

Members' news and views

Common Cause

There's no shortage of talk about values but when it comes to our work, what does it actually mean? Understanding exactly how to tap into values to make a positive impact to your organisation isn't easy. The basic concept is one we all understand from our own lives. Values represent our guiding principles: our broadest motivations, influencing the attitudes we hold and how we act. They have a powerful influence over our own choices. But as organisations how can we tap into these motivations? At Oxfam this is already a major focus, but moving towards implementation takes time, and a sustained commitment. With that in mind, Oxfam Scotland and WWF Scotland are hosting a joint workshop to try and inform this debate. The workshop is free and will be led by Richard Hawkins, Director, Public Interest Research Centre and co author of The Common Cause Handbook. The keynote speech will be given by Tim Kasser, Professor & Chair of Psychology, Knox College and author of The High Price of Materialism. The workshop will guide participants through the existing research but also, crucially, give an opportunity to discuss the implications for their work. **Common Cause Workshop**, 12 December 2011, 10am-4pm, The Melting Point, 5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR. The event is free but places are limited. More: <http://tinyurl.com/6eq6va2>
Please register by emailing jlivingstone@oxfam.org.uk.

Scotland Backs the Robin Hood Tax

Millions of people - including plenty in Scotland - are suffering from an economic crisis they did not cause. Millions more are facing the devastating effects of climate change. That's simply not fair. It's time for banks and other financial institutions to pay their share through a new Financial Transaction Tax (FTT). Dubbed a 'Robin Hood Tax', it wouldn't affect normal retail banking.

Instead it would impose a 0.05% tax on every trade in shares, bonds and derivatives. That's a tiny amount - just 50p in every £1000 traded. A global tax of this kind could raise around £250 billion per year to help those living in poverty and to help tackle climate change. The impact would be enormous. Germany, France and Spain back it. Pope Benedict is fully behind it. So too is the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, financier George Soros and money expert Warren Buffet. Even the world's second richest man, Bill Gates, supports it.

Progress at the G20 Summit was disappointing but world leaders can only ignore the weight of public opinion for so long. A recent poll by Oxfam Scotland suggests more than half of all Scots - 62% - believe the UK Government should introduce a new FTT. Oxfam are hosting an online petition - "Scotland Backs the Robin Hood Tax" so that people and organisations from Scotland can show their support and call for the UK Government to change their stance about implementing the Robin Hood Tax. Please add your voice, and that of your organisation, to Oxfam Scotland's petition - by doing so we can let the world know that Scotland backs the Robin Hood tax.

Sign up here: <http://is.gd/S4RHT>

Partnerships - Sharing Value: Dunira and Mercy Corps case study

NIDOS' September event Business - Sharing Value? provided a valuable networking opportunity and the chance to rekindle existing connections, but highlighted the absence of a permanent tool for Scottish businesses and NGOs to form partnerships for work on international development projects.

Models elsewhere such as Partners for Environmental Cooperation in Europe (PECE) broadened the pool of expertise for partner countries and opened routes through which all partners had the opportunity to be involved in interesting projects. Unfortunately PECE is now inactive. Other models, for example the Bond Directory, focus on promoting services to NGOs, rather than enabling more effective partnerships with NGOs.

Dunira has previously worked in partnership with fellow Edinburgh resident and NIDOS member Mercy Corps, building the capacity of community stakeholders in South Lebanon and using sustainable tourism as a tool to promote social and economic benefits for communities. Mercy Corps' aim was to contribute to development in South Lebanon through an integrated programme of economic opportunities. This included sustainable tourism, which had until then been focused on large capital investment projects to develop main attractions, without a clear strategic tourism framework. Dunira was able to draw on its international experience, which has often involved working with small stakeholder groups in emerging and post-conflict destinations, to conduct fieldwork which led to a series of recommendations. This enabled Mercy Corps to fully understand the region's capacity building needs. Most significantly, Dunira and Mercy Corps jointly established a training programme and framework to facilitate the realisation of the region's tourism assets within a robust enterprise culture and vibrant local community.

The partnership resulted in the lifting of FCO travel advice for South Lebanon, ending years of economic isolation and absence from the international tourism arena. However, tourism is not simply about global trade and economic activity, but represents an opportunity for cultural exchange, dialogue and partnerships between nations and across sectors.

The nature of Dunira's work means that so many organisations are relevant (to some extent); tourism, especially in post-conflict destinations, covers so many strands that it is impossible to sign up to every organisation. But access to an online searchable data-base of expert Scottish partners across the public, private, and NGO and charity sectors would be invaluable in achieving more effective partnerships, whereby all sides add value to each other by diversifying and implementing objectives together.