**Policy Committee Meeting Notes**

Tuesday 1 November, 2pm – 4pm

**Committee members**

Tearfund Scotland, IDEAS, Thrive, IIED, Christian Aid Scotland, SCIAF, Carey Tourism, Water Witness, Oxfam Scotland, HALO, Corra Foundation, Jubilee Scotland, ActionAid, CBM UK, Tearfund Scotland, Unicef

**Present**

Chris Hegarty, Christian Aid Scotland

Benjamin Carey, Carey Tourism

Geraldine Hill, SCIAF

Chrissie Hirst, Corra Foundation

Joanne O'Neil, ActionAid

Mark Barrell, CBM UK

Graeme McMeekin, Tearfund Scotland

Jon Novakovic, Individual

Lewis Ryder Jones, Oxfam Scotland

Louise Davies, Scotland’s International Development Alliance

**Apologies**

Dorcas Pratt, Water Witness

Chris Loughran / Calum Craig, HALO

Frances Guy, Scotland’s International Development Alliance

Michael Alexander, Individual member (Diageo)

Line Christensen, Jubilee Scotland

Emma Gardner, Trustee IDEAS

Cathy Ratcliff, Thrive

Simon Anderson, IIED

Lucinda Rivers / Fatoumata Drammeh, Unicef

**Actions**

LD to discuss funding questions and feminist foreign policy consultation with Frances and update the committee by email.

LD to draft scope for consultancy on independence report. All to consider financial contribution.

JN to seek support for independence report from the Alliance board.

LD to contact academic recommended by Global Justice Now about possible reparations paper.

LD/FG to feed back on role of the policy committee and HEF/humanitarian policy work.

Items for next agenda: horizon scanning/info sharing, decolonisation and anti-racism (standing agenda items), MSP engagement.

**Introduction**

Geraldine opened the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves.

Previous minutes: approved with no comments.

**Discussion**

1. **Overview of Alliance activities**

**Conference**

Louise gave a short review of the Alliance’s annual conference which took place in September. Feedback has been very positive, with all survey respondents rating the conference as good or excellent. Disappointing attendance from Ministers and MSPs but otherwise a good audience mix. Sessions are available on YouTube. The Alliance are planning a smaller members event in March, topic possibly around economic crisis and we will update soon.

Committee members who had attended the conference gave positive feedback.

**Ministerial/government meetings**

Frances and Louise met with Minister Patrick Harvie who was broadly in support of our Wellbeing & Sustainable Development (WSD) recommendations but was unable to give any firm commitment on timings or specifics such as a dedicated Wellbeing & Sustainable Development Commissioner.

They have since met with Paul Gilhooley, the official working on WSD & Future Generations, who gave reassurances that work was happening.

Frances, Cathy and Louise met with Minister Neil Gray. They talked about the need for clarity on current priorities and the Minister explained these were health, education, fighting poverty and tackling inequalities. They asked about the scaling up to £15million International Development and £36million Climate Justice budgets which officials replied were up for design. They called for more transparency on funding, and the need to ensure priorities for information are not given to current grantees, this was taken on board. They outlined the challenges that members are facing due to the economic crisis. Lastly they asked about the Minister’s engagement with PCSD, the National Performance Framework Outcomes Review and WSD. Whilst the Minister reported again that there was a positive meeting on PCSD with Ministers, the report has yet to be published. Similarly the report on the Global South panel is still unavailable.

The Alliance are planning a members round table meeting with Minister Gray in the new year.

The Alliance held a session on funding which included a presentation from the Scottish Government on the new global solidarity fund.

**CPG on debt justice**

Louise reported that the CPG on debt justice had been well attended with stimulating discussion. MSPs particularly welcomed the suggested actions provided by Line Christensen and are already working on these.

**Other events**

The Alliance has held workshops on decolonising aid and equity and power shifting in global partnerships. These are available online.

**Feminist workshops**

The Alliance is delivering a series of workshops with the Global Affairs Council, on behalf of the Scottish Government, to consult on feminist foreign policy. The first meeting takes place at the end of November and workshops will run until February.

**Discussion**

Chrissie asked about the new SG fund and whether there was clarity on whether it was a global solidarity or global citizenship fund as both titles had been used in recent discussions, and on whether the grants will be limited to advocacy and capacity building. She shared concerns that some organisations, Alliance members and/or their partners, might be disappointed if it is limited in this way. Louise understood that the new fund was focussed on those two areas, and that both organisations here and directly in the global south would be eligible.

Lewis agreed there had been lack of consistency with the name and he’d heard it would be a global citizenship fund. He thought this was a more sensible name if the fund was about funding capacity building in Scotland. He also felt that there needed to be clarity on funding priorities and the Alliance should ask for more details.

Chrissie also asked about timing, and shared the hope that future programmes would match people’s needs and expectations. Louise understood that the new fund management tender wouldn’t be live until next year but can check. Chrissie had also heard that the Alliance might have a role in relation to the grants and asked about resource and relationships impact. Louise agreed to check with Frances on this, and to find out whether there was more information on the grant programmes, and if not the Alliance could follow up with SG.

Chris asked how extensive the feminist foreign policy consultation would be and how important the workshops were as part of that. Louise will ask Frances for details.

1. **Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill report next steps**

Louise updated the committee on the WSD working group which has had one meeting so far. Members include SEPA, Carnegie, WeAll, NatureScot, Scottish Environment Link and CEIS along with Joanne and Lewis from the committee. COSLA are also interested. Members have different priorities so rather than all pushing for the global impact aspect of the Bill, the group will likely coalesce around certain principles and messaging, for example, the definitions that the Alliance has outlined, and generally push forward momentum on the Bill. The next meeting will hopefully develop the agreed areas, and consider other action points arising from the recent meetings with Minister Harvie and officials.

Jo fed back that the Corporate Justice Coalition are interested in this and may be worth updating on our work.

Chris asked whether there was a risk that such a broad group might move the focus towards domestic issues and away from an international dimension. Louise commented that there wasn’t disagreement about the need for a global responsibility aspect to the Bill, but that other orgs had other priorities. Lewis said that these groups would be consulted on this in any case and bringing them into our group will mean the international aspect is diluted less than it might be otherwise.

Lewis commented that the Bill is useful to make all national outcomes more central to policy making and spending, through improvement to the Community Empowerment Act. The FPAC report into the NPF review mentions the WSD Bill and we should move the timings of our work alongside the review. We need to push for an ambitious NPF outcomes review.

Mark offered CBM’s technical expertise as needed, e.g. in mental health, disability rights.

1. **Independence report approach**

Louise introduced the paper and the challenge of not knowing if and when a referendum will happen. The questions for the committee are around the need for a report, the structure and policy themes, and the timing.

All agreed that a report is needed and that the content would be useful for a general election, and/or also the next Scottish election – especially since, if the Supreme Court does not give the go-ahead for the referendum, a future election is likely to be framed by some as a de facto vote on independence.

Jon felt that the supreme court would not rule in favour of a referendum, and the election is likely to be Autumn 2024 with a less nuanced debate around independence compared to the 2014 referendum. Lewis had heard that the supreme court decision would be March but was uncertain.

Jo questioned whether a post graduate would be appropriate to deliver the report and others shared this concern. Kirstie Shirra produced the last report and it was suggested she might be able to take this on. Lewis suggested that a group of organisations might contribute funding. He offered to check with Oxfam.

Chris said that in 2014 other organisations contributed to sections that were relevant to them, and Kirsty pulled it together and edited it. He thought that could be a way forward for this time. He was concerned about the potential breadth of a new report - we need to avoid an expanding scope and the committee would need to keep it manageable.

Chrissie commented that we should not follow the themes of the Scottish Government papers, but instead follow themes that are important to members. She felt much of the 2014 report was relevant, but more emphasis on climate and diversity & equality were required.

Lewis agreed that the structure of the 2014 was good but the policy themes would at least need to be restructured to reflect current realities. He felt that many of the asks were still relevant and would just need to be updated. Alternatively we could build on the Scottish election manifesto report which had 5 distinct sections as a starting point. This might mitigate the risk of an unmanageable scope. He felt deliberation would be required from the committee, Alliance board, and the consultant about scope and policy areas.

Geraldine agreed it should be driven from members concerns and expertise. She felt it should be a priority for the committee for next year.

Louise said there may be a small amount of funding from the Alliance, but contributions from others would be welcome. Louise offered to begin a scoping document for a consultant and to find out about 2014 costs. Geraldine asked for Jon to take this up with the board.

1. **Priorities for the committee for 2023**

Geraldine reiterated that producing the independence report would be a priority.

Chris would like to see the Alliance continue work on decolonisation, for example on language, and feels it’s an area where we are taking the lead. He thought we should be open to opportunities to genuinely feed into the feminine foreign policy, and we should continue our role to push things further.

Jon felt the committee should build on the expertise that comes together in the committee by addressing the strategic outcome to support our members to be responsive to changing needs. He also suggested we could expand the range of members that interact with the committee and encourage more two-way dialogue. A regular agenda item could be that larger members feed into a horizon scanning exercise on donor priorities. This would allow smaller members to get information on policy that they wouldn’t ordinarily access, and offers opportunities for collaboration either as a whole committee or between small groups of committee members, and may also involve collaboration between smaller and larger members. This would add value to members. Geraldine responded to say that we had always wanted the committee to be open to anyone and suggested we dedicate part of meetings to learning/sharing.

Chrissie suggested continuing work on climate, the theme of policy coherence and that the Alliance can help by nudging/collaborating with other organisations such as the Global Affairs Council and the anticipated new Peace Institute. New institutes and actors in the landscape may be available to be influenced. Chrissie also suggested a dedicated CPG meeting on PCSD. She felt further work on decolonisation could involve University research where work needs to be done.

Lewis pointed out that we need to be aware that we can’t do everything. Lewis felt Alliance is uniquely positioned to work on PCSD and should continue. The ‘spillovers’ report is a clear next step and allows us to talk about PCSD and global impacts in a different way. He thought this could also link to climate work. Lewis thought reparations might be an additional piece of work to follow decolonisation and he is able to feed back on Oxfam’s work on this over coming weeks. Lewis felt that bringing smaller members in might take up capacity, similarly bringing in specific expertise from larger organisations takes time and internal negotiation. Lewis also felt Global Citizenship Education is increasingly less funded and young people/public are less engaged and we may want to try and counter this.

Geraldine asked the committee to consider what they could bring to the table in terms of delivering these ideas, as they are not just for the Alliance to deliver, but the whole committee.

Jo supported the independence report as a priority. She felt decolonisation and anti-racism should be considered and it could be a standing item on the agenda to share learning and challenges. Action Aid are interested in the feminist foreign policy work and are keen to support any work on this and connect us with other global feminists. Loss and Damage and climate justice are also areas where Scotland is leading the way and we could do more, again Action Aid have staff who could support work on this. Similarly Wellbeing & Sustainable Development is a key area and AA are releasing research next year with some Malawian feminists which is a good fit.

Mark is keen for us to talk about inclusivity and ensuring the voices of people with disability are heard. CBM are also working on climate, and disability inclusive climate action, and Mark suggested building on momentum of Loss & Damage. They would also be keen to input to the decolonisation and language discussion from the point of view of inclusivity.

Benjamin supported more work on decolonisation and brought up the risk of applying our own perspective on decolonisation to those in the global south who may think differently. He would be keen to revisit work with the private sector and how we can build alliances to build capacity and access funders. Benjamin also stressed importance of building relationships with opposition parties in Scottish government who will likely be in power post-independence.

Geraldine fed back that SCIAF have done a lot of work on Loss & Damage and reparations, and would be keen to support on PCSD.

Louise picked up on some of the points made: the Alliance new CRM system may help assist linking up smaller members with specific policy interests with larger members and generally encouraging collaboration amongst members, as we will have a better insight into areas of expertise and interest. Louise is also working on a stakeholder/power map which will help us understand the role of institutes like the Global Affairs Council and where value for any relationship may lie. The Alliance are supporting the Low & Middle Income Countries Network at Glasgow University, to connect researchers and NGOs, encouraging an evidence-based approach and addressing equitable research approaches. They are keen to do more in this area. Louise fed back that the Alliance’s more recent approach has been to ensure that decolonisation and anti-racism are threaded through all work but we hear from members that it is a priority and will continue work on language. Loss and Damage work may be best done in conjunction with SCCS. Reparations could be picked up from the conversations we had with Global Justice Now regarding the climate reparations paper they drafted for SCCS. Louise will follow up with the suggested academic who may be able to draft a wider reparations paper for the Alliance. She asked whether it was something worth giving resources to given the removal of climate reparations from the FM’s language recently.

Lewis responded that this is a reason for the Alliance to do the work. A reparations lens in the world of development is a long term objective. The active removal of reparations from the FM’s vernacular suggests there wasn’t understanding in the first place, and gives us an opportunity to push this. Louise agreed to make contact with the GJN academic and see what might be possible.

Chrissie fed back that one of the presentations at the SG Loss & Damage climate conference noted that some actors were not using the term reparations intentionally to avoid things getting blocked by the US.

Louise picked up on Benjamin’s point around the private sector and that this could be a topic for a future Alliance event and she would like to follow up with Benjamin.

Jon asked about the Ukraine crisis and whether the committee should be keeping up momentum of that. Geraldine asked about the role of the HEF and Louise felt thought needed to be given to the role of the Alliance/policy committee in promoting this work. Louise to discuss with Frances.

Geraldine reminded the committee that we need to ask ourselves what we can bring to make things happen in order to ensure the work doesn’t all sit with the Alliance.

**Loss & Damage conference reflections**

Geraldine fed back from SCIAF. The conference was very technical and there was a mismatch of topics for discussion and levels of expertise in the room. It was organised last minute so lots of global south people couldn’t attend. High Level Champions seem to be reigning in some of the ambition we saw from the Scottish Government at COP26. Lewis said Oxfam had similar feedback, as did Chrissie.

Chris asked why the HLCs had reigned in the ambition. His colleagues, from Bangladesh and Ireland, had a positive impression of the conference and were appreciate of Scottish leadership in this area.

Mark contributed online and also found the communications confusing about what was expected from breakout leaders. He was pleased that it took place and that the SG are still following up on Loss & Damage.

Chrissie felt it was about providing a legitimate process for providing a paper that will be used at COP27 [this has now been produced, see Chrissie’s attachment]. No one had seen any drafts on the paper, but committee members had heard that SG were rolling back on some of the proposals from civil society.

**Election of co-chair**

Geraldine explained she is moving on and a new co-chair was required, gender balance is a consideration.

Lewis felt that gender balance is essential. He pointed out that the committee will be imbalanced when Geraldine leaves and more non-males need to be invited to join. He also felt that smaller members don’t have capacity to do policy and that we should approach larger organisations who are not yet represented. He asked whether someone from the board may want to join as co-chair.

Chris felt we should give people time to consider the role and that there are others who gave apologies who may be interested.

Jo felt the co-chair should be from a Scottish based organisation. Chrissie said she didn’t have capacity to take the role on at this point, and also felt that diversity generally needed to be addressed on the committee.

Chris has agreed to stay on as co-chair as an independent member when he leaves Christian Aid. All agreed this was fine.

**AOB**

Lewis fed back that an organisation he works with holds a reception a month after their annual conference in the garden lobby at Parliament. This could aim to raise the level of attention to key issues amongst a wider MSP audience. He felt engagement would be better than for CPGs. Jon agreed and said getting MSPs to the Alliance conference would always be difficult. Chris supported the idea but thinks we need to give more thought to MSP engagement. An online learning event on PCSD for MSPs may be more effective than a CPG, or events with provocative speakers. Geraldine suggested this is added to the next meeting agenda.

Lewis/all thanked Geraldine.

**Next meeting**: likely to be late February, Louise will send round a doodle poll.