



Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday 12th March 2018 10.30am-12.00pm

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

Attendees:

Simon Anderson (chair and Alliance BOT), Charlie Bevan (Tearfund Scotland), Ben Wilson (SCIAF), Lewis Ryder-Jones (Alliance) Sam Ross (Link Community Development), Amy Blake (IVS), Lois Muraguri (GALVmed), Ryan McQuigg (Oxfam), Chris Hegarty (Christian Aid)

Apologies:

Nick Hepworth (Water Witness International)

Summary of action points

- NPF and SDG one-page briefing for MSPs. Lewis to draft something, with feedback and support from group
- Lewis to follow up on arranging roundtables with other political parties.
- Group members to actively engage with [Alliance Community](#) (online forums), in particular to prepare for CPG
- The committee will keep to 6 monthly meetings to set priorities, and any other meetings in between can be topic specific, with interest and agendas developed through use of online forums.
- Lewis to feedback to committee from PCD meeting next week, considering how we approach the minister, if at all in the next 6 monthly meeting, and how the policy committee can feed into the PCD working group.
- finalizing CPG dates and agenda preparation to be done in the Alliance Community online. All group members are asked to sign up to Alliance Community
- Discussion to be started about what next Alasdair Allan meeting (August) should be like – the annual government report on their int dev strategy/ policy coherence for development and the importance of the Climate Change bill for international development are priorities.

Introductions

Simon opened the meeting asking that everyone introduced themselves and areas of interest. He began by saying that his focus is primarily on gender inequality and climate risks. Others gave their focus:

- Charlie – climate change bill
- Sam – Education in Africa & Safeguarding (both local and overseas)
- Lois – policy issues in developing countries, specifically, how technology gets adopted in those countries, specifically veterinary products, and how different groups get access to those techs
- Ryan – chief exec stepping down, main issues. Climate, women, decent work, PCD, transparency – at UK gov level
- Amy – safeguarding of volunteers, transparency of partners overseas. Kenya, Malawi and Mozambique – policy areas in those countries include gender issues
- Ben – climate bill, but also watching brief on a range of issues.
- Chris – Climate bill, two opportunities – PCD and climate justice.

Summary of previous action points

Lewis gave a summary of actions and issues since last meeting:

- No new developments for sector on Brexit

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- Ruth Davidson meeting has been useful for a few members to develop new relationship with her policy team. No luck pinning down Alexander Stewart MSP or Jackson Carlow MSP as yet... but since meeting, Lewis has arranged a meeting with Alexander Stewart for Tuesday 5th June.
- Movement with BBC connections as a result of CPG. Huw Owen of DEC to organise a small roundtable with commissioners of new BBC 9 o'clock news. Huw Owen worked at BBC for 20 years, so is well connected. New BBC news programme will have more international remit so commissioners keen to build relationships with Scottish orgs working overseas.
- NPF and SDGs – SDG network preparing general briefing for MSPs ahead of next week's debate. The Alliance can lead on a one-page briefing highlighting international importance of SDG alignment.
- Safeguarding events – on going work since event - working with the Scottish Government to establish an understanding of the strengths and needs within the sector. This will include a survey to identify where support is needed, and what type of support as well as learning and drawing from existing good practice. This will enable us to design a "Safeguarding Package" which would incorporate a manual and guiding methodologies to enable organisations to develop robust policies and strengthen the implementation of these.
- ODA inquiry - Recent grilling of SoS by IDC revealed two things: 1) that she is clearly going to continue the trend of ODA being spent by other departments; and 2) that policy coherence is on her mind to a degree – with the mention of a cross ministerial group looking at coherence.

Comments from group:

- Ryan on NPF – Oxfam want to push opposition to look at NPF and consider on same standing as budget
- Group supports idea of getting something out to MSPs before debate on NPF
- On SDGs, questions on whether Scottish government planning to submit a report to UN – this had been talked about within the SDG network and is likely to happen next year. UK gov have now committed to voluntary reporting.
- On Ruth Davidson Meeting – Both SCIAF and WWI have had contact with her office since, group generally supports other political party roundtables with membership. Good for membership, good for raising profile of work.

Actions:

- NPF and SDG briefing for MSPs
- Lewis to follow up on arranging roundtables with other political parties.

Topic focused future meetings and online forums

On future topic oriented meetings – Lois supports this idea, especially when some interests are very niche, and would benefit from drawing in voices from wider membership.

But Ben thinks more general meetings still necessary to talk about emerging issues, and planning and setting priorities still need to take place regularly.

Lewis brought up the 'Alliance Community' online forum software, and asked if members would be willing to participate with this as a trial to see if more topic specific meetings can be developed out of using this tool.

Group suggested keeping six monthly meetings for general/priority setting meetings, with potential other topic/issue focused meetings developing through use of online forums. The example of developing agenda for CPG on climate in September

Actions:

- use online forums to prepare for CPG, keep 6 monthly meetings to set priorities, other meetings in between can be topic specific, with interest and agendas developed through online forums

PCD

Chris Hegarty of Christian Aid Scotland, who has been part of a small PCD working group for a few years, explained where the PCD working group had got to over the past few years. He started by mentioning the groups history. A small working group had developed back in 2014 and helped develop what became the NIDOS publications on PCD that were widely shared and referenced at Holyrood in and around the independence referendum. Both publications are available [here](#).

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Around that time, the SNP endorsed the 'do no harm' approach in their election manifesto, and more recently in 2016, both the Scottish Government and the SNP published statements on PCD and 'beyond aid' in both manifestos and government strategies.

Chris explained that in the initial stages of working with Scottish government officials, problems around understanding of what PCD is has been the main barrier. For Scot Gov, a focus on 'Beyond Aid' has meant non-monetary forms of aid, such as NHS staff volunteering, rather than dealing with structural issues inherent within other policy areas that impede/improve development outcomes. Structural issues in education, procurement, refugees etc have been complex for government to understand.

Chris went onto say that nonetheless Scottish Gov are supportive, and by December 2017, the ad hoc PCD group presented a doc to Scot Gov on 4 issues – Migration, Economy/trade, education and climate. At this point, Chris met with Scot Gov and a SPAD and they welcomed it, but then safeguarding/media stuff happened, so everything was put on pause.

Chris thinks we will be able to move again on the PCD issues, and the four areas we have chosen to work on again, and that the PCD group will meet next week to plan action. He also mentioned that Scot Gov are interested in healthcare, but are open to the four areas that the PCD group presented.

On Reporting – Scot Gov need to report on their Int Dev Strategy annually, but discussions around making the beyond aid stuff every two years is in process.

Ryan – Scot Gov now have their goal for PCD set, we need to be looking at how departments and institutions are operating.

Chris – on NPF and SDG alignment etc, he believes there is a risk we ask Scot Gov to do 3 or 4 very similar things, so cautions against lobbying in too many places, but the fact that PCD currently sits with int dev team is something we want to break away from.

Questions therefore include: How do we get this across departments? Who does this sit with? Realistically, this won't be first thing on FM's mind...

On producing a renewed Alliance report. Feelings are mixed. A report might not be necessary on its own, but potentially a shadow report from the Alliance when Scot Gov report on their int dev strategy could be useful to amplify the voices of alliance members on specific things/case studies that demonstrate coherence or a lack of.

Action

– Lewis to feedback to committee from PCD meeting next week, considering how we approach the minister, if at all in the next 6 monthly meeting.

September CPG

Group still supports climate change and international development themed meeting in September.

Amy mentioned that IVS are doing something on 21st September for International Peace Day

Ryan mentioned using 100 voices, getting someone videoed in to speak about how climate change is affecting them from the three priority countries.

Action – finalizing CPG dates and agenda preparation to be done in the Alliance Community online. **All group members are asked to sign up to Alliance Community - [Alliance Community](#)**

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