



Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Friday 15th December 11am-12.30pm

Please note that it is not the intention of the minutes to record a verbatim account.

Attendees:

Simon Anderson (IIED), Amy Blake (IVS), Ben Wilson (SCIAF), Lewis Ryder-Jones (Alliance)

Apologies:

Sam Ross (Link Community Development), Charlie Bevan (Tearfund Scotland), Lois Muraguri (GALVmed), Ryan McQuigg (Oxfam), Josephine McLaughlin (IDEAS)

Summary of action points

- Climate Bill actions - Committee members to feed what they are doing to Lewis so he can disseminate evidence to all members, galvanising support for issue early on. Member orgs need to see explicit importance for why they should engage.
- Brexit risk analysis to be carried out by Lewis, with support from Amy.
- CPG topics, and ministerial meetings to be considered strategically. Committee members to feed ideas back to Lewis before next meeting (before end of February).
- Next meeting to be held much sooner than would usually be suggested (in March 2018?) in order to allow those not present to feed in to work plan development, coordinate climate bill action, and feed into CPG (which aims to hold a meeting in April 2018)

Welcome and Introductions

Simon thanked everyone for coming, and explained that this group has been convened by the Alliance Board in order to allow member organisations to engage more coherently on both proactive and reactive policy issues. The Board view this as an important benefit to members, especially given the unstable policy landscape at this time.

He emphasised that time constraints could be an issue for the group, and therefore the scope and key areas of work must be agreed upon early by group members. He also reminded the group that it is important to remember that feedback and input from the wider membership should be sought whenever possible.

Introductions by group members, policy interests, expertise & priorities

Ben (SCIAF): Ben explained that one of the main upcoming priorities for SCIAF is the Climate Change Bill, which is likely to go through Parliament in April/May. SCIAF are planning an event on 18th April. SCIAF are also looking at divestment, in particular targeting local authorities in Scotland.

He mentioned that UK/Westminster policy issues are generally dealt with by their sister organisation, CAFOD, who are better placed to engage on these issues. SCIAF often feed into work undertaken by CAFOD. Ben raised a query about how the Alliance works with BOND, and said that on different issues, SCIAF feed into BOND work as well.

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Amy (IVS): Amy started off by saying that IVS work closely with Service Civil International (SCI) who are based in Belgium. Historically in 60s and 70s, IVS engaged with policy issues, but this has been less significant in recent years. However, with Brexit on the horizon, this has changed, and it is now an important policy issue facing IVS. IVS send volunteers to other countries, but also coordinate volunteer programmes for other nationalities coming to the UK. Brexit is likely to seriously affect volunteering in both directions.

European Commission funding is important and making sure any lost funding is picked up by DfID or others is a priority for IVS. SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions) frames the work undertaken by IVS.

Lewis (Alliance): On Brexit, an important role for group could be informing members of what issues might be. Also, informing members that there are reasons to engage, for example, the benefit in making sure that when the SG are lobbying UK Gov on Brexit, that they are raising the ID sector perspective, increasing our voice.

On BOND, it is not necessarily sufficient just to sign onto what they are doing, and there are often uniquely Scottish voices being missed out in their work.

Simon (IIED): Trying to triangulate, and align agendas of this group, the CPG on International Development, and the newly established ministerial meetings is worth attempting, and could be fruitful for getting issues up and down the ladder.

DfID are also an important stakeholder that should be engaged with from Scotland. Particularly given that DFID are aware that the Scottish electorate have a generally more amenable outlook on the ID sector than their English counterparts. Leverage over DFID is therefore strong at this point.

Amy: Amy has useful contact who worked with DFID, and suggested that the whole committee should develop a list of contacts with expertise and connections around specific policy issues. This could be a really useful tool down the line.

Lewis: Charlie Bevan and Ryan McQuigg both gave advanced feedback for this meeting.

Charlie, Advocacy and Campaign Manager at Tearfund Scotland wrote:

Policy interests

- Climate change
- Role of faith-based communities in advocating change
- Circular economy
- PCD

Expertise (in the organisation as a whole, not just in Scotland):

- Clean energy
- Climate change
- Circular economy- food waste, urban waste, etc
- Campaigning

Scottish priorities:

- Scottish Climate Change Bill Tearfund Scotland campaign- launching in Jan- promoting SCCS topline ask: target net-zero GHGs emissions by 2050
- PCD- part of the PCD group
- Circular economy- proving the case in an international development context

What issues are on the horizon that the Alliance, this group, and the wider membership should be considering to act on?

- Scottish Climate Change Bill
- Lobbying register
- SNP party conference
- Engaging Scottish MPs on int dev
- Maintaining/raising support for int dev amongst Scottish public

The 6 monthly meetings with the Minister and the CPG are vehicles that might be usefully complimented by this group... what issues can we raise in those meetings that this group can give added value to?

No specifics, but perhaps this group could action some of the items discussed to keep momentum going

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Ryan mentioned that PCD should continue to be the main Alliance policy focus. He also mentioned that he is keen to see the development of a 'Scotland International Development Week'.

Amy supports this concept as a useful tool for engaging politicians outwith the 'echo chamber', but Simon was unconvinced that 'campaigns' should be part of this committee's remit. It was decided that this issue and idea for a ID week should be brought up and discussed further with Ryan at the next meeting.

Discussion, clarification and approval of Terms of Reference

Attendees generally happy with suggested TOR, and have agreed on them. Simon emphasised flexibility in TOR, and that they can be amended ad hoc to fit purpose.

Ben asked about point 10.1 (developing an annual work program), and queried timescale for this, and what it should consist of. The Alliance business plan should be shared with committee members to assist this process. Ben also asked how the PCD group will work alongside this committee. This is to be followed up on next meeting.

Simon responded that any work plan that is developed will stem from this meeting and the next one, once a set of agreed priorities have been identified. But this work plan should be concise and achievable.

There is potential justification to attempt an analysis of wide membership, given their pivotal importance to the ID sector – they should be both voice and ears on policy issues.

Other points raised

A point was raised about finding out more about wider public support for particular issues. Is there scope to carry out research? Where would the funding for this come from?

Concerns were raised about workload of committee falling on Lewis' shoulders, and the need for coordination if the group is to work. The Committee must identify people to feed in/ commit time to certain pieces of work.

Amy supports the idea of working collectively on BREXIT, but Ben highlighted it is not something SCIAF have engaged much with at this stage. Ben mentioned that the work undertaken by CAFOD could be useful is happy to connect.

Simon mentioned the level of advocacy engaged in by this group to be discussed at next meeting.

The SDGs were mentioned as a useful structure/framework for any work plan that is developed. Specifically, universality and PCD are tied into each other and provide solid explanatory foundation for any work undertaken.

The CPG on Int Dev should be strategically used – and priorities for the next meeting in April should be sent round by email by Committee members, to be discussed in next meeting.

Action points

- Climate Bill actions:
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Next meeting date

March 2018 – specific date and venue to be decided by doodle poll sent out with these minutes

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