

HOWG Community Networking Meeting
Thursday 26th May 2011
Multicultural Centre, 1 Ardconnel Terrace, Inverness
at 6.00pm

Present: Monica Lee MacPherson (CEMVO / Multicultural Centre), Malcolm Fleming (Oxfam Scotland), Alison Pyott (Highland Multicultural Friends), Ian Barr (Highland One World Group (HOWG)), Janis Keast (HOWG), Martyn Crawshaw(HOWG), Hilary Lawson (HOWG/FTINverness), Rolf Schmidt, (HOWG), Susan Appleby (FairtradeINverness), Stephen Kelly (Cooperative Membership), Marion McDonald (Real Nappy Project), Rob Wakeling (Tearfund and Christian Engineers Aboard), Rose McKechnie (HOWG), David Crippin (Christian Aid), Isla Hepburn, Peter Abernethy.

Apologies: Martyn Crawshaw(HOWG) and Jim Leslie, (HOWG)

1. Welcome and apologies

Hilary welcomed everyone, after very enjoyable eats, and thanked Malcolm for his flexibility as the meeting was postponed a few days earlier but then resurrected when there was a sudden flurry of interest.

Every one assembled introduced themselves and the group they represented.

2. Oxfam's Food and Justice Campaign

Malcolm Fleming, Media and Communications, Oxfam Scotland

Malcolm gave a stimulating, interactive presentation on the new, ambitious 4 year Oxfam campaign on Food Justice which has so many facets to it. He made the links with Climate Change, land issues, the many local / global environmental connections and especially emphasised the social justice angle – the impact of rising food prices on the world's poorest. Some of his statistics gave us all food for thought.

Using the Issue Tree, a development education tool that encourages participation and critical thinking, he involved us all in looking at the *causes* of rising food prices – from the impact of growth in biofuels to the effects of climate change, especially in relation to rainfall, and the issue of land tenure. We then explored the *effects* of rising prices- and a plethora of concerns were shared, mostly very negative. A note of optimism was struck when we reached the leaves of the tree as we were discussing *solutions*. It was cheering to see the many small changes we could all embrace to MAD (make a difference)- such as growing our own and reducing food miles. These sat alongside major policy decisions which would be needed to alter trading practices and support small farmers.

3. Future of the group

- Hilary thanked Malcolm warmly for this much enjoyed session. Ideas were shared about what to do locally to take this Food Justice campaign forward. It was thought that many local groups would have a stake in this campaign and it was suggested that an information stall be arranged at one of the Community Markets where all groups could share their angle on the issue with the people attending.
- Hilary also asked for a steer on where the group should go in the future. Malcolm offered to return in the autumn to facilitate a **training session on making the most of the media**. This was felt to be an excellent suggestion. Hilary said in the meantime she would contact all those who showed interest in the networking idea at the start as to
 - (a) whether this topic would be of interest to them and
 - (b) whether 6pm was the best time of day for the group to gather.

4. The meeting closed at 7.45pm