

Transforming Lives; Transforming Business



Salt business network manager, Helen Howe with Salt members Julia Howl, Olu Ogunbode, Chris Sheldon & Stewart Ritchie at the first workshop

Dear All,

Welcome to the first Salt newsletter covering the network activity since we launched in October 2016. After sharing thoughts and ideas online it was a pleasure to come together for the first time in February, giving us an opportunity to meet and gain real insight into how this action focussed network will operate.

The network is starting small but has a big vision—that by 2020 we will not only have regional hubs but global hubs. We have a vision of how business leaders can come together as agents of change, leading best practice within their own businesses and encouraging others to do the same as well as supporting entrepreneurs in the global south. We believe that together we can be more ambitious and more effective in the work we do – learning from each other, supporting each other, thinking more creatively and inspiring each other to do better and achieve more.

Our first Salt ‘theme’ was ‘Business & human rights’ with a specific focus on Modern Day Slavery. Feedback on the first workshop was positive, giving members time and space to identify real, tangible actions they could take to improve their business practice and influence others. Following the workshop, each member is undertaking discipleship challenges across the areas of leading change, provoking a community of change and resourcing change. Read on to find out more about the pledges members are making and the entrepreneurs they are supporting through our Social Enterprise Programme.

Leading Change on Modern Day Slavery

Modern Day Slavery is one of the most discussed human rights issues of our time. It affects 2.4 million people at any given moment. An estimated 21 million people are living in forced labour conditions, of which 14.2 million of those working in forced labour are in the private sector.

Across the network we have been sharing case studies and best practice in the area in preparation for our workshop. We were joined for the event by Matti Kohnen, Christian Aid’s private sector policy advisor, and Quintin Lake, Research Fellow at [Ashridge](#) and Director at [Fifty Eight](#)

Leading Change (cont'd)

Members were inspired, challenged and supported to take on discipleship challenges to improve their business practice around the theme of business and human rights. As a result **70%** of Salt members have currently taken on pledges, including:

- Assessing the risk related to subcontractors
- Building existing staff awareness on Modern Day Slavery Issues as well as including sessions in staff inductions
- Reviewing most important business purchases
- Training procurement staff in the issues around Modern Day Slavery and other areas relevant to sustainable supply chain
- Publishing their Modern Day Slavery statements on time, honestly and in full (where applicable)

As well as making pledges, Salt members identified areas where they needed extra support to move issues forward. The network is now supporting them in a variety of ways from from signposting on best practice to securing pro bono legal support to draft supplier statements.



Provoking a Community of Change

One of the aims of Salt is to give members a united voice to speak out to the wider business community, church community and policy makers on issues that affect the world's poor and encourage and support members to influence others. Again business leaders have made pledges to influence others both around the issue of Modern Day Slavery and to engage them with the network activity as a whole. Pledges included:

- Asking suppliers to sign declaration forms around Modern Day Slavery
- Speaking about Modern Day Slavery at local Christian business networking events
- Covering the issue of Modern Day Slavery in coaching sessions with other business professionals
- Speaking to other contacts about the Salt network and it's activity
- Lobbying MPs around the issue of failed asylum seekers and their potential to be victims of Modern Day Slavery

Resourcing Change

Salt members have also pledged to come together to resource change by crowdfunding for some of Christian Aid's most innovative enterprise projects in the Global South. As part of the workshop we successfully skyped Mauricio Preciado-Awad, Christian Aid's commercial analyst (based in Colombia) who is coordinating support to approximately 18 enterprises across South America, Africa and Asia via Christian Aid's Social Enterprise Programme. These enterprises are being supported to make a qualitative jump in order to reach a point where they are an attractive and viable well managed and administered business with clear growth milestones at which point they will be able to attract external funding or access credit.

Mauricio outlined the process for identifying and supporting these enterprises and talked in detail about one of the enterprises being supported, which is an Eco-lodge in Bolivia. Chalalán S.A. is a community-owned ecotourism company located in the heart of the Madidi National Park in the Bolivian Amazon. Chalalán targets national and international mid and high income tourists looking for a premium experience in the wilderness. Although currently having an average of 700 visitors a year and a revenue of \$350k it



Travelling to Chalalán S.A. - the Eco lodge is only accessible by boat

operated as a much larger business in the early 2000s with over 2000 visitors a year. Due to mismanagement a series of issues came to light including errors in tax submissions and a break down of trust with their main promoting agency which led to a loss of 70% of business overnight. Since Christian Aid's involvement, there has been a change in management and support has been given to help them:

- Achieve operational efficiency, have absolute control of financial information, as well as agree payment terms for unpaid tax debts by previous administrations.
- Improve communications and be able to communicate to its market segment and also to differentiate it from its competitors –this includes both a re-brand and enhancing their online presence

Resourcing Change (cont'd)

Capital investment is also needed to make some improvements in infrastructure and maintenance, and to support the operational enhancement strategy. The project will directly impact 633 indigenous people in the community of San José de Uchupiamonas and is the first time an indigenous community in Bolivia has got title deeds for their land. As well as protecting their land rights, 50% of the profit from this enterprise is returned to the community of San José de Uchupiamonas for social benefit use and sustainability. The Eco-lodge also promotes green energy and recycling as well as raising awareness in conservation of nature and bio-diversity.

Salt members are coming together to support this enterprise and others like it with individual pledges, corporate pledges and fundraising. Some Salt members are also exploring opportunities to use their skills and expertise to support Christian Aid's work.

if you've not made a pledge yet (or you're an associate member) and you would like to support our Social Enterprise Programme, please contact Helen by emailing salt@christian-aid.org

Dates for your Diary:

Salt members:

Next workshop: 13th June 2017

We're seeking feedback on our next theme which will either look at 'Good Investment' or the broader topic of 'Developing a Values based business'. Please let us know your thoughts!

In Their lifetime Annual Event:

14th March 2017

A chance to find out more about this innovative work we are undertaking. You will have the opportunity to speak directly with on-the-ground Christian Aid staff (including Mauricio) about the progress and challenges they're experiencing, as well as with our key speakers: Loretta Minghella (Chief Executive of Christian Aid) and Dr Rowan Williams (Chair of Christian Aid). If you would like to attend please RSVP asap....

Open to all:

How business can tackle modern slavery and forced labour: 25th-26th April 2017

A 2 day conference hosted by the innovation forum creating space for in-depth discussion on how individual businesses can tackle modern day slavery in their supply chains and operations. For more information visit their [website](#)

Joint event with LICC: May 2017

A joint event between Salt and LICC look at Modern Day Slavery. Date to be confirmed—please get in touch if you would like further information

Interested in Salt and would like to find out more?

Contact the Salt Network Manager, Helen Howe for further details: email hhowe@christian-aid.org