

Eastern European Aid & Development Network

Date: 4th November 2009 **Time:** 2.00-5.00pm

Venue: Carmichael Centre, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7

MINUTES

Chairperson: Fiona Dowling, Executive Officer, Comber

Attendees: Stephen Wilson (ADRA Ireland), Laura Johnson (Chernobyl Children's Trust), Mary Manning (Chernobyl Children's Trust), Mick Croghan (Chernobyl Orphans Fund), Tisha Gallagher (Chernobyl Orphans Fund), Frances Haworth (Comber & Moldova Vision), Sile Byrne (Consultant), Donnacha Ó Beacháin (Eurasian Studies Group, DCU), John Mulligan (Focus on Romania), Ronan Ryan (Genesis Association /Georgia), Audrey Cranston (Health Action Overseas), Michael Kinsella (Ierlanda-Moldova), Aine O'Dowd (Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation), Fr. Eamon Aylward (Irish Missionary Union), Joanna Fortune (To Russia With Love), Helen Walmsley (Voluntary Service International), Ann O'Connor (Aurelia Trust), Kirsten Fjoser (Operation Smile Ireland).

Apologies: Tom Walsh (Rebuild for Bosnia), Marie Cregan (Aurelia Trust), Tom McEnaney (International Orphanage Development Programme), Damien Meaney (Chernobyl Children's Project International), Stephen Conway (Samaritan's Purse).

1. Introduction

Fiona Dowling opened the meeting and thanked people for attending.

Frances Haworth gave a brief update of the history of the Network project and an overview of the last meeting.

2. Establishment & Purpose of Network

The group discussed the outcome of the last meeting and decided that the Network should be established. Several names for the Network were proposed and the working title is currently: Eastern Europe Aid & Development Network.

It was decided that the Network should have the following three purposes:

- Increase networking amongst groups
- Raise awareness amongst the general public and funders about the work of Irish organisations in Eastern Europe
- Support information sharing and learning on country & issue specific areas of practice.

It was agreed that in the future the Network could potentially lobby on behalf of members on common issues, but that for the initial 12 months, the Network would not adopt any positions as an organisation.

3. Governance & Structure

It was agreed that an interim committee would be appointed for 12 months and meet at least once every 2 months. This committee will aim to:

- Establish governance structure, membership and activities of the Network
- Organise 2-3 events to bring people together on country and/or issue specific areas (see list generated in Appendix 1).
- Facilitate information exchange between members

The following people volunteered to be on the committee:

- Sile Byrne, Consultant
- Fiona Dowling, Comber
- Joanna Fortune, To Russia With Love
- Frances Haworth, Comber & Moldova Vision - *secretarial role*
- John Mulligan, Focus on Romania
- Helen Walmsley, Voluntary Service International
- Stephen Wilson, ADRA Ireland

- Ronan Ryan, GENESIS Georgia

It was agreed that further Committee members would be invited from other groups and that Committee meetings would remain open so that interested parties could attend. It was agreed to keep the Network structure relatively informal for the next 12 months.

Base membership criteria for the Network was agreed as: having a CHY/NI Charity number and working in the CEE/FSU region. Further thought needs to be put into the membership of non-Irish registered groups and individuals.

The possibility of becoming a working group under Dóchas was discussed and it was decided not to take this option at the moment, though it could be a possibility in the future. It was also noted that Dóchas have been very supportive of the establishment of the Network and that their expertise and advice remains a great source of support for the Network.

It was noted that Comber are employing Frances at the moment to support the establishment of the Network but that her contract will be completed at the end of 2009, so the workload will have to be shared on a voluntary basis from then on. It was also noted that costs of meeting etc should be kept to a minimum and covered by voluntary contributions if possible.

Directory (<http://irecee.wordpress.com/>)

It was agreed that a directory of Irish organisations active in Eastern Europe would be further developed from publicly available information and information provided directly by the organisations that agree to join the network. To prevent misunderstandings arising, the directory will

- a) distinguish between members of the network and non-members and
- b) clearly state that the information on non-members has been compiled from the public domain and does not constitute an agreement to join the network

As membership criteria has not yet been set, the directory will continue to gather organisation profiles and will later be divided into member/non-member.

Next steps:

- Invite other groups to volunteer for committee and attend next meeting. (Frances)
- Organise next meeting in mid-January 2010 at the Irish Aid Centre on O'Connell Street (pending availability). (Frances)
- Organise event in Feb/March on issue specific area (Committee)
- Put ad about Network & Online Directory in the Conference programme. (Frances)
- Online Directory to be advertised and enlarged (Frances).
- Possibility of a setting up a closed email list, listserv or online forum to be further explored (Committee).

4. Conference

Frances & Fiona gave an update on the Conference & Irish Aid Reception and circulated information on how groups can get involved. For further information see www.comber.ie/conference or contact Frances at 087-9022216 or frances@comber.ie

F. Haworth 5/11/09

APPENDIX 1:
List of Country & Issue Specific areas identified by attendees

Country Specific

- Belarus
- Romania
- Georgia
- Albania
- Moldova
- Russia
- Other countries

Issue Specific

Organisation activities

- De-institutionalisation
- Fostering
- Adoption
- Education
- Disability
- Economic development
- Respite holidays
- Aid/Orphanages
- Renovation/ Construction
- Anti-trafficking
- Migration & Development
- Child Labour
- Healthcare & medicine
- Street children
- Roma/ ethnic minorities
- Human Rights
- Conflict resolution/ prevention
- Visas/ travel
- Volunteering
- Lobbying / Advocacy
- Development Education

Organisational development

- Building local partnerships
- Working with Governments/ local authorities
- Fundraising/ promotion
- PR/Messaging
- Governance

Cross-cutting issues

- Sustainability
- Good practice