**Policy Committee Meeting Notes**

Wednesday 22 February, 2pm – 4pm

**Present**

Mark Barrell, CBM

Calum Craig, Halo

Line Christensen, Jubilee

Louise Davies, Scotland’s International Development Alliance

Fatoumata Drammeh, Unicef

Emma Gardner, IDEAS

Frances Guy, Scotland’s International Development Alliance

Chris Hegarty (Chair)

Chrissie Hirst, Corra

Lorna McDonald, Tearfund

Bakhtawar Niaz, Alliance intern - observing

Jon Novakovic

Yulia Nesterova, LMIC Network, Glasgow University

Joanne O'Neill, Action Aid

Dorcas Pratt, Water Witness

Cathy Ratcliff, EMMS

Lewis Ryder-Jones, Oxfam

Catriona Spaven-Donn, UN House Scotland

Ben Wilson, SCIAF

**Apologies**

Michael Alexander (stepping down from committee)

Simon Anderson, IIED

Benjamin Carey, Carey Tourism

**Actions**

* Anyone responding to SG energy strategy to contact Louise with comments for possible Alliance response
* All to share any relevant reports when published (Water Witness, Oxfam, Corra as noted)
* Lewis to share reflections on reparations (via Alliance blog or other means)
* All to look at the report consultant ToR and consider scope and role of the consultant
* Louise to make suggestions for financial contributions for report from interested members
* Louise and Jon to update committee ToR and circulate
* Ben, Lorna, Cathy and Frances to follow up to consider actions on SG transparency

**Introduction**

Chris opened the meeting and asked members to introduce themselves.

Previous minutes: approved with no comments.

**Discussion**

1. **Overview of Alliance activities**

Cross-Party Group meetings – next meeting 7 March (rescheduled from January). Will discuss Sarah Boyack MSP’s private members bill consultation and other potential and existing legislation which could help better understand Scotland’s global impact.

‘[Measuring Scotland’s Global Impact](https://www.intdevalliance.scot/resources/measuring-scotlands-global-impact-national-performance-framework)’ report published in February (also referred to as ‘spillovers report’). Looking to engage with other organisations to support the eight recommendations for the National Performance Framework Outcomes Review which is opening in March.

Alliance Spring Conference takes place on 16 March at Trades Hall, Glasgow. Minister Andrew Mitchell MP will open the conference and panels will discuss the economic landscape and political leadership. Scottish Government will also present on funding.

Series of workshops have taken place as part of consultation process for Scottish Government on what a Feminist Foreign Policy will look like. Organised by Alliance and Global Affairs Council. Online workshops included global south representatives.

Call for responses for Alliance members survey to feed in to future planning: [Alliance Annual Member Feedback Survey (surveymonkey.co.uk)](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/alliancefeedback2023)

Louise asked if anyone was responding to the energy strategy and just transition plan and if they could contribute to an Alliance response.

1. **Horizon scanning & info sharing**

Jo reported that she had been in Scotland meeting with SG re Wellbeing & Sustainable Development and funding for gender equality; Alasdair Allan MSP re research on Malawi and feminist wellbeing economy; and SMP & WEALL Scotland.

Ben said SCIAF are waiting for an outcome on the Climate Just Communities bid.

Ben asked if anyone knew why Conservative MSPs were asking parliamentary questions about the Climate Justice Fund. He asked what activities were planned regarding the SNP leadership election. Ben also mentioned the SG meeting on non-economic loss and damage taking place that week.

Louise said she would be working with SCCS on a ‘first 100 days’ response to the election. There is also the opportunity to draw content from the political leadership session at the Alliance conference.

Chris suggested proposing questions at any hustings and the Alliance being open to opportunities to raise international development issues.

1. **Decolonisation and anti-racism**

Dorcas reported that Water Witness are working on a ‘decolonisation of aid’ paper and will share with the committee.

Chrissie said Corra have started a research project looking into the origins of Corra’s wealth and potential links to historical and colonial exploitation. They are committed to publishing a summary, likely in the summer.

Lewis reported that Oxfam are about to publish a racial justice framework and will share with the committee. He also had extensive training on reparations which was challenging, and cautioned against the proposed reparations paper without involving those affected. He offered to share further reflections on the training.

Benjamin had noted on email that City of Edinburgh Council is planning a range of interventions, some of which could provide a framework and opportunity for Alliance members to contribute to meaningful development partnerships in former British colonies and other territories.

Emma reported that Charlotte from IDEAS and others are talking to SG about developing more anti-racism content for schools and facilitating a building racial literacy course with Education Scotland, so there is support within the IDEAS network for anti-racism learning.

1. **New co-chair**

Chris flagged that the committee is seeking a co-chair to replace Geraldine from SCIAF. The committee had previously agreed that the co-chair should be a woman. Anyone interested could talk to Chris or Louise.

1. **General election/**[**future Scotland paper**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/13geu-bmWUeDK2Sdwsd9PHWL9tc9Uq3Gc/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110037969174231892821&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Louise gave some background that the paper was originally drafted with an independence referendum/election narrative in mind. It had since been amended by Oxfam to take a broader scope, focussing on the General Election. She asked the committee to consider whether the Alliance should be more active at UK political level, whether the scope of the paper (beyond international development) was manageable, and whether committee members could contribute funding.

Lewis gave further context and underlined Oxfam’s commitment to this approach. He explained that a potential Labour UK government would give additional devolved powers and could allow for more of a global affairs identity for Scotland.

Ben was supportive and thought that UK Labour may be interested in hearing what Scottish NGOs have to say given Scotland’s reputation. He suggested we could have a facilitated session to establish what ideas we already have.

Chris thought the report would be a foundational document from which positions on the UK General Election or Scottish Elections could be drawn. Lewis agreed the report would be useful for multiple points and this might help justify the cost.

All agreed that we should be influencing beyond the SNP.

All agreed that a paper as outlined in the revised terms of reference would be beneficial.

All to look at the ToR and consider scope of the report and role of the consultant. Louise to recirculate and make suggestions for financial contributions from interested members.

1. **Wellbeing & Sustainable Development** working group update

Louise gave an update on the working group activities – they are prioritising guidance to be shared with other organisations to support a strong response to Sarah Boyack’s consultation. They are also working on briefings for Parliamentary committees to link the Bill with the National Outcomes review.

Chris asked whether the tactic to get broader support for Alliance views was working. Louise reported that so far there was support for e.g. the Alliance definitions of sustainable development and little disagreement amongst the group.

1. **Committee role &** [**terms of reference**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ki_4ughd06nHY75Xq5pWYh3wfSXHyE1V/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=110037969174231892821&rtpof=true&sd=true) **review**

Jon had left the meeting but was happy to receive any comments by email.

Louise explained the committee’s terms of reference were up for review. The Alliance was keen that the board have a more active role in sharing the strategic direction of the Alliance and ensuring that policy committee activities support that. The committee would also help to address the Alliance’s strategic objective to see more member-led activity.

Jon and Louise had produced some guidelines to support more collaboration within the committee.

The committee should: -

* support the policy direction of the Alliance:
	+ providing input on planned activities, e.g. upcoming meetings, conferences, consultation responses, policy papers and positions;
	+ developing policy positions for the Alliance to consider taking up for formal advocacy
	+ receive updates from the Alliance on in-progress projects
* offer a platform for policy collaboration amongst members (mechanism TBC)
	+ problem solving and information sharing
	+ the opportunity to spin-off member-led initiatives

Cathy supported the idea to link the committee more to the wider membership of the Alliance and to encourage others to get involved.

Chris asked what would happen if the committee wanted to carry out work that didn’t align with the Alliance strategy. He felt that activities may need to be driven by where the energy is which may not always match the strategic priorities. Ben thought we may need a caveat to explain that staff would need to balance their time according to member needs but give the committee ability to decide priorities.

Lorna suggested some detail on what would be in scope or out of scope for the committee, and suggested updating the ‘Purpose’ section of the ToR. She gave the example of emergency relief.

Mark also felt the Purpose would need to be updated to clarify that the committee would work alongside the organisational objectives. He said that the Bond working groups are successful in encouraging member led collaboration.

Ben mentioned the use of the word ‘campaign’ and felt this should be included providing that activities were always directed by members.

Louise and Jon will update the terms of reference based on comments made and circulate for feedback.

1. **AOB**

Lorna asked about discussions with SG on transparency of funding.

Frances said this is raised every time the Alliance meet SG and she will continue to do so.

Ben suggested asking SPICe (Scottish Parliament Information Centre) who could provide information on commitments made and funds spent. This could draw out inconsistencies and provide a basis for increasing pressure.

Cathy mentioned she has also raised this, as well as the way that future funding opportunities are advertised. She emphasised the importance of transparency in receiving the best applications.

Lorna asked about annual reports which used to be published.

Chris suggested asking a Minister to make a public commitment on this. Lorna said there had been commitments made previously but they haven’t been delivered upon.

Ben suggested contacting special advisors and the new First Minister/reshuffle will mean a new contact. He had also heard that there was more support for funding non Scottish NGOs and we might need to make the case for our role.

Frances suggested clarity would be needed on what we’re asking for, both to deliver on existing commitments and to adopt additional commitments.

Ben, Lorna, Cathy, Frances, and anyone else interested, to follow this up.

1. **MSP engagement**

Discussion about merits of CPGs and challenges in making new MSP connections.

Ben felt it was usual to have a group of allies and we needn’t be too concerned about this as a small group can be very effective.

Dorcas felt that CPGs, or other meetings, can be effective if it’s clear what the purpose is and what any requested action is. Cathy shared her experience of the challenges in making MSPs feel that issues they should care about are important.

Chris felt that consideration of the Parliamentary arithmetic is important. The current make up means that focussing influencing on Ministers, MSPs and Spads within SNP and Greens would be a sensible approach.

Ben said SCCS organised a mass lobby which has been successful over the years. He also thought SMP's localised approach was good - publishing a big collection of case studies of Scotland-Malawi partnerships delineated between constituencies which they then sent to constituency MSPs and used in all correspondence with them. The Alliance could do something similar, looking at very local projects related to international development that could be shared with MSPs.

1. **Reparations paper**

Yulia fed back that Glasgow Uni has been doing some superficial work in this area, along with academics carrying out research, and she would be keen to support this with the Alliance.

Agreed to wait for Lewis’s feedback on reparations from Oxfam session before revisiting this idea.

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