

Rickshaw rides highlight the need for charity support

Over the weekend rickshaws took over The Meadows. Members of the public were invited to ride with volunteers from Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and Restless Development. The volunteers' stories help disprove the myth that international development isn't working and that 'nothing ever changes'.

Even dignitaries, such as the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Rt. Hon. Donald Wilson, Lothian MSP Sarah Boyack and MP for Edinburgh North and Leith, Mark Lazarowicz, took rickshaw rides. They also heard volunteers' experiences of positive change and why international development requires continued public support.





MSP Sarah Boyack, who volunteered with VSO in Bangladesh in 2011, said:

“The work of aid organisations and charities makes a real difference. When I visited Malawi, I was struck by the huge progress being made to tackle maternal mortality and the increase in young girls getting access to education – that’s

real change happening on the ground”.

Jess Carmichael, 25, from Uddingston, who volunteered with VSO in 2013 helping to tackle poor sanitation in southern India, said:

“A lady I spoke to didn’t know what aid money was doing to deal with poverty overseas. After her rickshaw ride hearing about my experiences in India and speaking to other volunteers from Restless Development, she commented that global poverty was sensitively and intelligently tackled.”

The rickshaws and rickshaw drivers’ shirts had facts about global poverty printed on the back, and distributed to members of the public, including this information:

- 77% of the UK public think that our efforts to tackle global poverty over the last decade have made little or no difference. However **extreme poverty has been halved** since 1990, a girl born in Sub-Saharan Africa will **live on average 16 years longer** than in 1960, **AIDS-related deaths have dropped** by almost a third since 2005 and many countries who used to depend on aid now receive hardly any and even donate to other countries.
- Over half **(59%) of people Scotland think that the UK spends more on overseas aid than we actually do:** 0.7% of Gross National Income. Asked how much we should spend, almost three-quarters (74%) suggested more than 0.7%.