Connecting Scotland – how Scottish organisations engage internationally

Network for International Development Organisations (NIDOS)

Introduction:
NIDOS  www.nidos.org.uk  is the Network for International Development Organisations based in Scotland. Our aim is to strengthen the contributions of Scottish organisations to tackling inequality and poverty worldwide. Since our establishment 15 years ago in 2000, our network has grown to have a uniquely global reach, with our 115 members working in at least 142 countries with a wide range of specialisms.

Summary of key points: Scottish organisations (NGOs, academic players, other civil society organisations) play a key role in international development and in Scotland’s international relations, alongside government and business players. We strongly urge Scottish Government and Parliament to continue to support this engagement in both international development and international relations and engage civil society actors in the development of future policy and in debate about Scotland’s international role. We also strongly recommend that Scotland takes a ‘policy coherence for development’ (PCD) approach to its international development and international relations to ensure that it does not give with one hand and take back with the other.

Q 1: What international activities are happening now in your sector and/or organisation? Please describe how and why these activities take place. Are other sectors or organisations involved? What do these activities contribute or achieve?

Our response to this question is divided into two sections:
- An overview of the work of our member organisations and their activities and impact
- A summary of NIDOS’ role, contribution and impact

An overview of our member organisations and their impact
NIDOS has 115 member organisations, all working in different aspects of international development. They include full member organisations of different sizes with their headquarters in Scotland; full members which are a Scottish branch of a large global international non-governmental organisation (INGO) such as Oxfam Scotland or Islamic Relief in Scotland; as well as associate members which include departments of several Scottish universities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations who do some work abroad but do not have international development as their main remit.
Our members:
- employ over 300 staff in Scotland
- are supported by in excess of 3000 volunteers in Scotland
- have many tens of thousands of financial supporters and donors in Scotland
- have a direct impact on the lives of many millions of people living in poverty around the world, improving their lives through education, health, livelihoods and business development, water and sanitation, access to key resources such as land and knowledge, and access to their rights.

Between them, our Scottish headquartered member organisations raise over £43 million per year for international development work. We estimate that the funds raised by our cross-border members (those headquartered outside Scotland but active here) will bring this total to around £117 million per year from Scotland.\(^1\) This does not include fundraising from any of our associate members.

Below is a summary of the types and sizes of our member organisations at present:

NIDOS members are a key and significant group for delivery of the Scottish Government’s grants programmes. Since 2010, the following proportion of the grants and funding have been awarded to NIDOS members:

- Malawi programme: 34 out of the 61 grants and 56% of the total grant funding
- Sub Saharan Africa programme: 7 out of the 8 grants and 84% of the total funding
- South Asia programme: 27 out of the 33 grants and again 84% of the total funding
- Small Grants programme: 19 out of 26 grants and 65% of the total funding
- Climate Justice Fund: 9 out of 11 grants and 80% of the total funding

\(^1\) This does not include fundraising from any of our associate members.
These statistics show the calibre of organisations involved in the network, and the good level of experience represented by members of the NIDOS network as a key group for the Scottish Government to work with.

Most member organisations are involved in direct project work abroad done in partnership with organisations (which might be community based, faith based, businesses or government bodies) within the communities and countries where our members work. This is crucial both for ensuring work meets the needs and priorities of local people and to build sustainable impact in the long term.

Some member organisations also focus on raising awareness of global justice issues in Scotland (including global education work in schools and communities) or work to influence the international policy of the Scottish or UK Governments. The focus of all this work is to tackle poverty and inequality and to strengthen the capacity of the communities our members are working in to improve their own lives. Our members work in over 140 countries.

The main areas of work are represented on the following chart:

![Areas of work of NIDOS member organisations](chart)

Twenty-six NIDOS member organisations have collectively produced an exhibition about the impact of their work, called Scotland v Poverty. This highlights some of the key issues of importance in international development and provides 26 case studies, one behind each of the faces on the website, of people or communities that are benefitting from our members work.
Our membership also includes three sister networks engaged in international development and global justice work from Scotland:

- Scotland Malawi Partnership [www.scotland-malawipartnership.org](http://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org) – a network focusing on building partnership between Scotland and Malawi
- Scottish Fair Trade Forum [www.sftf.org.uk](http://www.sftf.org.uk) – a network that is building Scottish engagement in fair trade and helped Scotland secure Fair Trade Nation status
- International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS) [www.ideas-forum.org.uk](http://www.ideas-forum.org.uk) - a network of agencies involved in global education work in schools and communities in Scotland.

There is a certain amount of overlap between NIDOS member organisations and membership of these networks, as well as with the Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) Coalition.

For a full list of NIDOS member organisations please visit our [member directory](http://www.nidos.org.uk) or refer to the appendix.

**NIDOS’ role and impact**

NIDOS has three key roles as a networking organisation:

1. Supporting our members to build their effectiveness and impact
2. Enabling networking and collaboration between our members and between them and other key actors in Scotland (such as the academic, business, funding/philanthropic, and government sectors)
3. Facilitating collective policy and advocacy work to influence international development policy and practice in Scotland and the UK

These roles are delivered through a range of services including information provision through a newsletter and website; advice and support on fundraising; an effectiveness programme helping members to review and strengthen their effectiveness and transparency; networking events and forums; seminars and conferences, often in partnership with other agencies; facilitation of collective input to policy debates, inquiries and consultations; and links with key decision makers in Scotland and the UK and with the media. As outlined by a [recent external evaluation of NIDOS work](http://www.nidos.org.uk) we found that we had made a positive impact in all three of these roles. A summary of the evaluation follows:

**Role 1: Building members’ effectiveness and impact**

- 46% of respondents said NIDOS effectiveness service had helped them strengthen their monitoring and evaluation
- 27% said it had strengthened their governance
- 19% said it had strengthened their staff capacity
- 38% said it has strengthened their partnerships
• 27% said it has strengthened their community engagement

Role 2: **Enabling networking and collaboration**
- 72% of respondents said their networking with other NIDOS members had expanded since 2011
- 40% said their links with other organisations were now much stronger with a similar percentage saying these links with other organisations were also more productive
- Over 50% said that NIDOS support had strengthened their fundraising capacity.

Role 3: **Facilitating collective policy and advocacy with Scottish Government and UK Government, as well as funders/philanthropists**
- 61% of respondents said NIDOS had helped increase their knowledge of Scottish international development policy
- 55% noted improvements in understanding UK international development policy
- 68% with regard to the Millennium Development Goals and the Post-2015 debate
- 16% had improved their media or advocacy skills
- 23% noted improvements in their relationships with decision makers
- 16% said they were now more involved in advocacy activities.

Q2 - **Do you think your sector and/or organisation is effective in participating in international activities? If not, what would help you to make improvements? What prevents you from making improvements now?**

Our sector has a strong record and interest in effectiveness in international development. This is shown in two key ways:

1. **Taking a collaborative approach**
A good number of NIDOS member organisations work in coalitions and have developed collaborations both to take forward their own work and to input to the development of international development policy at a Scottish, UK, and to some extent, global levels. Over the last few years these collaborations have included:

- **The Enough Food for Everyone IF... Campaign**: highlighting action that needs to be taken to tackle food security and hunger globally and working with the public and politicians in Scotland
- **The Procurement Bill**: inputting into policy on Scotland’s public procurement
- **Sustainable Energy for All**: inputting into Scottish policy and the steering group
- **Post-2015 framework and Sustainable Development Goals**: linking between NGOs, DFID and the Scottish Government, as well as with the global civil society network Beyond 2015, to ensure flow of information on the process and input into DFID thinking

- **Stop Climate Chaos Scotland**: inputting into SCCS campaigns and working with Scottish politicians and officials in relation to the development of a world leading Climate Act (Scotland) 2009 and the follow up to this in relation to monitoring progress against targets and helping to highlight the world leading Climate Justice Fund

- **Engagement with DFID**: NIDOS is a key link between the sector in Scotland and DFID, ensuring DFID is aware of the range of international development activity in Scotland and encouraging them to engage with Scottish actors

2. **Focusing and acting to improve on their organisation’s effectiveness**

Many organisations have robust systems for clarifying their aims, working effectively with their partners and with the communities they are working with, have built sustainability into their approaches, and are focused on improving their performance. Other organisations may have improvements to make to their long term positive impact and in their governance. Over the last six years NIDOS has built up its effectiveness programme and support services to increase standards and performance in our sector even further. As a result of this work NIDOS has, with input from many of our most effective members, produced an [Effectiveness Toolkit](#) which both challenges and supports our members to strengthen their effectiveness. NIDOS provides an advice and mentoring service as part of the effectiveness programme, helping members use the toolkit and implement improvements to tackle areas of weakness identified. This toolkit has now been used by over 40 member organisations with many going on to improve their systems and effectiveness as a result.

We also work with our sister network in the UK, Bond, alongside our own effectiveness programme. This joint work with Bond focuses on encouraging our members to build their transparency – i.e. how open they are about information on their work, finances, governance, impact and approach – as well as on strengthening their Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning systems.

NIDOS’ effectiveness programme is largely focused on ensuring that the project based work of our members is done effectively in the countries where they work. This ‘aid-related’ effectiveness is crucial but is not the only important element of effectiveness for our sector to consider or engage in.

A second significant element of NIDOS members’ collective work is in relation to ensure positive international development impact outside of any aid related programme. This relates to the much greater international development impact that
can be achieved through activities like trade, procurement, the reduction of climate change emissions, corporate tax payments to governments, and so on. These ‘beyond aid’ elements are crucial as they can add considerable value to the efforts made through aid programme if done with a pro-poor focus, or, where not, can seriously undermine any benefits aid might try to bring.

In both the context of the global debate on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework and the emerging post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, NIDOS worked with members to produce the report, *Scotland’s Place in Building a Just World*. This recommended a policy coherence for international development (PCD) approach for Scotland to take, and for our members to lobby for. Based largely on European models, this is the concept that all government departments and policies should act coherently to comply with, and contribute to, the goal of equitable and sustainable global development. The full report can be accessed [here](#) and a two page summary [here](#).

The most recent OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peer review report on the UK highlighted the importance of improving policy coherence for development, laying out additional policy areas to improve, which are of strategic importance. These recommendations also apply to Scotland’s approach.

We believe that an important element of taking a PCD approach is to build in engagement of civil society, both in inputting ideas for key focus areas and on reviewing progress against these annually or biannually. It is important therefore that NIDOS and its members learn more about this and work with others in Scotland (and wider) in order to strengthen Scotland’s impact.

**Q3 - What should organisations in Scotland do to be effective internationally? Are you aware of any good examples of this from Scotland or another country?**

Much of what we have said in answer to question two also applies to this question.

NIDOS recently commissioned research and produced the report, *Policy Coherence for Development: Exploring and Learning from European PCD Approaches*, exploring European approaches to policy coherence for development (PCD). We studied six countries’ approaches, learning from their experience both in relation to government and civil society engagement in PCD. This research highlighted a number of key factors which need to be built in to secure progress:

- A strong legal, or at least policy, commitment to PCD to prevent loss of support if and when governments change.
• A clear definition of PCD that makes it relevant to national and EU policies to avoid confusion
• The involvement of all ministries and leadership from the highest level to aid arbitration and to prevent it becoming a ‘development' issue
• The involvement of southern partners to ensure credibility and measure impacts
• The identification of thematic issues to focus PCD work
• Annual or biennial government reporting on PCD with scrutiny by parliament and civil society to ensure transparency
• A strong role for civil society built in to mechanisms to ensure accountability and information exchange
• Appropriate funding committed to ensure a PCD system can operate effectively.

For international development organisations, the key findings were as follows:

• Focusing on thematic issues to make PCD relevant to members and decision-makers
• Referencing PCD in all work and events
• Establishing a working group for engaged member organisations to work on PCD
• Produce civil society reports on PCD progress to hold government to account
• Develop positive formal and informal working relationships with government to share expertise and knowledge

NIDOS is now building this into its PCD work with members. In addition, the research included a review of the approach in Belgium, where federal departments review all new legislation against twenty-one development factors, such as gender, to ensure all national policies are coherent with international policies. The Belgium sub-states have a significant portion of the overall Belgium budget for international development. We are currently commissioning further research on how sub-state actors in a range of countries have been engaged in international development work, in order to identify examples that Scotland might learn from. We hope to have finalised this research by the end of June 2015.

17 April 2015
Appendix: Current NIDOS members

500 miles
ACTSA Scotland
Africa On The Ball
African Scottish Development Organisation
African Youth Development Action Project
Aim Hai Trust SCIO
Bal Craig Foundation
Bethesda Khankho International
Better Life in Pakistan
Bioclimate Research and Development Ltd
Books Abroad
Bressay Outreach
British Red Cross
Burma Assist
Cairdeas International Palliative Care Trust
Capstone Projects
CBM
Cerebral Palsy Africa
Challenges Worldwide
Charity Education International
Children in Distress
Children of Songea Trust
Christian Aid Scotland
Christian Engineers in Development
CIFAL Scotland
Classrooms for Malawi
Community Energy Scotland
Community InfoSource
DARF (Dignity Alert Research Forum)
Dochas Education Trust
Dwelling Places UK
Ecologia Youth Trust
Edinburgh Global Partnerships
EMMS International
First Aid Africa
Friends of Chitambo
Friends of the Earth Scotland
Gaia Education
GALVmed
GEN International (Global Ecovillage Network)
Glasgow Centre for International Development (GCID)
Global Justice Now (formerly World Development Movement)
Haiti Support Group
IDEAS
IIED
Imani Development Foundation
ImpAcTAIDS
INSP (International Network of Street Papers)
Institute for International Health & Development
International Assoc. for Community Development
International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Islamic Relief
Jairah Funds
JTS (Just Trading Scotland)
Jubilee Scotland
Kenyan Women in Scotland Association
Kids Action
Link Community Development
Malawi Fruits
Mamie Martin Fund
Mary’s Meals
Mellow Parenting
Mercy Corps Scotland
Mision Mexico (UK)
Mission Aviation Fellowship
Mthunzi and Lilanda Initiative (M.A.L.I.)
Ombetja Yehinga Organisation (Scotland)
Orskov Foundation
Oxfam Scotland
Project Trust
Refugee Survival Trust
Relief Education Development International
Renew SCIO
ReSurge Africa
Rwanda Scotland Alliance
SASHITA Developing Rural Communities
Save the Children - Scotland
SCIAF
Scotland Malawi Mental Health Education Project
Scotland Malawi Partnership
Scottish Fair Trade Forum
SEAD (Scottish Education & Action for Development)
Sense Scotland
Sierra Leone Support Association
Sight Aid International
Signpost International
Social Enterprise Academy
Soko Fund
Solas Educational Trust
South Asia Voluntary Enterprise
Southern Agenda
Sport 4 Socialisation UK
STAND International
Take One Action
Tearfund
The Chesney Trust for Education in Malawi
The CIFA Trust
The Co-operative College
The Global Concerns Trust
The James Hutton Institute
The Leprosy Mission Scotland
The Malindi Project
The Nepal Trust
Ucare Foundation
UNICEF UK
United Nations Association, Scotland
VMM (Volunteer Missionary Movement)
VSO
Water Witness International
WaterAid in Scotland
Waterforall Africa
Woodford Foundation Scotland
Yes! Tanzania
Youth for Economic Justice