

## **Sharon ní Bheolain Launches 'Every Child' Campaign for Action Aid Ireland**

ActionAid Ireland Ambassador Sharon ní Bheolain helped launch the 'Every Child' campaign today. Through the 'Every Child' campaign, ActionAid Ireland is seeking to give children in developing countries access to the basic rights and necessities that those of us in Ireland sometimes take for granted.

ActionAid Ireland believes education is a fundamental human right; many children will never enter a classroom. ActionAid Ireland is asking Irish people to help children and their communities in countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Vietnam and Cambodia. For as little as 76 cent a day sponsoring a child can help to build an education system, provide access to safe, clean water and improve livelihoods so children no longer have to work and can attend school. ActionAid estimate that over 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all children left school with basic reading skills.

By sponsoring a child through the 'Every Child' campaign, Irish people could help one of the 67 million children in the world who are not getting a primary education, millions of whom are girls who have been denied an education because of early marriage, some as young as 12 years old.

At the launch today, CEO of ActionAid Ireland, Olga McDonogh said; "Child sponsors are vital to the work we do in ActionAid Ireland. The regular support that our sponsors provide helps us to work with children and their communities and change their lives for the better. She added; "Much of the sponsorship we receive goes towards educating children that otherwise may not have such a chance. Over one billion people, mostly women, lack a basic education and 246 million children worldwide work to survive - education gives people the skills and confidence to escape poverty and achieve their dreams. Education isn't just life-changing, it's something every child has a right to and through our child sponsorship programmes, we are working towards giving more children in the developing world access to that right".

ActionAid Ireland Ambassador Sharon ní Bheolain also said today at the launch; ""Children have a natural curiosity and an eagerness to learn, no child should be deprived the joy, the confidence or the opportunities afforded by an education. Not only can an education lift a child

out of poverty, it can enhance the lives of family members and benefit those living in that child's community"

For further information on Action Aid Ireland and the Every Child campaign, please visit [www.actionaid.ie](http://www.actionaid.ie) / [www.facebook.com/actionaidireland](https://www.facebook.com/actionaidireland) / [www.twitter.com/actionaid.ie](https://www.twitter.com/actionaid.ie) /

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Notes to Editors:

**About Action Aid Ireland**

Action Aid Ireland was founded in 1983 and works as part of Action Aid International fighting poverty and injustice helping over 20 million people in Africa, Asia and the Americas. Together with more than 2,000 civil society partners worldwide, we work with and support the poorest and most vulnerable people to fight for and gain their rights to food, shelter, work, basic healthcare and a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Among them are widows, orphans, the homeless and disabled, people with HIV & AIDS, tribal peoples and religious minorities.

Education is a core strategic theme of ActionAid Ireland because it is a fundamental human right and is key to helping people lift themselves out of poverty. The links between illiteracy and poverty are proven and strong. Education is recognized as the responsibility of the State and is regarded as a core element of a development policy committed to social justice.

ActionAid's vision for education is that all children will have free access to quality education within an equitable system.

**Key aspects of ActionAid Ireland's work in education:**

- Supporting excluded and disadvantaged groups (especially girls) in gaining access to quality education
- Promoting the rights of all learners within education systems
- Strengthening citizens' participation in education governance
- Advocating for education policies that promote the right the education of all

Action Aid Ireland also champions poor people's rights through international campaigns on food rights and HIV & AIDS.