

The Four Corners

The quarterly Alumni Association newsletter



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EDITORIAL



Message from the chairman

Welcome to the first edition of The Four Corners for 2015.

The Alumni Committee has been busy since I reported to you on our last meeting in December.

I am very pleased to announce that John Stuppel has been appointed as the new secretary of the Association. He will take over from Marc Taylor at the beginning of February.

Marc will continue to edit the Four Corners and sit on the Committee. We welcome John on board and look forward to his contribution to a busy agenda

We have new proposals for you on how we might raise funds in future. Please see the article "Alumni Opportunities and Sponsorship" on page 22 and give us your views.

We are working with DFID on the conference on tackling corruption and on arrangements for mentoring. Details will follow as soon as possible.

I hope you enjoy this latest newsletter. Thanks as always to Marc for putting it together. Please send us ideas and contributions for the next edition.

With best wishes

Simon Ray

NEWS IN BRIEF

South Sudan: further aid for refugees



The UK will provide emergency food, shelter and sanitation to half a million refugees that have fled the ongoing fighting in South Sudan.

With almost a quarter of refugees reaching camps in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya suffering from acute malnutrition, this new £16.4 million package will provide:

- £7.4 million to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and World Food Programme (WFP) to assist 200,000 refugees in Ethiopia where recent flooding has destroyed camps. As well as food, shelter and sanitation, solar powered lamps will be distributed to help reduce the risk of violence against women and girls, by allowing them to move safely at night
- £5.8 million to WFP for 360,000 refugees in Uganda including food for all children under two and targeted supplementary feeding for children under five
- £3.2 million to WFP to help fill a gap in its food supply in Kenya, without which it would be forced to reduce the size of the rations provided to refugees.

HISTORY OF UK-NEPAL RELATIONS

2016 represents 200 years of diplomatic relations between the UK and Nepal, and this will be celebrated in Kathmandu by the Embassy, DFID, the British Council and the Ministry of Defence. As part of this, DFID is keen to tell the story of the development relationships between UK and Nepal over the last 50 years, and to create an exhibition of stories and photos of those who have been involved in British Aid projects and what they have achieved. Because institutional memory is limited, they need help in doing this.

DFID Nepal would like to hear from people who have worked in or with Nepal, and who feel they have a story they would like to share about a project they worked on. These will be compiled to tell the story of our involvement in agriculture, infrastructure, health, forestry, etc. DFID Nepal will be trying to get similar reflections from Nepali staff, Government and those who implemented projects.

DFID Nepal would be interested not only to hear about what changes you made to Nepal, but also how being in Nepal might have changed you. If you have contacts from your days in Nepal who might also have stories to tell, or have photos of your time in Nepal, please also get in contact. This project is not as ambitious in scope as the India book, but is a great opportunity to share what we have done and what we have learnt.

We hope that the stories can form the basis for Alumni events in the UK as well. There is plenty for DFID to learn from reflecting on our involvement with Nepal, and the exhibition will provide a useful starting point for those discussions which the DFID Alumni can organise.

For more detail about the request, contact the DFID office in Kathmandu:

Nita Pachhai [n-pachhai@dfid.gov.uk] and

Mark Smith [mark-smith@dfid.gov.uk]

To help members exchange ideas about the celebration in Nepal and about the planned DFID Alumni event in London in 2016, there is a new sub-community on dgroups.org.

To join it, send a blank email to join.nepal@dgroups.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM DFID IN OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2014

October

- Defeating Ebola Conference
- DFID high on international transparency index
- World Bank and IMF meetings
- International Day of the Girl
- Gaza Reconstruction Conference
- DFID Nepal won award from the Institution of Civil Engineers
- Justine Greening visited Sierra Leone
- Lynne Featherstone visited Somalia and Somaliland
- Lynne Featherstone visited Bangladesh
- ICAI reported on anti-corruption

November

- Baroness Northover replaced Lynne Featherstone as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
- The UK Ebola treatment facility opened in Sierra Leone
- Bill Gates met the DFID Ebola Crisis Team
- Global Nutrition Report published
- African Statistics Day
- World Toilet Day
- UK pledge £720m to Green Climate Fund
- International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women
- Attack on British Embassy vehicle in Kabul
- DFID collaboration with police against corruption
- DFID responded to ICAI report on corruption
- Baroness Northover visited South Africa

December

- 15 minute test for ebola to be trialled in Guinea
- London Conference on Afghanistan
- UK-Australia MOU on Ebola treatment centre
- UN Secretary General reported on post 2015 process
- ICAI reported on the international climate fund
- International Development Committee in Tanzania
- ICAI published its review of DFID Smart Rules
- OECD DAC published its peer review of UK aid
- Aid for refugees in South Sudan

First major reform to the ODA system in 40 years agreed at the OECD Development Assistance Committee high level meeting

The OECD-DAC agreed a historic package of reforms at its high-level meeting on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 December.

These cover loan concessionality, the mapping out of future work on private sector instruments, peace and security, and the development of a new category of total official support for development (TOSD). The DAC also committed to reversing the decline in ODA to the least developed countries, sending a powerful positive signal to the forthcoming UN negotiations on the post-2015 financing agenda.

This far-reaching change reflects a strong UK effort behind the scenes. The UK priority had been first and foremost to protect the credibility of ODA system, and to pave the way for a more rational treatment of instruments for working with the private sector, and peace and security activities. This required solving the concessionality issue, which threatened to unravel the system.

The question of how concessional a loan should be to qualify as ODA had been a bone of contention in the DAC for some years, with loan donors (France, Germany, EU) coming under increasing criticism from other members (notably USA and Sweden) for 'gaming' the system and bringing it into disrepute.

Concessionality negotiations took place in the months preceding the high level meeting. A small group, chaired by Mark Lowcock at the request of DAC Chair Erik Solheim, carried out the negotiations on concessionality, which culminated at the high level meeting. The photo shows Mark Lowcock, Eric Solheim and Director Jon Lomoy during one of the more difficult moments of the negotiation.

Under the new rules the current cash-flow based system will be replaced by a 'grant equivalent



system', whereby only the grant element of loans will count as ODA. This means that more concessional loans earn greater ODA credit than less concessional loans. The new system will apply from 2018 onwards, and will provide a more credible basis for the ODA system.

The new concessionality system will:

- Provide a fairer picture of 'donor effort'
- Facilitate comparability of statistics
- Strengthen transparency
- Incentivise targeting the most concessional loans to the poorest countries with the aim of increasing the financing available for those countries less able to access the market, over lending to middle income countries
- Incentivise (i.e. reward, in terms of the amount of ODA recognized) the provision of aid in the form of grants rather than loans, and within the lending components, it incentivises cheaper loans over more expensive ones
- Count as ODA only loans which meet debt sustainability standards.

Wider UK objectives on private sector instruments, ODA targeting and peace and security had largely been secured ahead of the high level meeting through the communique negotiation process. Further work on each of these is now mandated through 2015.

Climate change: the negotiations in Lima

What happened, and what does it mean for developing countries?

DFID reported that the annual climate change negotiations concluded in Lima on Sunday 14 December. These were a stepping stone to negotiations in Paris, where we need to agree a global deal to come into force from 2020.

The poorest are most vulnerable to environmental degradation and climate change

The World Bank's latest **turn down the heat** report highlights the impacts of climate change today on millions of people - and the severity of future shocks, especially if we don't agree ambitious and binding commitments in Paris.

Climate finance offers new opportunities for developing countries to seek cleaner, more resilient growth paths. The Lima negotiations were difficult, but some critical issues have been agreed:

- Global - all countries have been invited to make a commitment ahead of Paris on how they will tackle climate change, these will be focussed on mitigation but may include adaptation. They should include quantifiable, transparent, comparable information
- Accountable - a report will be published in November assessing whether we are globally on track to limit climate change to 2°C. We expect civil society will publish assessments of individual countries' pledges
- Coordinated - the UK signed up to a National Adaptation Planning Global Network, with other major donors, which seeks to coordinate bilateral support

Elements of a draft negotiating text for the new agreement.

On climate finance, a number of countries made pledges to the Green Climate Fund - a new multilateral fund to tackle climate change - bringing the total fund to \$10.2 billion. This

includes \$1.2 billion (£720m) from the UK. The UK's pledge was conditional on the fund receiving at least \$10 billion in total, which has now been met.

Next steps

The deal to be signed in 2015 will be global and all countries are expected to bring forward their mitigation commitments in the first half of next year.

There is flexibility regarding these commitments, with developed countries expected to provide absolute emissions targets, with other commitments varying according to countries' capabilities with poorest countries expected to provide low carbon development strategies.

2015 is key in developing an ambitious and robust deal - alongside the new Sustainable Development Goals - which addresses climate change as an integral part of sustainable development and helps the poorest countries adapt.

Baroness Northover's first visit to Africa as PUSS

Tackling violence against women and girls

Baroness Northover made a two day visit to South Africa in November 2014, where she was the key note speaker at the launch of the £25m what works to prevent violence against women and girls programme on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

With one in three women beaten or sexually abused in her lifetime, the UK is leading efforts to tackle this violence. The programme will gather vital evidence about what actions make a real difference to people's lives and is funding innovation grants for civil society organisations and others to test out new approaches to tackling violence. The grants will be announced on Wednesday 10 December at the end of the 16 days of activism against gender based violence.



The new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State also met with representatives of government, the women's movement, the LGBTI community, young people and programme partners.

She visited a community radio station in Mamelodi township where she was interviewed on air by lively youth reporters about her role and UK policies around women and girls – and visited a national call centre for youth and parents on HIV/AIDS and gender based violence.

Progress and optimism but still room for improvement

The South African Minister for Women emphasised the existence of good laws and policies in South Africa to tackle gender equality and violence against women, but more work still needed to be done to ensure full implementation and to change behaviours.



A roundtable meeting with representatives from the LGBTI community reiterated that, despite South Africa's progressive rights based

constitution they still suffered tremendous discrimination.

They called on the international community to monitor and respond to the early warning signs of retrograde attitudes and policies in countries and to apply continued and consistent pressure to uphold the rights of LGBTI people on the continent.

Engaging men and boys to tackle violence against women

With 50% of women having suffered intimate partner violence in their life and 39% of men admitting to rape it is important to engage men and boys to see how they can creatively contribute to gender equality. The PUSS and Sonke Gender Justice discussed the recent 'MenEngage Symposium' in India, which looked at the engagement of men and boys

New open-source index for risk management

To support decisions about crisis prevention, preparedness and response



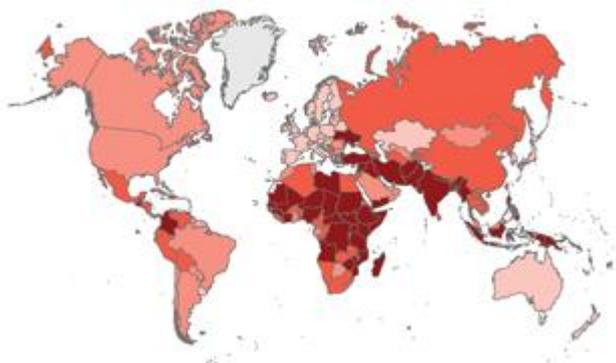
On Wednesday 19 November [INFORM](#) (Index for Risk Management), the first global open-source tool for measuring the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters, was officially launched.

Designed to support decisions about prevention, preparedness and response

Because INFORM is open-source it will help many actors align their work to reduce crisis and disaster risk and to build resilience.

Understanding why and where humanitarian crises and disasters are likely to occur is a fundamental step in saving lives and promoting sustainable development.

It is the result of many months of development by a large coalition of partners, including leading operational agencies and research institutions. We provided significant support, including expertise, to the development of this composite index.



The tool works by simplifying a lot of information about risk and its components into a simple risk profile for 191 countries, covering natural and human hazards, vulnerability and lack of coping capacity.

All the results and data used are freely available and the methodology is completely transparent.

INFORM can also be used to measure risk at the sub-national level and our partners are working with regional and national counterparts to develop region and country-specific versions. Our partners are already using index to help them with their decision-making and they are encouraging others to use it too.

Although it is only one element of the decision-making process, they believe that by using a shared and reliable evidence-base on risk, they will together be more effective at managing risk and building resilience.

Ebola treatment facility opened in Sierra Leone



In November 2014 a British Ebola treatment facility opened to patients in Kerry Town, near the Sierra Leone capital Freetown.

The Kerry Town complex includes an 80 bed treatment facility to be managed by Save the Children and a 12 bed facility staffed by British Army medics specifically for health care workers and international staff responding to the Ebola crisis. The 12 bed facility is expected to expand to 20 beds in the New Year.

The construction of the treatment facility was funded by DFID and designed and overseen by British Army Royal Engineers. It is the first of six centres to be built by Britain in a bid to contain, control and defeat Ebola in Sierra Leone.

The site also hosts an Ebola testing laboratory run by British scientists to accurately diagnose patients. The lab began operating last week and has doubled the country's lab capacity.

The Secretary of State said:

“Sierra Leone does not have enough hospital beds to cope with the scale of the Ebola crisis. Patients are being turned away from hospitals, reducing their chance of survival and allowing the disease to spread”.

“That is why British Army Engineers together with Sierra Leonean construction workers have been working round the clock for the last eight weeks to get Kerry Town built. This treatment facility, the first of six British-built centres, will give patients the care they need to fight Ebola, limiting the spread of this terrible disease”.

“I pay tribute to Save the Children and to the heroic British medics, Sierra Leonean health workers and international volunteers whose work in this facility has the potential to save countless lives”.



Construction has begun on two more facilities in Freetown and:

- Port Loko
- Makeni
- Moyamba.

These facilities will take the number of UK-supported beds to over 700, providing direct medical care to up to 8,800 patients over six months.

Our wider £230 million Ebola response package includes funding for burial teams to increase capacity and work with communities on new burial practices, the roll out of up to 200 new community care facilities and help to shore up the country’s stretched public health services to help contain the disease. This includes vital supplies such as chlorine and protective clothing for thousands of health workers.

15-minute test for Ebola trialled in Guinea

A rapid, point-of-care diagnostic test for the Ebola virus was trialled the Ebola treatment

centre in Conakry, Guinea. The trial is one of six health research projects jointly funded by DFID and the Wellcome Trust. The six projects are managed by Enhancing Learning & Research for Humanitarian Assistance (ELRHA).

Funding for these projects has been made available from an existing £6.5 million research initiative, [Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises \(R2HC\)](#)

The 15-minute Ebola test is six times faster than similar tests currently in use and aims to speed up the diagnosis of Ebola cases. Early detection of Ebola leads to better infection control as medical staff can identify and isolate confirmed cases of Ebola faster, and start treating patients sooner. Ultimately, a faster test could reduce Ebola transmission and mortality.

The trial, led by researchers at the Pasteur Institute in Dakar, Senegal, was deployed using a ‘mobile suitcase laboratory’ which is designed for low-resource settings. The portable laboratory includes a solar panel, a power pack and a results reader which is the size of a small laptop.

The reagents used in the test are available as dried pellets, which are ‘cold-chain-independent’, meaning that they can be used and transported at room temperature. Similarly to the tests currently in use, the new test detects the genetic material of the virus. The pilot trial will test whether the reagents are safe and effective to use with Ebola patients’ blood and saliva samples.

Other new projects to help defeat Ebola

Among [five other projects](#) that have been funded by the same initiative is another diagnostic device, developed by the University of Westminster, that can be used away from hospital labs in villages. The objective is to test bodily fluids for Ebola and deliver a result within 40 minutes. Other projects include predicting the spread of disease so that resources can be moved to health centres most likely to see a surge of new cases, and modelling the epidemic to work out how many cases and deaths might be expected over time.

World Health Organisation and member country failings mean global health systems remain “Dangerously Inadequate” for dealing with health emergencies, say MPs

[Report: Responses to the Ebola Crisis](#)

[Report: Responses to the Ebola Crisis \(PDF\)](#)

[Inquiry: Responses to the Ebola Crisis](#)

[International Development Committee](#)

In a report published in before Christmas, the House of Commons International Development Committee said DfID and the World Health Organisation initially failed to recognise the scale and severity of the Ebola crisis and were too slow to respond.

This is in part due the WHO’s member states, who have cut its funding and failed to emphasise building sustainable health systems in developing countries, leaving the global health system “dangerously inadequate” for responding to health emergencies. The Committee commended DfID’s vigorous efforts to tackle Ebola now, but the outbreak continues to outpace efforts to tackle it.

The Committee commended all those who have risked their lives in the effort to tackle Ebola, and in particular Médecins Sans Frontières, which was the first international organisation to recognise the scale of the epidemic and respond accordingly.

The International Development Committee recommended that DfID press for a review of the international approach to health emergencies, incorporating the function, structure and funding of the World Health Organisation and the role and expectations of major donors.

It said DFID must not wait for its 2015 Multilateral Aid Review to do this: the urgency of the situation requires immediate action.

The Ebola outbreak that has stricken Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea since March 2014 has had a devastating effect on the region. By 2 December 2014, more than 17,500 cases and 6,000 deaths had been reported. These figures will inevitably rise. Ebola has had wider damaging consequences for local economies, food security, institutional stability and the broader health system.

Chair's Comments

“The Committee visited Sierra Leone and Liberia in June 2014, just before the full impact of the epidemic became apparent. The health system in Sierra Leone has since been overwhelmed by Ebola, which, given the post-conflict fragility of development in the country and the severity of the epidemic, was perhaps inevitable. However, had more attention been paid over recent years to strengthening the health system as we have recommended in the past, and had more Sierra Leonean health professionals been retained in the domestic system, the impact of Ebola would have been less severe.

“So too would have been the cost of tackling the outbreak. We reiterate the recommendations of our report on Strengthening Health Systems in Developing Countries - strengthening the health system should be the centrepiece of DFID’s reconstruction plans for Sierra Leone.

“DfID has rightly identified defeating Ebola as quickly as possible as the most important step in giving Sierra Leone the best chance of successful reconstruction and development in the long term. It is also right to be planning for that long term now. We are asking DFID write to us on a monthly basis detailing progress on, and plans for, aid disbursement, staff deployment and other actions to tackle Ebola.

“It is imperative that, once the immediate crisis is over, the eyes of the world do not turn away from the region. DFID should convene a global conference in early 2015 to agree a common plan for post-crisis reconstruction in the region and keep the momentum going.”

New initiative to conduct ‘inclusive growth diagnostics’ in countries

Pilots in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Ethiopia and Zambia



Driving inclusive growth is fundamental to economic transformation and to eradicating poverty. To get our interventions right, we need robust, context-specific analysis of the constraints and the areas where we can have the most transformational impact.

The Economic Development Directorate, the Chief Economist’s Office and others have developed a new approach to ‘inclusive growth diagnostics’ ([methodology framework](#) and [analytical narrative](#)), which was endorsed by the Economic Development Steering Group last week.

Diagnostics for five pilots (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Ethiopia and Zambia) were completed in December. Lessons from the pilots will inform revisions to the methodology and roll out to all DFID focus countries in January for completion by May.

Building on the country poverty reduction diagnostic (CPRD)

The inclusive growth diagnostic builds on the CPRD which produced an integrated analysis across the poverty reduction system. The

inclusive growth diagnostic will look in greater depth and sharper focus at the inclusive growth component given its importance for poverty reduction, our economic development scale-up and gaps in our analysis.

The diagnostic is about inclusive and transformational growth and emphasises political economy, women and girls and the challenges of conflict and fragility. The inclusive growth diagnostic will be desk-based, drawing on existing material.

Preparing for the next Spending Review

The diagnostic will generate an improved evidence and analytical base for the next Spending Review and related resource allocation discussions on economic development in 2016-17 and 2017-18.

At a central level, we will use the diagnostic to understand country office prioritisation and to assess coherence across DFID’s economic development investments, including through vehicles such as CDC and Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG). At the country level (and regional levels as appropriate), the diagnostic will inform the design of new interventions and support a more targeted and rigorous approach to promoting inclusive growth and wider transformation.

Working with others on diagnostics

The World Bank is beginning its own [diagnostic exercise](#) (notably in Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Burma, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Yemen, Uganda) and country teams should work with the Bank and share analysis. The Growth Team is developing a wider programme of support for growth analysis together with the World Bank and USAID.

Ethiopia 30 years after the famine



During the festive season 30 years ago, the world's focus was on Ethiopia and the region of Tigray. Up to a million people died the 1984 famine and, with warfare and severe drought the driving causes, and Tigray was described as "hell on earth". A seven minute BBC report has been called the most influential TV footage of all time. The images of starving children, desperate parents, dry earth and flies still define the perceptions of many but, 30 years later, reality couldn't be more different.

Today's Tigray represents one of the most impressive development stories of our time. In 1984 Korem was a barren plain but now the hills are green and fields of wheat and millet being harvested.



The general hospital (built with UK funding and managed by UNICEF), sits next a primary school built on the site of one of the camps from 1984. Although few of their parents had been to school, most of children there now want to be doctors when they grow up.

The productive safety net programme, which we support, is benefitting over 25,000 people in the area surrounding Korem. The landscape has been rehabilitated through public works to build terraces and irrigation schemes. The programme has lifted an estimated 1.6 million people out of poverty across Ethiopia. The Tigray Agriculture Research Institute develops many climate smart crop varieties and technology for small holder farmers, and it has recently won awards for developing two new sesame strains which are exported to the UK.



The MAA garment and textiles factory has a workforce of 1,600 (90% are women), operates to international standards, and supplies leading companies like Tesco. Mekelle is fast becoming a textile hub, with two new factories being built by Italian and Bangladeshi investors. When the Mayor of Mekelle meets the heads of the SME Association and Investment Promotion Office, the talk is of one-stop-shops, industrial zones and economic clusters.

The Ethiopia famine changed the face of modern humanitarian work. This country now hosts the most refugees in Africa, mainly from Somalia and Eritrea, with an additional 200,000 in the last year from South Sudan. Again the UK response has been substantial and swift, with support to the UN and a range of NGOs. While many humanitarian challenges remain across the world, one place not in crisis this Christmas was Tigray.

DFID funded Zoonoses research programme

November saw the  public launch of a research programme on zoonoses, diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans.

Over the next five years the Zoonoses and Emerging Livestock Systems (ZELS) programme will fund 11 projects in developing countries in Africa, South Asia and South East Asia. By bringing together world-class scientists from various disciplines from around the globe, the programme aims to improve the health and well-being of animals, humans and the environment and, ultimately, enhance the lives of millions of people.

Smallholder farmers in the developing world who depend on their livestock to earn a living are hit twice by these diseases. Not only do they lose their income when animals become infected, they and their families are then at risk of becoming sick themselves.

This new funding is an important step towards controlling the spread and reducing the impact of some of the most prevalent of these diseases. It will protect the livelihoods and the health of millions of families in the developing world and boost economic growth in eleven of the world's poorest countries.

Zoonoses are estimated to have cost more than \$20BN in direct costs globally between 2000 and 2010, with a further \$200BN in indirect costs. As well as threatening human and animal health they affect livestock production, causing economic and social harm to communities in developed and developing countries.

Partnership between our Agricultural Research Team and the UK Research Councils

DFID is co-funding the ZELS programme with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and four UK Research Councils:

-  Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)

- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC).

ZELS is a £20.5M programme of research and training to tackle zoonoses. £1.5M of funding will give 15 students from the UK and developing countries doctoral training in ZELS-related research.

The ZELS programme is the fourth programme in a partnership between DFID's Agricultural Research Team and the UK Research Councils, primarily the BBSRC.

DFID ALUMNI VISIT TO BAPS SHRI SWAMINARAYAN MANDIR (HINDU TEMPLE)

105-119 Brentfield Road, London NW10 8LD

From 11:30 on 17 February 2015

BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir is a masterpiece of traditional Hindu design and workmanship. It is an active place of worship. Our tour will make allowance for ceremonies taking place in parts of it.

Our group visit will include a short welcome and introductory address, a video presentation, and a guided tour of the Mandir. This takes approximately one-and-a-half hours, and is free. It concludes with a half hour visit to the educational 'Understanding Hinduism' exhibition.

There is a charge for the exhibition of £2 per adult, or £1.50 for senior citizens, which includes the price of the 'Understanding Hinduism' guide book. The DFID Alumni tour will end around 13:30. Please allow extra time if you wish to visit the Souvenir Shop and the Shayona Indian restaurant.

Please arrive at the Mandir 15-20 minutes before the start of our guided tour at 11:30. The Mandir is about 20 minutes' walk from Stonebridge Park or Neasden or Wembley Park stations. Buses 224 and 206 stop outside it. Buses 112, 611, 232 and 18 stop nearby. For transport details and a journey planner see <http://londonmandir.baps.org/visit-us/getting-here/>.

If you would like to take part, please tell Marc Taylor by 10 February 2015:

c.marc.taylor@gmail.com or 07507413432.

Numbers are limited.

EVENTS

Seminar, 16th October 2014,

Security Sector Support in Sierra Leone: The Key Success Factors and Wider Aid Implications.

This seminar brought together about 40 people from the DFID Alumni Association, current staff of DFID, FCO, MOD, PJHQ- Security Assistance Group, the British Chapter of the 1818 Society (the Association of World Bank Group Alumni), the Royal United Services Institute, the Law and Development Partnership, the University of Birmingham, DAI Europe, Cardno, and Security & Risk Consultancy Services.

The five speakers on the Panel were:-

- General the Lord Richards (Retired as Chief of Defence Staff in 2013; earlier in his career planned and initiated the first British military involvement in Sierra Leone 1999-2000).
- Keith Biddle (Inspector-General of Sierra Leone Police 1999 – 2003).
- Brigadier (Retd.) Patrick Davidson-Houston (Joint Force Commander Operation SILKMAN, Sierra Leone 2001-2002, Commander of the International Military Advisory & Training Team, IMATT, 2001-2003, Military Adviser to the Government of Sierra Leone, 2001-2003).
- Dr Brian Jones (Head of the British International Security Advisory Team, ISAT, in Sierra Leone since it started in 2013 on secondment from FCO) - by video from Freetown.
- Freddy Carver (Senior Governance and Conflict Adviser in DFID, Head of the Security and Justice Group in MOD/FCO/DFID Stabilisation Unit).

The Seminar was chaired by Simon Ray, The Chairman of the Alumni Association.

The Seminar's objectives were:

- To identify the key factors in British support to the Sierra Leone (SL) Security Sector that made the programmes a comparative success.
- To draw out lessons from SL experience for their application more widely in programmes of Security Sector support and reform.
- To underline the importance of Security Sector Reform as the vital underpinning of all aspects of development.

The speakers were asked to address the following questions from their different perspectives and experience:

- What was the state of the SL security sector when British involvement started?
- What development strategies and tactics were implemented for the Armed Forces, Police and Intelligence Agencies, their parent ministries and the coordination and policy making machinery in the Office of the President?
- How did these work out? What were the keys to the impact achieved?
- What should have been done differently, in light of current challenges?
- What are the wider implications for Security Support?

The following is a summary report of the issues raised in the Seminar by the speakers and in discussion among participants.

Keys to the Comparative Success of the British Intervention

An initial question was the extent to which British involvement in the security sector in Sierra Leone occurred- initially at least -in a unique set of circumstances. This led on to the identification of what succeeded and why, and then on to what conclusions can be derived for wider application in programmes of security sector support and reform.

Acronyms

CCSSP Commonwealth Safety and Security Programme(Police)

CDF Civil Defence Forces

CISU Central Intelligence Support Unit

DISECs PROSECs District and Provincial Security Councils

FCAS Fragile and Affected States

GOSL Government of Sierra Leone

IGP Inspector General of Police

IMATT International Military Advisory and Training Team

ISAT International Security Advisory Team

JSDP Justice Sector Development Programme

NSA National Security Advisor

NSC National Security Council

ONS Office of National Security

OSD Operational Support Division(Police)

PCRU Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit

PJHQ Permanent Joint Headquarters

RSALF Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

RUF Revolutionary United Front

SILSEP Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme

SLA Sierra Leone Army

SLP Sierra Leone Police

SSR Security Sector Reform

UNAMSIL United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

guideline being do what is required to support the Government and prevent it being overthrown by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

- Strong political leadership in Sierra Leone and high level political support in UK: President Kabbah, his Government (GOSL) and the SL Parliament had been democratically elected (albeit from a restricted geographical base using a party list system). On the UK side, Prime Minister Tony Blair, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, expressed public and unqualified support for GOSL. Minister Short was prepared to push the boundaries and take initiatives in order to aid Sierra Leone, She was, for example, instrumental in amending the British International Development Act in 2002 to allow for funds to be allocated for security support.
- As a result, British resources allocated to SL were massively increased for a period following the guideline 'do what is required', and for a few years were not a constraint. One lesson soon apparent was that successful intervention is expensive even in a relatively small country like Sierra Leone. At its peak, the IMATT/Protection force had 1000 soldiers in the country. One consequence of the size of the British Aid Budget was the UK gained enormous influence by becoming the dominant donor partner of the Government of Sierra Leone.
- A strong GOSL-HMG relationship was underpinned by friendship, trust and credibility among the key personalities involved on both sides: President Kabbah and his team in the President's Office; GOSL National Security Adviser and the Office of National Security; Commander IMATT: Inspector General of Police (IGP); British High Commissioner; British Advisers to the National Security Council (NSC), Office of National Security (ONS) and SL MOD. Daily (or

There were a number of key factors:

- British interventions in the security and justice sector in 1999/2000 took place in a situation in which there were no precedents or guidance strategies to draw on. Security Sector Reform (SSR) as a concept and strategy had not been invented –the catalyst for HMG was Sierra Leone as the first country in which DFID and the Ministry of Defence played effective complementary roles in rebuilding a country shattered by civil war. Hence a pragmatic approach was required,-the

two or three times a week) bilateral or roundtable meetings were the rule. A genuine partnership was built up between GOSL and the British. This ensured that President Kabbah became a decisive factor in the policies and strategies adopted.

- The pattern of meetings also helped in building up a holistic approach to SSR, including all the key institutions and programmes. Comparatively long postings on the British side (with the exception of the IMATT Commanders) consolidated relationships and teamwork. Although there were three separate British-funded projects in the security area: IMATT; SILSEP (ONS/Intelligence reform in the Office of the President and the SL MOD); and the CCSSP (Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Programme for the police); close personal relations, and the immediate advantages of cooperation, soon caused them to become effectively one SSR programme on the ground.
- These working relationships were much strengthened by the de facto delegation of decision-making from MOD London to the Commander IMATT /Protection Force right from the start of their involvement. For example, initial British tasking in the intervention in 1999 concentrated on ensuring the evacuation of Commonwealth nationals. This was changed by the Force Commander to attacking and defeating the RUF in an alliance with local pro-Government forces, in response to an analysis of threats in the environment. 'Trust the people on the ground' has since become the mantra (admittedly not uncontested) to be applied in other British military involvements.
- GOSL was extremely insecure and enthusiastically welcomed all forms of British support. This enthusiasm came to be shared by most of the SL population, especially after the British Intervention Force in 'Operation Palliser' stopped the RUF outside Freetown

and then began to drive them back into the interior. The 'visibility' of the British presence to the local population was vital in this. British military Land Rovers driving up and down from the IMATT compound on Leicester Peak and the landing of a Gurkha force from a warship in the British 'over the horizon' capability may have been as important in maintaining peace and stability in Freetown as some of the crucial reform work.

- The psychological and communications elements ('Strategic Communications') were kept well to the fore in the British strategy. As well as confidence building in the Government and local population and dispelling rumours, it was equally important to destroy the confidence and self-belief of the RUF. The visible deployment of heavy weaponry and air power and victories on one or two carefully chosen pitched battles near Freetown severely damaged the RUF belief that they were invincible and would soon take over the country. The improved performance of the much strengthened UNAMSIL and the Civil Defence Forces against the RUF was a further vital practical and psychological element.
- These programmes capitalised on the universal hatred and repugnance for the 'enemy' -the RUF- and its horrific treatment of the public ('short or long sleeves'). There was little or no support for it anywhere in the country.
- The pragmatic approach adopted by UK personnel meant that when it was realised that the whole of GOSL was in a state of collapse, recovery had to require reconstruction over a broad front from the start. Security Sector Reform could not take place in isolation. A range of complementary programmes was begun with British support: up-grading the Justice sector; rebuilding basic effectiveness in central and local administration; restoring financial management and accountability;

strengthening Parliamentary and local democracy; re-establishing customary courts and chieftdom systems; and creating sufficient capacity in public media institutions to create a channel for government citizen communication. These were relatively small programmes in comparison with SSR –in one or two cases having more of a symbolic than a real impact, but still of value in spite of this limitation.

The Police Reform Programme

When British involvement with and support for the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) began in earnest in the late nineties after the first RUF invasion of Freetown, and with the appointment of a British Inspector-General of Police (IGP), the police were in meltdown with no logistics, a high incidence of corruption, shortage of uniforms, damaged infrastructure and very low morale.

Reform was not helped by an initial DFID decision that Police were part of the Justice Sector rather than the Security Sector, to be reconstructed as part of restoring the 'Rule of Law'. In part this was because DFID had had no involvement with the military aspects of SSR up to that time, and partly because HMG as a whole was making its first combined entry in what became the Security and Justice Sector.

Policing has long since been integrated in the HMG approach, but this unfortunate division had significant implications, particularly for the scale of Police support which was not large enough. The comparison with the military programme was very marked.

The first step in restoring confidence in the role of police in the community was the launch of a new Police Charter by President Kabbah in August, 1998. This he largely disseminated and publicised himself, as he had a clear vision of the type of police force he wanted. Establishment of good personal as well as good working relations between the President and the Inspector-General of Police, made the process much easier. Both the Charter and the Police Council (which had

overall control over the Sierra Leone Police) were firmly based in the 1991 SL Constitution—a factor which underlined the importance of returning to the rule of law in Sierra Leone.

The Police Charter became the guide for a transformational change programme that became known as 'Local Needs Policing'—shorthand for the goal of police and communities working in partnership to respond to particular problems in the locality.

Equal opportunities were a major feature in reforms. Contrary to expectations, the Sierra Leone Police did not turn out to be dominated by any particular ethnic group. But women were very few, kept down to lower ranks or non-operational activities with none in the senior ranks. Reforms have now produced a range of female officers including three at Assistant Inspector-General level.

Achievement of 'Police Primacy', meaning the ability of the SLP to take lead responsibility for internal security (only being assisted by military forces in times of major emergency, natural or man-made disasters or major civil disturbance), has been achieved. A current example is the Ebola crisis. So far the SLP and OSD (Operational Support Division—the para—military police) have contained twenty serious 'public disorders' by using tear gas rather than weapons, without calling in the RSLAF.

The culmination of the reform programme organisationally was the replacement of the top echelon of SLP officers with well trained and motivated younger successors untainted by politicisation and allegations of corruption. The combined impact of these measures was to restore effectiveness in the SLP and re-establish its positive image with the public at large.

The question remains however of how permanent and sustainable these improvements will prove to be. The SLP has achieved international credibility by being invited to second police to the UN missions in Haiti and South Sudan.

But doubts remain internally which might have been avoided by a larger, longer more sustained programme of British support than the one implemented. The severe test presented by the Ebola crisis has so far been contained, but if the spread of the disease gets out of control, the scale of the challenge will be even greater in future.

The Military Reform Programme

After it was clear that the RUF was defeated, and that peace would soon be declared (as it was in January 2002), IMATT gave priority to the reform of the SLA. The strategy adopted included 'train and equip', but was much more than that. The overall objectives were to create armed forces that were democratically accountable, affordable and sustainable with a capability appropriate to SL's security needs.

In methodology, some called it the 'sit-up, crawl, walk and run' strategy emphasising the gradualist approach. A large scale training programme at all levels and substantial re-equipment were major features, but going beyond that British officers filled command positions in the SLA while mentoring a new generation of SL successors. New recruitment took place at all levels as well as retraining of the existing complement. There was some effort to absorb a limited number of ex-combatants from the RUF and the CDF.

Beyond core military training, there were a number of objectives. One was the acceptance by the military of police primacy in matters of internal security. A second was to ensure both awareness of and obedience to the country's laws among soldiers. This was to improve relations between the military and civilians so that the latter were no longer terrified of their own soldiers. A fourth was the reestablishment of civilian political control over the military.

The SL Ministry of Defence had been little more than a post box during military regimes in the past and then used as the headquarters of the Civil Defence Forces during the civil war. This was rehoused and re developed on the dual hierarchy

model used by the British MOD with a civilian Permanent Secretary and Minister at the apex. British officers initially filled a number of parallel military positions to the civil servants.

The aim was to entrench civil service and political control and a particular priority was MOD control over the drafting and approval of the military budget to ensure it was sustainable, given GOSL's likely resources.

Advisers were also provided to the National Security Adviser in the Office of the President who supported the National Security Council (NSC), The Office of National Security (ONS) and the Central Intelligence Support Unit-CISU (the parent unit of the SL Intelligence Service). The aim was to make both the central coordination and policy making machinery and the District and Provincial Security Committees (DISECs and PROSECs) effective.

The combined effect of these reforms was to re-establish the SLA as the 'Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces' (RSLAF) under overall civilian political control through the Ministry of Defence and made up of disciplined, well trained soldiers. These characteristics have largely been maintained. The RSLAF has provided contingents to the African Union missions in Darfur in 2011 and more recently in Somalia.

The verdict cannot be so positive for the NSC, NSA, ONS and CISU where the programmes of support were so much smaller and shorter. The Office of National Security has not yet succeeded in establishing itself as an integral part of the system to be truly sustainable. For example, the National Security Council only met in March 2014 after a gap of a year, and security issues are not regularly discussed in Cabinet. Delays in treating Ebola as a national crisis also reflect shortcomings in intelligence services and the sub-national security committees.

This report was circulated to members of the DFID Alumni Association and to other interested organisations in November 2014. A version including the list of participants can be found in the DFID Alumni Association community on dgroups.org.

Assessment: What Could Have Been Done Better?

1. Periods of Support:

British support for military reform continued at a sustainable level for longer than the police programme and the impact was correspondingly greater (the much larger scale was of course also vitally important). Nonetheless, the assessment is that the involvement should have been longer and if necessary 'thinner'.

To personalise that conclusion: if it was a choice between 200 British soldiers for 2 years and 20 for 20 years, the latter would be the preference—but it should really be for a generation (at least 30 years) rather than measured in mere decades.

There is strong evidence that DFID reduced support to the SLP too early and too drastically when the successor to the CCSSP, the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) was begun in 2004. There is evidence of regression in overall effectiveness in maintaining security, in the quality of leadership and the incidence of corruption.

The lesson is that UK support should have been maintained over a much longer period. £8 million was mentioned over five years from 2004, but it should probably have been longer and 'thinner' in the sense of a smaller programme for more years. As for the military, ten or twenty years or even a generation may be required to embed efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness in the SLP.

2. Partnership versus Dependency

While there was a genuine partnership between HMG and GOSL, and this was one of the keys to the successful impact, the unresolved question remains as to whether the partnership perpetuated dependency? Initially, GOSL was immensely grateful to British bilateral assistance for rescuing them from the RUF and its allies and was prepared to defer to British decision-making. British personnel took over executive positions for a period.

Did this pattern have to happen and could it/should it have been ended earlier? Did British financial and manpower aid allow SL to defer facing up to harsh reality because "the British will help us"? Alternatively, is there anything wrong with temporary dependence, if it ensures peace and security for ordinary citizens? Alternatively again, did dependence just go too far and become too institutionalised so that earlier in 2014, the Head of ISAT (IMATT's successor) was approached to solve the problem of the collapsed septic tank in Pademba Road High Security Prison!

Whether the British response to Ebola –albeit belated but by far the biggest bilateral programme involving the deployment of the British Army –will strengthen dependence remains to be seen. Dependency was raised as an issue rather than resolved in the Seminar. One relevant comparison mentioned was Rwanda, another major recipient of British Aid, but which has retained a much more 'independent' attitude.

3. Maintenance and Replacement Costs

Neither the RSLAF nor the SLP really made allowances for these needs. Perhaps it was a consequence of the dependency complex ("The British have and will provide") or simply the overwhelming demands on the GOSL budget. Vehicles and equipment in particular were run into the ground and mobility declined. Barracks and police stations were not maintained, and with the SL rainy season, damage multiplied.

4. Uneven Spread of Resources

There were two major imbalances in British supplied resources: between IMATT, its Protection Force and the Police, the Office of National Security, NSA and CISU: and between the Security Sector and the complementary programmes in the Legal Sector (including customary courts and chiefs), central and local administration, public financial administration and accountability, parliamentary and local

democracy and media development to improve government–citizen communication.

The reasons for the huge differences in budgets were (and still are) historical and cultural alongside assessments of need and different approaches to reform. 'Defence' and 'aid' budgets have always been totally different in scale and military assistance reflects this. The military task in SL was to get the job done quickly, using all the means required. Developing local capacity was an important objective. but secondary to defeating the RUF, restoring peace and security and turning the SLA into an effective, disciplined, accountable fighting force.

Development programmes in other areas of government funded by DFID were conceived as a catalyst to developing Sierra Leonean capacity to manage effectively and efficiently. With the exceptions of the British IGP and a British team in the Anti-Corruption Commission, central principles in DFID support in SL (and throughout the Aid Programme) are to supply consultants as advisers, who are not in executive positions, and to take the time necessary (measured in years) to develop local capacity.

The two approaches were very different. and did create problems. At a very basic level, there were jealousies shared by both the British and SL partners over the scale of support. Why was the SLA receiving so much more than the SLP? What about the central coordinating and policy-making machinery in the Office of the President?

Why were vitally important ministries like Finance and Internal Affairs receiving so little support? More damagingly, a number of British and SL military officers became intensely frustrated by what they saw as the failure to overhaul key functions of government to complement and reinforce the progress in military reform.

What –or more importantly who-was holding things back and hindering security reform? What time scale were other programmes working to? Short postings did not help matters as officers

were tasked to deliver, and might be held responsible if they failed to do so.

In practice, these problems were actually minor difficulties. More generally, they should be reducing as military and civilians (MOD and DFID) gain more experience of working together in stabilisation programmes. The much more difficult issue is achieving the right balance of resources to commit to what are vitally important symbiotic development programmes.

How can very different time scales be reconciled? How can reform in the military be matched up with improvements in overall budget management in the Ministry of Finance? How can police rebuilding be complemented by improvements in the judicial system so affordable justice is delivered impartially and efficiently to citizens?

5. Use of 'Intermediaries': Civil Society and Traditional Authorities

Another issue raised briefly in discussion was whether the British Programme had made full use of SL civil society and the chiefdom hierarchy in communications with the population and in implementing local needs policing. In the 1998-2002 period, Local Police Partnership Boards were set up which have expanded throughout the country and continue in existence with varying degrees of effectiveness, providing a mechanism for local NGOs and CSOs to meet the police on local problems .Contact with chiefs was less institutionalised and much more variable.

The issue of 'intermediaries' is likely to come up much more urgently in getting the right messages across in the Ebola crisis, where rumours and superstition are rife. Civil society, chiefs and even the male and female secret societies could all have a vital role. The need for clear health messaging through all media outlets and channels (such as political leaders, women's groups, the police, paramount chiefs, etc.), is essential to justify changes in behaviour that may challenge cultural norms and traditional practice.

6. Continuing Underlying Fragility

The impact of the range of British efforts –and UN, WB EU and other bilateral programmes- has not created a self-sustaining pattern of democratic stability, internal peace and economic growth which will allow SL to graduate from 'Fragile and Conflict Affected Status (FCAS). The underlying problems of youth unemployment, ever rising population numbers and inadequate social services remain. There is little or no capacity to withstand sudden unexpected shocks, such as the Ebola epidemic, and the collapse of international iron ore prices.

What was demonstrated is what can be achieved by a combination of SSR and complementary governance support, very large in cost in proportion to the size of the country and a 'normal' aid programme, but not large in proportion to the benefits (outcome and impact) achieved in peace and security and a platform for development.

Sierra Leone Experience and its Wider Implications for UK Government Policy

The circumstances in Sierra Leone in the late 1990s were fairly unique, but the symbiotic relationship that developed between DFID and MOD in Sierra Leone helped to reinforce the need for an integrated approach to defence, diplomacy and development in UK foreign policy (the '3 Ds'), in general, and in the security and justice sector in particular. To this now has to be added a fourth 'D' British domestic security.

UK experience in Sierra Leone became the major impetus behind the amendment of the International Development Act in 2002 to enable interventions in the security sector. This has since become a feature of UK involvement in fragile countries recovering from conflict.

Mainstreaming the security and justice sector is now an essential part of development programmes. SL experience was one, if not the, decisive catalyst in the establishment of a DFID/MOD/FCO 'Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit' (PCRU), with a jointly funded Africa Conflict

Pool Fund ,the PCRU has subsequently developed into the 'Stabilisation Unit.' and the Conflict Pool is to be replaced in 2015 by the much larger 'Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund'

The comparative advantage of deploying UK armed forces was clearly demonstrated in Sierra Leone. They have the ability to quickly analyse problems, identify a plan, mobilise and deploy resources and implement under pressure- taking on an immediate 'command and control' role from civilian agencies, which cannot function in the same way. Although this can cause short term friction, it does provide the essential national and personal security on which sustainable development depends.

The need for long- term commitments to ensure that shared reform objectives are truly entrenched in UK/ GOSL relationships. Ten or twenty or even thirty year partnerships are required. Early exits from fragile contexts can lead to regression and significant setbacks when a new crisis like Ebola occurs. Continuous engagement over a long period also builds trust and good working relations.

All institutions in the security sector need to be included in reform programmes, not only the military and police but the central policy making and intelligence agencies focussing on security.

High level political leadership and vision on both sides are essential to drive the security agenda and accelerate progress. . Ideally, an integrated security sector reform approach should be developed from the onset rather than planning support for the police, or the involvement of the military, as unilateral, targeted interventions.

Though it is very difficult to achieve in practice, there is a need for a balanced approach to achieve the most productive allocation of budget resources, so that the wide range of different stakeholders in the security sector reform programme can play their parts effectively.

PEOPLE

New Year Honours 2015

Services to development recognised

Congratulations to all the DFID staff who received an Honour in the New Year Honours List.

The system recognises merit on the basis of someone's personal achievements in their field and the difference they have made.

DFID staff

Professor Christopher Whitty	CB	Chief Scientific Adviser. For public and voluntary service to Tropical Medicine in the UK and Africa
Jane Miller	OBE	Team Leader & Senior Health Adviser. For services to Development in Africa, particularly Female Genital Mutilation
Geoffrey Hope	OBE	Stabilisation Adviser, Helmand Provincial Reconstruction Team. For services to Stabilisation and Development in Afghanistan
Elizabeth Carriere	OBE	Head of DFID South Sudan. For services to Development and Leadership in South Sudan
Andy Hill	MBE	Civil – Military Adviser, CHASE. For Humanitarian services to the Philippines
Lance Gregg	BEM	Messenger. For services to public administration

Others whose work was recognised:

Dr Carolyn Makinson	CBE	Executive Director, International Rescue Committee UK. For services to Humanitarian Relief Programmes
Maud Kells	OBE	Nurse, WEC International. For services to people in the Democratic Republic of Congo
Paul Jacob	MBE	Trustee, Christian Aid. For charitable and voluntary services
Alistair McArthur	MBE	For services to Humanitarian Aid
Jill Ghanouni	MBE	For voluntary services to the community in Rural India
Dorothy Ellis	BEM	Volunteer, Save the Children. For charitable service
Anne Grant	BEM	Founder and lately Chairman, Save the Children Ayr Branch Art Exhibition

JOHN STUPPEL, OUR NEW SECRETARY

After serving as Secretary for two years, Marc Taylor has resigned.

The Committee is delighted to announce that John Stuppel will take over as Secretary from February 2015. John is a member of the DFID Alumni who worked for DFID and its predecessors from 1977 to 2014.

During his long career, John served in a range of posts delivering aid programmes in Africa and Europe. When he retired he was leader of DFID's corporate services team for the UN organisations in Geneva.

We look forward to seeing John use his wide contacts within and outside DFID to take forward the aims of the DFID Alumni.

Marc continues to be a member of the Committee, having been elected in June 2014.

New Members of the Association

Welcome our new members, who joined the DFID Alumni in October to December 2014

Glenn Bush
Sheila Dance
Liam Docherty
Danny D'Souza
Jakob Engel
Douglas Greenshields
Andrew Hall
Robin Hughes
James McDonough
Pustak Ojha
Anthony Smith
Don Taylor

63 new members joined the DFID Alumni in 2014

YOUR COMMITTEE

The members of the Committee elected at the Annual General Meeting in June 2014 were:

Simon Ray	Chairman
Marc Taylor	Secretary
John Burton	Treasurer
Jackie Creighton	
Jim Drummond	
Janet Grimshaw	
Amisha Patel	

The Chairman circulated a note on 13 December of the main points from the Committee meeting on 10 December.

The Committee meets next in March.

2014 CHRISTMAS PARTY

The DFID Alumni Christmas party took place at the Civil Service Club in London on 11 December 2014. Over 50 members of the Association spent a very pleasant evening together.

ALUMNI EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SPONSORSHIP

Suggestions from the Committee

At the 2014 AGM we discussed employment opportunities for alumni and the association's financial needs. And whether we could do better on both fronts at the same time. The committee was asked to pursue this question.

What happens now

Currently about 90 Alumni have joined a DFID Alumni employment forum on dgroups.org. Adverts are made available to that group when

- the Secretary or a member sees a post of potential interest to the group
- DFID wishes to draw attention to a post in an international organisation
- an employer approaches the DFID Alumni.

Over 100 jobs have been advertised over the last year. We do not monitor whether any are taken up, but it seems unlikely that many are. Also, it is much less good at signposting short assignments than employment opportunities. So we could do better.

The Alumni Association currently has £1,000 in the bank, derived mostly from St James Place sponsorship. They pay the Alumni Association £1,000 and provide free tickets to a concert or other event whenever we recruit attendees for seminars they run about their financial advice seminars. They hope that some of us will invite them to manage our money for which they take an annual fee.

St James Place have offered one more event in October 2015 if we can find 15-20 Alumni interested. We struggled to find any takers for an event in September 2014. We may have more luck next year, but most Alumni interested in the kind of advice St James Place offers have probably already met them, so this sponsorship has more or less run its course.

SPEAKERS AND MENTORS

In 2014, the DFID Alumni invited members to join two panels:

- Members prepared to take on speaking engagements when DFID is asked to provide a speaker and is unable to do so; and
- Members interested in mentoring current DFID staff.

We invited expressions of interest by the end of December. A number of members replied, and we are happy to confirm that there is sufficient interest from members and to take these activities forward. To support them, there are two new areas on [dgroups](http://dgroups.org).

If you would like to join one of these panels, or to find out more about them, send a blank email to

- join.speakers@dgroups.org

or

- join.mentors@dgroups.org

The Association does not need much money each year. Most events pay for themselves and DFID pays a modest honorarium for the Secretary, which it has recently agreed to continue. But it would be good to have a balance of £3,000 – £5,000 so that we can, for example, pay for refreshments at some of our seminars, pay for IT support for the website, and can offer some funding for alumni events outside the UK. At present our activities are quite London focused.

Opportunities

Initial soundings of a few recruiters (Price Waterhouse, KPMG, Oxford HR) suggest they might be interested in access to alumni cvs and may be willing to pay for that access. We do after all have several thousand years of experience of

international development, much of it still relevant. And some of us are still keen to use it.

Lots of us already use LinkedIn and already share our cvs with our private contact groups. We could create a group on LinkedIn, passworded for access to a group of recruiters who pay for that access. This would not affect our current LinkedIn contacts or the way that we use LinkedIn.

For those not already on LinkedIn it is easy to use and free. Even the most technologically challenged amongst us should be able to manage it! Well almost.

What we would need to do

So here's the plan:

- We need first to gauge interest. We need at least 50 cvs of members interested in doing some work to make it worthwhile. Please tell the Secretary by 15 February whether you would be interested.
- If there is enough interest the committee will approach, say, five firms in the hope that three will respond positively by the end of March.
- Those alumni interested would then have to enter and keep up to date cvs including their main skill sets on LinkedIn and link them in to a group set up for the selected recruiters. We will explain this in more detail if the scheme proceeds.
- Then when one of the recruiters has a job they want to fill, they could either broadcast it to the whole group or look at individual CVs and make individual approaches through LinkedIn. There would be no pressure to agree, though of course if after a year or two very few jobs were being filled the DFID Alumni would have to look for another means of financial support.

Please let the Secretary know your views by 15 February 2015. Reply to alumni@dfid.gov.uk.



CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN

No-one sent any correspondence to this edition,

PARTNER ASSOCIATIONS

The Chairman and Secretary are in touch with other Associations - including those for the FCO, the British Council, CDC and World Bank - about the possibility of shared events and activities.

Do you have links to another Association or organisation that might join with us in arranging activities of interest to DFID Alumni?

CONTACT

This newsletter is produced by DFID's Alumni Secretariat. For any queries, please contact:

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