

APPG "Connecting Communities" meeting held on Tuesday 1 February 2011 in Committee Room 11, House of Commons, Westminster.

Claire Parry MP	Chair of APPG
Viscount Eccles	
Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top	
Paul Goggins MP	
Lady Verma	
Stacy Carter on behalf of Alex Shelbrook MP	
Murray Cochrane	Department of Health
John Whitaker	BUILD Chairman
Nick Maurice	BUILD Director
Pia MacRae	THET Chief Executive
Julie Storr	WHO African Partnerships for Patient Safety
Isalm Ali	Children of Sudan
Rowaida El' hassan	Children of Sudan
Cerdic Hall	East London Mental Health Trust
Brenda Longstaff	Northumbrian Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Kalipso Chalkidou	NICE
Oliver Johnson	Medsin
Chikwe Ihekweazu	Nigerian Public Health Foundation

Claire Perry MP welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Nick Maurice

BUILD is a coalition of 45 agencies, including those present, THET, Children of Sudan, VSO, and British Council. BUILD's dream is that no one in the UK should escape life without being touched by a partnership in the global South through e.g. the local authority, schools, youth-group, community, health care organisations whether hospitals, medical and nursing schools, hospices etc. These partnerships are about mutual understanding and benefit, meeting the MDGs and personal and professional development.

BUILD's membership can be roughly divided into different sectors

- Education
- Health
- Youth
- Faith

The role of the APPG is crucial to BUILD's work and we are grateful to parliamentarians who attend. Through the APPG we have had meetings with DfES (now DoE) which resulted in further funding for the Global School Partnerships programme (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/getting-involved/for-schools/global-school-partnerships>).

Through DFID the Global Community Linking Programme (which is now under review) (<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/communitylinks>) and through Lord Crisp and the DoH the International Health Links Funding Scheme (<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learning-healthlinks.htm>).

Pia MacRae

THET has existed for over 20 years and has fostered health-care partnerships with a focus on partnerships between the UK and countries where there is a critical shortage of health workers. Building on expertise and hard work of individuals and institutions.

Clear interest from practitioners, supported over the last few years, by government both in terms of policy framework, as well as resourcing:

- The Crisp Report
- The Framework for NHS Involvement in International Development provides a context for NHS trusts to make decisions for staff to engage in international activities.
- Government support for IHLFS and International Health Links Centre which will be based in Liverpool and provide one stop shop for health links.
- The work sits between DoH and DFID
- IHLFS managed by THET on behalf of British Council.
- They have given out 60 grants in 2010: start up grants for partnerships (3K), mediums grants of up to £15K / year and large ones of up to £180K over three years.
The key focus of the selection panel is applications which hold greatest promise of contributing to the improvement of health outcomes for the poor through capacity building; clearly we often see benefits back to the UK as a result of this activity.

Successes:

- Quality and quantity of applications to the scheme, demand for the scheme and competitive field of applications.
- Positive feedback on making it supportive grants scheme, have to monitor how grantees use their funds but also made it accessible to those who are not used to making grants. Pre-application workshops have been run in UK and overseas.
- Spread of links geographically but also spread in terms of issues, wide range of clinical issues driven by partner organisations overseas. Grants have been given to:
 - Professional associations, setting standards in country and regionally. Large grant given to east African College of Ophthalmologists who are supporting 4 organisations beneath them.
 - Royal College of Nursing in Scotland with links to Malawi.
 - Reaching beyond hospital secondary care is the PONT link in Wales which is a community based link working in primary health care.
 - Zambian Institute of Environmental Health.

Challenges:

- Eligibility of who can apply
- A tendency to front load so you can see delivery at the end of the programme.
- Logic of country focus, some countries only eligibility for start up grants not medium grants, Sudan not on list of critical shortage of health workers as it was included in Northern Sudan

Year 1 reports currently being submitted by grantees.

Brenda Longstaff – project manager for link between Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, Tanzania.

In the first few years funding came from DFID. When this funding ended it was necessary to make a business case to the Trust Board for support for the link and also to raise funds through fundraising events.

There were and still are reservations at middle management level within the NHS for involvement in this activity. So Brenda went out to find evidence to show to NHS employers that link activity can also bring benefits back to the NHS and its patients.

NE Strategic Health Authority gave her a small grant to do a research study.

9 trusts were approached, 7 responded, 28 people were involved.

Findings indicated how skills and knowledge gained overseas could be linked to the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework in particular communications, personal and people development, planning and organisation skills and equality and diversity.

It was found that International work also provided a unique opportunity for CPD.

There were a number of outcomes which could bring benefits to the NH, such as better professional relationships, focus on change management, innovative ways of working, awareness of global health issues, strong resource management and increased work ethic.

Staff involved in the link came back proud of the NHS.

Recruitment and retention was good, and staff were more likely to stay with an NHS trust that had an international link.

Even small links without much money can have a great impact.

The cost of links is very small and those involved have to work on low cost solutions – therefore innovative solutions are frequently found.

In light of current changes facing the NHS, it seems that links can play a critical role in developing skills which will have real value to the NHS such as the ability to facilitate change, increased awareness of the costs of healthcare and an innovative approach to service delivery

Quote from research participant:

'I believe that employees of the NHS who are involved in international work, we come back with renewed vigour and we're more open minded, we appreciate the role of the NHS in health care as a whole for the nation, and then the role of that globally, we know what a wealth of resource it is and how lucky we are to have it....we come back with positivity, with energy and with hope really, and with dedication to healthcare, because you know how massively important it is to every nation.'

Paul Goggins MP

Wasn't aware of this appg and would like to become a member. He has a hospital in his constituency which has developed a partnership in Gulu in Uganda. A 5 year programme has been drawn up for primary trauma, about 11 staff have gone out on placements and they are more committed to what they are doing on their return to the UK. The trust sees it as an important part of what they do.

Baroness Armstrong

Was a VSO at the age of 21 and is now on the board of VSO international. VSO are finding it difficult to recruit people from the NHS because they are expected to do a long placement and the staff are worried about their job security.

VSO runs the Global Xchange programme which started with Returned Volunteers who wanted to keep in contact with the country where they had worked. Now exchanges are three months and are going to be hosting the governments citizen service overseas and developing the programme 18-25 year olds. Whole host of different partnership and are transforming for those involved and also for development.

For parliamentarians there is the PolVol programme which provides opportunities for MPs to do a short term VSO placement.

Cerdic Hall

- East London is one of the most diverse and deprived communities in UK.
- East London Mental Health NHS Trust has two links, one with Uganda and new one with Bangladesh.
- Butabika hospital is good partner, it encompasses all different areas of mental health. They have received a grant from IHLFS.
- Benefits to Uganda is an increase in knowledge and skills which goes across the country, better equipment and a workforce with specialist knowledge.
- Sense of opportunity now for Ugandan workers.

- Butabika is an old style asylum with a guard on each ward, custodial service, 150 patients to three staff, if lucky the staff will be qualified.
- People's ideas around the stigma of mental health in Uganda is very different to UK.
- Resources – Ugandan pharmacists visited UK and were horrified to see tablets being thrown away, and now the NHS Trust are looking at making savings.
- Bangladesh link is one year old and is based on mutuality. In East London there is a need to know how to serve the Bangladeshis in the community and using the link opens up a pathway to engage with the local UK population

Murray Cochrane

The NHS has a lot to offer to international development and a lot to gain, and this is captured in Framework for NHS Involvement in International Development.

There are concerns around whether NHS should support international development given the constraints on the NHS. **The answer is "yes".**

One of the most difficult things is getting greater awareness amongst NHS staff and getting them involved. There is growing interest in the Royal Colleges and NHS trusts. There are over 100 institutional links with NHS and that doesn't include the individual links that are going on.

Scaling up the initiatives and making it effective for a wider impact – Royal Colleges cascading down to other organisations is good. Priorities – one of the things is extending health links to involve primary care and public health.

IHLFS is now working to support these initiatives – focus on effort of frame work and the new Health Partnership Scheme. The new Health Partnership Scheme is under development and going through procurement process but from April 2011 should be able to give greater boost to some of these efforts.

Lord Eccles – trustee for the Hospital for Tropical Diseases Foundation a small charitable foundation which gives money to promote exchanges with Africa. The HTD has a small medical faculty with a need to stay up to date and the only way to do this is by travelling overseas, for example a leading expert on leprosy who has links with Ethiopia gained her knowledge by going to Ethiopia. We must work more closely together and be more focused instead of having disparate groups.

Murray - health funding is there to support health international development links, is open to everyone in the UK health sector.

Lord Eccles – time is critically short for busy people which is a limiting factor

Claire – is there a way to shout the triumphs what can be done to educate the NHS to the value of doing this.

Murray - Make parliamentary colleagues aware of what is going on, this can be done through the appg. In NHS and DoH work is being promoted through the IHLPS and through £5m set aside by DFID.

Nick – there is a need to raise awareness of what is currently go on below the radar, we are missing an opportunity by not looking at the contribution diaspora professionals in the NHS are making in supporting health care programmes in their home countries.

Murray – in the Framework is a strong recognition that the diaspora in UK can make an important contribution.
On Wednesday 16 February at 7-9pm in the Churchill Room, Houses of Parliament, is the launch of African UK.

Islam Ali – set up Children of Sudan to represent the interests of children with cancer in Sudan. There is only one cancer hospital in the whole of Sudan. The charity wants to train staff and nurses in that hospital and create a link with a hospital here in the UK.

Claire – there is muttering about ring fencing the DFID budget – if we can transfer knowledge about the over-use of antibiotics to developing countries we will be doing everyone a service.

Pia – We have at this meeting WHO, NICE, MEDSIN (Medical Students International) all of whom can continue to promote the UK health sector's reputation through partnerships.

Africa UK is a new project dedicated to enhancing the contribution of the Diaspora to Africa's development and to fostering greater dialogue between UK-based Africans working in development and policy makers. This year's programme taking place throughout the UK, will include training sessions, policy workshops, networking opportunities and the publication of essays and reports written by Africans active in the field of development.

Africa UK is part of the Common Ground Initiative in association with the Royal African Society and AFFORD (African Foundation for Development). The Common Ground Initiative is an exciting programme with a £40m fund supporting African development through UK based small and diaspora organisations. It is jointly funded by Comic Relief and the Department for International Development

RSVP essential: odonoghuea@parliament.uk