faces pressure from donors to demonstrate impact of its programme's intervention. In view of this demand, this study purposed to amass evidence showing the impact of Development Perspectives (DP) Insight Programme (IP), specifically evidence showing the effect of programme on participants' active citizenship.

Data for this study was gathered through online questionnaires and was designed to compare participants' active citizenship prior to participation in the IP to their active citizenship after the IP. The findings reveal a substantial increase in participant's active citizenship after joining DP's Insight programme. In particular, the findings suggest participants not only feel psychologically empowered as a result of DP's programme, but that this psychological empowerment translates into physical engagement in civil and political spheres.

Limitations posed by sample size and methodological instruments, nevertheless, preclude this study to causally attribute the change observed in participants to DP's Insight Programme. The recommendation, therefore, is that this study be considered a pilot project that, with adequate sample size and added methodological instruments, can conclusively attribute DP's Insight Programme to changes observed in participants' active citizenship.

## Introduction

Active citizenship, as defined by the Irish Task Force on Active Citizenship, “refers to the voluntary capacity of citizens and communities working directly together, or through elected representatives, to exercise economic, social and political power in pursuit of shared goals (Irish Task Force on Active Citizenship 2007). Past studies, not least DP’s (‘The Story so Far’ 2011) and Dochas’ (‘Assessing the Impact of Development Education in Ireland’ 2012) attest DP’s Insight Programme’s positive effect on active citizenship. Our study, aiming to contribute to this body of evidence, differs slightly only in its attempt to assess for attribution of causality. The research intends to make the conclusive claim that observed change in participants active citizenship is readily attributable to DP’s Insight Programme.

Approaches to achieve this goal included designing a randomized control trial, with a control and treatment group. However, this option was subsequently rejected due to the near impossibility of finding identical sample. Picciotto stresses ‘Only if the treatment group and the control group and the process that affects each of the two groups are strictly identical can inferences be established with confidence (Picciotto 2014). Our next and deciding approach was the ‘pre and post intervention’ approach, designed to assess for participant’s active citizenship before joining DP and assess for their active citizenship after joining DP. This approach, we believe, because of its comparative nature, would strengthen the claim that changes observed in participants are attributable to DP’s Insight programme.

Ultimately, our inquiry aims to answer the question: “Does DP’s Insight Programme empower participants to become more active in their citizenship?” Empowerment and active citizenship were thus the key terms—the two dimensions of change—extracted from the research question that informed our research design. Our research design emanates from the premise that it is necessary that a person ‘feel’ capable and ‘feel’ empowered first before that person can exert active citizenship to influence social and political outcomes (Shellman 2014). Thus, to account for empowerment and for active citizenship, we measured for change at two levels: the individual level and the personal engagement level. The individual level refers to changes in psychological empowerment, defined as “a sense of personal competence and a desire for and willingness to take action” (Shellman 2014). The personal engagement level refers to changes in active citizenship, that is, changes occurring in, but not limited to, engagement in civil society organizations, political protest, and more. Ultimately, this study in its approach and its design has two goals: (1) to measure changes in participants’ active

citizenship and, (2) to definitively conclude that those changes are, or are not, attributable to DP's Insight Programme.

This report is catalogued as follows. Section one is the executive summary, which is followed by section two—the introduction, that details study's approach and objectives. Section three presents the literature review. Section four details the methodological approach and instruments used to carry study. Section five presents limitations study faced. This section is then followed by section six which presents the findings of the research. An attempt is then made in section seven to present suggestions and recommendations for future studies. Finally, section seven reports the conclusion, which is followed by the reference list and appendix respectively.

## **Literature Review**

### **3.1. Defining Impact**

Impact refers to the sustained and long term change the program or learning process intends to achieve, and should be evidenced through collected and analysed data (IDEA 2014). For the purpose of this study we relied on two definitions of Impact: the Development Education Association (DEA)'s definition and the OECD's definition.

DEA defines impact as 'the set of sustainable changes that result from the education activities and the effects (intended or unintended) that a programme has on a community or target group' (DEA 2011)

OECD defines impact as 'the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended' ( Picciotto 2014).

These formulations of impact by taking in focus long term effects and indirect effects emphasize the sustainability of an intervention, defined by OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as "the continuation of benefit from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed" ( Picciotto2014). Given that DP falls in the development education sector—and as such programmes' goals are often long term and have indirect effects on community, both the DEA and OECD's definition of impact proved to be well suited for the purpose of this study.

### **3.2. Measuring Impact in Development Education**

Since 2011, Irish Aid mandates that all programs funded by public fund to demonstrate tangible and measurable results (IDEA 2014). This mandate puts pressure on sectors such as Development Education, whose programmes are primarily concerned with having long term, non-linear results. It is from this view that the Irish Development Education Association's (IDEA) Quality and Impact Working Group have stressed, in a recent discussion paper, that

standardized models for tangible result-based evaluations do not properly suit the Development Education (DE) sector (IDEA 2014). Moreover, this group stresses the fact that DE sector is comprised of a great variety of organizations, target audience and activities, and as such standardized performance indicators would result in comparisons amongst organization and programmes that are not readily comparable (IDEA 2014). Seeing from this context, it is therefore incumbent on particular organizations to identify ways to demonstrate to donors that their programmes are effective in reaching their intended aims and objectives, albeit the fact that some indirect influence of program on target group may not be readily measurable. This understanding informed our decision to devise a method of evaluation narrowly tailored to measure DP's Insight programme's objectives and goals.

## **Methodology and Research Methods**

This study took the form of an impact evaluation.

### **4.1. Convenience Sampling**

The sample consisted of past participants of DP's Insight Programme (IP) for whom DP had valid email addresses.

### **4.2. Data Collection**

Our methodology was inductive in nature and quantitative in design. Data gathering was conducted via an online survey which employed the free section of the Survey Monkey web site. Desk based research was conducted in order to inform the researchers of other studies conducted around the topic. From this a questionnaire was designed. Extensive discussions were carried out with DP during the design phase of the survey. Before the survey was disseminated a draft copy was sent to DP, some problems with the survey were identified and ironed out. Prior to going live on Survey Monkey, DP'S approval was sought and approved.

The survey consisted of two separate section's which the respondents were informed that they must complete in order for the survey to be considered valid. Part A ask participants question relating to pre engagement with (IP) and part B ask participants questions relating to post engagement with IP. DP sent out the links for the surveys with instructions attached.

Inclusion criteria for the survey consisted of past participants in the IP from 2006-2009 and for whom DP had a current email address. DP sent out a total of 83 emails. 27

returns were made, however 8 were deemed spoiled returns. Therefore, the total population survey was 19. This equated to a 23% return rate.

### **4.3. Data Processing**

Data Monkey was employed to produce returns for each question. The data was further broken down into two distinct areas. They were Physiological Empowerment, Civil Activities Engagement. We used MS Excel to produce graphs and pie charts to graphically represent the data.

### **Limitations of study**

There were a number of limitations to the research

1. Time
2. Sample size
3. Costs
4. Lack of triangulation

### **5.1. Time**

The study was a comparative in nature. It compared the participant's civil engagement prior to their engagement with the IP and post participation in the IP. The ideal mode of gathering data would be to give the survey to participants prior to their engaging in the Insight Project, however due to limitation of time, that option was not possible. As the participants completed part A and B of the survey at the same time, the validity of the comparative nature of the survey must be questioned.

### **5.2. Sample Size**

DP could only send out 83 requests for participation. This was due to shortage of valid email addresses for past participants. In particular there were no respondents for year 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2013. There were 27 returns which indicated a 32% response rate. However 8 of these respondents failed to complete part B of the survey and were thus ruled invalid. This reduced the sample size to 19, and the sample rate to 23%.



### **5.3. Cost**

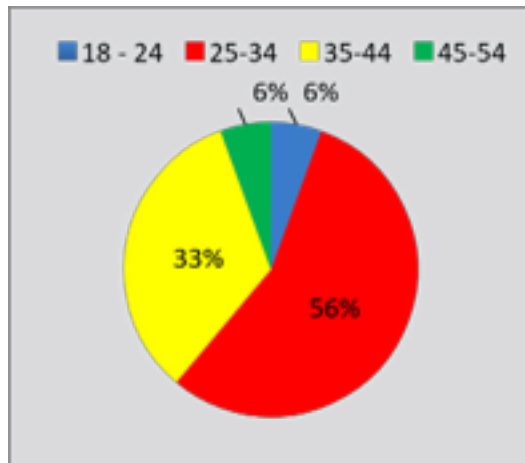
Full access to the Survey Monkey web site would have cost €400.00 which was beyond the finances available to the research project. Survey Monkey charges for surveys over ten questions. Because of this we had to split the survey into part A and B. This we feel resulted in some confusion among the respondents and as such resulted in 8 spoilt returns as participants failed to fill in part B of the survey.

### **5.4. Lack of Triangulation**

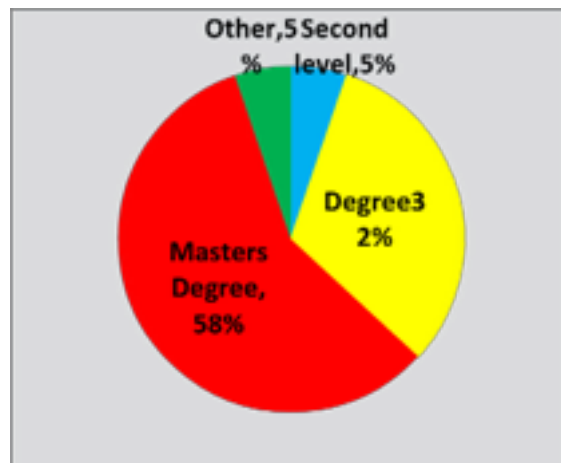
We were unable to conduct interviews or focus groups due to the time constraints of the project. This raised concerns of the validation of the surveys. The small sample size and lack of triangulation makes it difficult to draw conclusions from the data.

Ogevalle (2013) stresses “while standardised quantitative survey instrument [provide] a doable way of assessing knowledge, attitudes or behavioural change over a large number of people, [it will] be rather inadequate to draw rich lessons about the impact of development education interventions and about the factors that contributed to Impact” This explains why triangulation was needed (Ogevalle 2013).

## Results



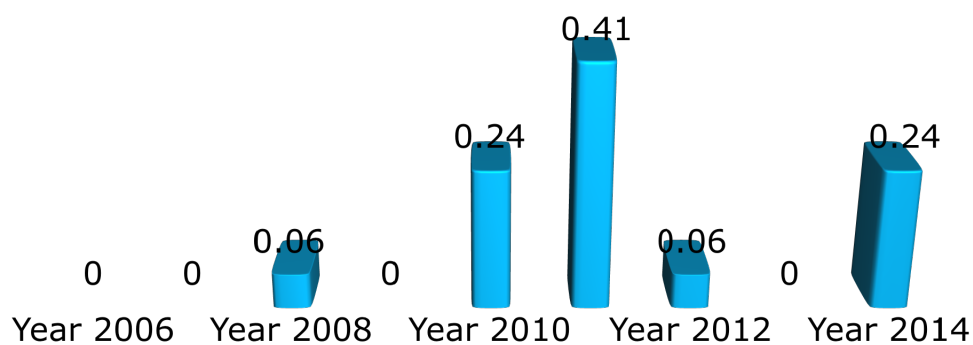
Age Profile fig 1



Education Profile fig 2

### 6.1. Demographics

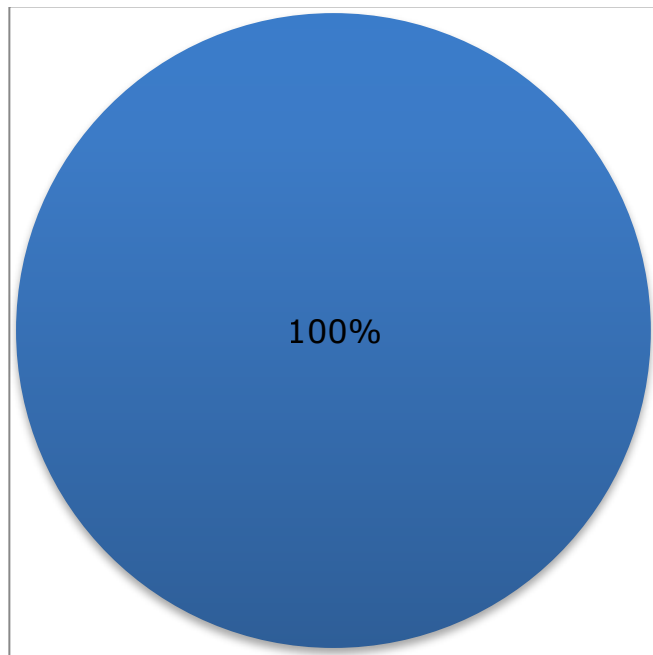
The majority (55%) of respondents were in the age group 25-34 followed by 45-54 (33%), 25-34 (6%) and 18-24 (6%). The respondents were asked what was their highest level of education. The educational profile of the respondents was 58% master's degree, 32% degree level and 5% respectively for second level or other.



Year of participation fig 3

### 6.2. Year of Participation

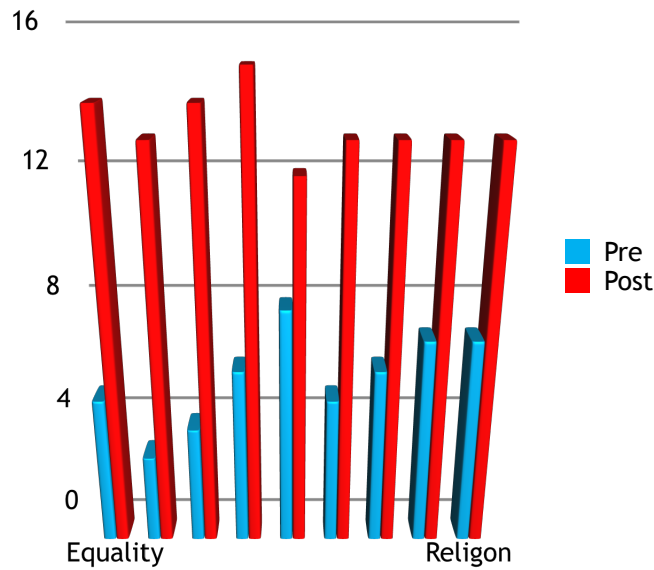
We surveyed the year the participants took part in the IP. 94% of the replies to the survey had participated within the last 4 years. The lack of response data for 2009 would suggest a gap in DPs contact email addresses for this year



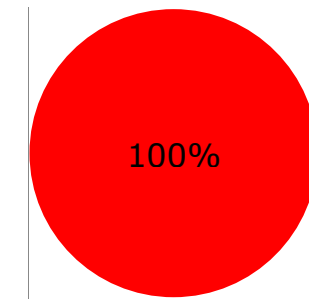
Contact with DP fig 4

### 6.3. Contact with DP

We asked the participants how they heard of the IP .52 % said through a friend 39% said through college, and 9% said through the media. The high level of participants who heard of the IP through a friend would suggest that participation in the IP is having a multiplier effect.



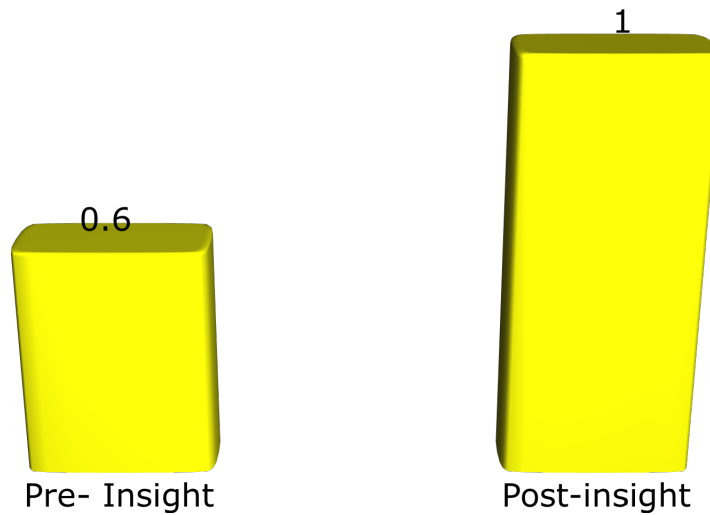
Topics of Engagement fig 5



Multiplier of Change fig 6

## 6.4 Multipliers of change

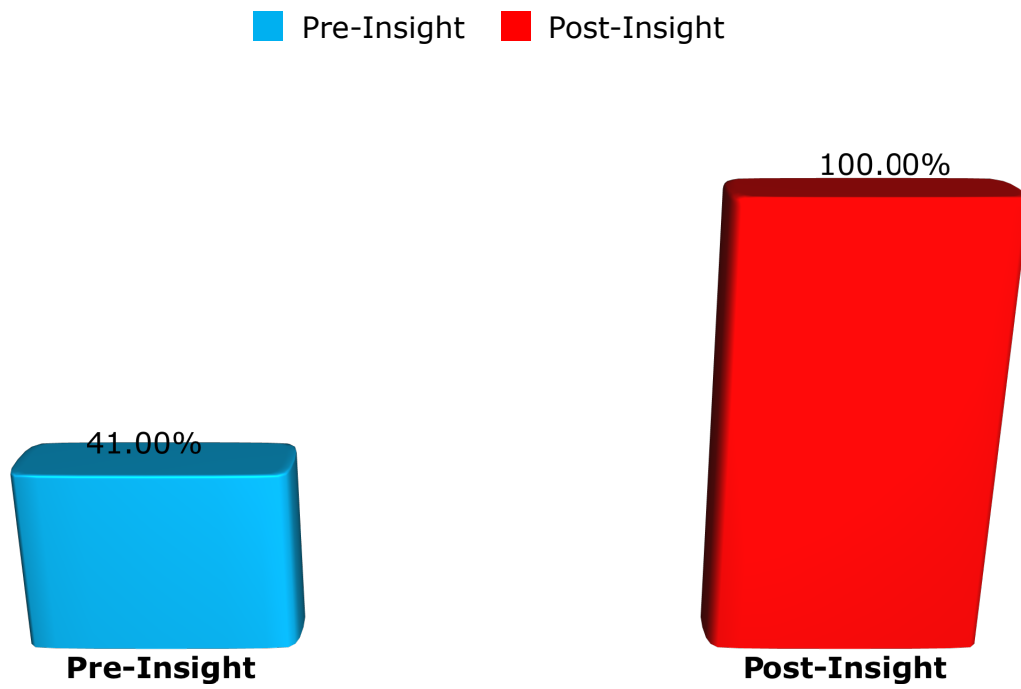
The majority of participants (79%) consider themselves as agents and multipliers of change (See fig6). To assess and understand in which social and political spheres participants are exerting influence and acting as multiplier of change, we posed a number of possibilities (See fig 5). We asked participant to indicate the many categories they are engaged in, and we allowed space in survey for participants to note whether or not IP had contributed to their engagement in these social/political spheres. One respondent added “Yes all of them, as they are all interconnected. Insight helped me to see this”



Empowerment fig 7

### 6.5. Physiological empowerment

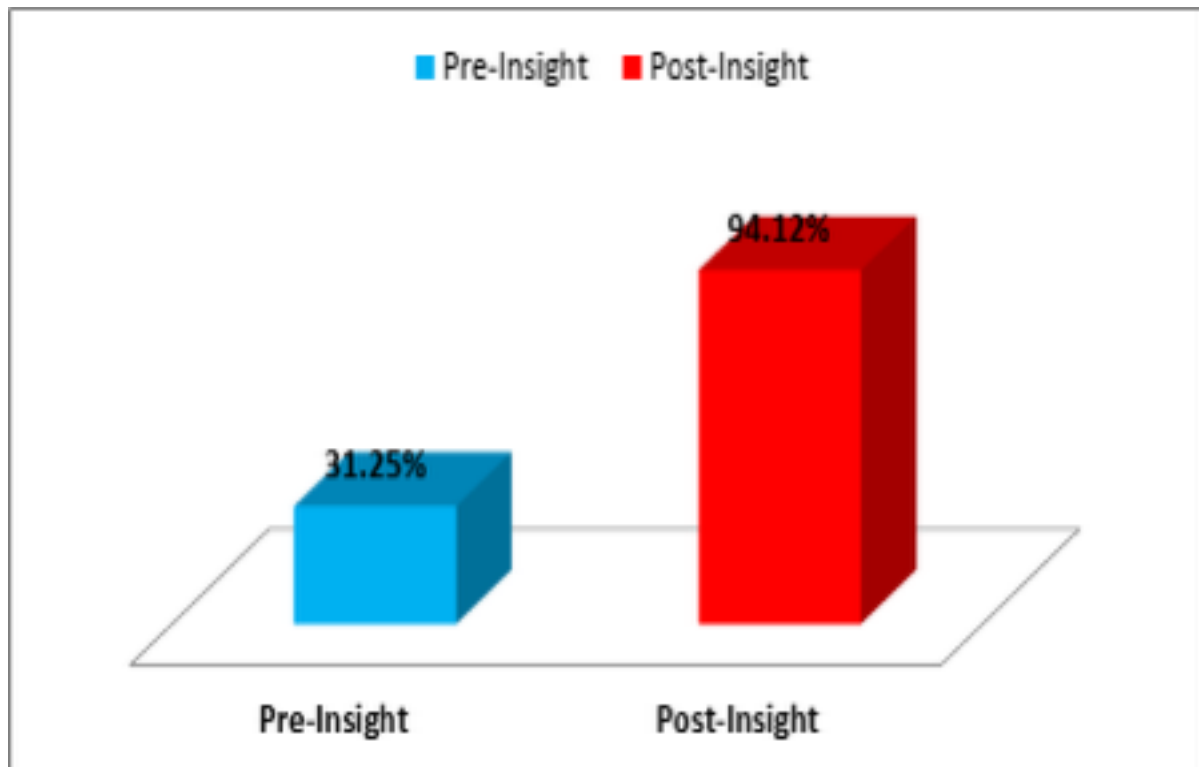
To gauge the physiological empowerment we asked participants if they felt they could agree with this statement. "I feel I am confident enough to bring about changes to the world whereby people live in peace with each other, in harmony with nature, free from the shackles of poverty. While 55% (Pre-Insight Programme) replied affirmatively to that statement, 100% (Post- Insight Programme) replied affirmatively to that statement.—a shift of 45%.



Engagement fig 8

## 6.6. Engagement

To gauge engagement with civic activities we asked respondents if they were engaged in any form of civil activities. 41% (Pre-IP) were engaged in civil activities compared to 100% (Post- IP) engaged in civil activities. This represented a shift of 59%

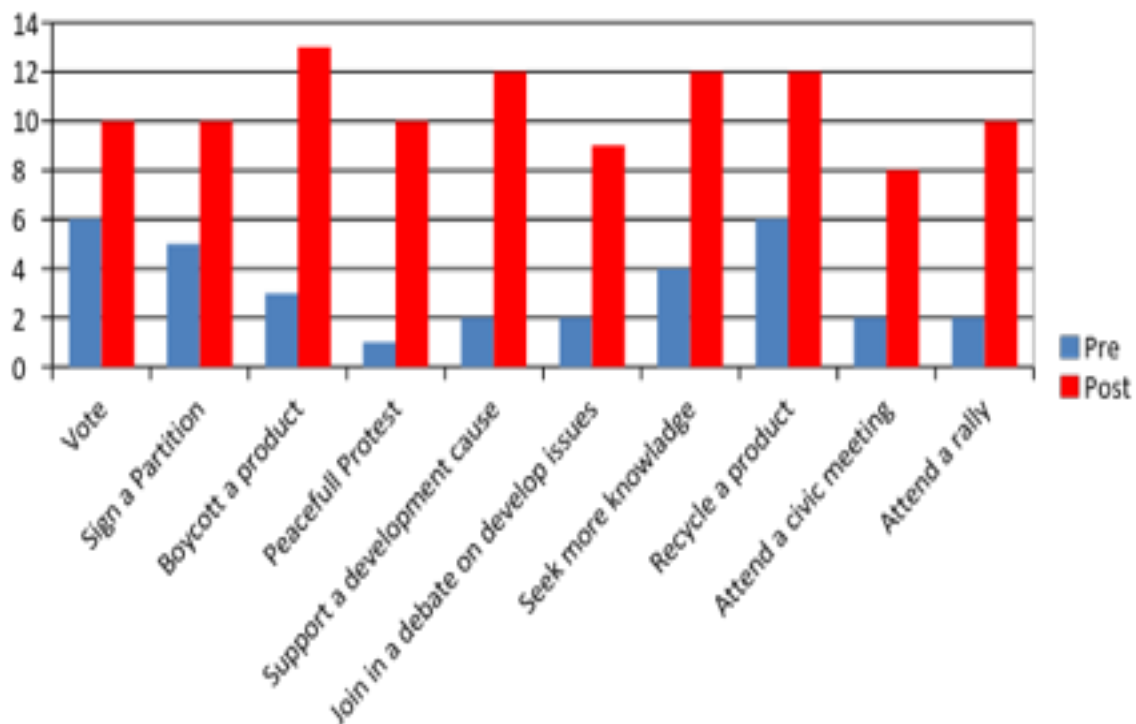


Action fig 9

### 6.7. Action for or against government action/Inaction

To discover respondents' level of active citizenship in the political sphere, we asked

“Previous to your engagement in the Insight Program would you have participated in any actions for/against a government action/inaction?” The return from this questions indicated that post IP, respondents overwhelmingly adopt a more action oriented approach to highlight their disaffection from government action/inaction.



Activities fig 10

## 6.8. Activities

We also asked the respondents to indicate what kind of activities they engaged in and compared these pre and post participation with the IP. Results clearly indicates that, post IP, respondents had increasingly sought to tackle social and political issues by engaging in a wide array of activities. One respondent notes “All these topics are related. It takes many types of action to deal with an issue”



## **Discussion**

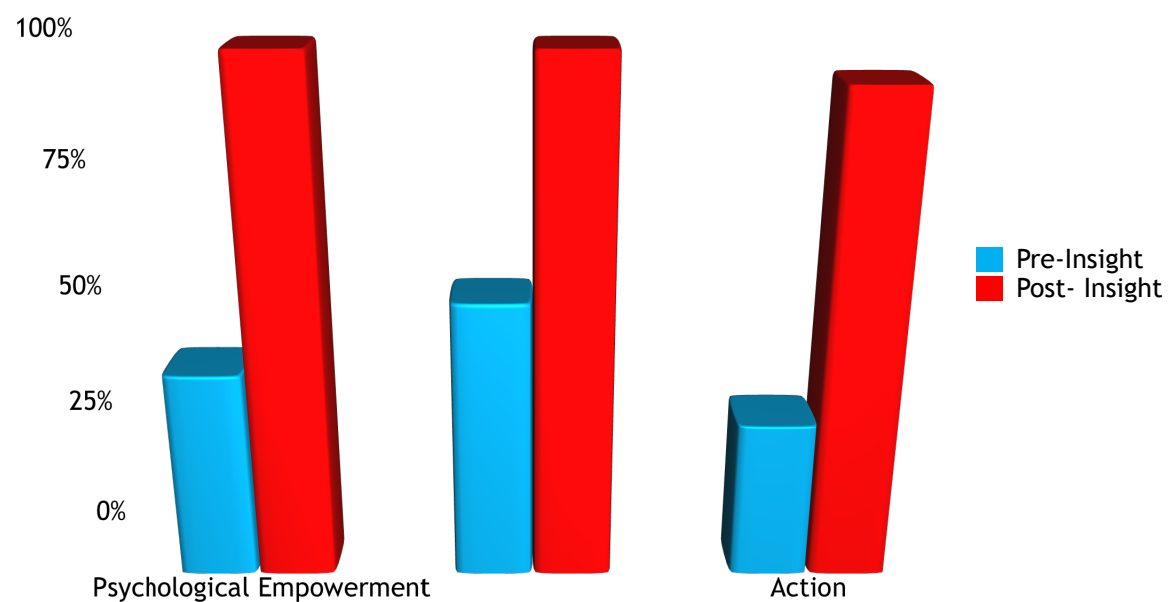
### **Locating Active Citizenship in Development Perspectives**

The results of this study lends credence to previous studies' conclusion (DP's The Story so Far' 2011) (Dochas' Assessing the Impact of Development Education in Ireland' 2012) that DP's Insight Programme has a strong positive influence on participants' active citizenship. However, while many studies have shown that DP has a positive effect on active citizenship, few have given the political dimension of active citizenship appropriate focus. This is a problem, as active citizenship, in an Irish context, have been criticized as a process contributing to "depoliticization of principles and practice of community development" (Gaynor 2011). The argument is that active citizenship, in the Irish context, by predominantly calling for volunteers to become allies to marginalised groups by volunteering and doing good will work for community solidarity, has taken the attention away from state accountability, hence depoliticize the process of community development (Gaynor 2011). This study avoids that trap as it accentuates political activism with questions measuring directly for respondent actions for or against government action or inaction (See Figure 9,10 and 11). With indicators such as: peaceful protest, attend rally, sign petition, this question intended to re-insert politics and power into the process of community development and into the spirit of active citizenship in whole (See Figure 10).

## Recommendations

Our recommendation refers to the research design. It is widely noted that long time frames associated with educational impact and behaviour changes necessitate in many cases a longitudinal approach (Ellis, E; Hakizimfura, E 2012). Hence, we recommend DP adopts a longitudinal approach to measure impact of intervention; that is, DP measures participants active citizenship prior to their commencing the program, and allow for a year or two to elapse before conducting another study measuring for level active citizenship after intervention. Adopting such an approach, while remaining conscious of adequate methods, namely the triangulation methods, would allow changes observed to be readily attributable to DP's intervention. Other recommendation refers to the necessity for future studies measuring for active citizenship to, as highlighted by this study, to take in focus political activism.

## Conclusion



Conclusion fig 11

The findings from this research show a strong positive correlation between participation in DP's Insight project and level of active citizenship. More specifically, the results shows participation in DP's program results in participant feeling empowered. This empowerment translates into participants actively engaging in various activities to exert influence over social and political outcomes. In addition, the study reveals participants employ high political processes to exert influence on political affairs. DP's participants are not only exerting influence in community by engaging in the soi-disant 'soft' 'apolitical' activities such as volunteering at civil society organizations, but they are also highly engaging in so called 'hard' highly political activities such as protesting, signing petition, attending rallies amongst others.

Despite the strong correlation between DP' intervention and active citizenship, due to limitations aforementioned, the study does not however permit causal attribution nor does it allow for generalization beyond study's sample. However, this does not undermine the value of the study, as evidenced in the fact that DP is already adopting the questions used in the survey to measure 2015 participants' level of active citizenship before those participants partake in the Insight Project. (See appendix 1)

## Appendix

1.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Development Perspective</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pre-Insight Questionnaire</b></p>
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Q1 What age are you?

Q.2 Are you...

Male	
Female	

Q.3 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Primary	
Secondary	
College	
Master's Degree	
Doctorate	
Other	

Q.4

How did you hear about the Insight Programme?

Q.5 Have you engaged in conversation with your peers in topics relating to (select as many as you need)

Equality	
Economic Policies in Ireland	
Politics	
Social Change	
Community Issues	
Development Issues	
Global Warming	
Race	
Religion	
Gender Equality	

Q.6 Would you have agreed or disagreed with the following statement "I feel I am confident enough to bring about changes to the world whereby people live in peace with each other, in harmony with nature, free from the shackles of poverty"

Strongly Disagree (1)	Tend to disagree (2)	Neither/ Nor (3)	Tend to agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)

Q.7 Are you engaged in any form of civil activities (a member of a club/political organisation/pressure group/volunteer?)

Yes	
No	

Q 8 Previous to your engagement on the Insight Program would you have participated in any actions for/against a government action/inaction?

Yes
No

Q9 Have you engaged in activities to “improve things” or “prevent things” in this country or abroad (Select as many as you like )

Vote	
Sign a petition	
Boycott a Product	
Peaceful protest	
Support a development cause	
Join in a debate on development issues	
Seek more knowledge in Development issues	
Recycle a produce	
Attend a rally	
Attend a local civic meeting	

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