

**CROSS PARTY GROUP: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGM AND JOINT  
VOLUNTEERING AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR CPG**

**18 JUNE 2013**

**COMMITTEE ROOM 4, SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

**5.30PM – 7PM**

**Present:**

Sarah Boyack MSP, Siobhan McMahon MSP, Jamie McGrigor MSP, Margaret MacDougall MSP, Annabelle Ewing MSP, Fiona Trafton, Fiona Forsyth, Kate Cotton, Derek Todd, Chris Wigglesworth, Moira Tasker, Carol Morton, Liz Burns, David Kenvyn, Rob Crawford, Paul J. Okroj, Morven MacLean, Susan Swan, Ben Wilson, Rebecca Adams, David Stevenson, Jeni MacKay, Janey Andrews, Callum Henderson, Manuela Coletti, Aolowoyeye Abiodun, Linda Todd, John Blair Fish, Gillian Wilson, Dr Gari Donn, Cathy Crawford, Agnes N Holmes, Tracy Johnstone, Francis Johnstone, Helen Wass-O'Donnell, Blair Melville, Hamish Goldie Scott, Kelagh O'Neill, Habib Malik, Jim Copland, Jo Vallis, Rachel Campbell, Kathryn Nadeau

**Apologies:**

Patrick Harvie MSP, Susan McIntosh, Jo Vallis, James EBB MacLean, James Trolland, Professor M.I. Aguilar, Grant Davidson, Pat Bryden, Colin Pritchard, Murray Tyrrell, Karin Overton, Clare Telfer, Keith Robson, Lorna McDonald, Lynne Kalman, Robert England, Allison Cosgrove, Alan Dixon, John Francis, Professor Leakey.

**Welcome and Introduction:**

Sarah Boyack MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a warm welcome to members of the Volunteering and Voluntary Sector Cross Group members. Sarah thanked Margaret MacDougall MSP for the assistance in organising the meeting and noted Patrick Harvie MSP's (Deputy Convenor) apologies for not being able to attend.

**Annual General Meeting – Business**

- *Minutes and Annual Report*

Sarah asked members to review the minutes from the last meeting (March 26<sup>th</sup> 2013), which were emailed in advance of the AGM, and it was accepted that they were an accurate record of the meeting. It was also agreed that the Annual Report accurately reflected the activities of the group during the 2012/13 period.

- *Financial Report*

Sarah and Siobhan McMahon MSP provided a financial report and it was acknowledged that due to the remaining balance in the account (£1054.28), there was no requirement for the group to re-commence individual and organisation subscription charges. The money is used for catering purposes for the meeting and the group has received no financial assistance in the last year (which has been reflected in the Annual Report).

- *Appointment of Office Bearers*

Siobhan McMahon MSP nominated Sarah Boyack MSP as convenor and this was seconded by member Margaret MacDougall MSP and Sarah Boyack was elected unopposed. Sarah Boyack MSP nominated Patrick Harvie MSP as Vice Convenor and this was seconded by member David Stevenson (University of Edinburgh) and Patrick Harvie was elected unopposed. Sarah Boyack MSP nominated Siobhan McMahon MSP as Treasurer and this was seconded by Margaret MacDougall MSP and Siobhan McMahon was elected unopposed.

- *Suggestions for forthcoming session (September 2013 – June 2014)*
- Cathy Crawford (ImpAcTAIDS) suggested a meeting focussing on the Millennium Development Goal 6 (HIV) to be held around World Aids Day (1 December 2013);
- Gillian Wilson (NIDOS) suggested a meeting following on from their Scotland 2013 and beyond event which was held in Edinburgh in May. Gillian suggested September 2013.
- Hamish Goldie-Scott suggested a meeting focusing on managing corruption in international development;
- John Blair-Fish suggested a meeting focusing on food security;
- Rebecca Adams suggested a meeting on promoting international development issues in Universities and Colleges.

#### **Fiona Forsyth, Major Partnerships Manager, VSO Scotland**

Fiona provided a brief introduction into the work and history of VSO, highlighting that they have over 50 years of experience and have worked in more than 90 countries, helping to tackle poverty through the skills and commitment of volunteers.

#### **Kate Cotton, Global Advisor on Volunteering for Development, VSO Scotland**

Kate thanked the International Development and Volunteering and Voluntary Sector Cross Party Groups for organising the meeting and acknowledged a number of former VSO volunteers were present. Kate outlined that VSO are currently working on a post 2015 framework and the centre of the plans are combatting global poverty.

It was considered at the meeting that whilst VSO were and are supportive of the ambitious United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they have not done a great deal to empower people and have not led to the desired development outcomes. Kate argued that there has been a lack of participation and that gender inequality is still rife.

VSO's Theory of Change is centred on the principles of motivating people to work together, recruiting people who can bring about change, understanding organisations and how to work with them to achieve progress, sharing knowledge and experience, and bringing essential knowledge to help implement policies.

Kate also mentioned the importance of looking ahead to the future of volunteering and how the field could possibly change, including the introduction of e-volunteering and innovations in the development of volunteering.

## Question and Answer

A range of questions were asked following the presentation. Please note that it is not the intention of the minutes to record a verbatim account.

- **David Stevenson** raised the point about the balance between recruiting youth workers and specialist volunteers;
- **Cathy Crawford** made the point that some people are unsure of the concept of volunteering, what this means and also that it has different meanings in different cultures;
- **Rachel Campbell** emphasised the importance of South to South Volunteers and how, in certain circumstances, they are more accessible to communities and individuals than global/Western volunteers;
- **Jamie McGrigor MSP** made the point that some services, such as Mountain Rescue and RNLI, are better provided on a voluntary basis and in some cases volunteers prefer minimal government intervention;
- **Helen Wass O'Donnell** commented on the number of 'Gap Year' companies who have taken a capitalistic approach to the 'popularity' of volunteering abroad before or after University/college and how this can lead to immoral territory, for example an orphanage being 'kept poor' to continue attracting Gap Year students to visit and work;
- **Derek Todd** asked VSO what opportunities were available to people with Learning Disabilities who wanted to engage in volunteering;
- **Liz Burns** raised the point about patterns of volunteering being influenced by different cultures and that a 'one size fits all' model is not appropriate, but one that should be tailored to the specific environment;
- **Jim Copland** asked to what extent VSO have access to knowledge on water technologies;

## AOCB

Sarah closed the meeting and emphasised that a number of important questions had been raised, mainly issues relating to inclusion and accessibility.

Sarah asked members if they had any other competent business to raise and there were none.

