



49th Session of the HRC
Item 6 – UPR outcome – Ireland
March 23, 2022
Speaker: Eileen Hoffler

Oral statement submitted by
**VIDES International – International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education
and Development**

And co-signed by
IIMA – Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco

With the support of
VIDES Ireland –International Volunteering Development Education Service Ireland

Thank You Mister President,

VIDES on behalf of this NGO coalition commends the constructive participation of Ireland in its 3rd UPR.

We welcome the acceptance of recommendations 157.173 ¹ and 157.176 ² aiming to prioritise equal access to quality education at all levels and to continue to work to ensure equal access to digital technologies being mindful of children’s mental health. However, we are concerned about the ongoing inequity in relation to access to digital technologies and the disparity in the levels of digital literacy among children from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds when compared to the general child population. Moreover, we are deeply concerned with the high number of suicides, self-harm, substance abuse and high prevalence rates of mental health illnesses among adolescents. The Covid 19 pandemic has only exacerbated the situation; with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, suffering greater ‘learning loss’ and experiencing more mental health challenges ³.

We call on Ireland to:

¹ Recommendation 157.173 “Prioritize equitable access to quality education opportunities at all levels (Botswana)”. See Report of the Working Group Pg.20, UN Document A/HRC/49/18. 14 December 2021.

² Recommendation 157.176 “Continue its efforts in ensuring equal access to the Internet and the technologies necessary for remote learning, as well as taking care of children’s mental health (Lithuania)”. See Report of the Working Group Pg.20, UN Document A/HRC/49/18. 14 December 2021.

³ “*The Implications of the Covid 19 Pandemic for Policy in relation to Children & Young People. A Research Review*” Darnody, M., Smyth, E., & Russell, H., ERSI, Survey & Statistical Report Series, No 94, July 2020

- 1. Strengthen its efforts to tackle educational inequalities at all levels, through the adequate resourcing of early childhood education, the continued expansion of the DEIS⁴ school programme, the expansion of the school meals programme and the introduction of free schoolbooks scheme.***
- 2. Support digital inclusion by targeting disadvantaged students and their communities through the provision of reliable, affordable internet access, through the delivery of digital literacy programmes and through adequately resourcing the provision of internet enabled devices.***

Thank You

⁴ Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools.