



Concordia Directors' Report For the year end 31st December 2009



1. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity Name: Concordia (YSV) Ltd
Charity Registration Number: 305991
Company Registration Number: 381668
Registered Office and
Principal Address: 19 North Street, Portslade BN41 1DH

GOVERNING BOARD

The Baroness Byford DBE
B Holbeche
President – resigned 21st May 2009
President – appointed 24th February 2010

R Mitchell
C Lumb
Chairman
Secretary & Executive Director - resigned 21st May 2009 as
secretary, 30th June as Director
resigned 21st May 2009

J M E Ogilvy
L Norman
S Drzymala
Y P Richards
M Cook CMG
D J T Piccaver
C I Snell
J F Rodley
S Wellman
appointed 21st May 2009

R Orme
Chief Executive and Company Secretary
(appointed Secretary 21st May 2009)

BANKERS

Bank of Scotland Plc
8 Air Street
Brighton
East Sussex
BN1 3FB

AUDITOR

Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP
Chartered Accountants
International House
Queens Road
Brighton
East Sussex BN1 3XE

SOLICITOR

Adams and Remers
Trinity House
School Hill
Lewes
BN7 2NN



2. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

CONSTITUTION

The Governing Documents of the company are the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. On winding up each person who is a member at the date of winding up, or who ceased to be a member during the year prior to that date, is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the company. As at 31 December 2009 the company had 9 members (2008: 10).

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The company is governed by the Board of Directors, which met three times in 2009. The following Committees report to the Board:

- The Human Resources Committee, consisting of two directors (S Wellman and L Norman), the Chief Executive and the Employer Services Manager.
- The Finance Committee, consisting of two directors (J F Rodley and M Cook), the Chief Executive and the Finance and Systems Manager.
- The Education and Development Committee consisting of two directors (L Norman and Y Richards), one non Concordia person with relevant experience (currently the Vice Principal of Plumpton College), the Chief Executive and the Education, Training and Development Manager.

In 2009, the Executive Director retired and the post was replaced with the new post of Chief Executive. Day to day business is conducted in the office under the management of the Chief Executive, Rob Orme. A customer-focused staff structure continues to be very effective. The office is divided into five teams each headed by a line manager: Employers; Students; Finance and IT; Volunteers; and Education, Training & Development.

RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

A Nominations Committee oversees recruitment for the Board. It meets as required and consists of the Chairman, two Directors and the Chief Executive. Particular regard is placed on the candidates' relevant background and skills. Candidates have the opportunity to meet Directors and discuss the proposed roles and responsibilities and to learn about the ethos of the organisation.

A Trustee Skills Audit is made every three years and this was completed in August 2009 to inform the future recruitment of trustees.

TRUSTEE INDUCTION TRAINING

All new Directors receive a copy of Concordia's Governing Document, together with a handbook on the Roles and Responsibilities of being a Trustee. In addition, they are encouraged to attend external training seminars as appropriate.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Directors have identified the major risks to which Concordia is exposed. The impact and likelihood of these have been documented together with action plans to address or mitigate these risks; they are reviewed monthly by the Executive Group and at each Board meeting by the Directors. Financial risks are reviewed by the Finance Committee quarterly. In addition, any changes to the charity's activities or the legislative environment are reviewed and assessed, and where appropriate are incorporated into the ongoing risk management process. Third party professional indemnity insurance is provided for the Directors. In 2009, a Business Continuity Plan was developed and a full recovery strategy is in place within this plan.

3. OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY

The principal activity of the company is the operation of a charitable organisation which arranges work and volunteering programmes for young people, aimed at promoting a better understanding between nationalities.

OBJECTIVES

The Charity's continuing objectives are to:

- facilitate the opportunities for young people to participate in student mobility schemes such as the Home Office Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS);
- enable young people to engage in meaningful activities in an international arena, where they can enhance their understanding of other languages, cultures and working practices;
- offer sound pastoral and welfare support for the young people participating on our projects. This is achieved through regular monitoring of the work programme environment by Field Officers, with particular emphasis on Health & Safety aspects and ensuring that appropriate insurance is in place to cover all participants; and
- offer educational, training and development opportunities to young people. In 2009, a new educational programme, the Management and Supervisory Training programme (MAST) was introduced to replace the Concordia Agricultural Bursary Scheme (CABS).

All these objectives were met during 2009.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Charity Trustees have had due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Concordia offers a range of opportunities for people to develop and realise their potential. Concordia aims to give people, especially young people, the opportunity to learn new skills,

develop and gain experience. The employment service department of Concordia gives international students and recent graduates the opportunity to gain work experience both through study and training programmes and work experience placements on UK farms and horticultural enterprises.

Concordia works closely with Plumpton College in pursuit of its charitable activities through its CABS and MAST training programmes. 259 Students were enrolled on Concordia educational courses in 2009. 12 of these students attended the CABS programme which was fully funded by Concordia. Students have an opportunity to train in the most advanced techniques practised and to return to use them in their home country. Such a skills exchange is of great benefit for the development of agriculture in less advanced countries.

Concordia encourages a broad international mix on placements to encourage participants to develop an understanding of different cultures and nationalities. Many participants, and UK nationals on the placements, embrace this mind broadening experience and gain from making lifelong friendships that transcend national borders. This helps to work against discrimination and prejudice by developing understanding of other cultures.

Concordia International Volunteers provides opportunities to people of differing age groups and including people from disadvantaged backgrounds to volunteer on short term projects with other international volunteers. In 2009 Concordia placed a total of 508 volunteers and provided cross funding that subsidized the provision on 490 of these places in 2009. Participants have the chance to learn new skills and be absorbed into a new culture by volunteering. Concordia sent UK volunteers to 31 countries in 2009.

There are also opportunities for international volunteers within the UK. The volunteer projects originate from the heart of communities and include opportunities for environmental enhancement, work with children, help with community festivals and support on educational projects. The projects bring benefits to the individuals involved and to the wider communities. In one case, Concordia supported a young carers' festival by providing a group of international volunteers to assist at this festival for children who care for adults.

The international volunteer team also organise education programmes for volunteers, providing them with skills in development, motivation and support.

Concordia continues to finance educational facilities for students on its farms such as internet access, educational trips, and language lessons, through its pastoral fund. In 2009 approximately £25,000 was provided.

The Charity Trustees and all who make decisions about the activities the Charity undertakes are concerned to ensure that a benefit is provided to a broad range of people. The Charity Trustees consider that the achievements and performance of the Charity demonstrate success in this regard.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

During 2009 Concordia continued to operate under the regime of the Home Office SAWS scheme for expanded Europe which since 2008 has required that all work placements under the SAWS

were given to Romanian or Bulgarian nationals. The actual number of Work Permits issued by the Home Office in 2009 was 21,250 (2008: 16,250). Concordia was able to maintain its role as the leading operator within the SAWS scheme, with an allocation of 8,125 of the total SAWS permits being allocated by the Home Office.

The source of seasonal labour continues to be the newly enlarged EU, due to the global economic situation with increasing unemployment, there was an uplift in interest in Concordia's programmes. Concordia was able to meet the requirements of all its employers. The latest European Union countries, Bulgaria and Romania, will continue to have limited access to work until the end of 2011 with a possible extension until the end of 2013. The SAWS scheme is expected to end once restrictions to the labour market are lifted for all EU nationals.

The Student Worker Education Programme (SWEP) introduced in 2008 combines education and training with work practice on UK farms and horticultural holdings. The opportunity to learn new technology is especially valuable for students from outside the UK who are encouraged to implement this knowledge in their home country. This is a unique opportunity for students to gain educational qualifications and accreditation and satisfies the requirement for student mobility for non EU countries who have signed up to the Bologna Process of education. It also provides opportunities for cross cultural discussions as well as developing life skills and improved English language ability.

In May 2009, Concordia was awarded a UK Border Agency licence for Tiers 4 and 5 of the new Points Based System introduced by the Home Office. The Tier 4 licence enables Concordia to place qualifying non EU national students on the SWEP course.

Concordia was represented at a number of Growers' and Fruit Shows, which are excellent arenas for face-to-face meetings with the end users of our services. It also arranged road shows with its placement providers. The Farmers' extranet continues to prove successful and has significantly enhanced communications; this has been augmented to include an extranet facility for overseas agents and participants.

The Concordia Agricultural Bursary Scheme (CABS) saw the fifth group of 14 students graduate in October. Group 5 were presented with their diplomas by the Chairman of Concordia at Plumpton College. In addition to a structured education programme at Plumpton, their course included training

and work experience with Concordia registered employers. Concordia is working in partnership with Plumpton College to deliver a new Management and Supervisory Training course (MAST) to replace CABS. This course of work based learning includes time spent at Plumpton College and leads to a

CMI qualification in leadership and management. The first course started in November with further courses scheduled to start in 2010.

Concordia placed more volunteers than in recent years. The international volunteer team at Concordia placed 234 volunteers on projects in 27 countries (2008: 196 participants; 26

countries). In addition, Concordia sponsored 27 UK based projects in which 256 volunteers participated (2008: 28 projects; 294 volunteers). This number dropped from the previous year due to a combination of factors including the economic environment resulting in some hosts not running projects and a delay in the receipt of the Tier 5 licence.

Concordia's voluntary profile has been raised through Vine UK, the UK based network of international volunteer exchange organisations. The creation of the post of European Voluntary Service (EVS) administrator in May has enabled the charity to apply for funding for volunteers and broaden the range of volunteering opportunities that Concordia offers. In 2009 Concordia received funding for 18 volunteers on EVS (2008: 14).

Further external funding amounting to £22,966 (2008: £11,047) this year has been secured from the Youth in Action programme. This significant increase can be attributed to the investment in resource outlined above.

The first group volunteering project was organised in February with a school from Ashington Northumberland sending a group of 8 students supported by teachers to volunteer at an orphanage in Vietnam.

The Strategic Plan, approved by the Board in February 2007, remained the focus for the organisation's activities in 2009.

Concordia was awarded the Investors in People Standard in May 2009. The organisation considers this an excellent achievement and an endorsement of the human resources processes it has adopted over the last few years and a genuine credit to all its staff.

5. FINANCIAL REVIEW

RESULTS

This year Concordia returned an overall surplus of £156,137 (2008: deficit of £53,170). With total expenditure remaining broadly level the surplus was due to a significant increase in income.

Total income for the year, including investment gains, was up 18% to £1,285,473 from £1,088,281 in 2008 (of which £1,188,935 represented grower and student fees, up 9% from £1,087,958). Although the number of farms fell, numbers of individual participants increased on the previous year. The membership scheme remained popular with the majority of participants again choosing to take full membership.

Good cost management with an exceptionally good recovery of trade debts restricted expenditure to £1,129,336 (2008: £1,141,451).

The results strengthened the balance sheet with an increase in cash at bank of £72,376 (2008: £9,655). The majority of the balance sheet is represented by current assets representing a strong going concern position.

The Strategic Plan takes a five year view of Concordia's financial position, and the Directors regularly review this to take account of changing regulatory circumstances which impact the supply of and demand for participants. The SWEP project introduced in 2008 will be expanded and 2010 will see the first full year of the new self funding MAST courses which have replaced CABS. Although an extension of the SAWS scheme is most welcome it is hoped that these projects, together with new initiatives and continued consolidation of the membership scheme, will address the potential shortfall in revenues caused by changes to our traditional operating model.

INVESTMENT POLICY

At the end of the year the value of Concordia's investments had increased by 26% to £181,179 (2008: £144,157).

Concordia's investment policy is to invest for growth over a 5 year period with a medium risk strategy. No specific ethical or environmental restriction is placed by the Board on investments although investments are confined exclusively to funds available to charities. All investment decisions are endorsed by the Directors and the Directors consider the return on investments to be satisfactory.

RESERVES

Excluding an increased contingency fund of £300,000 (2008: £200,000) originally established in 2003, accumulated general reserves stand at £710,997. The future for Concordia is changing significantly, and the company is implementing a number of new initiatives in 2010 to enable it to face the challenges arising from the possible withdrawal of the SAWS programme. The Directors believe the level of reserves is adequate to support the development of these new programmes and prepare Concordia for the potential changes in income.

6. FUTURE PLANS

A strategic review is currently being undertaken and a new strategic plan will be in place by mid 2010.

The Government announced in November 2009 that the SAWS scheme will end in December 2011; this is one year longer than previously confirmed. It may be extended for a further two years until the end of 2013. SAWS is restricted to a fixed quota of Bulgarian and Romanian nationals. There are no plans in government to replace the scheme with another at the present time but Concordia will continue to lobby Government on this matter.

Strategic planning for the next five years will take into account this likely change in a key area of Concordia's work and seek to address the issues around income that it will raise. A Business Development Manager will be recruited to ensure Concordia develops diverse income streams in preparation for the potential end of SAWS income.

SWEP is designed for college students and undergraduates studying agriculture and horticulture and offers a structured programme combining education with practical training. Further development of this aspect of our work is planned. As well as developing Concordia's education

and training portfolio, the new MAST has good potential to introduce new placement providers to Concordia. The training gained using new technology and procedures in the UK will increase production levels in participants' home countries.

The Volunteer Department will be working to further increase external funding through the EVS programme and through other channels. English language provision is also being explored as a possible area into which Concordia can expand. The Education department is also in discussions about offering training opportunities to the young unemployed in the UK.

The Directors believe that the initiatives already in development and the new Strategic Plan will position Concordia to build on its established reputation and to move forward in broadening its range of quality programs and services for young people in the UK and overseas.

7. FUNDS HELD AS CUSTODIAN

No funds are held by Concordia (YSV) Ltd on behalf of other bodies.

8. AUDITOR

The Auditors are appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting in May.

STATEMENT AS TO DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO AUDITOR

In so far as the Directors are aware:

- a. there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware; and
- b. the directors have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

SMALL COMPANY EXEMPTIONS

This report is prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

On behalf of the Board
R Mitchell
Chairman,
Concordia (YSV) Ltd, 19 North Street, Portslade, BN41 1DH