Scottish Government International Development Review

Notes from Zambia civil society roundtable meeting with Jenny Gilruth MSP, Minister for Europe and International Development
25 November 2020

Session 1 – Themes

Question 1: What themes would you prioritise for Zambia for the next few years, in terms of the Scottish Government's international development programme?

- Despite Zambia reaching lower-middle income status, gains of that have been confined to 6% of Zambians. There are still high levels of inequality – of income, gender, and access to opportunities in education and agriculture. Addressing inequality should be a priority. It is mentioned in the 7th National Development Plan, and this discussion is timely as the 8th National Development Plan is currently being developed.
- Shrinking civic space is a concern. Strengthening civil society is a priority, along with education, agriculture and health.
- Consideration should be given to how decisions taken at a global level impact on civil society on a local level. NGO Act cited as an example.

Question 2: Thinking about the Scottish Government announcement of a £2M covid fund for its partner countries this year, what do you consider to be the immediate priorities in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic? And how can the Scottish Government best support Zambia in response to the pandemic?

- Testing identified as a key issue, government has not been able to increase number of people being tested. Could increase support to government to broaden and increase testing to help understand extent of the disease. Church groups run health organisations, usually funded by government but access to funding has been problematic so not been able to respond as effectively to COVID-19. Would be good to find a way to engage directly to support their response and set up testing stations. Safeguarding of children also an issue during the time of covid.
- Zambian budget published in September, but funding for WASH sector reduced by 17%. The budget recognises a link between covid and health, but importance of WASH not recognised. Important to fund interventions on WASH, and should be a priority for SG.
- COVID has had an adverse economic impact on low-income groups. Need to look at alternative ways for these groups to earn income. Agriculture has a lot of potential, supporting low-income communities to earn extra income, through market linkages, support around mechanisation, training, capacity-building and smart agriculture so they can manage their own businesses through the covid period.
- Education also key. Working with a savings and lending group of over 3,000 women, 70% are semi-literate. Following covid guidelines is a challenge. If we improve access to quality education in these communities, this will help

- people to follow the guidelines and stay healthy. Education a priority both short and long term.
- Issue of immediacy is saving lives, urgently required in Zambia, then focus on the economic recovery. Value addition to Zambia's natural resources could be explored. Also adverse impact of climate change by supporting sustainable organic agriculture. On COVID-19, this organisation has been distributing food hampers to households and priority is to save lives first.
- Scholarships and education is a key area to focus on in order to groom quality leaders in Zambia who are going to run sustainable programmes beyond support from Scotland. COVID-19 has affected Zambia in many ways, but education sector most affected. COVID-19 has prompted acceleration of digital transformation and widened the digital gap in Zambia. Children in both rural and urban areas do not have access to stable internet which deprives underprivileged children accessing good knowledge and education. Would like SG to concentrate on technology, it will help people get disposable income from new jobs emerging in the digital space.
- Zambia struggling with issue of public debt, with budgets to essential sectors cut. Promotion of sustainable agriculture would be good. Also good to support civil society space and community activism to promote proper accountability from duty bearers.
- This organisation has switched to virtual support for healthcare system during pandemic. Working with MoH on covid 19 guidelines for health workers and continuation of care procedures for TB and other conditions. MoH concerns around data flows, how quickly information currently gets from rural communities to district health centres can currently take 2 months due to paper record keeping. One of the biggest priorities for the community health unit at MoH. There is a huge human resource gaps, doctors, nurses etc, with no national standards for a community health programme - largely NGO-led, working in silos. From a health perspective, these would be the priorities. Glad collaboration is on the agenda, WASH, education agriculture etc all have a key role in the response. Independently those things will only have so much impact, WASH programmes without education won't have an impact, if people can't afford to eat etc. Collaboration key to any sort of sustained response.
- Social economic rights have been effected by covid-19. Need to strengthen grassroots organisations, linked in to national organisations. Ensure effective and prudent use of resources on the ground, when dealing with governance issues of CSOs on the ground. See how SG can build synergies with local institutions on the ground. Issue of education also key.

Question 3: How should the Scottish Government fund projects in Zambia? Do we need to shift the balance of spend, and if so how do we do that?

- At the beginning of the pandemic, international NGOs had to evacuate, smaller local CSOs with less capacity had to step up. Support to local orgs should be prioritised, system-strengthening, issues to do with governance. Digital divide another issue, need to close the gap.
- Promotion of the localisation agenda has been talked about for a long time. To add another dimension, we need to redefine who we see as civil society. In the covid era we have seen faith actors stepping up as first responders, but

not seen as civil society so don't get funded, or benefit from capacity building initiatives.

- Important to leverage synergies. Many people in Zambia working in silos. Doing great work but don't know each other, would be helpful for SG to operate as a hub, identifying skills from different sectors. Solar power and access to electricity affects lots of areas, when you talk about access to technology, most areas of Zambia are not on the national grid and don't have access to electricity. If you give people laptops, but they don't have access to electricity they won't be able to benefit. If you're a farmer and are off the grid it can be very difficult to pump water etc. Alternative energy an area for investment, would be good for SG to pick from different areas – experts in their own discipline – an accountant, project manager etc. which leads to projects being run more effectively.

Noted development of the 8th National Development Plan, keen to see how SG work can support that. More widely, recognises limitations of what SG can offer and that we seek to offer additionally on the existing UKG contribution. Acknowledged the points made, and particularly aware education of women a recurring theme while speaking to partner countries.

Session 2 - Principles

Question 1: A recent academic from one of the Scottish Government's partner countries said the following: 'Black lives matters in America is not the same as in Africa. But if you come to my country and you put a white person in charge of a programme – when I could do that job, when I know my local community – that's what Black lives matters means to me. That is white privilege'

With reference to Principle 4, what does 'Black Lives Matter' mean to you?

- The concept of BLM can be misinterpreted. Doesn't mean black lives matter more, just that they matter as well. The academic highlights an experience many have also experienced. You see the difference in treatment when a white person enters a community in Zambia. BLM the in-thing at the moment, but be careful not to get consumed by buzzwords. Same applies to white gaze, but what does it actually mean and how do actually address these issues? Otherwise there's a danger of everyone just wanting to be seen to be doing something. Highlighted example of being asked to check a BLM statement as a black person. What are the steps we are going to do to move away from white gaze? A number of important points highlighted about strengthening local capacity. We have a lot of people with strong links with Zambia – the diaspora in Scotland, should look to strengthen that community. When we are thinking about, one of the things that worries him, with a small pot of funds, how can we ensure we're doing the best, most effective things? How do we get the key players on board, and don't cut out the grassroots and just focus on big organisations? As highlighted, smaller local organisations very important in the covid response.
- Emphasised we are also putting these questions to Scottish civil society. Wants partner organisations in Scotland to take on responsibility. Thinks there's a disconnect, and we need to recognise our own white privilege.

- There are thin lines drawn by socio-economic division, you find this approach creates some access that is not equal to opportunities, which is where we need to draw our attention to. We are all human beings and are perceived to be equal, despite being different in creed and colour. The socio-economic statuses we may have, the aspect of taking responsibility, if you look at human rights, defines that we are all equal.
- BLM a matter of human dignity. Need to promote human life regardless of tribe etc. we should create a nation of equal opportunities and equal rights. It is all human life and there is nothing that separates us.
- Two examples to shape understanding of BLM. We cannot overlook history and context we live in. There's a reason we see Africa and developing countries in the situation they are. Beginning of 16 days of gender based violence activism, in communities they work, they find women unable to take on responsibility due to abuse when young. Issue of equality and of equity. 2nd example, education sector. 80% of country is rural and children tart school at 11/12 and don't know how to read, but in Scotland they start much earlier. Scholarships that are available are meritorious, so cuts out rural child who hasn't started until later – so equity and equality again. You need to recognise the position that is negative.
- Heartwarming to hear talk about BLM in that sense, now confronting issues and start of changes we'll see in years to come. Totally different to the experience of black Americans which goes back to slavery and are trying to get freedoms back, but haven't managed to get them back completely. It's different in Africa, but can relate back to colonialism. It was only when gaining independence Africans starting running their own governments. There is psychological programming that happens over time. Young people grow up not believing they can take on leadership roles unless they are from a privileged background.
- An example to relate to academic's, outsiders need to engage stakeholders. Someone came to a village, saw women drawing water from a river, and decided on need for boreholes, so drilled them. Came back for monitoring and saw women still going to the river. They didn't realise going to the river was when the women had time to speak to each other and get away from home. It is very important to engage with people on the ground and understand culture and existing systems before introducing new culture. This is how you would integrate BLM in the African context.

Question 2: in relation to draft principle 5, on supporting Collaboration and partnerships - How do we better create and support peer-peer collaborations in thematic areas which are identified as priorities? These can be peer-peer collaborations between Zambia and Scotland, or collaborations between Zambia and our other African partner countries (Malawi and Rwanda).

Question 3: Open up for feedback on the draft set of Principles as a whole. Are there any draft Principles that people would like to discuss further?

- On collaboration, need to be able to create platforms to learn and share work they do on the different thematic areas that have been specified. Lack of coordination an issue. Create platforms for learning and sharing, and how they can enhance the work they are doing. Recognise funding is constrained,

so need to do more with that they have. Need to encourage more collaboration with different actors in different sectors as they are all connected.

- This meeting is a good start, a good step to engage with organisations that SG don't usually fund, to have co-creation and identification of issues, and need to see practical partnerships develop as a result of this.
- Sharing of collaboration, learning and sharing initiatives, and building resilience among stakeholders are identified as critical to the SG and this might work through identified institutions that could be mapped to be appreciated and provide long lasting results.
- Great to see collaboration here, would be good to see more collaboration between organisations on the ground in Zambia. This organisation has just signed an agreement to work with another NGO and would love to work with more. Availability of funding makes it a competitive environment, so if calls for funding actively promote partnerships it can be a real help.

Need to be cognisant of colonialism – particularly Glasgow benefiting from the slave trade, we have got to teach people about that. Highlighted the challenges on equality and equity, challenges we also face here. Borehole story a really good example of development gone wrong, with organisations in the global north thinking we have all the answers. Emphasised this review is partner-led to ensure we have the right and best impact. Recognised peer-to-peer collaboration and links within Zambia really important.

Comments from chat box (edited to remove identifying information)

11:30:26   other themes could be livelihoods and climate change, Human rights, governance and Peace. it would be also interesting to see how social cash transfer methodology can be used to safe trees in Zambia.

11:35:14   Also [edit] found that Covid affected girls when during the school close period some girls were unable to return to school due to pregnancy. Another wave will male this worse especially for children in rural areas, interventions at this level are required. Also the Covid relief package while offered to businesses and even artisit they have not extended to the University students who were last week sent away due to failure to pay full fees arising from the economic challenges faced by parents and guardians. Possibility of support in this area would be good

11:43:08   Good development is localised and uses local expertise. We would recommend that SG invest in and work with organisations that spend the majority of the grants in-country and that are locally led. They have a wealth of expertise, cultural understanding and knowledge of the local development needs so are best placed to meet those needs in the most culturally appropriate way. There is also need to invest in building local capacity as COVID has demonstrated, international organisations will not always be available to provide hands-on support.

11:47:26   being involved in Mental health training through [edit] I would support [edit]'s comments on the importance of data collection. Also would like to see MH and disability user groups supported to develop services.

12:04:22   for me black lives matter translate into areas of marginalisation, tribalism, widening gap between the poor and rich, segregation between people in the ruling party and those in the ruling party. many people now in Zambia are crying out "We can't breathe"!

12:04:45   Black lives Matter to me means recognizing and highlighting the struggles and oppressions people of colour are going through, given different systems that are or maybe designed to do so by old governances. We all are responsible to respond positively regardless of race or colour.

12:20:32   Co-creation (Scotland and Zambian such this consultation which is really a good step) of interventions and identification of issues and ways of addressing those.

12:23:04   Being deliberately to do business unusual, consultation process engagement and learning to reach out to new all local organisations would help to strengthen partnerships and collaborations for me.

12:23:57   We need a platform were I can have mutual advocacy engagements

12:24:38   Collaboration around themes is critical if we have to achieve more. The challenge before has been around those who assume positions of lead urgencies changing goal posts resulting in disappointments and failure of the collaborational relations. I think the starting point for local collaborations to be voluntary in areas that we see that we can work together. Be more intentional among ourselves and extend this through exchange learning platforms with partnerships between countries - Zambia and Scotland.