

JAG is a network of development organisations that includes: Anti-Slavery International, British Youth Council, British Council (Global Xchange), British Museum, CAFOD, Citizenship Foundation, Christian Aid, Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council, Comic Relief, DEA, Development in Action, Envision, Girl Guiding UK, GLADE, Global Education Derby, The Harambee Centre, Institute for Global Ethics, International Alert, Lancashire Global Education Centre, Leeds Development Education Centre, National Youth Agency, Oxfam, PeaceChild, People & Planet, Plan International, Raleigh International, Red Cross, Save the Children UK, The Scout Association, SPW, Student Action for Refugees, Tzedek, UNICEF UK, VSO (Global Xchange), We Are What We Do, Woodcraft Folk, World Bank Institute, World Vision, Y Care International.

21st May 2009

White Paper response from Joint Agencies Group

The Joint Agencies Group (JAG) is a network of development organisations which engage with young people in non-formal settings. Whilst the context and content of our work is different (including youth work, volunteering, working in cultural settings such as theatre and dance, and international exchanges) we have common purpose in working with young people to help them *connect* the local and global; *challenge* their thinking and help them take action for *change*. Underlying our work is a commitment to promoting critical thinking about development issues.

We note that the White Paper consultation document does not contain any references to developing public understanding and support for development. This is a critical issue for a document that seeks to address the theme of interdependence. Whilst we recognise that there are financial pressures on public spending, this is an important agenda that needs to be invested in for the long term. We support the commitment that DFID has shown to building public education, understanding and engagement for development. We would like to see the White Paper reiterate its commitment to this agenda.

JAG agencies are united by working with young people in non-formal settings. DFID's work has built a good platform on the schools agenda. We would like DFID to now take the opportunity to develop its work around supporting the non-formal sector. Building real support for development requires that the work is youth led and owned by young people. The participatory approach of non-formal education offers unique opportunities for young people to understand development issues and act upon global injustices in their own way, on their own terms. There is real innovation and creativity in the work by JAG agencies and others, but the value of the non-formal sector is not always recognised, and more needs to be done to join this up and make the work have a real impact.

The youth led agenda supports DFID's commitment to open governance and access to decision making for young people. It also fits with the work that has emerged from the DfID/CSO Youth Working Group.

Supporting young people to understand and campaign around development issues builds long term support for DFID's agenda. We hope that DFID will take the opportunity to work with JAG and other parts of the non-formal sector in building greater engagement with and support for development over the coming years, and that it will indicate its support for this agenda in the White Paper.

From the Joint Agencies Group
(Text agreed at meeting on 14th May and by follow up)
Submitted on their behalf by Connie Wessels from UNICEF UK