

MacArthur Foundation Award Success

Trinity College Dublin in partnership with University College Dublin, The National University of Rwanda, Kimmage Development Centre, The Ethical Globalisation Initiative, headed by Mary Robinson, the Chancellor of the University of Dublin and Trócaire have been awarded a grant of US \$900,000 to establish a Masters in Development Practice (MDP) by the MacArthur Foundation in the United States. This programme is headquartered globally at the Earth Institute at Columbia University in New York.

The TCD-UCD programme is one of nine MDPs worldwide that will receive support this year from the MacArthur Foundation, and is the only one in Europe. The steering committee will be comprised of representatives of the different partner institutions and chaired by Patrick Paul Walsh, Professor of International Development Studies at UCD. The other "faculty champion" is David Taylor, Professor Geography at Trinity College Dublin, who will be based at the National University of Rwanda during 2009-10, with responsibility for the clinical field training experiences. The academic co-coordinator of the programme is Dr. Pádraig Carmody, also of the School of Natural Sciences at TCD. Professor Taylor stated that the support of the MacArthur Foundation was highly welcomed and an endorsement of the world class development-oriented teaching and research that the consortium of institutions involved in the MDP was able to deliver. The focus of the field training will be on climate change and livelihoods in border regions in East Africa, an area of particular interest for the School of Natural Sciences.

The global programme of MDPs aims "to create an innovative model for professional training within a global network of participating universities". The overall goal is to train world leading inter-disciplinary development practitioners and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations to dramatically reduce global poverty. There are four main pillars of the programme: health sciences, natural sciences, social sciences and management. The programme also contains a heavy emphasis on intensive field training experiences, undertaken in multidisciplinary teams. Exceptional graduate-level students from around the world will develop the core skills and knowledge required of a "generalist" development practitioner who understands the complex interactions among fields and is able to coordinate and implement effectively among the insights offered by subject-specific specialists.

The grant money will be used to support a MacArthur Lectureship in Development Practice, administration of the programme, scholarships for students from the developing world, staff exchanges between TCD, UCD and NUR and clinical field training in Rwanda. This programme will also contribute to development of the global MDP network through curriculum and teaching material development and to courses delivered through the network via the "Global Classroom", which utilizes videoconferencing. The programme will also seek to learn from and contribute to the development of the Millennium Villages project, also funded, in part, by the MacArthur Foundation.

Further information is available at:

The MacArthur Foundation's website:

<http://www.macfound.org>

The Global MDP Secretariat's website:

<http://mdp.ei.columbia.edu>

The Earth Institute, Columbia University's website is at

<http://www.earth.columbia.edu>

The Millennium Villages Project website is:

<http://www.millenniumvillages.org/>