

European and External Affairs Committee

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The Wales for Africa Programme

1. The 'Wales for Africa' programme is a Welsh Assembly Government initiative to support and encourage more people in Wales to make an effective contribution to international development and addressing global disasters/ emergencies. It reflects Wales' sense of duty as an international citizen and the Assembly government's legal duty as a government in Wales to promote sustainable development in the exercise of all its functions.

2. The main responsibility for international development within the UK lies with the Department for International Development (DfID). However there was, and continues to be, a demand within Wales for there to be an identifiable Welsh contribution to tackling global poverty. The Wales for Africa programme complements the work of DfID and seeks to increase practical understanding, and commitment to the delivery of the UN Millennium Development Goals in Wales.

3. Two key commitments were made in the Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainable Development Action Plan (2004-07) and then reiterated in the One Wales agreement:

to work with NGOs in the development sector to support a positive Welsh contribution to the UN Millennium Development Goals through the Wales for Africa programme, and,

to work with partners on the campaign to make Wales a Fair Trade Nation.

The 'Wales for Africa - Framework for Welsh Assembly Government Action on International Sustainable Development' was launched by the First Minister and the Secretary of State for International Development in October 2006.

4. One Wales - a Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales makes the following relevant references:

Placing Wales in the World

We will continue to make our contribution to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, with support for the Wales for Africa programme and its international development fund.

We will support the campaign for Wales to become a Fair Trade Nation.

5. The Wales for Africa programme has an annual budget of £755k, supplemented by an annual £95k transfer in from the Department for the Environment, Sustainability and Housing budget specifically for Fair Trade activity.

Benefits to Wales

6. Due to the nature of the devolved legal powers the Welsh Assembly Government only funds international development activities which also provide benefits to Wales and the people of Wales. Although this limits the type of activities the Welsh Assembly Government can fund, it does ensure that the activities supported are based on a genuine partnership, with both sides gaining from the interaction.

Impact

7. We have found that through the funding of several key Wales-wide projects and the provision of small grants, we have been able to dramatically increase the level of activity in support of international development across Wales. In these first 3 years we have set out to support a wide range of activities from a diverse range of organisations to encourage as many different groups, communities, organisations, business and individuals as possible to get involved.

As a result:

There are now 116 Wales - Africa community links, which is approximately a quarter of the UK's community links with Africa (up from 10 in 2007).

We are the world's first Fair Trade Nation with all of our cities, 90% of our higher education institutions and 70% of our towns having active Fair Trade groups (91 groups in total).

800 schools in Wales have registered on the UK Fairtrade Schools Scheme and Welsh schools form a quarter of all UK schools who have gained full Fairtrade status.

Wales now has a fifth of all UK hospital to hospital links with sub-Saharan Africa.

Our Somali community - the largest and longest established in the UK - is engaging wider Wales in building development focussed links with Somaliland.

By the end of this financial year 75 Welsh managers/leaders from the public and voluntary sector will have completed 8 week placements

in sub-Saharan Africa, supporting the delivery of the UN Millennium Development Goals whilst developing their own skills.

Nrg4SD and International Sustainable Development

8. The Wales for Africa Team also has responsibilities for the Welsh Assembly Government's international SD activities. Wales, a founder member of the network of regional governments for Sustainable Development nrg4SD, unexpectedly became the Co Chair in June of 2009 following the resignation of Brittany. Whilst becoming Co Chair was unplanned it presented Wales with a good opportunity to lead the network during the UN Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen. Wales handed over the Co Chair role at the nrg4SD General Assembly in Uruguay in late April 2010.

The Territorial Approach to Climate Change TACC project

9. The Welsh Assembly Government is continuing to lead on this evolving and significant project with the UN Development Programme and nrg4SD. The TACC seeks to assist developing country regions to develop their own Integrated Territorial Action Plans (identifying their vulnerabilities to climate change) and acquire the funds to deliver them. The TACC is seen as an innovative approach to assisting the delivery of the adaptation and mitigation actions that are the ultimate goals of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

10. The Welsh Assembly Government has developed a strong partnership with the District Authorities and leading NGOs of the Mbale region of Uganda. This partnership has built on the success of a civil society partnership between Pontypridd and Mbale.

11. Mbale has been chosen by the UNDP as one of 4 pilot TACC programmes. Mbale will have the support and engagement of the UNDP and Wales over the next 3 years to develop its own Integrated Territorial Climate Plan. This plan will be the basis for applications for UN carbon finance funds from the CDM, REDD, GEF etc. In parallel, the partnership will work on some 'quick win' projects to build the confidence of local partners and demonstrate the potential of this approach

12. The First Minister announced Welsh Assembly Government financial support of £75,000 per year for 3 years for the TACC, from within the Wales for Africa budget whilst in Copenhagen at the UN Climate Change Summit. The Mbale project will commence in 2010. The Department for International Development (DfID) in Uganda has agreed to part fund the project with a contribution of £100k per annum and a Wales based charitable Trust has agreed to invest £50k per annum in the programme. The first project, to commence in the September 2010 rainy season, will be to plant nearly 1 million trees in Mbale. The trees will provide shade for crops such as coffee, help enrich and bind the soil (the region is prone to devastating landslides), provide firewood, fruit and building materials and absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Conclusion

In the last 3 years a sizeable increase in Welsh civil society activity in support of international development has been reported. Relatively small sums of money from the Welsh Assembly Government alongside increased support and encouragement have contributed to the increase. Future work of the Wales for Africa programme will need to focus on improving the quality and impact of this activity both in terms of international development and benefits to Wales.

Annex A

Key Activities of the Wales for Africa programme

Fair Trade

13. The Welsh Assembly Government funds Fair Trade Wales to increase the awareness and use of Fair Trade produce by communities, schools, organisations, individuals, Fair Trade groups, local government and the public in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government also funded their Fair Trade Nation campaign. The criteria for becoming a Fair Trade Nation were agreed between the First Ministers of Wales and Scotland in 2006 and Wales became the world's first Fair Trade Nation on 6 June 2008.

14. Amongst the developments over the past year, the National Eisteddfod, Hay Literary Festival and Royal Welsh Show have agreed to adopt Fair Trade policies and the Farmers Union of Wales is supporting the message 'If you can't buy local, buy Fair Trade'.

15. Advice has been produced on Fair Trade procurement in the public sector, and we continue to make support/advice available to Welsh businesses (through grants to the Wales Co-operative Centre) on switching to Fair Trade and growing Fair Trade businesses.

Gold Star Communities Project (now called 'Wales Africa Community Links')

16. This very well-received project, about building links between communities in Wales and communities in sub-Saharan Africa for mutual development, continues to grow. There are now 105 links registered with the project and around 40 are actively working towards Gold Star status.

17. The project was developed in partnership between the Wales Civil Society MDG Task Force and BUILD UK (Building Understanding through International Links for Development), and it is managed by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA). It is recognised by the UN Development Programme as a pilot for working out the best attributes of community - community linking between Northern and Southern countries.

18. It is hoped that eventually every community/area in Wales will have link with a community in Africa. The partnerships aim to help deliver the MDGs and promote mutual community development and learning. They focus on 5 main topics (or 'gold stars') which are: health; livelihoods; the environment; children; and social harmony.

19. The First Minister presented 5 Gold Star awards at an event in Senedd on St David's day 2010.

International Learning Opportunities

20. This project is now delivered under contract by Adopt-a-Business and is managed by Public Service Management Wales. It was previously delivered by VSO.

21. Over the past 3 years we have sent 60 public service managers on 8 week placements with VSO's partner organisations in sub-Saharan Africa - supporting development in public organisations there. Participants have shared their skills and knowledge, and developed their own skills in leadership, understanding of different cultures, and new ways of working. The project has had excellent feedback from both participants and VSO partner organisations

22. Under the new providers the scheme will remain broadly the same, except that the numbers have been reduced to 15, private sector managers/leaders will be able to apply and we will focus on placements specifically in Uganda, Zambia, Cameroon and Lesotho to better align with other Wales for Africa-related activities. The Ugandan participants will be able to contribute to the TACC programme (see above).

Hospital /Health linking work

23. Funding to increase the number and impact of hospital / health linking work in Africa is available from the Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh NHS Health Links fund (with a total budget of £50,000 per year). Guidance has been issued to NHS Trusts advising them to treat participation in such schemes as a valuable contribution to their staff's continuing professional development.

24. The Wales for Africa Health Links Groups now hold annual conferences (which the Welsh Assembly Government fund) and are an active support group for links. They also published a report of the work of Wales-Africa health links this year. Wales currently has a fifth of all of the hospital links with Africa in the UK.

Supporting development work by African Diaspora Communities

25. Wales has the oldest Somali community in the UK (approx 12,000 people). Funding is provided funding and support to the Somali Progressive Association in Cardiff to build links between the Somali community in Wales and communities in Somaliland. The Somali community in Wales are now linking with programmes such as the Gold Star Communities Project, health/hospital links and the DfID global school linking scheme. Progress continues to be made, albeit slowly, by the partnership. There are significant challenges in ensuring a harmonious partnership between the representatives of the different Somali community groups in Wales.

26. In the last year the Welsh Assembly Government have provided funds to assist Zambian and Zimbabwean diaspora groups in Wales to undertake small-scale projects and develop community/organisational links.

Dolen Cymru: the Wales-Lesotho link

27. The Wales for Africa programme manages a core grant of £55k per annum to Dolen Cymru. In the last year Dolen Cymru:

support 4 community links between Lesotho and Wales (under the Gold Star Communities framework);

create 1-12 month placements for 15 Welsh health professionals in Lesotho;

support two local health boards in Wales to form links with hospitals in Lesotho;

develop a potential partnership for climate change work in Lesotho; and,

give support/advice to the existing Welsh school, church and organisational links with Lesotho.

Africa - Wales Honey and Beeswax Trade project

28. This project is managed by Bees for Development - a small registered NGO based in Monmouth who provide a unique personal information and training service for beekeepers in both Africa and Wales.

29. The project aims to produce a Welsh-designed honeycomb separator that will assist beekeepers in Cameroon to improve the quality and yield of their honey and beeswax. These products will then be imported by Tropical Forest Products Ltd (the only registered Fairtrade importer in Wales). The honey will be supplied to supermarkets and shops in Wales and the clean, pollutant-free beeswax (now difficult to acquire in Europe) is in demand for beauty/toiletry products by companies such as The Body Shop. Bees for Development will benefit from the research and implementation of this project and will be able to disseminate the learning to beekeepers across Africa and in Wales.

Small and Medium International Development Organisations (SMIDOS)

30. We fund the SMIDOS organisation to provide one-to-one consultancy, advice and support in order to help these organisations increase their skills; capacity; networking and income generation skills. The project ensures that all groups are linked with other international development initiatives in Wales in order to promote more (and more effective) Welsh contributions towards delivering the MDGs. This organisation is providing valuable support for SMIDOS in Wales, enabling them to network and share ideas, information and learning.

Small grants

Over the last 3 years small grants (under £25k) have been provided for a variety of projects/activities such as:

31. Engineers For Overseas Development (EFOD) and the Saltpeter Trust - sending young professional engineers and architects from the Cardiff based charity EFOD to help build medical facilities and design - construct an orphanage in Soroti, Uganda. The Welsh participants learn valuable project management and construction skills (finding innovative solutions with limited resources).

32. Health Workers Partnerships - evaluating the effect on Welsh healthcare workers of working in Ethiopia (through the Southern Ethiopia - Gwent healthcare link) and the subsequent contribution they make to Wales in light of their experiences. Also sending 4 Welsh midwives to conduct a midwifery skills workshop in Ethiopia.

33. Gumutindo Coffee Co-operative (Uganda)- Fairtrade Business Support - sending a Welsh business/organisation adviser on voluntary placements to advise/support the Gumutindo (Fairtrade) Coffee Co-operative in Mbale, Uganda. The volunteer acquires new skills and experiences and educates people in Wales on Fair Trade on his return.

34. British International Search and Rescue Dogs (BIRD) - training BIRD members in emergency rescue skills (e.g. chainsaw use and rope rescue) to enable them to meet the requirements of the UK Urban Search and Rescue Group (recognised by the UN).

35. Hope for Grace Kodindo - Making Birth Safer - supporting the work of a midwife from south Wales who has provided training and a regular supply of basic drugs to hospitals in Chad, Liberia and Ethiopia, with success in reducing the neonatal mortality rate from 33% (2005) to 7% (2006) in the N'djamena hospital in Chad.

36. St John (Wales and Zambia) - "sending Welsh First Aid Trainers (young people and adults) St John Cymru to Zambia to run training programmes in the most up-to-date First Aid techniques for St John trainers in Zambia.

37. RedR/IHE and Engineers Without Borders - humanitarian assistance training courses for Welsh members of the Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief / International Health Exchange (RedR/IHE) and Engineers Without Borders.

38. Welsh Network of Development Researchers (WNDR) - "running a series of seminars on development topics for academics, NGOs and interested groups to provide specialist information and further the debate around key Wales for Africa issues.

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