CONNECTING SCOTLAND STRAND TWO – HOW SCOTTISH ORGANISATIONS ENGAGE INTERNATIONALLY

Background

In autumn 2014, the European and External Relations Committee agreed to conduct an inquiry into “Connecting Scotland: how Scotland can engage most effectively in a globalising world”. The inquiry will have four strands, the second of which is to examine how Scottish organisations engage internationally.

During strand two of the inquiry, the Committee will consider how Scottish organisations like universities and colleges, local authorities, the third sector and professional associations engage internationally.

The three main aims of the strand two inquiry are to:

- map international activities carried out by Scottish organisations,
- understand how these activities contribute to international engagement, and
- understand how these activities provide opportunities for learning and exchange.

The Committee has identified three main areas of questions for its strand two inquiry:

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?

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?

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

This paper provides a summary of some of the examples of international engagement provided by organisations engaged with international development in their written evidence for strand two of the inquiry.

15 pieces of written evidence were received from organisations involved in international development. All the written evidence received by the Committee can be accessed at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/88774.aspx
At the start of its evidence, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) provided a useful summary of some of the key international development issues facing the world during 2015:

“2015 is an important year for tackling global poverty. In September, the UN will agree new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the current development framework and in December, nations will agree a new global deal on climate change at the UNFCCC in Paris. Important decisions on financing for development will be made in Addis Ababa in July. Here in the UK, SCIAF is delighted that the UK Government’s commitment to provide 0.7% of Gross National Income for overseas aid has been enshrined in law. July will also see the start of intergovernmental discussions on the establishment of an international treaty on business and human rights.”

Scale and scope of Scottish organisations involved in international development

As with the previous sectors the Committee has taken evidence from (universities and local authorities), it was clear from the written evidence provided that a wide range of organisations across Scotland are engaged in international development activity. For instance, the Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) summarised the breath of work going on in Malawi by highlighting “the scale, depth and breadth of civic links between Scotland and Malawi”.

SMP wrote that “94,000 Scots now have a Malawi partnership and 46% of Scots personally know someone with a Malawi link”. In addition, SMP wrote that 300,000 Scots benefit from Malawi partnerships each year.

SMP provided examples of links across a number of different policy areas including (but not limited to) agriculture and trade; sustainable economic development; arts and culture; environment and energy; further and higher education; health and governance.

SCIAF told the Committee that it works with:

“approximately 60 local partners in 15 focus countries across Africa (Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia), Asia (Burma, Cambodia, India) and Latin America (Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti and Nicaragua).”

SCIAF’s projects focus on the three themes of livelihoods, peacebuilding and access to justice, and education. According to SCIAF:

“It is estimated that in 2014 some 260,000 people directly benefited from SCIAF projects with approximately 1.8 million indirectly assisted by our projects.”

The Network for International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS) outlined its role in supporting the international development work of its members as:

“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)”

NIDOS also summarised the international development work of its members writing that:
“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…

…. Our members work in over 140 countries.”

A smaller organisation, the South Asia Voluntary Enterprise (SAVE-UK) wrote that it works in:

“the Indian subcontinent as a non-political and non-religious Scottish Charitable Organisation in the spheres of Primary Education, Primary Health Care, Mother and Child Care, Women’s Rights and Empowerment, Nutrition and Sanitation, Vocational training for income generation and on Advocacy in Environmental and Social issues. SAVE was established in 1994 by the Indian Diaspora settled mainly in Scotland and since its inception it has funded and supported 27 small projects in 9 states of India. At present it is funding 10 small projects in 5 states of India as Scottish charity.”

Oxfam Scotland summarised the international work of Oxfam writing that it “works to overcome poverty in over 90 countries around the world”. In terms of activity Oxfam highlighted its emergency response work across the globe including in West Africa to fight Ebola, in Syria where civil war has led to over 190,000 people being killed and over 3.2 million people displaced and the 2014 crisis in Gaza where the Scottish Government’s international development fund has provided £200,000 to help Oxfam reach nearly 420,000 people. According to Oxfam, at any time it is responding to 25-30 emergency situations worldwide.

Christian Aid Scotland wrote that its year round fundraising and campaigning by 600 local groups across Scotland raises around £7.5 million per year. This equates to about 13% of its voluntary income raised from across the UK.

Link Community Development, a Scottish-based international NGO envisions a world where all children have access to quality education. This vision has led to it working in over 3,000 schools and impacted nearly 2 million learners and their communities in the five countries of Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa, and Uganda over the past twenty years.

The Scottish Fair Trade Forum outlined its work promoting fair trade in Scotland but also wrote about its work with fair trade producers abroad:

“We regularly host guests from all around the world for our annual celebration of Fairtrade Fortnight and at other times of the year to draw attention to the work of Fair Trade producers and promote dialogue between producers in the developing world and consumers here in Scotland.

Over the last five years, we have hosted or supported visits from Fair Trade producers, farmers and workers from Kenya, Malawi, St Lucia, Chile, Palestine, Tanzania, Uganda, Thailand, Ghana, India, Nicaragua, Nepal, Colombia, Indonesia, Mauritius and the Dominican Republic. Many of these have been arranged in partnership with other Fair Trade organisations and businesses and some have been as part of wider visits to the UK and Europe. We have worked in partnership with Equal Exchange, Imani Development, the Fairtrade Foundation, JTS, the Edinburgh

Our guests have included small holder farmers, factory workers, representatives of co-operatives and Fair Trade businesses from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The visitors have met with Fairtrade campaigners, public and third sector organisations, businesses and farmers, government Ministers and officials, parliamentarians, local councillors and local government officials. They have attended events in nurseries, schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and places of worship.”

Mary’s Meals, an international school feeding charity demonstrated the geographic reach of its work stating that it:

“delivers school feeding programmes in 12 countries around the world. We are currently feeding 989,791 children through projects in Benin, Burma, Ecuador, Haiti, India, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, South Sudan, Thailand, Uganda and Zambia.

Mary’s Meals’ largest programmes are operated through our four affiliate organisations Mary’s Meals Kenya, Mary’s Meals Liberia, Mary’s Meals Malawi and Mary’s Meals Zambia and we also work with ten partner organisations, the largest being Mary’s Meals’ partners in Haiti, India and South Sudan. In Malawi, Mary’s Meals is currently feeding 740,712 children at 571 schools, which represents 26.5% of Primary School age children in Malawi.”

Malawi Fruits supports smallholder farmers in rural northern Malawi to grow cash crops to be able to fund their families education and healthcare needs. According to Malawi Fruits:

“In terms of contribution, we will be working with 600 farmers and helping 6,000 people by the end of the current grant cycle. These are subsistence farmers many of who have had no cash income before and the work is enabling them to have cash in the household available for education and healthcare needs of family members.”

An example of the work of a smaller Scottish charity was provided by the written evidence from Aim Hai Charitable Trust which provides support for education in Tanzania. It carries out its support by supporting Aim Hai School, and education in the wider community, in Bomang’ombe, Tanzania. According to the Trust:

“Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in Africa and levels of poverty in the Hai district are very high. Good quality education for local children is key not only for their own personal fulfilment but to the development of the community and the country, but many families cannot afford to send their children to good schools, and educational materials are in short supply.

The school now has 285 pupils. They are achieving excellent educational results and a recent local authority inspection reported very favourably. The school is still being developed, with the construction of 7 new classrooms and a laboratory under way.”

The Scottish Government’s International Development Fund

A number of respondents referred their involvement in the delivery of the Scottish Government’s grants programmes provided by the International Development Fund. NIDOS wrote:
“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”

SCIAF (a member of NIDOS) wrote that Scottish Government funding currently supports four projects in Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi and Burundi.

Oxfam wrote that between 2005 and 2015 it has received over £5.7 million from the Scottish Government’s International Development Fund and the Climate Justice Fund. According to Oxfam:

“The funding has enabled us to deliver a number of essential development projects, including in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Significantly, Oxfam campaigned for the creation of the Climate Justice Fund to help those most affected by the climate change which Scotland helped cause. In addition, the Scottish Government has supported our emergency response work both directly and through contributions to the Disasters Emergency Committee, of which Oxfam is a prominent member.”

Christian Aid Scotland used its evidence to highlight the four programmes it currently receives Scottish Government funding for. The funding is for the following programmes:

1. Through the International Development Fund, Christian Aid Scotland receives funding for work in Malawi on child and maternal health and health governance. These are supported by local church/community partnerships in Scotland, which raise additional funding as outlined in the funding awards, hold local awareness-raising and educational events and receive regular briefings and updates on the partnerships.

2. Christian Aid Scotland receives funding through the IDF for a programme in India and Bangladesh on resilient livelihoods. It has hosted both the Minister for International Development and IDF civil servant visits to these programmes through its India office.

3. Through the Climate Justice Fund, Christian Aid Scotland receives programme funding for work on climate adaptation in Malawi. Scottish community partnerships are providing seed funding for this programme.

4. Christian Aid Scotland promotes and publicises all of these programmes through media visits and coverage, speaking engagements and resources. A photographic exhibition of the work on child and maternal health is currently touring partnership communities across Scotland.
Link Community Development suggested that one way in which Scottish organisations could be more effective is by being provided with longer term funding as the current three year terms is not enough. In addition, with regard to the cost of delivering aid that:

“donors be open to more flexible in regards to core funding amounts (overhead and organisational investment) to fund operational costs, infrastructure investments, and salaries. Most NGOs underestimate and underreport the amount of overhead required to successfully manage and administer grants due to imposed limits set by funding agencies, and many times the indirect allowances that grants do fund don’t cover the costs of administering the grants themselves. Increased allowances or flexibility in overhead funds would allow organisations to adequately and optimally invest in the core costs needed to manage the organisation and funded programmes. We recommend the conversation shift from strict overhead allowances to focussing on mutually agreed outcomes and their dissemination, and a clear communication about what costs are required to fulfil those outcomes most effectively and efficiently.”

Malawi Meals, another NGO which has received support from the Scottish Government’s International Development Fund wrote that:

“The big challenge facing small ngo’s looking to scale up their operations is the difficulty in funding the necessary operations here in Scotland. We want to fundraise, to network, to disseminate and apply learning – but all these activities take time this is the part of the operation which is hardest to fund. Government and other grants don’t allow for this type of work so funds are being gathered for coal face operations in Malawi while we are restricted in our ability to grow and to tell a good story back home because we can’t fund that.”

Networks

A number of organisations who submitted evidence commented on the links between different international development organisations in Scotland. Most welcomed the support provided, for example by NIDOS. Aim Hai Trust wrote:

“Despite our longstanding links with education in Tanzania we are not experienced in international development, and we value NIDOS as a support service. So we hope NIDOS continues to enjoy finance and support from the Scottish Government.”

Scottish Focus

A key issue raised by a number of stakeholders who submitted evidence to the Committee was the role that Scotland’s international development organisations play in raising awareness in Scotland. For example NIDOS wrote:

“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.”

SCIAF told the Committee that an important role within Scotland was to address international development education in Scotland. SCIAF told the Committee:

“An important part of SCIAF’s work in Scotland is development education to increase the Scottish public’s understanding of international development issues, and develop
a greater global solidarity and commitment to us each doing our bit to live simply so that others may simply live. To end global poverty and injustice we need the support of an active and informed Scottish population. Through our relationships with parishes, groups and schools, we aim to ensure our supporters understand the causes of global poverty and injustice as well as their role and responsibility in bringing about lasting change. In 2014 we engaged directly with 182 schools across Scotland and provided more schools with resources. In 2014, SCIAF also arranged for a small group of teachers to travel to Addis Ababa to learn more about international development on the ground. Such ‘immersion’ trips provide invaluable support to teachers.”

The Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) explained how the development of links between Scottish and Malawian schools raised awareness in Scotland.

“School Partnerships have been at the very centre of the bilateral relationship for more than two decades. Today, more than 150 Scottish primary and secondary schools have active and vibrant links. The benefits of school partnerships go far beyond individual teachers and students, they allow school communities in both Scotland and Malawi to learn, understand other cultures better and feel connected in our global society.

Such links, and a focus on good global citizenship, are an integral part of the Curriculum for Excellence, with Education Scotland extolling the many benefits of such links and making clear their expectations for all schools in Scotland to follow this lead. Indeed, Education Scotland now has its own formal partnership with Malawi: a cooperation agreement sharing learning, experience and support for school inspection services.

Decades of schools links with Malawi have created whole generations of Scots growing up with a greater sense of the challenges faced in the developing world, Scotland’s place as a responsible nation, and the many similarities and commonalities which unite us. They have inspired new generations to think differently, and act differently.”

Oxfam also raised the issue of global citizenship education in Scottish schools stating:

“Oxfam is also a member of the International Development Education Association of Scotland (IDEAS) which is a network of organisations and individuals involved in Development Education and Education for Global Citizenship across Scotland. This is an important element of our work in Scotland as education is the bedrock on which a nation builds itself. It instils values and helps to develop a sense of principles in its citizens. In a fast-changing and interdependent world, education in Scotland can, and should, help young people to meet the challenges they confront both now and in the future. Oxfam believes that education here can fight poverty everywhere. We need education which allows people to become informed and critically aware citizens – outward looking and committed to a just and sustainable world.”

**Policy Coherence for Development**

An issue which was raised during strand one of the Connecting Scotland inquiry was policy coherence. In written evidence submitted for strand one, NIDOS, SCIAF and the SMP told the Committee that aid alone was not enough because other policies have an impact on international development. In particular NIDOS stated:
“NIDOS is encouraged to see that the Scottish Government is considering the impact on international development of other policies and practices outside of the immediate international aid programme and has in principle committed to taking a more policy coherent approach. This concept of policy coherence for development, which has been successfully adopted in countries such as Sweden and Norway, would see all government departments and policies comply with, and contribute to, the goal of equitable and sustainable global development.”

SCIAF wrote that:

“It is commonly acknowledged that for richer nations, meaningfully tackling global poverty requires more than simply providing overseas aid. In Scotland, many of our national policies – including procurement, education, tax and trade policies - can have a major impact on vulnerable communities overseas.”

SMP wrote:

“We recommend that the Scottish Government includes an explicit commitment to policy coherence for development in the 2015 update of the International Framework, and specifically explores how it can support and encourage procurement systems which are aligned to its Malawi Partnership.”

SCIAF suggested that a policy coherence approach must be at the heart of Scotland’s role as a global citizen:

“In pursuing increased and ‘sustainable economic growth’, SCIAF believes it is vital that the Scottish Government sufficiently addresses any potential negative impact this may have on its international development, climate justice and human rights obligations. A policy coherence approach should mean the Government considers the impact of all its policies through a development lens, including those it makes as an economic actor. It is also important that the Government adopts a clear definition of ‘sustainable economic growth’, recognising that infinite growth is not possible and that prosperity of society and wellbeing of individuals cannot be measured purely in monetary terms.”

The issue of policy coherence for development was once again raised in a number of written submissions received by the Committee for strand two of the inquiry. Oxfam wrote that:

“Increasingly, national policy must address trans-national issues, this means domestic decisions can and do have an international impact. Scotland’s impact on the world is not limited to its international development and aid policies. The time is right to discuss how Scotland can ensure its global impact contributes to the goal of equitable and sustainable development.

While we welcome the commitments to international aid by both the Scottish and UK Governments, we know that aid alone is not enough to eliminate global poverty. How our companies operate, the things we as consumers buy, and government policies on areas such as energy, transport, and trade all impact on people and the environment across the globe. We therefore need to examine and adopt a policy coherent approach to enhance our contribution to sustainable and just global development. In short, we must ensure Scotland does not ‘not give with one hand and take with the other’.
This approach would ensure all government departments consider the wider impacts of their policies through a pro-poor lens, avoiding contradictory policies that have a negative impact globally. It would involve a whole of Government approach, with all government departments and policies complying with, and contributing to, the goal of equitable and sustainable global development. Such an approach involves proactively identifying conflicting objectives or interests in order to make well-informed and well-considered strategic choices.”

NIDOS also raised this issue telling the Committee of its recently commissioned research and report titled “Policy Coherence for Development: Exploring and Learning from European PCD Approaches”. NIDOS wrote that the research highlighted a number of key factors including:

- 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

**Partnership Not Charity**

The Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) recommended that for Scotland to continue its good international development work, it was important that the work is considered not to be charity but a partnership:

“While many of the organisations linked with Malawi are charities by definition, we do not think of our work with Malawi as being defined by “charity” but by “partnership”. We see a key distinction: activity which solely defines itself as “charity” can risk being seen as a one-way philanthropic relationship, with donors on one side and recipients at the other. By contrast, we see a “partnership” as an active two-way relationship, where both sides contribute and both sides benefit.”

SCIAF supported the emphasis on a partnership approach writing that it sees its work as:
“a relationship of mutual enrichment, sustained by shared goals, values and resources, which reinforces achievement of positive change in people’s lives.”

In the spirit of partnership working, SCIAF also wrote that:

“SCIAF believes people should be in charge of their own futures and make the decisions that shape their lives. To that end, we believe tackling poverty is best achieved by supporting and strengthening the work of local organisations. SCIAF works closely our partners and the communities they work with on the ground when designing, monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects. Good policy and advocacy work also stem from working closely with partners on the ground and building advocacy in the Global North upon the analysis and action of the Global South.”

The SMP also suggested that more should be done to engage with the private sector to allow them to contribute to the development agenda. SMP wrote:

“Malawi has a $600million trade deficit because it imports more than it exports. Aid and charity alone will not solve this problem. We must recognise these truths and be alert for ways Scotland’s civic links with Malawi can make a strong contribution to Malawi’s future sustainable economic development.

We look to build values-led, pro-poor business, trade, investment and tourism links between Scotland and Malawi. If each of the 94,000 Scots with links to Malawi bought Malawian fair trade coffee, for example, or encouraged their friends to visit Malawi on holiday, we would unleash a strong economic force which could have a transformative impact in Malawi.”

Link Community Development wrote that for organisations to be effective internationally:

“They must design and implement sustainable programmes. To that end, it is important to collaborate with local and national governments, work within local government policy, and ensure community participation.”

Mary’s Meals also addressed the issue of partnership stating that both community ownership and alignment with the host government’s priorities are important contributors to ensuring its programmes are successful.

Private Sector Support

The use of the private sector to support development was raised by some respondents to the Committee. For example, Challenges Worldwide’s primary activity is supporting businesses in lower income countries to grow in market systems which offer inclusive and fair economic opportunities for poor people. According to its written evidence:

“We believe that by supporting the development of fair and inclusive local economies we can help alleviate poverty and bring a lasting positive impact to communities in low and middle income countries.”

Challenges Worldwide achieves this firstly through capacity building by working with business students and entrepreneurs from the UK and overseas to work with SMEs in Africa through the International Citizen Service’s Entrepreneur Programme. In addition, Challenges Worldwide provides business support to local businesses in low and middle-income countries:
“We identify and recruit skilled professionals who have worked at a senior level in industry and place them to support local businesses in low and middle-income countries. We match the needs of our clients with skilled and experienced volunteers to ensure they receive the support and results they need. Our associates have skills in business planning, financial management, marketing and organisational development to meet the needs of high-potential fledgling businesses.

Our expert associates will normally spend around 3 months providing specific support on projects to generate income, employment and sustainable economic growth. The support can range from developing a business plan for a small food production company that is looking for loan equity, to recruiting a senior management team for a large social enterprise.”

Malawi Fruits also emphasised the importance of links with the private sector when delivering international development policies telling the Committee:

“One of the strengths of Malawi Fruits is the flexibility to allow us to work with private companies both in Scotland and in Malawi. This mixing together of charitable donations, government funding and private enterprise presents some challenges and yet will be an increasing trend over the next decade. It is something that we will all have to adjust to and may require policy change.”

Better Use of the Diaspora

The evidence from Kenyan Women in Scotland Association (KWISA) highlighted a particular value in working with nationals from developing countries who are resident in Scotland. KWISA highlighted its work campaigning against Female Genital Mutilation and also the importance of remittances sent by Kenyans in Scotland back to Kenya. According to KWISA:

“The value and impact of remittances on development is well documented and Kenyans in Scotland are part of the diaspora community that sends money back home to support families and friends for food, school fees, hospital bills and accommodation. They also support local schools, hospitals, and environmental and conservation projects. Remittances have an immediate and direct impact on development because the money goes directly to the people who need assistance most. Remitting money does not involve complicated grant applications processes or ever-changing themes, criteria and seasons. In addition it is not tied to political conditions, control or preferences.

According to the World Bank, billions of dollars are transferred to developing countries every year: an amount greater than all international aid. In 2011-2012 remittances to Kenya were over $1.8 Billion dollars.”

Linked to this, KWISA wrote that organisations in Scotland could make better use of the diaspora communities in a number of ways:

a) By treating them as equal partners, (not competitors), who have knowledge and experience about their countries of origin which organisations in Scotland can benefit from: see them as ‘expatriates not migrants’.

b) Create space for trading or bartering of skills: due to shortage of funding many organisations are reluctant to share resources for free. At the same time diaspora
communities complain of being used and exploited by organisations that want to consult them for free. This is an opportunity to bring them together for mutual benefit.

c) ‘Visit Scotland’: Every year families and friends of people from diaspora communities in Scotland come to visit them. They contribute to the economy like other tourists but this is not recognised or valued by Scotland. In addition to challenges of getting visas they do not feel welcome like visitors from rich countries. This is something Scotland can improve on to ensure that its reputation does not suffer.

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