

WGIR13 Wales Overseas Agencies Group (WOAG)

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

[Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol](#) | [Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee](#)

[Strategaeth Ryngwladol Llywodraeth Cymru](#) | [Welsh Government's International Strategy](#)

Ymateb gan: Grŵp Asiantaethau Tramor Cymru (GATC) | Evidence from: Wales Overseas Agencies Group (WOAG)

1. What is your relationship, if any, to the International Strategy?

The Wales Overseas Agencies Group (WOAG) is an alliance of international development organisations in Wales committed to using their expertise and knowledge to support Wales in becoming a globally responsible nation and promoting active global citizenship within Welsh society. While WOAG recognises the potential and ambition of the Welsh Government's International Strategy, our engagement reflects both alignment with its objectives and an awareness of critical gaps that need addressing to achieve sustainable impact.

WOAG members have direct and indirect relationships with the International Strategy. Many of our members contribute through involvement in Welsh Government advisory and Senedd cross-party groups addressing priorities such as the Well-being Economy, Human Rights, gender equality, race equality, and climate change. Several members serve as key partners in initiatives under the Welsh Government's Wales and Africa programme, actively supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through partnerships in Sub-Saharan Africa. These collaborations are central to Wales' commitment to global responsibility and resonate strongly with the International Strategy's aspirations.

Despite these efforts, there remain significant challenges that hinder the full realisation of Wales' international potential. The COVID-19 pandemic and successive UK Government cuts to overseas aid budgets have deeply affected the international development sector in Wales. Many charities have faced budget reductions of up to 60%, forcing some to downsize or even close, thereby disrupting essential poverty alleviation programmes and hindering progress toward the SDGs. This financial strain has also compromised the ability of

organisations to exit programmes responsibly, leaving vulnerable overseas partners to bear the brunt of unfulfilled commitments.

The capacity constraints faced by Welsh-based international NGOs (INGOs) further underscore these challenges. For instance, Oxfam Cymru has reduced its staff team from 9 to 2.5 between 2020 and 2024, with similar reductions seen across other organisations, including Tearfund and the British Red Cross curtailing their operations in Wales. Such staffing cuts have limited the capacity of these organisations to contribute robustly to the International Strategy and to channel support effectively to local, Welsh-based international groups.

WOAG's ability to engage on key global issues, such as advocating for the People's Vaccine or responding to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, demonstrates the group's ongoing relevance. However, the lack of systematic, long-term mechanisms to support global responsibility within Welsh Government departments has created barriers to sustained engagement. This situation highlights the need for more coordinated approaches that consider both domestic and global priorities simultaneously, ensuring Wales' international strategy is integrated and impactful.

To address these challenges and strengthen our relationship with the International Strategy, WOAG advocates for:

- i. Enhanced mechanisms for engagement: Establishing streamlined communication channels and long-term planning frameworks will facilitate purposeful advocacy and collaboration with the Welsh Government and enable more meaningful contributions to the International Strategy and global partnerships from INGOs in Wales.
- ii. A dual focus on domestic and global issues: Recognising the interconnectedness of local and international development will enable Wales to be a leader in global responsibility.

WOAG envisions a future where Wales fully realises its potential as a globally responsible nation, supported by a resilient, collaborative international development sector. With strengthened partnerships and strategic alignment, the International Strategy can play a pivotal role in achieving this vision.

2. What are your views on the Welsh Government's International Strategy – what's worked well and any areas for improvement?

The International Strategy is a commendable step toward positioning Wales as a globally responsible nation. However, while it articulates an ambitious vision, there are critical areas where alignment, transparency, and delivery mechanisms could be improved to achieve a more coherent and impactful approach.

One area for improvement is the tension between the Strategy's emphasis on economic growth and its commitment to a wellbeing economy. The Wellbeing Economy seeks to ensure that people and the planet thrive irrespective of economic growth, requiring systemic and cultural shifts. Current language and framing within the strategy risk reinforcing "business as usual" practices. A more nuanced articulation of Wales' trajectory toward a wellbeing economy, along with clarity on balancing economic and environmental sustainability, would provide stronger alignment with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

A separate **international development strategy** would significantly enhance the delivery of global solidarity and development goals. Such a strategy should be grounded in the principles of community ownership and locally led development, ensuring the priorities of partner countries and indigenous populations are central. Engaging the Diaspora communities in Wales and embedding global solidarity as distinct from trade and economic growth objectives would ensure ethical and sustainable international partnerships.

Despite almost 10 years since the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act became law, WOAG members remain concerned about the lack of understanding around delivery of the globally responsible Wales goal. We are encouraged that global responsibility is a central theme within the International Strategy but there remains a significant gap in policy coherence across the Welsh Government and the wider public sector.

We are concerned that the drive to attract inward investment for job creation and prosperity in Wales may overlook critical issues, such as environmental harm and the human rights records of these investors and the importance of promoting ethical employment practices in global supply chains, including those within Wales. It is crucial that these matters are addressed in the statutory guidance under the Social Partnerships and Procurement Act. Members of WOAG are actively collaborating with the Welsh Government to embed these principles into statutory metrics, guidance, and regulations. Due diligence checks on supply chains that adhere to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights could be integrated into the Sustainable Procurement Assessment process, which currently focuses primarily on environmental impacts.

We have a long way to go in building a clear understanding of what global responsibility entails. This means making sure **everyone** involved in delivering the International Strategy, including external contractors, are aware of and able to implement the values that underpin this goal. It is not about tokenistic gestures but systematically ensuring that actions taken here in Wales do not harm the planet or people anywhere and have positive impacts where possible.

According to research commissioned by the Welsh Government, if the entire world population lived like the citizens of Wales, humanity would require 2.08 earths. The Global Footprint is now one of the 50 national indicators used to measure progress against the seven well-being goals for Wales and the national milestone relating to this national indicator states that “Wales will use only its fair share of the world’s resources by 2050”. This would complement the leading role Wales is playing in waste management. There should be greater joined up thinking to connect the global context with actions here in Wales to promote global responsibility. A good example of these principles in action is the work of WOAG member Size of Wales (in collaboration with WWF Cymru and RSPB Cymru) through their [‘Making Wales a Deforestation Free Nation’](#) report, which highlights some of the ways the Welsh Government would be able to enact global responsibility. This is particularly important given the increasing urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises, and should be a focus of scrutiny.

Communication and transparency regarding the expansion of the **Wales and Africa** programme is another area needing improvement. While the rebranding has been a positive step, limited updates and [sporadic online](#) engagement have constrained public engagement and awareness. Moreover, the programme’s budget has not increased in real terms, contrasting with the Scottish Government’s more ambitious investments in international partnerships. Enhanced clarity on resource allocation, vision, and priorities for Wales and Africa would strengthen public confidence and maximise the programme’s impact.

The absence of systematic approaches to sharing learning from international partnerships is a missed opportunity. For instance, successful projects promoting menstrual and reproductive rights in the Global South could inform relevant policy areas in Wales, such as the implementation of the Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum. Embedding decolonial approaches and learning from partners in the Global South would rebalance power dynamics and support racial justice, vital for poverty alleviation and achieving the SDGs.

WOAG members and Hub Cymru Africa Partners are leading the way on decolonial partnerships. The Welsh Government could work better with WOAG members to support and learn from these partnerships. Recognition of this

opportunity to strengthen links between Wales and the world is not limited to the International Strategy, but all areas that are globally facing, such as climate change or the wellbeing economy.

The International Strategy should also recognise the role that Indigenous Peoples play in tackling the climate and nature crisis and support initiatives that result in greater funding for their work and recognition of their rights. Wales can build on the UN Pact for the Future recently adopted in New York. There are opportunities for great learning about Indigenous Peoples concept of wellbeing and living in harmony with nature which is reflected in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

The Welsh Government's support for the Nation of Sanctuary vision demonstrates a values-led approach to refugee support, promoting inclusivity and countering hostile rhetoric. Similarly, the "[Team Wales Values Statement](#)" initiative during the Qatar World Cup showcased a commitment to human rights and diversity in international engagement.

To build on these achievements, long-term support for civil society partnerships and clearer guidance on embedding global responsibility across all sectors are essential. The Scottish Government's Global Affairs Framework provides a useful model, offering a transparent, values-driven blueprint for international engagement. By adopting similar principles, Wales can ensure that its International Strategy embodies its aspirations as a globally responsible and compassionate nation.

3. What are your views on the Welsh Government's priority international relationships for 2022-25?

The Welsh Government's priority international relationships for 2022-25 demonstrate ambition and a global outlook, but they require closer alignment with the principles of global responsibility and coherence with ethical, environmental, and human rights standards. While the strategy highlights valuable initiatives, there are areas where policy and practice could be refined to ensure they truly reflect Wales' values and commitments.

European Union (EU) Relations

The Welsh Government's ongoing focus on EU relationships is critical given the enduring importance of trade, cultural exchange, and cooperation with European partners. However, it is unclear whether this approach seeks to differentiate itself

from UK Government relationships, which have largely been shaped by post-Brexit dynamics. Wales has an opportunity to diversify its EU engagement, emphasizing partnerships that reflect mutual values such as sustainability, social equity, and innovation.

Balancing Foreign Policy and International Development

There is a need to distinguish between Wales' foreign policy priorities and its commitments to international development. The latter should be guided by principles of global solidarity, prioritising the needs of partner countries over domestic economic growth goals. For example, partnerships that focus solely on trade may inadvertently undermine development goals if they fail to account for ethical considerations, including the impact on communities and ecosystems.

Ethical Concerns with China and India Partnerships

The Welsh Government's partnership with China raises questions about alignment with global responsibility goals. While economic ties can bring benefits, these must not come at the expense of ethical considerations. China's human rights record and environmental impact, including its role in global supply chain exploitation, contradict the strategy's commitments to solidarity and sustainability. For instance, exporting [Welsh beef to China](#)—a climate-intensive activity—undermines Wales' climate commitments, in direct opposition to the national milestone to limit our planetary impact.

The recruitment of health and social care workers from India to address domestic shortages in Wales could exacerbate India's existing care crisis. While international collaboration is valuable, it must ensure mutual benefits and avoid perpetuating inequalities under the guise of solving local challenges, as outlined in [A Wales That Cares for People and Planet](#).

Climate and Environmental Commitments

Wales' involvement in the Under 2 Coalition, the [Race to Zero](#) campaign spearheaded by Oxfam Cymru and Climate Cymru, and its commitments at COP26 are commendable, signalling leadership in addressing climate change, however the Welsh Government could have given a stronger steer to local authorities asking for support with actioning this campaign. The focus on tree growing in Uganda's Mbale region, spearheaded by Size of Wales, provides tangible benefits for local communities. However, this initiative risks being overshadowed by contradictions in Wales' own environmental footprint.

For example, statements celebrating the protection of rainforest areas fail to account for the role of Welsh consumption patterns in driving deforestation abroad. Research from the Wales and Global Responsibility Report reveals that an area of land 40% the size of Wales is required annually to grow imports, with significant portions coming from high-risk regions for deforestation and social exploitation. Addressing thorough comprehensive policy coherence is essential for credibility.

Recommendations

To strengthen its priority international relationships, the Welsh Government should:

- I. Diversify EU partnerships beyond trade, focusing on shared values and sustainability.
- II. Establish clearer ethical guidelines for partnerships to ensure alignment with human rights and climate goals.
- III. Align environmental initiatives, such as tree planting, with broader systemic reforms to reduce deforestation risks linked to Welsh imports and investments.
- IV. Develop transparent criteria and reporting mechanisms to evaluate the social, environmental, and economic impacts of international relationships.

By addressing these areas, Wales can ensure that its international strategy reflects its global responsibility aspirations and reinforces its reputation as a principled and progressive nation on the world stage.

4. What are your views on the availability of information on the Welsh Government's international activities and delivery of the strategy?

The availability and accessibility of information about the Welsh Government's international activities and the delivery of its International Strategy remain key areas for improvement. While there are some positive developments in promoting certain initiatives, a more cohesive and transparent approach is needed to enhance public understanding and engagement.

Limited Reporting on Progress

One significant issue is the lack of publicly available information detailing how the Welsh Government has delivered against the International Strategy. Stakeholders and the public alike would benefit from clear reporting on achievements,

challenges, and lessons learned. For example, while the Wales and Africa Programme has had notable successes, such as long-standing tree-growing initiatives in Uganda, the 10-year report on this programme is still awaited. Without such reports, it is difficult to measure the programme's impact and its alignment with the broader goals of the strategy.

This lack of transparency can hinder effective scrutiny and reduce opportunities to celebrate and build on successes. Additionally, it may prevent the Welsh Government from adequately demonstrating how international activities contribute to global solidarity and mutual benefit.

Missed Opportunities to Promote Positive Stories

The Welsh Government could do more to share success stories from its international work and the broader impact of these initiatives. For instance, initiatives under the Wales and Africa Programme or contributions to global solidarity efforts have not been promoted as effectively as they could be. While there has been some improvement in social media engagement, updates remain sporadic and inconsistent.

By actively sharing stories of successful projects—such as the Size of Wales work in Mbale or innovative decolonial partnerships highlighted by Hub Cymru Africa—the Welsh Government can foster greater public understanding of the value of global solidarity. This storytelling could also address misconceptions and counter potential backlash from those who may perceive international work as a diversion from domestic priorities.

Public Appetite for Global Responsibility

Research conducted by Hub Cymru Africa highlights strong public support in Wales for global solidarity work. Promoting the positive outcomes of international initiatives aligns with this public sentiment and can further bolster support for the Welsh Government's international activities. A lack of communication, however, risks leaving this public goodwill untapped and allows room for misunderstandings or misinformation to take hold.

Fear of Backlash

There is a perception that fear of backlash from right-wing commentators may be limiting the extent to which the Welsh Government promotes its international work. While political challenges are understandable, this cautious approach might ultimately undermine efforts to build an informed and supportive public narrative around global solidarity. Proactively showcasing the tangible benefits of

international partnerships for both Welsh communities and partner regions is an effective way to counteract potential criticism.

Recommendations

To address these issues, the Welsh Government should:

- I. Publish regular and detailed reports on the delivery of the International Strategy, including specific achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.
- II. Enhance efforts to tell the story of successful projects, using social media, public events, and traditional media to highlight the benefits of global solidarity.
- III. Collaborate with civil society organisations like Hub Cymru Africa to leverage existing research on public attitudes and align communication strategies with public sentiment.
- IV. Take a proactive stance in promoting the value of international work, using data and storytelling to demonstrate its relevance to Wales' domestic and global responsibilities.

By improving transparency and communication, the Welsh Government can strengthen support for its international activities, align with public values, and reinforce its commitment to a globally responsible Wales.

5. In your view, what information on the Welsh Government's international activities should be in the public domain?

To strengthen transparency and accountability, it is essential for the Welsh Government to provide comprehensive and accessible information on its international activities. This information should be directly tied to the principles and goals outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly the goal of creating a "Globally Responsible Wales" as detailed in the [Well-being in Wales 2024 report](#).

Aligning with National Well-being Indicators

While the Act establishes clear goals, such as reducing Wales' ecological footprint and ensuring sustainable global engagement, there is limited public reporting on how international activities contribute to achieving these objectives. For instance, the [Welsh Doughnut](#) reports Wales' current consumption levels require the resources of 2.5 planets. ['A Wales That Carers for People and Planet'](#) outlines how

Wales can take a global perspective within an holistic approach to climate justice and inequality.

Without actionable plans or progress reports, it is difficult to gauge the Government's efforts to reduce this consumption footprint.

Progress should be measured and reported against specific well-being indicators, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting ethical supply chains, and supporting global partnerships for sustainable development. This would provide the public with a clear understanding of Wales' contributions to global challenges and its commitment to long-term sustainability.

Moving from Learning to Solutions

The Welsh Government has engaged in valuable learning through its international collaborations, but there is a pressing need to transition from learning to implementing solutions. Public reporting could focus on:

- **Practical Outcomes:** Demonstrating how knowledge gained through international projects is being translated into actionable policies.
- **Mutual Benefits:** Highlighting how Wales' global initiatives benefit both partner communities and Welsh citizens, whether through education, economic opportunities, or environmental sustainability.

For example, the Wales and Africa Programme has demonstrated success in areas like tree growing and community development. However, a detailed account of how such initiatives directly contribute to the global and national well-being goals would underscore their relevance and impact.

Specific Information That Should Be Published

To enhance transparency and accountability, the Welsh Government should ensure the following are publicly available:

- I. **Progress Reports on Well-being Goals:** Regular updates detailing how international activities align with and advance specific national well-being indicators.
 - II. **Impact Assessments:** Evaluations of environmental and social impacts, such as how Welsh consumption and procurement practices affect global sustainability.
 - III. **Global Responsibility Initiatives:** Insights into international collaborations, including their scope, funding, and outcomes, with a focus on lessons learned.
-

- IV. Transparency on Challenges: Open acknowledgment of challenges or areas needing improvement, alongside plans to address them.
- V. Case Studies and Success Stories: Examples of projects, such as ethical supply chain practices or international educational exchanges, showcasing tangible achievements.

Addressing Public Engagement

A stronger emphasis on communication is needed to increase public awareness and support. The Welsh Government is using social media to promote its international activities, but a more comprehensive approach is required. Efforts to counter misinformation and foster understanding of the benefits of global responsibility should include accessible publications, community events, and collaboration with civil society organisations.

Providing comprehensive and accessible information is vital for building trust and demonstrating progress. This aligns with the vision outlined in the Well-being in Wales 2024 report and the broader aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. By enhancing transparency, the Welsh Government can not only foster public confidence but also reinforce Wales' leadership as a globally responsible nation.

6. What are your views on how the Welsh Government's international activity is resourced?

The resourcing of the Welsh Government's international activity must be critically examined in light of systemic changes and emerging challenges that impact its ability to deliver a globally responsible Wales, a key priority in its international strategy.

Impact of UK Government Policy Shifts

The disbandment of the Department for International Development (DfID) and the reduction of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of Gross National Income have significantly reduced resources available for international development. These changes have affected Welsh civil society, limiting its capacity to contribute to global solidarity and sustainable development. Welsh organisations previously relied on DfID partnerships and funding to amplify their work, as noted in the International Strategy's aspiration to increase Wales-based engagement with UK aid funding. With these mechanisms

now disrupted, there is an urgent need to reevaluate and adapt Wales' approach to resourcing international activities.

Wales and Africa Programme

The Wales and Africa Programme has been a flagship initiative for advancing Wales' commitment to global responsibility. However, its static budget over the past five years does not reflect the increasing demands or ambitions of the strategy. A lack of financial growth, particularly in light of inflation, undermines the programme's ability to expand its reach and deepen partnerships. The Welsh Government must consider increased funding to ensure that this programme remains a meaningful contributor to global development, particularly in areas where Wales has demonstrated leadership, such as climate resilience, health partnerships, and community-led development.

Overseas Offices and Global Responsibility

The Welsh Government's overseas offices play a critical role in fostering international relationships. However, these offices often appear aligned with economic growth priorities, potentially overshadowing Wales' global solidarity objectives. Greater transparency is needed regarding their operations and alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, especially in promoting ethical trade, climate action, and human rights. An evaluation of whether these offices engage meaningfully in advancing global responsibility would ensure that their resourcing contributes holistically to the strategy's objectives.

Need for Autonomy and Collaboration

International development is not devolved, limiting Wales' direct control over key aspects of its global agenda. However, the Welsh Government could advocate for closer collaboration with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to ensure that Wales' values and priorities are represented. Additionally, exploring arrangements for increased autonomy, particularly in areas like humanitarian response and ethical trade, could strengthen Wales' ability to pursue its unique international vision.

Recommendations

- I. **Increased Investment:** Boosting funding for the Wales and Africa Programme to match its growing importance and aligning budgets with inflation.
-

- II. **Enhanced Transparency:** Regularly publishing detailed reports on how resources are allocated, including the role of overseas offices in promoting global responsibility.
- III. **Advocacy for Collaboration:** Strengthening ties with the UK Government to ensure that Welsh organisations can access FCDO resources while exploring options for greater devolved powers in international engagement.
- IV. **Global Responsibility Prioritisation:** Ensuring that all resourcing decisions reflect Wales' commitment to sustainability, equity, and ethical practices as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Without sufficient resources or control mechanisms, Wales risks falling short of its ambitions to be a globally responsible nation. It is essential to align funding and resourcing strategies with the values and priorities underpinning the Welsh Government's international activities.

7. What priorities and priority relationships would you like to see included in the Welsh Government's approach to international relations beyond 2025?

The Welsh Government's future international relations strategy must prioritise addressing the global climate crisis, which poses the greatest threat to future generations and exacerbates vulnerabilities in already fragile regions. Climate change acts as a threat multiplier, intensifying existing crises and creating new humanitarian challenges. The United Nations estimates that the number of people living in "very high" crisis-risk countries could triple from 580 million to 1.5 billion by 2050, with annual humanitarian response costs exceeding \$20 billion. Addressing these urgent issues aligns with Wales' commitment to global responsibility as defined by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Climate Change and Humanitarian Resilience

Wales must position itself as a proactive global partner in mitigating and adapting to climate change. Key priorities should include:

- I. **Anticipatory Action:** Supporting proactive measures to address potential crises before they escalate, reducing human suffering and economic costs.
- II. **Integrated Nexus Programming:** Combining development, humanitarian, and climate responses into a cohesive strategy that addresses root causes and fosters long-term sustainability.

Ethical Partnerships and Global Responsibility

As Wales strengthens international relationships, these must be framed by ethical and sustainability principles to ensure alignment with its global solidarity goals.

- **Climate Justice Leadership:** Wales should prioritise partnerships with countries disproportionately impacted by climate change, particularly those in the Global South. This includes supporting adaptive measures in agriculture, water management, and energy systems.
- **Evaluating High-Impact Relationships:** Relationships with high-carbon economies, such as China, should be carefully reviewed. Wales must ensure these partnerships support its global responsibility objectives and do not undermine climate justice or human rights.
- **Decoupling Economic Growth from Harmful Practices:** Wales should lead by example, transitioning toward a wellbeing economy that prioritises sustainability and global equity over short-term economic gains.

Building on Existing Strengths

The Welsh Government has already demonstrated leadership through initiatives such as the Mbale Tree Growing Programme in Uganda. Expanding these types of projects—while addressing systemic issues such as deforestation in supply chains and unethical investments—will be crucial. Wales can further leverage its involvement in the Under2 Coalition and Race to Zero to amplify its commitment to global climate action.

Recommendations

- I. **Focus on Climate Justice:** Make climate change the core priority of the international strategy, with clear goals to reduce Wales' ecological footprint and enhance global partnerships addressing climate resilience.
- II. **Support Vulnerable Regions:** Expand support for disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action, and resilience building, ensuring alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- III. **Strengthen Ethical Standards:** All international activities must reflect Wales' values of sustainability and human rights, with mechanisms to evaluate partnerships and supply chains.
- IV. **Increase Public Awareness:** Foster a deeper understanding within Wales about the interconnected nature of global crises, emphasizing the need for ethical consumption and investment practices.

By embedding these principles into its international relations strategy, Wales can play a vital role in combating the global climate crisis, building resilience in

vulnerable communities, and fostering a globally responsible and sustainable future.

8. Are there any other matters you would like to draw to the Committee's attention regarding the Welsh Government's international relations?

The Welsh Government's approach to international relations must address several critical areas, including its decision-making on global issues, the implications of Brexit, and the importance of international educational exchange. Furthermore, there is a need to address contradictions in policy, such as promoting Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary while enabling activities that may exacerbate global displacement and conflict.

Decision-Making in Global Matters

The Welsh Government faces challenges in articulating clear policies on when it can and should intervene in global issues. For example:

- **Conflict and Displacement:** Wales has championed its identity as a Nation of Sanctuary, providing refuge and standing against hostile environment policies. However, this message is at odds with the UK's arms sales to conflict zones, some of which may be supported by companies with links to Welsh public investments. These arms contribute to displacement and crises that undermine Wales' humanitarian values.
- **Ethical Investments:** To align its actions with its values, the Welsh Government should scrutinize investments and partnerships with entities involved in arms production or activities contrary to global peace and human rights principles. Transparency and consistency are key to upholding a globally responsible Wales.

Brexit Impacts on International Work

Wales, as a significant recipient of EU funding, has faced profound challenges post-Brexit, particularly in maintaining its overseas partnerships and projects. The withdrawal from Erasmus+ has disrupted opportunities for cultural exchange and learning.

- **Taith Programme:** While the Taith Programme is a valuable initiative to fill the gap left by Erasmus+, it needs to be expanded. A bolder, well-funded approach would enhance its reach, allowing young people and
-

professionals across Wales to forge meaningful international relationships and foster a globally responsible outlook.

Personal Contact and Peacebuilding

Building personal and cultural connections is essential for fostering mutual understanding and peace between nations.

- **Educational Exchange:** Continued investment in initiatives like Taith is critical for enabling people-to-people connections, which are fundamental to Wales' vision as a globally responsible nation.
- **Peacebuilding Initiatives:** Wales should also explore its role and historical achievements in peace building, promoting reconciliation and conflict resolution, potentially leveraging its reputation as a Nation of Sanctuary.

Recommendations

- I. **Address Contradictions in Policy:** Align Wales' Nation of Sanctuary commitments with ethical investment practices and stances on arms sales, avoiding actions that undermine its humanitarian vision.
- II. **Strengthen Educational and Cultural Links:** Expand funding and scope for the Taith Programme to deepen international partnerships and foster global citizenship.
- III. **Champion Ethical International Relations:** Promote transparency and accountability in Wales' global relationships, especially regarding trade, human rights, and investment decisions.

By addressing these issues, Wales can strengthen its international strategy, uphold its commitment to global responsibility, and meaningfully contribute to a fairer and more sustainable world.
