

40 Years of Concern Debates Motions

- 1984** Irish politicians don't really care about Third World development as it never was and never will be an election issue
- 1985** The gap between the rich and poor in our society is getting wider all the time and there is no political will to narrow it
- 1986** Charity and development are incompatible
- 1987** The liberator of today is nearly always the oppressor of tomorrow
- 1987** Feeding the world is increasingly beyond humanity's reach

- 1989** Irish people are doing their fair share to help solve world hunger
- 1990** Super-power policies are the major cause of hunger in the Third World
- 1991** Poverty is as oppressive to the poor in Ireland as it is to the poor in the third world
- 1992** Famine is an inevitable reality for the Third World
- 1993** International Aid is tackling the real causes of world poverty

ST OLIVERS IN CONCERN DEBATES AREA FINAL

The Concern debating team from St Oliver's Post Primary, Oldcastle, upheld the schools impressive record recently by representing the school in the Cavan - Meath - Longford - Roscommon final of the competition. The team of Alma Farrelly (captain), Kevin Twomey, Colin Bowers and Joanne McEntaggart, showed great dedication and hard work to reach this stage of the competition.

The team proved itself adept at both proposing and opposing motions on its way to the final for example, they successfully opposed the motion, "Environmental destruction is the major problem facing the Third World today", against Eureka Convent, Kells, and proposed the motion, "Famine is an inevitable reality for the Third World" against Mercy Convent, Athboy.

Wins such as these qualified them for the unit final, one of only twenty two teams remaining in the country from an original entry of over 280 teams. The final against a team from Ballymahon, Longford was held in Oldcastle, before a capacity crowd of over 300 people. Oldcastle had the difficult side of the motion proposing that: "Poverty and prejudice are as oppressive to the poor in Ireland as they are to the poor in the Third World".

Both teams rose to the occasion, especially Joanne McEntaggart, whose refutation earned her a special commendation.

Unfortunately, when the adjudication was announced, Oldcastle had lost by the narrowest of margins, as the Ballymahon team made full use of the drama of their side of the motion. Oldcastle were impressive to the end and at this level of the competition it gets hard to decide between the teams.

Concern debates under way

The first round of the Concern Debates were held on Wednesday, 13th in the Patrician College, Ballyfin. The motion was 'The World is solving its Food problem'. Ballyfin were proposing and Bridgline were opposing.

The proposing team asserted that the farmers in the past were much worse than those of the present, that progress was being made in the area of malnutrition and that certain parts of the world, notably China and Kerala in Southern India, had solved their food problem. They also referred to the progress in food science and to the 'green revolution' that had resulted.

Mountrath opposing pointed to the vast excess of malnutrition in the world, to the huge inequalities of income, between the developed and least developed nation and to the recurring famines and rapidly rising birthrate on the African continent.

Ballyfin were deemed to have won a very closely contested and interesting debate.



- 1994** Developing countries should have the right to exploit their wildlife as they see fit
- 1995** Worldwide, the advantages of economic growth outweigh its costs
- 1996** The world is solving its food problem
- 1997** The Celtic Tiger has a strong global conscience
- 1998** Human rights hinder economic development
- 1999** The voices of women are making an impact on world development
- 2000** Students today don't care about the third world
- 2001** Development NGOs do more harm than good
- 2002** Aid to the developing world is doing more harm than good
- 2003** Multinational corporations are cleaning up their act
- 2004** Tomorrow's children will inherit a better world
- 2005** Ireland is committed to fair trade



- 2006** The BEBO generation cares little for the developing world
- 2007** Celebrity led campaigns do more harm than good for the developing world
- 2008** Genetically Modified Food is essential in the fight against world hunger
- 2009** The Irish Media has a stereotyped and unfair view of Africa
- 2010** Overseas aid works
- 2011** Aid to the developing world is a luxury Ireland cannot afford
- 2012** International commitments to tackling climate change are a load of hot air
- 2013** Social media improves our understanding of major world events
- 2014** China is good for Africa
- 2015** Young people should be trusted to vote at sixteen

CONCERN debate

The Longford Area Finals of the CONCERN debate takes place on Tuesday night next, January 26th at 8pm in St. Mel's College, and the two competing teams will be St. Mel's Versus Moyne Community School.

The CONCERN debates have been running for the past nine years and are open to all second level students. This is the third round of the debates in the Longford/Roscommon area.

The Motion for next Tuesday night's debate is: "International Aid is tackling the real causes of world poverty" and the winners will proceed to the Unit finals where they will debate with schools from other counties.



Concern Debates

The annual Concern debates have just been launched in second level schools throughout the country. Since the event was established four years ago, it's become an important feature of the school year for many students. In 1986 alone, over two hundred and sixty second level institutions entered the competition with the top award eventually going to Pobalscoil Neasain in Dublin.

Organisers believe that the debates provide an ideal forum for young people all over Ireland to speak out on behalf of the victims of injustice and poverty and on behalf of the millions in the Third World who cannot speak out. "The voices of the poor especially in the Third World fall on deaf ears. In recent months, the voices of war victims in Mozambique, of those threatened by famine in Ethiopia or the millions who have been affected by flooding in Bangladesh have been shouting to be heard".



All Ireland Concerned Debates Poetry Competition 2021



Aedmar O'Callaghan, a student from St. Louis Secondary School, Carrickmacross who won the All Ireland Concerned Debates Poetry Competition 2021 with her poem "2030". Pic. Pat Byrne.



- 2016** Ending world hunger by 2030 is an impossible dream
- 2017** There should be limits to free speech on social media
- 2018** Globalisation is a force for good
- 2019** The EU needs an army
- 2020** Climate change activists must give up eating meat
- 2021** Except for valid medical conditions, vaccines should be made compulsory
- 2022** Boycotts are an effective tool for social change
- 2023** Big business is indifferent to the Sustainable Development Goals
- 2024** Achieving world peace is the defining task of the 21st century

A note on language: The language used in motions has changed over time to be more respectful and accurate. For example, we don't say "third world" anymore because it's outdated and offensive - we use terms like "low income nations" instead. It's all about keeping debates inclusive and informed.