

**Scotland: Focus Group with Ruchir Shar, Paul Bradley, Dorothea Vincent, Ruth Boyle Doreen Green (for first 45 mins),**

**Purpose of the meeting:**

- Understand the challenges and success of the programme to date to be able to develop a dream statement that can act as a focus for future dialogue
- Identify any projects/activities beyond those that are already listed on the wiki

**Dialogue**

- If you understand the agenda then it is easy to get involved, but the majority of people will find this esoteric concepts with confusing acronyms
- Linking the SDGs and OGP process can be challenging because there are:
  - Two different sets of stakeholders
  - Two different conversations
  - Two different sets of projects
  - Two different agendas
- Why are they linked?
  - Open government is how we do reform (build trust, openness etc)
  - SDGs are one of the ways we can deliver that reform
  - When SDGs were launched – OGP recognised need to use action plans to drive them
  - There's an obvious connection for some
- Open government – is broad so can be all things to all people, risking people retro fitting into their agenda – want to use for transformational change – practically we need to know what to do and who is to do it
- The first year has needed time to discuss that – people haven't been as open as they could be – they are nervous and struggle with the scale of what could be
- It's a big agenda – if we are taking this seriously then it must be about DECISION making
- We also need to think about who else needs to be part of the discussion and ensure they are involved in an open way
- In the early days it was all about buy in and how to tackle this
- As we have seen more actions with the SDGs we have more opportunity to say there are more opportunities
- We are just starting

- Who else would fund this type of work other than the lottery – very welcome, but challenge will be that it is early days and the immediate impact of this may not be felt now.
- Within government – the way they align and report on aspects is a challenge. They are on a trajectory. Already have national performance – this is already seen as the route to track that performance?
- Started with some citizen small scale conversations which were good but there is so much to do those closed down while they got on with it
- We need to feel comfortable with openness – it will take a while to get there – it is risky to expose thinking
- The challenge to achieve instant wins is difficult
- Need to build a critical mass of engagement and support which takes time but he had to do this immediately and could have been more effective later with the opportunity to build connections and networks
- Equalities is key if we are to open up power to a wider range of people – that outreach and connection takes time; opening up that power is a 2030 agenda for SDGs
- This work has enabled the **creation of the Global Goals website** – it will take time to develop the connection between people but people are posting already
- We rely on stakeholder to work to reach more people – this ground work was evident when we facilitated the **open letter** process to get engaged in the SDGs – 18+ organisations were involved in co creating that – posted blogs etc and started to feel more of a connection together, and maybe an opportunity to participate in wider open government agenda
- See the SDGs as being very proactive as a network, but the OGN can feel more reactive. With the SDG network it feels like there is a ‘we want the same thing’ agenda but with OGN that will inevitable be different – a challenge to get a sense of purpose? How do you encourage people to participate in that as it can feel like a scary place
- Getting the ordinary person involved requires a different use of language and explanation – the **meet up groups** about this topic have been very open and not the usual people participating – they came across this rather than naturally pursuing it.
- The definition of open government is blurred – and may need to be? The project coordinator (Paul) in Scotland is writing a **blog** about the how and why it matters

- At the start the SDGs had limited traction but with the focus on equalities it became apparent that open government could be a tool to develop the SDGs
- The SDGs are the reason and the destination – they are the goals; the OGN is the method to achieve those goals – the how to. The guiding light is the Human Rights action plan and environmental responsibilities. The principles
- The UN advocate programme is a collaboration – two key pieces of impact assessment – the measurement could be useful to government but within the networks there can be resistance to ‘feed the government’ – we must be more collaborative
- The SDGs are a serious movement which emerged from the grass roots – a good example
- SDGs are essentially about citizens, businesses, ngos etc coming together to make a difference. The government can’t know everything and are busy people – the OGP can be the bridge for collaboration
- It is the citizen role to build a sense of urgency
- So many political layers and so many different agendas – SDGs can be a good hook
- Scottish government want to be the best small country in the world – SDGs can help inform manifestos and as a result the ‘pioneers’ element of the open government title is deliberate – we want to pioneer
- We are one of the only world-wide projects to link SDGs and OGN; SDGs bring different people together and are perceived to be really good – people want to engage. In the OGN there can be exclusive language used and can feel hard to engage with
- The beauty of working with the SDGs is that they want to DO things – example of the work from this connection of the two networks is when the government ran a national performance framework workshop they had **80% attendance from the SDG network**
- The OG forum feels hard to engage with even when you do know a lot which will have implications when communicating messages
- **International Devt Scotland connection** – 25-30 ppl – had a request from grassroots to support smaller organisations and those running the meeting were able to take this back immediately
- Business in the Community Scotland want to be involved – they:
  - **will help create a film**

- **are meeting with the first minister,**
  - **are blogging using the platforms**
  - **want to partners with SDG network, and**
  - **a potential slot for then to speak at the conference**
- The transparency and openness of this process may be one of the reasons why it is getting good feedback from stakeholders. This is the third time that a version of the SDG network has been initiated (the back story can be found here - <https://globalgoals.scot/scotlands-goals/>). In previous times there was a perception that conversations took place out of sight – this process is completely open which network members seem to value and encourages meaningful participation – live streaming and wiki etc. It has also been resourced this time.
  - SDGs came out of a discussion about what people wanted – they asked for monthly meetings and although sometimes turnout at those can be low they are valuable conversations and give a regular space to contribute
  - In less than a year we have 300 people in the network which is seen as very positive
  - The question will be asked ‘what next?’ when this stops and that can be an inhibitor to starting things up. There is a desire to DO things but if (for instance) a **social media** space becomes really active and important and then stops because no one to manage it – what are the implications? **The video** will be good as that stays whatever happens
  - “if you weren’t there [coordinator] the SDG network might fall apart”
  - We have tried to embed for sustainability: added and automated content; global goals Scotland site; rotating chairs, knowledge hub (not great but use what is there)
  - Involve will be the legacy for the OGP – they could be the backstop
  - could there also be the possibility of additional funders coming on board now?
  - Like Ireland – blog, action plan, national platform and forum
  - What are the crucial parts to developing an SDG?
  - First year here felt like lots of developing relationships, putting things in place etc but sometimes wondered what impact? That’s why we have dedicated the summer to a host of activities – webinars etc to give visibility to Scottish intentions and unlock the potential of others to contribute
  - **Young women’s movement:** they have been interested in this work at an international level but do not have much resource – we have worked with them to show how this is relevant to Scottish women. The challenge is connecting and linking the SDGs

- What is success? Is it numbers or talking to experts and integrating into agendas? Is success shaping the work of others? We think so but it is hard to measure. When we do this though it has the potential to connect and reach to many more people
- Been working with the **policy officers network** - blogging
- Worked with Young Scot to hold several events with young people and building relationships with government – there is an interview planned with the YP ambassador to think about how young peoples’ voice will get into the next action plan
- The above is success because it wouldn’t happened without this work – this is an agile project and so we have started with where there is an energy and it has paid off
- I see this as an equalities project – so many people don’t have access to power or able to influence decisions
- Protected characteristics mean everyone – we can all identify with at least one! This project is about what sort of society we want to live in in the future.
- We are a small organisation with limited resources so we chose to focus on three groups:
  - Disabled: they are championing at the policy level – the interest and intention is there but they have pressing issues regarding the implications of policy on disabled people. They are less interested in the SDGs but the event we had with them supported us to deliver more eg Participatory budgeting – the issues raised there are relevant for the whole Action plan
  - Young people: young people ran with SDGs in a way we have never seen before – no silo thinking – a really intelligent connection across the SDGs and how they relate to each other; they ran their own events and discussed youth empowerment and used the SDGs to demonstrate this. One key strapline from the process was ‘Young people are not the future – they are the NOW!’.
    - Youth Citizens Advocacy for change is coordinating involvement in the policy agenda and have a session as part of the conference – this programme part funded their event
    - Meeting them next week to discuss a parliamentary event
    - This project can provide the link between say Young People in Dunfermline and the Parliamentary event
    - The agile approach we adopted has enabled this momentum regarding young people in a way we couldn’t have if set in stone what we would do at the start
    - Young people were much more comfortable with working with SDGs than those who were older
  - Ethnic minorities: worked with CEMVO who feel under resourced as a sector but have lots of enthusiasm for the work and recognise the connection to

their agenda. They want to continue but they not adequately resourced for this work at the moment. This project funded their time but unable to continue without resources.

- The projects and all the meetings we have been involved with are on the wiki project page and will be updated again soon with the last few months of activity
  - The big question to ask is who have been the big influencers that have helped to make this happen? – should ask this in all the groups
  - In Scotland both networks (SDGs and OGN are new which means some fresh and new ideas but also got to get the network established
- Unintended impact of this project has been to open up the work of SCVO and the staff – a different way of operating an impacted on other projects eg identity scheme
  - The call for openness has been a success: if you look at the previous plan you can't see how it was developed. You will be able to with this one

Some reflections on this meeting:

- been really good to talk about the project – inspired and energised!
- How can we secure the feedback from others because I hear all the time how awesome people think this work has been? – use the wiki and respond to the survey
- Speak to Alan who works one day a week on the project
- Communic18 is a young person led panel (Facilitated by YoungScot <https://www.youngscot.net/communic18-the-year-of-young-people/>) who will help co design initiatives