



The Four Corners

The quarterly Alumni Association newsletter

Issue 47: March 2019

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EDITORIAL

Message from the chairman

Welcome to the spring edition of The Four Corners.

The cloud of Brexit uncertainty continues to hang over us. Its implications for those of our members who are involved one way or another in international development cooperation with the EU remain a critical preoccupation. We report on the steps DFID have taken particularly on no-deal planning. And we hope that members will have the opportunity for a briefing from DFID on latest developments before the summer.

But there is plenty to report on in the meantime. This edition reports on DFID's response to the crises in Yemen and Mozambique and its plans in Jordan. Yusuf Samiullah gives his personal take on the Department's work in Burma as well as the wider attractions of the country. And we report on discussions on the social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Suma Chakrabarti reflects on how the work of EBRD has developed and expanded since its creation in 1991, as the international community moved from the MDGs to the SDGs. The importance of mobilising the private sector in helping to deliver the SDGs is now widely accepted and EBRD has shown how matching private finance with public policy goals can work in practice. As a former UK Director of the Bank, I well recall efforts to sell the wider merits of the EBRD approach. I am delighted that its role is now well recognised.

At a practical level, we continue to try and improve the way we exchange information between members. I hope you find the separate guidance on DGroups useful.

It is with sadness that we report those who have left us, but celebrate their contribution and influences on our own lives and work.

We would welcome feedback and comments on this latest edition. And I hope someone is ready to accept the baton from our editor, Marc. We appreciate as always his efforts to produce a varied and interesting newsletter.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Response to Cyclone Idai

A [UK team of health and emergency response workers](#) flew to the region hit by Cyclone Idai to help assess health needs following the disaster. The team of five will work with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Ministry of Health in Mozambique, to help with the next stages of the health response following the cyclone, which has affected millions of people across Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

UK aid is funding the specialist team as part of a wider UK government response to help those affected by the disaster. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has warned of a cholera outbreak in the region hit by the cyclone. Many hospitals and clinics have been destroyed by the flooding. As the rescue efforts increase those that are still open will have been overwhelmed by people who urgently need treatment. The UK was one of the first countries to respond to Cyclone Idai and is currently the biggest international donor. It has so far pledged to give £22 million to help deal with the disaster's aftermath.

DIARY

Events and Meetings

17 June – Annual General Meeting at DFID, 22 Whitehall, London, 4-5.30 p.m.

17 June – Summer Party at the River Room, House of Lords, 6-8 p.m.

EDITOR NEEDED!

Could you help to edit The Four Corners?

Marc Taylor has been its editor since 2013. After five years, it is time for a change.

We need a new editor who can bring new ideas and new interests to keep the Association's quarterly newsletter relevant to alumni around the world.

Please contact Marc (c.marc.taylor@gmail.com) or another member of the DFID Alumni Committee to find out more.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM DFID IN JANUARY TO MARCH 2019

January

- Penny Mordaunt announced a £2m investment in MFS Africa to make sending remittances easier
- UK and New Zealand reaffirmed their commitment to fighting climate change on the Pacific Islands
- The Foreign Secretary announced that another £2.5m will be sent to the UN for peace keeping in Yemen
- The UK announce an aid package to Iraq so that it can rebuild its infrastructure and revive its economy

February

- Technology funded by UK aid helped to stop 750 pieces of illegal ivory being smuggled into Uganda
- £6.5m has been given in aid to Venezuela to help provide medicine and clean water
- The UK has given developing countries support for a better tax system to fund public services
- The UK pledged to invest up to £30 million across Africa via the Africa Union
- A \$250million loan to Jordan was agreed to help improve the country's economy

March

- The UK will give more aid to Africa in order to help it create more renewable energy
- Penny Mordaunt made a speech, pledging to double UK aid for plastic recycling
- The UK announced £6m in aid to Mozambique and Malawi after being hit by Cyclone Idai

In this edition:

- DFID Alumni seminar on inclusion and disability
- Suma Chakrabarti on EBRD and the SDGs
- Yusaf Samiullah in Myanmar
- Adrian Davis writes about prostate cancer
- Sad news, Alan Russell and the Dresden Trust
- Moscow in transition
- Adventures of Colin Roth
- March committee meeting

And in The Back Pages

- DFID advice to NGOs and suppliers in case of leaving the EU without a withdrawal agreement
- House of Lords inquiry into Brexit and international development cooperation
- UK aid for hospitals in Gaza
- DFID has updated its Smart Rules

Jordan: Growth and Opportunity - The London Initiative 2019

On 28 February 2019, the Rt. Honourable Theresa May MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan hosted Jordan Growth and Opportunity: The London Initiative 2019 a new initiative designed to lay the foundations to unlock growth, jobs and investment for Jordan.

DFID published the [Co-chairs' statement](#) on a five-year pathway designed by Jordan.

Advice to EU nationals working for DFID

DFID has agreed with other UK government departments on advice to EU citizens employed by DFID overseas about the implications of Brexit, including the impact if the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

See the Back Pages for advice DFID has published for NGOs and suppliers of development-related services.

Governance for Growth, Stability and Inclusive Development

In March, DFID published a [position paper](#) on its governance policy.

The paper says that the UK will continue to prioritise the importance of institutions and politics in lifting people out of poverty and addressing global challenges. To maximise the UK's impact, DFID says it will implement four cross-cutting shifts:

- Thinking and working politically across all its work – ensuring that it goes further in its analysis to assess different forms of power. For example, around gender and other forms of exclusion, and consistently apply it to the design and implementation of policy and programming.
- Integrating governance for growth, stability and inclusion – delivering a stronger inter-disciplinary approach, taking portfolio level decisions to encourage better governance.
- Being confident in its values – focusing on the beneficiaries of its work and ensuring that respect for dignity, human rights, democracy and equality are reflected in the choices it makes.
- Keeping DFID at the cutting edge of governance work – working with a wider variety of organisations and individuals, taking advantage of digital opportunities and supporting experimentation and learning.

The position paper sets out how DFID will promote a coherent use of all its instruments and levers to deliver these shifts through work in partner countries, influence and partnerships at the regional and global level, and collaboration with the rest of government in the UK. It will mean:

- Bringing a governance perspective to the full range of DFID efforts in-country – building lasting partnerships, supporting long-term inclusion, growth and stability and developing strong institutions.
- Providing concerted UK international engagement on governance - leading on anti-corruption measures, tackling illicit flows, and building democratic space. Seizing opportunities to implement SDG 16 and connect governance across all the SDGs.
- Working more closely across the UK government to make more effective use of different departments' capabilities and remit to pursue governance related goals and support the national interest.

DFID pledged £200 million to feed people in Yemen

The UK is leading new international efforts to reach those most in need in Yemen, Lord Bates, Minister of State for International Development, announced on 26 February 2019.

At the Yemen Pledging Conference in Geneva, co-hosted by the UK with the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UN agencies, NGOs and key donors agreed new ways of working to prioritise those most in need.

This includes humanitarian agencies committing to coming together to analyse, plan, target and respond to those most in need in a coordinated manner, under the guidance and direction of the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. They will also report on the outcomes of these efforts as part of the Humanitarian Response Plan reporting cycle.

Yemen remains the largest humanitarian crisis in the world. Nearly 10 million people are at risk of starvation, almost 2 million more people than last year. As such, the international response must prioritise help to the most vulnerable.

The UK also announced an aid package of £200 million in funding to Yemen for the 2019/20 financial year. This support will provide vital food assistance right across the country to those most at risk of dying from starvation and disease, meeting the immediate food needs of 3.8 million Yemenis for a month, treating 20,000 children for malnutrition and providing 2 million people with improved water supply and basic sanitation.

DFID responded to ICAI recommendations on: The UK's Approach to Funding the UN Humanitarian System

In its [response published in February](#), DFID welcomed this ICAI performance review. DFID said that, in the face of today's unprecedented humanitarian needs, it is committed to working for a more efficient and effective global humanitarian system that helps save more lives and reduces suffering.

DFID will continue to use UK funding, partnerships and influence to strengthen, improve and reform the humanitarian system.

Joint DFID Alumni/DFID Seminar on social inclusion of people with disabilities

Simon Ray

A seminar was held at DFID on 25 January to discuss the social inclusion of people with disabilities and how policy commitments can be turned into effective practice. Representatives of DFID, ICAI, Sightsavers, ADD, Humanity and Inclusion and the London School of Health and Tropical Medicine made up the panel and were joined by alumni and DFID staff.

There was broad welcome for the progress that had been made in raising the profile of disability inclusion over the last year, including the leadership shown by the UK in convening the Global Disability Summit and the launch of DFID's first disability inclusion strategy.

Discussion focussed on DFID's new strategy published in December 2018 and the next steps required in implementing it. With its minimum standards, it was recognised as ambitious; it would require sustained political support and resources to implement it. Disability inclusion needed to be mainstreamed in programming, and people with disabilities meaningfully involved from design through to implementation, though it was noted that it should be recognised that capacity of existing disabled people's organisations was limited. We needed to move away from thinking about disability inclusion in terms of the additional cost it can require, and instead as a commitment to our ambition to reach the most marginalised.

The problem of limited data on disability was highlighted. Of the 230 indicators of the SDGs, only four are based on disability and there are a number where there is currently no available data. A major coordinated effort would be needed to gather data disaggregated by disability.

It was noted that there was at present limited evidence and research to guide evidence-based policy. A true consortium and sharing of research

evidence was needed, based on a unified evidence platform. But it was also not enough just to have evidence. We also needed key policy recommendations that reflected that evidence. This was difficult with such a complex issue like disability. DFID's new Disability Inclusive Development programme and the UK Aid Connect window on disability will seek to address this gap.

The seminar was welcomed by all participants as an occasion to share experience and ideas on an issue of common concern. Head of the Disability Inclusion Team, Penny Innes, welcomed the seminar as an opportunity to hear the views and perspectives of those personally and professionally involved in the issues. These would be useful as DFID implements its recently published disability inclusion strategy. Connections were established to continue the dialogue.

Disability-inclusive development

Professor Tom Shakespeare (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

Everyone in the disability and development world would surely welcome the growth in funding for disability inclusion interventions and research by DFID, as well as the efforts to make DFID's work disability inclusive. My own group, the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, have benefitted from receiving £7m funding for research and evidence, as well as being part of several UK Aid Connect consortia.

There was a long period when DFID did not prioritise disability, and where DFID staff were absent from global meetings on disability and development. So this change towards an increased focus is greatly to be welcomed, and appreciation should be extended to the leadership of the Secretary of State, as epitomised by the wonderful Disability-Inclusive Development Summit in July 2018. Broad-ranging commitments from a range of global actors appear to have been made at the July 2018 Disability Summit: the difference is monitoring to see if they have been effective. It was particularly welcome to see the commitments to inclusion made by the World Bank.

Broadly, it seems that the DFID investments and Disability Strategy are along the right lines. There are questions of capacity of, for example, DPOs and

disability-specific NGOs, if too much funding is given too quickly. It is impossible to judge whether DFID is spending 'enough'. Certainly at the moment, there are good allocations: the fear is that this will be a short-lived fashion, supported by the current Secretary of State, but perhaps downplayed by her successor.

The emphasis on promoting Inclusion is in line with the ethos of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and WHO/World Bank (2011) World report on disability and other disability rights thinking. Rather than targeted or specialist provision, it would be better for all schools to be accessible to all children, and for all buildings to be accessible to all people, and so forth. The suggestion is that this would be a cost-effective approach that would reach the most people. DFID makes big investments, and it seems counter-productive if some of those investments, e.g. new schools, are excluding up to 5% of potential pupils who have disabilities. However, more thinking is required on exactly what is meant by Inclusion.

The Disability Strategy identifies "Inclusion" with fulfilment of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but perhaps brackets the definition of what inclusion might be and how it might be measured and achieved. DFID was a pioneer of the 'twin track strategy' (targeted response plus inclusive response) and perhaps needs to return to that, because as well as a removal of barriers in mainstream provision, targeted approaches are needed to ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy their rights.

While we welcome the inclusion of social protection as one of the four key areas of work, we would worry if this means that healthcare and rehabilitation efforts are downgraded in DFID's work and investment, as appears to have happened in the new Disability Strategy. Without healthcare, people are at risk of premature death, which means they cannot enjoy their other human rights. The International Centre for Evidence in Disability, has conducted reviews of evidence on barriers to health for persons with disabilities showing the disparities. Our work has also shown that poor health is a major reason why children with disabilities don't attend school.

As always, more research is needed. But data alone is not enough. I was very struck reading Kat Smith's 2013 book, *Beyond Evidence Based Policy in Public Health*. She compares evidence on tobacco control with evidence on social determinants of health. In each case, the science is very strong about associations and mechanisms. But the impact of each body of knowledge was different. Social determinants

of health is a complex story, with multiple solutions.

Tobacco control advocates had what Smith calls "a charismatic idea", a straightforward response, which was banning of smoking in public places, which we now know has excellent impact. My worry is that disability disadvantage is complex, multi-dimensional and stubborn to shift. We are still in search of the "charismatic ideas" to effect change. Worse than that, some of the "charismatic ideas" which developing countries deploy appear to be wrong, for example, the "employment quota", which does not seem to be making a positive difference in Bangladesh and Kenya, two countries where we are currently working on disability employment.

DFID's new leadership on disability is very welcome. But a long-term sustainable strategy is required to grow inclusion, which should operate across all DFID's streams of work – health, education, humanitarian, social protection. Working together, and in association with the World Bank and other multilateral and bilateral partners, and always in close partnership with disabled people from the Global South, we hope that all actors can collaborate to achieve lasting solutions for disability disadvantage.

When did you last amend your DGroups profile?

Since you joined the DFID Alumni, have you

1. taken on a different job or role?
2. developed a new interest?
3. moved to another continent?

If any of these has happened (not to mention other life events), the profile you shared with your fellow Alumni is probably out of date.

Please take a look at your profile on DGroups and enter any information that will help the DFID Alumni Association to do a better job of bringing together members with shared interests and creating opportunities for us to help each other with our activities and plans.

Jan Ketelaar has written step by step instructions for members to use if they need them.

If you want the DFID Alumni to use a new email address for regular communications with you, please tell our Secretary: alumni@dfid.gov.uk

A Time of Change

Sir Suma Chakrabarti

President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The world is a very different place to that which I inhabited while at the Department for International Development. Then, our guiding lights were the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Our aim was to lift more people out of poverty and further development by, primarily, using official funding flows. Now, those of us still in the development community are led by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). So, what is the big difference between the MDGs and the SDGs? The answer is something more fundamental than just changing the first letter of an acronym. It is about choosing a different pathway to delivery. It also means a bigger role for the organisation that I currently lead, the EBRD.

The initials EBRD stand for European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The paradox is, though, that despite being founded in 1991 and having the 'D word' in our title, for many years we stood at one remove from the mainstream development discourse. The principal reason was that the EBRD was set up – as central planning collapsed - specifically to promote “market-oriented economies...and private and entrepreneurial initiative”, or what I would call economic development across all its characteristics. Thus, when the global development challenge was cast in terms of the vital, but narrow focus, represented by such priorities, as access to education and reducing child mortality as exemplified in the Millennium Development Goals, the EBRD stood stage right, or even off in the wings.

How times have changed! The Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 have broadened our common agenda to embrace both economic as well as social imperatives, alongside the environment. The SDGs are also universal, so applicable to all countries, including the middle-

income countries where the EBRD is on the ground.

In parallel, the EBRD has also changed. Since 1991 command economies have become an increasingly distant memory; the financial crisis has shattered the Washington Consensus and the Bank has been asked by its shareholders to work in new and more diverse economies. Creating well- functioning, sustainable markets remains the goal. But the Bank's approach now takes more account of country circumstances and ensuring that markets deliver against the priorities of today: including inclusive growth, tackling inequality, developing strong institutions, building sustainable infrastructure, and addressing climate change. To have impact, the Bank has refreshed its internal approach to focus less than in the past on the dry structure of markets and more on the qualities of the economy which influence daily life. The question all our activities have to answer is whether they are making countries more competitive, resilient, integrated, well governed, green or inclusive – a strong mapping onto the SDGs.

Not only is the Bank's approach aligned with the new development agenda, so are its skills. The SDGs will only be achieved through mobilising private finance. The annual investment needed is estimated at twenty times the current volume of official development assistance. This in turn requires recipient governments to create conditions that encourage a positive investment climate. And all official actors need to deliver their own assistance in ways that support markets and capital mobilisation.

This is exactly the EBRD's job. So, it is not surprising that the Bank and its business model are now squarely centre stage of the debate. Ever since our creation, our main competitive advantage has been our ability to match private finance with the delivery of public policy goals. For example by:

- Engaging directly with the private sector and mobilising finance;
- Combining investment, policy engagement and capacity building for an enhanced business environment;
- Operating in both the private and public sectors for the benefit of both;

- Maximising the impact on the ground through our network of offices and in-depth knowledge of our countries;
- And finally, taking and managing financial risk against our own capital resources.

Applying our unique business model has allowed us to build up impressive expertise in areas such as: private sector climate finance; local currency financing and capital market development; sub-sovereign municipal lending; and private sector support for economic inclusion. And these are the very areas which are ever more prominent within the development landscape.

Our model's success has already encouraged our shareholders to expand the region in which we operate on four separate occasions. We now work in almost 40 economies across three continents and each successive expansion has underlined how fast we can scale up our activity and have real impact. From Mongolia to Turkey, to the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and, most recently, Greece and Cyprus, the EBRD model has achieved results in countries very different from the centrally-planned economies where we started out.

The skills, mind-set and finance we bring to the market differ from, yet complement those of, other development actors. We believe that the development system should act coherently and pull together in a coordinated way based on common principles. Our common goal must be to crowd in, rather than crowd out, the private sector. And as public institutions with taxpayer backing, we must take particular care not to distort the workings of the market. Official support has a role and in some of the least developed countries remains crucial, but to support the private sector development we wish to see it must be well targeted, time-limited and deployed to address specific shortcomings, such as market failures and affordability.

Time is tight – the SDGs must be delivered by 2030 and EBRD is stepping up its delivery. This year we are raising both the quality and quantity of our investments – building on the 9.5 billion Euros of impact that we delivered on the ground in 2018. Making swifter progress is now more essential than ever – without that private sector focus, success will elude us.

PEOPLE

New Members of the Association

We welcome our new members who joined the DFID Alumni in January to March 2019.

Mike Hammond

John Bowler

Shehu Idris

Lesley Miller

Wendy Phillips

Maria Collins

Robin Gorna

Ailsa Harper-Hennesey

William Price

Jay Bagaria

Vel Gnanendran

Balloons over Bagan

Yusaf Samiullah

Burma: 2018

Last year found me in Burma (Myanmar) based in Rangoon (Yangon) working on the multi-country DFID Cities and Infrastructure for Growth (CIG) programme – the British Embassy retains the colonial-era names on business cards. An interesting and challenging place, already changing rapidly under huge inward investment flows from China's Belt and Road (infrastructure connectivity) Initiative as well as private capital, Japan's regional infrastructure scaling up to counter such Sino-hegemony, a flurry of European bilateral, World Bank and AsDB programmes, Thai private sector investment and a sprinkling of Indian interests.

Centrally sponsored urban infrastructure sat uneasily with the core DFID country programmes of rural livelihoods, governance and humanitarian assistance, particularly in light of the need to



respond to the Secretary of State's demand for some programmatic shift away from Rangoon to insecure border areas to signal displeasure at the Rohingya genocide and ethnic cleansing (er.. allegedly) in Rakhine State. This has resulted in some 800,000 displaced people pouring into Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh – the neighbour least able to cope with such an influx.

A generally tolerant and overwhelmingly Buddhist people and philosophy appear to have succumbed to “fake news” at its worst with a widely held cant that the Rakhine Muslim population, despite 200-1000 years of residence are “illegal foreigners and terrorists”. Of course, the early honeymoon and Great Expectations of the Aung San Suu Kyi (The Lady) government have left the (western) international community disappointed.

The country's borders are a ring of conflict zones often ungoverned from the capital Nay Pyi Taw (NPT) and controlled through uneasy cease-fire by Armed Ethnic Organisations, some with standing militia of tens of thousands strong, and their own formal and functioning governance structures. Thus, trans-national and cross-border infrastructure development – come the day we do any - would make work for social development and conflict advisory expertise.

NPT itself is a surreal military-era soviet/Chinese-style grand construct in the middle of nowhere half-way between Rangoon and Mandalay – entailing a 35min flight and loss of a complete day to get to and from one Ministry HQ meeting. A 20-lane highway passes the National Parliament building, with traffic flows of about 50 cars per day – we have some way to go before the Value for Money (VfM) calculus ingrained in HMT



economists has much conceptual traction here!

Of course, old lags and world-weary retired DFID staff, might very well think that programme Logframe Impact/Goal assertions are a triumph of optimism over reality. A noticeably increased DFID HQ bureaucracy, procurement delay and reducing risk appetite means generally that haggling over the number of angels on the Monitoring Evaluation And Learning (MEAL) pin head overtakes the importance of focus on development partner confidence- and friendship-building – and moving “things” along. HMG Attribution and Contribution analyses where UK £mms are swimming in External £bns is also a tricky one!

For Burma, one surmises that possibly double the value of GDP (~US\$70Bn) is flowing though and off the books from methamphetamine and heroin



production, illegal jade mining, not to mention a Wild East plethora of Chinese-invested casinos on the Burma side of that border. Anyway, in sum, the HMG position broadly holds true to the best pragmatic traditions of the Colonial Office – better in the tent/bazaar than out.... so the development, trade and diplomatic game plays on.

Balloons over Bagan

Wife Diana joined me for six weeks after the daily and torrential monsoon rains had subsided towards the end of October. During one of the National public holidays we took a trip North where I was disconcerted to find that there is more than one “road to Mandalay”. Risking death by truck and rickshaw by inches we got out and walked on the verges of two to hedge our “been there-done that” assertion.

We then went on by road to Bagan, the 100km² rural plains of which are covered by some 3000 temples and pagodas, some a millennium old. You could spend a life-time researching them, so we didn’t. After a sub-sample of three typologies, a “special offer” from my local fixer persuaded us to shell out an exorbitant sum (in dollars) on a dawn hot air balloon ride over the plains. Previously we had discounted this option as being poor VfM, and it needed to be booked some time in advance – not possible in a Consultant’s life. However, the exotic air and news that friends of friends could arrange something for tomorrow morning induced a loss of (my) judgement.

Cash payment was required. Back to the hotel to count the readies – and clean out Diana’s purse. The count was unsettling. Contrary to locally-held beliefs in foreigners’ infinite cash resources, this



would have made cash (new/unused dollar) payment for the rest of our 4-day tour tricky (also the expectation). My fixer, determined not to lose his (I suspect) side commission, shook the grapevine and declared that that one company did have a card reader and was willing to open up to assist (in the pitch dark after 20.00pm). We sped-up dinner at the remote hotel and set off back to town – in a taxi driven by a moderately villainous-looking character. The usual “are you sure” protests from Memsahib were brushed off, and I risked all with the plastic. “Ah, Sir, we will need to copy your passport to complete the booking” (since flight was now only about 6 hours away the next morning). Naturally, that was safely locked in the hotel safe – what fool heads into the dark up-country carrying their passport? It transpired that we were all 21st Century Men...a pdf lurking in the darkest recess of my (local) mobile phone was e-mailed to the office printer, and we were issued “boarding passes”. I look forward to being arrested sometime in the future with fraudulent use of that pdf. “We will collect you at 5 o’clock tomorrow morning Sir...please don’t be late”.

We weren’t, and a minibus of subdued travellers headed off down a potholed earth road into an utter maze though the plains in the dark. Eventually, we spied flashes of flame in a clearing in the distance and decanted to receive a pre-flight briefing – from a Geordie (Pilot) in a safari flight suit. This might have been fine, but for the fact that our party was 95% made up of Mexican tourists, and our Pilot’s Buenos Dias, Comos da encouraging start, proved to be only that. Translation failures were most evident when trying to get our co-passengers to put out



cigarettes they had lit inches from the four giant propane fuel cylinders we had on board in our “basket” – which took ~15 of us. Anyway, we survived the huge balloon filling, the unlocking from our truck anchor, and the “up up and away” feeling that one gets with vertical flight. The key challenge for balloon pilots here was to find the right height, such that a balance was struck between view (fabulous) – proportional to height and increased horizontal velocity – also proportional to air currents at altitude. There was an imperative for the balloon(s) not to overshoot a river at the end of the plain – since there were no bridges and balloon and passenger retrieval would then change from a 5km drive (with champagne and croissants on an awaiting trestle table) to a 100km dash off-road for the ground support teams.

We had champagne. I had two croissants. It was spectacular. VfM?... well, who cares with the passage of time :)

Prostate cancer

Adrian Davis

Following a MRI scan and two biopsies I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in March 2018. Before the diagnosis I had a vague knowledge that prostate problems were common among men as they grew older, but my level of absolute ignorance was almost complete. Now I know that 1 in 8 men will develop prostate cancer, 1 in 4 black men, and men whose father had prostate cancer are 2.5 times more likely to develop the disease. Since I have two sons (and four grandsons), this news was particularly shocking to me. Around 400,000 in the UK are living with and after prostate cancer. I knew where the prostate was – somewhere near the bladder, but I didn’t know it was the size of a walnut and that its main function was to produce semen.

What prompted me to go to the doctor initially? Nagging by my wife which in this case was productive rather than counter-productive. I was suffering from the normal symptoms of aging – getting up to pee in the night being the main one – but it is of course difficult to distinguish that from generally getting older. The first step was to take a PSA (prostate specific antigen) test. The normal score for men my age is around 4. My first two scores in December 2016 and March 2017 were 5.3, but it went down to 4.13 in

Mukesh Kapila

DFID Alumni member Dr Mukesh Kapila has been appointed chief executive of the Defeat-NCD Partnership at UNOPS in Geneva. The Partnership’s web site explains how Defeat-NCD is mobilising efforts to tackle non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension which cause so much death and limiting illness in low-resource countries, as well as in the UK.

April 2017. At this stage I was under “active surveillance” i.e. waiting to see whether a medical intervention was necessary. However, in October 2018 it went up to 5.48 and further investigation was recommended – hence the MRI scan and biopsies. The result was that I had cancer (a 2 cm lesion) but thankfully it was all contained within the prostate. The unanimous verdict from the surgical team at UCLH (University College London Hospital) was that I should have the prostate removed.

Prior to the operation, I attended a surgical school which tried to explain what would happen during the operation and immediately after it. I was too neurotic to pay much attention. The fact of the operation was too overwhelming. My overriding concerns were worries about incontinence and having to use a catheter – ironic since having a catheter deals with incontinence at least in the short term! I had the operation – a robotic prostatectomy - on 9 June. The operation lasted around four hours. I was back home the following evening with a huge bag containing a supply of adult pads, three urine leg and night bags, stockings, laxatives and 27 needles for the daily blood clotting injections.

I felt pretty overwhelmed and miserable the following two days with my stomach really sore and mobility impaired but things improved radically from the third day. One bonus was that I could get my shorts back on i.e. my stomach had gone back to its normal rotund shape rather than the artificially inflated one (from the gas they pump into you to facilitate the surgery). I found my sleep patterns were pretty disturbed at first. At least I didn’t have to keep getting up in the night to go to the toilet. Using a catheter wasn’t as awful as I thought it would be. It was removed 10 days after the operation. I spent a sleepless night before its removal wondering

- whether and how they would get it out; and
- if they did get it out would I be able to pee naturally.

I presented myself at 0900 at UCLH and confessed to the nurse that I felt rather nervous. She reassured me and told me to lie back (and think of England?). Within 45 seconds at most, and only a mild tingling sensation, the catheter was out. As an aside, the nurse said that women were generally more courageous about medical matters than men. I didn't disagree. She then sent me off to drink 5 cups of water, one every fifteen minutes, and to record the amount of urine I passed and to report back at 1200. After completing the task to the satisfaction of the nurse I was discharged and had the indescribable joy of walking across the park on a sunny afternoon without a catheter. In mid-July the consultant urologist confirmed that all the cancer had been removed.

What do I draw from this overall experience? Initially I felt guilty about having cancer. Then I recognised that this was a pretty irrational response. It wasn't my fault (unlike say smokers and drinkers contributing to their diseases). I also felt very alone until I realised that prostate cancer was the second most common cancer (after breast cancer). The side effects of the operation have been manageable. Incontinence never proved to be a major issue (I did pelvic floor exercises for about six weeks before and after the operation – previously I didn't even know I had a pelvic floor) but erectile dysfunction has been a problem – but one I can live with. "Better to be dead below than dead in a box"

Men over 50 have the right to a PSA test after consultation with their GP. The PSA test is not super reliable and can result in false positives e.g. biopsies when they are not necessary but it is the only test available at present. Another complication is that men can be completely asymptomatic but still have prostate cancer. The most common age for diagnosing prostate cancer is 65 to 69.

Since the operation I have become a prostate cancer volunteer giving talks to raise awareness. Prostate Cancer UK have a very good website which is a mine of useful information <https://prostatecanceruk.org/>. They also have specialist nurses who are available for a free consultation by phone on 0800-074-8383.

Dr Alan Russell, OBE, MA, DPhil **1932 – 2019**

Alan Russell, founder of The Dresden Trust, who died on 6 February 2019, was not a natural demonstrator. Street protest was for other people. Yet in June 1992 this hitherto undemonstrative former European civil servant engaged in a silent protest and held a banner in the presence of Queen Elizabeth the Queen

Sad news

Five of our old colleagues passed away recently. As well as Alan Russell we say goodbye to Roy, Stefan, Geoff and Jimmy.

Roy Carter

Roy passed away on Sunday 6th January. He had been diagnosed with prostate cancer and it was in an aggressive state.

I knew Roy from 1956 when he joined the Colonial Office to become the Superintendent of Stationary. A nice lad.

Ron Wootton

Stefan Mniszko

Stefan died suddenly at home in Tunbridge Wells on 24th January aged 64. He worked in ODA/DFID first as a consultant on CEE/CIS country programmes and then joined DFID as a Governance Adviser, retiring in 2007.

Geoff Crabtree

Geoff's funeral was on Friday 8th February at The Chilterns Crematorium, followed by a celebration of his life at The Crown Inn (Courtyard Room) Old Town Amersham.

Geoff was one of several "old school" civil servants who showed me the ropes. Sometimes this was direct advice, mostly it was being a role model for common sense, judgement, integrity; and having a good sense of perspective. My only grumble is that, even though many years my senior, Geoff rang rings round me on the squash court.

Chris Austin

Jimmy Whiffen

Jimmy's funeral mass was held on 4 February in Blessed John Duns Scotus, Ballater Street, Gorbals followed by burial at St Conval's Cemetery in Barrhead.

Jimmy was a real character in Eland House in the early 80s and Abercrombie House thereafter, until the early 2000s, as a Union representative and a Pensions Department stalwart.

Barry Kavanagh

Mother. The apparently innocuous occasion was her unveiling of a statue outside the Royal Air Force church of St Clement Danes in London's Strand. But the statue was of the late Air Marshal Sir Arthur Harris – known as “Bomber” Harris because of his World War II predilection for flattening old German towns and their civilian populations.

Russell and others stood under a banner declaring that the annihilation of Dresden (and similar civilian centres) had not been a justifiable act of war. Moreover, they believed a statue of an unknown airman (rather than a provocative one of the controversial Harris) would have been a more appropriate memorial to the Bomber Command crews who died.

Russell recalled how, 40 years earlier, he had faced the moral and strategic arguments over the fate of eastern Germany's renowned cultural centre. While doing his National Service in the Rhineland, he discussed war and German war guilt with a local student friend, Gunter Lafere. The latter acknowledged the criminality of the Nazi regime but posed a question of his own: what about Dresden? That question and the answer would in due course have profound significance for a large part of Russell's life.

Indeed, more than a quarter of his life was to be deeply affected by an event in Dresden on 12 February 1990, when a group of prominent Dresden citizens issued an appeal – the *Ruf aus Dresden* – calling for “worldwide action to rebuild Dresden's Frauenkirche as a Christian centre for the promotion of peace in the new Europe ... a uniquely important architectural wonder that would once again complete one of Europe's most beautiful city panoramas”.

Russell knew this required a response from the UK. The result was the founding in 1993, by a small group led by Russell, of The Dresden Trust, even before his first visit to Dresden. That took place a year later and he was captivated by the city. It was suggested by a group of Dresdeners on that occasion that the Trust might contribute to the Frauenkirche project by creating the golden orb and cross which would surmount the dome of the rebuilt church.

Ten years later the objective was achieved, the Trust having raised within the UK the equivalent of 1.5 million euros for the purpose. And so, one of the glories of baroque Dresden was recreated and, with it, the iconic city skyline. To add special piquancy, the London goldsmith in charge of crafting the orb and cross was the son of a Bomber Command pilot involved in the air raids on Dresden – which his father forever regretted.

The Trust itself continued to flourish under Russell's inspirational leadership and a succession of able, committed and imaginative fellow trustees with a range of skills and expertise, as well as royal patronage (HRH The Duke of Kent became its Royal Patron at an early stage). The Trust continues to undertake new educational, cultural, environmental and humanitarian initiatives, and as a result it has largely achieved its goal of post-war reconciliation. Whereas Britons were treated with mistrust and hostility in Dresden for many years after the war, today they are welcomed as friends with shared human values.

Russell gave a strong impression that his life until the early 1990s had been a preparation for the years that followed and that these were the years that gave him most fulfilment, in which he found limitless sources of energy, for organisation, fundraising and prolific writing. Indeed, he became an ‘honorary Dresdener’ who felt as much at home in his apartment in Dresden's beautiful Neustadt as in his homes in Oxford and then Chichester (which he named, of course, ‘Dresden House’).

Alan Keith Russell, born in London on 22 October 1932, was educated at Ardingly College in Sussex and Lincoln College, Oxford, where he graduated in Economics and Political Science; later in his career he was a Fellow of the college. He took his DPhil at Nuffield College. He served in the Colonial Office, Ministry of Overseas Development and Foreign & Commonwealth Office in 1959-69 and 1972-75, with a spell at the Civil Service College between those dates. He had three periods as a senior official of the European Commission (1976-79, 1981-86 and 1988-89), as well as serving for two years as Director of the Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas after his first spell in Brussels.

In 1959 he married Philippa Stoneham (now Dame Philippa Russell, CBE, a leading expert in learning disabilities and, from 2007 until 2015, Chair of the Prime Minister's Standing Commission on Carers) and they had two sons and a daughter.

Dr Russell was appointed OBE in 2000, for services to Anglo-German relations, and was awarded the City of Dresden Medal of Honour and the Erich Kästner Prize in 2006. He twice received the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, in 1997 and 2006. He retired as Chairman of The Dresden Trust in 2013 (succeeded by Eveline Eaton) and became Honorary President. He suffered from heart illness in his later years.

He wrote and contributed to many publications about Dresden and the historic relationship between Great

Britain and Saxony, including Dresden: A City Reborn (1999), Why Dresden? (2000), Firestorm: The Bombing of Dresden 1945 (2006), After the Berlin Wall (2009) and A Trust for Our Times: The Story of The Dresden Trust, a comprehensive account of the development of the Trust and its achievements, which was published in 2015. He also produced studies on Mauritius, the Liberal general election landslide of 1906, Edwardian radicalism and a collection of poems.

His interest in rebuilding, conservation, town planning and civic improvement led him to take a Certificate in Architectural History and a Diploma in Historic Conservation at Oxford Brookes University in the late 1990s; he had firm views on the rebuilding of Dresden, not least as a Dresden resident.

Alan Russell himself wrote of Dresden that it had been “an architectural and artistic powerhouse in the 18th century, an intellectual and industrial leader in the 19th century and a musical giant throughout these years. Dresden is now a striking amalgam of all of these. Its 21st century vocation is surely to become a crucible for reconciliation and peace within the European Union and beyond”. His principal legacy is to have made a notable contribution to the fulfilment of that vocation.

Editor's note. The work of the Dresden Trust has personal significance for me. The firestorm in February 1945 destroyed 1,600 acres of the [ancient centre of Dresden](#), the capital of Saxony, killing 25,000 people including my great-grandmother's sister Leontine von der Ropp 1862-1945.

Moscow in Transition

Bob Stephenson writes about the recently published book of photos he took in Moscow in 1992-1997

After starting my working life in the UK Employment Service, I spent the latter part of my civil service career as a member - and then head - of the international team at the Civil Service College which later became the National School of Government before it was closed in 2012).

My own international career began, however, with a 5-year in-country spell of secondments from March 1992 to July 1997 in Moscow, working on a series of technical assistance projects in support of the (then) new Federal Employment Service. In 1994 I was seconded to ODA and stationed in Moscow as (I think) the first Technical Cooperation Officer (TCO) ever deployed in Russia. I reported to the Joint

Assistance Unit as the UK task manager for a large Know How Fund trainer upgrading programme called the Enterprise Training Initiative (also qualifying me to join the Alumni Association!).

In my spare time during my years in Moscow I got to know the city very well and, as a keen amateur photographer, I recorded life and the city landscape as it changed almost daily following the collapse of the USSR. I met and married my wife during this period and continued to visit - both to see friends and family, and for work with Russian counterparts (including on several DFID-funded projects) - after returning to the UK.

Following my retirement I began work on a project to review my archive of photographs and bring them together in a photographic study of Moscow in those turbulent years of transition, with an accompanying personal narrative about life in the city at the time. The result is a new book, "We Are Building Capitalism! Moscow in Transition 1992-1997", published by Glagoslav Publications on 31 March 2019. A selection of images from the book can be viewed on my web site at <https://bobstephensonphoto.com/we-are-building-capitalism>. The book itself is now advertised on the [Glagoslav Publications website](#).

I hope this will be of interest to you and other alumni, including those who worked in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union, and with the Joint Assistance Units.

Thanks to the ongoing support of DFID, FCO, MOD and Cabinet Office, the NSG's international team survived the institution's closure and its successor unit continues to operate, as Government Partnerships International (GPI), co-located with the Stabilisation Unit.



Alsations and Belgians

Colin Roth

When I lived in London and rode a bike I used to nip over to France from time to time to pedal along their quiet country roads. I'd booked on the Newhaven-Dieppe ferry. There was a delay to start with because the tide was unusually low and the ferry was stuck on the rocks. I got into conversation with the only other cyclist waiting to board. He was an 80-year old Belgian, born in Wembley where his father was living at the time. And his mother, of course. Later his father took them all to the US, but then decided to return to Belgium. In 1939 that wasn't one of his best decisions. My new acquaintance had come to England to do some cycling but had quickly abandoned the idea as he found our roads too crowded with heavy traffic; he had decided to visit his son in Bordeaux instead.

When the tide came in we set off. I had booked a hotel in Dieppe for the night, but my new acquaintance hadn't, so I suggested he follow me to see if my hotel had a room available. On leaving the boat, I led the way into town, as I thought; but the layout had changed since my last visit and after a while I found us on a major road out into the countryside. Eventually I saw a way back and stopped to wait for my new-found friend. But he was nowhere to be seen. So eventually I went on without him. The following day I thought I might find him at the station. And I did. He explained his disappearance the night before – he had been dazzled by the lights of an oncoming vehicle and had fallen into the ditch. Anyway, he had got out of the ditch, and into town, where he had found lodgings, and was now awaiting a train to the south-west.

A few days later I met with one of the hazards of quiet country roads. I cycled past a house with a furiously barking Alsatian in the garden – a common Alsatian reaction to a passing cyclist. I ignored him, and pedalled on. A minute or so later I felt a large set of teeth cutting into my leg. The cunning beast had crept silently up the road to launch his attack. After one bite his owner called him back, and being an obedient dog, he went. I pedalled on and found the local pharmacist who cleaned up and bandaged my leg, all free of charge if I remember rightly. DFID had provided me with anti-rabies prophylaxis so that was all right. I decided not to go back to complain to the dog's owner as that would have meant meeting the dog again. But on return to London I did write to the local gendarmerie to report the presence of *un chien méchant*.

I heard no more.

March committee meeting

The Alumni Association Committee met on 28 March.

Main points were as follows.

1. With DFID, we reviewed progress under the joint memorandum of understanding. It was agreed to organise in the next 2-3 months a meeting for alumni with the Permanent Secretary to discuss latest developments in DFID and aid policy; also a meeting with Gareth Weir to discuss the review of DFID's operating model, currently being undertaken as part of the spending review. We would explore alumni interest in mentoring/ supporting DFID staff in the direct entry talent scheme. And we would continue efforts to share news and information.
2. We noted significant work done by Committee members to update the current members' database. Guidance on the use of dgroups would be circulated to members (see box). Further strengthening of our systems would be discussed with DFID IT staff.
3. We agreed arrangements for the AGM and summer party on 17 June. Details follow.
4. Ideas for possible future seminars would be developed for later in the year in the light of Brexit developments.

Members can find previous editions of this newsletter at dgroups.org and on the DFID Alumni Association web site.

The Four Corners has appeared quarterly since 2007. Members of the DFID Alumni Association can download any of the previous editions – and other documents - from the DFID Alumni [Library on dgroups](#).

Dgroups (at <https://dgroups.org>) hosts a private on-line resource for our members. Members can request a password, or ask for a new password, [here](#).

Editions of The Four Corners since December 2013 are available for anyone, whether a member or not, to download from the Association's web site at www.dfid-alumni.org.

Committee members

- Simon Ray (Chairman)
- John Burton (Treasurer)
- Isobel Doig
- Jim Drummond
- Janet Grimshaw
- Pauline Hayes
- Pam Jenkins
- Jan Ketelaar
- Kathy Marshall
- John Stuppel
- Marc Taylor

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UK backs British aid organisations in the event of no deal

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has extended her commitment to protect the UK's aid organisations in the event of a no deal departure from the European Union.

Last August the Department for International Development committed to funding any new programme led by a UK aid organisation funded from the EU's humanitarian and civil protection agency (ECHO) in a no deal scenario.

The European Commission currently requires UK aid organisations to prove when they apply that they are able to fund the delivery of humanitarian contracts should there be a no deal scenario. The vast majority of organisations are unable to make such a financial commitment up front, and so were being discouraged from applying.

UK Parliament inquiry into international development cooperation after Brexit

In November 2018 the EU External Affairs sub-committee of the House of Lords began an inquiry into the impact of Brexit on UK-EU international development cooperation. It covers:

- The reasons for and against cooperation in specific areas
- Formal and informal arrangements through which the UK could continue to cooperate with the EU
- The impact of Brexit on UK-based NGOs

The sub-committee is continuing to take evidence.

Further details on the [UK Parliament website](#).

Ms Mordaunt has now promised to extend this pledge to cover any development funding implemented by UK NGOs which the EU would stop in a no deal scenario. This includes contracts and grants awarded prior to 23 August. In addition, DFID will be extending the assurance to ECHO contracts signed prior to this date. This assurance will now apply to programmes bid for prior to 12 April.

Ms Mordaunt has written to UK aid organisations to confirm her funding commitment. She made a Written Statement to Parliament on the extension of the financial assurance.

DFID's Director General for Economic Development wrote to DFID's suppliers in February about the implications of leaving the EU for EU funding and UK organisations' ability to compete for EU programmes.

Violence against women and girls:

Evidence digest January 2019

In February, DFID published a selection of the [latest evidence on violence against women and girls](#) (VAWG).

Community sponsorship

Community sponsorship is a way that community groups can be involved in supporting the resettlement of vulnerable people fleeing conflict.

In February 2019, DFID published a series of guides and application forms.

- [Guidance for prospective sponsors](#)
- [Guidance for prospective sponsors](#) (Welsh)
- [Guidance for local authorities](#)
- [Guidance for local authorities](#) (Welsh)
- [Application for approval](#)
- [Application guidance](#)
- [Sample agreement](#)

A community sponsor will be allocated a family fleeing conflict, and it will be the sponsor's responsibility to support the resettled family from the moment of arrival in the UK.

Before completing the application form, please read the

‘Community sponsorship: guidance for prospective sponsors’ document. This explains:

- how the process works
- the criteria sponsors must meet
- how to apply

The resettlement plan template forms part of the application. It sets out the minimum requirements to support a resettled family and includes space to explain in detail how you’ll meet these. The sample agreement shows an example of the formal agreement you will sign if your application is approved.

You can read additional sponsor and local authority guidance and watch a series of existing community sponsors discussing their experiences with [community sponsorship](#).

UK aid to support hospitals in Gaza

Hospitals across Gaza will receive support through a new package of UK aid announced in March, which will provide urgently needed medicines and surgical supplies. The funding will help to keep Gaza’s hospitals functioning as they face increasing demand from the number of trauma patients.

Hospitals in Gaza are under extreme pressure, after trauma patients requiring treatment increased month-on-month to more than 29,000 over the last year. Rising demands on hospitals have reduced general access to healthcare, with consistent shortages of medicines and supplies leading to increased rates of infection, and a growing risk of amputations and antibiotic resistance.

UK aid will support the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) to deliver urgently needed surgical equipment, medicines, wound dressing kits, prosthetic limbs and post-surgery physiotherapy. It will also help to provide physical rehabilitation services for up to 3,000 disabled people.

DFID will provide £2 million to the International Committee for the Red Cross’s (ICRC) 2019 Israel and Occupied Territories (ILOT) Appeal. UK aid will contribute to the delivery of surgical equipment, drugs and disposables, wound dressing kits, rehabilitative prosthetics, and post-surgery physiotherapy through the Artificial Limb and Polio Centre.

DFID said

The work of the ICRC is based on the Geneva Conventions of 1949, their Additional Protocols, its Statutes – and those of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – and the resolutions of the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The ICRC is an independent organisation ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. It takes action in response to emergencies and at the same time promotes respect for international humanitarian law and its implementation in national law.

DFID’s Smart Rules updated on 1 April

DFID has issued a [revision of its Smart Rules](#). DFID says:

The Smart Rules provide the operating framework for the Department for International Development’s (DFID’s) programmes. They do not cover non-programme elements of DFID’s operating framework (i.e. human resources, security and estates).

To eradicate poverty in a complex and fragile world, we need to transform the way DFID programmes are managed. Delivering results and addressing the underlying causes of poverty and conflict requires programmes that can adapt to and influence the local context.

DFID needs to maintain high standards of programme management and due diligence, in a wide range of difficult operating environments. We must make evidence-based decisions, apply professional judgement, act proportionately, ensure a clear audit trail of our decisions and be properly accountable to UK taxpayers in everything we do.

Factsheet: The UK’s humanitarian aid response to the Syria crisis

DFID also updated its [detailed breakdown of UK humanitarian aid](#) in response to the Syria crisis, and how it is being spent in the region.