# **Policy Committee Meeting Tuesday 24th November 2020 2pm-4pm**

Venue: Online.

# **Committee members:**

# IIED, Christian Aid Scotland, Oxfam Scotland, Tearfund Scotland, SCIAF, Water Witness International, Carey Tourism, University of Edinburgh, Thrive, Water Aid, HALO Trust, IDEAS, British Red Cross

# **Present:** Geraldine Hill (SCIAF), Kenneth Watt (Red Cross), Cathy Ratcliff (Thrive), Dorcas Pratt (Water Witness International), Lewis Ryder-Jones (Alliance), Simon Anderson (IIED), Ben Wilson (WaterAid), Chris Loughran (HALO Trust), Jamie Livingstone (Oxfam), Chris Hegarty (Christian Aid), Hazel MacIver (Tearfund)

# **Apologies:** Benjamin Carey (Carey Tourism), Michael Alexander (Individual member)

**Decisions & Action Points:**

1. **Decolonising development/BLM/ ending ‘white gaze’**

Decision – The Alliance needs to support members to go further on these multifaceted issues (relating to BLM, Decolonising development, anti-racism, localisation etc.) through creating fora to discuss and signposting resources, to help members ask the right questions, not necessarily provide the answers.

Action - All to feed in ideas on how the Alliance can support various elements to decolonisation/localisation/anti-racism etc.

# **Committee membership and Terms of Reference**

# Decision – Terms of Reference fine, no amends needed. All current Committee members present wish to remain on committee.

# Action - Improving diversity of group (in all senses) remains important – new members should be sought with this in mind. All to recommend new member suggestions for Alliance staff to pursue.

1. **Scottish Government Review**

Action – once review findings are published, committee should plan public response, not before.

1. **Scottish Government External Affairs**

Action – Lewis and Ben to plan meeting to brainstorm ideas on wider SG external affairs opportunities.

1. **2021 Election**

Decision – Alliance, Tearfund, WaterAid, SCIAF, Christian Aid and Oxfam keen to be involved in doing some kind of public campaigning event in the run up to the election. But timings could mean it becomes a coalition of the willing

Action – election sub-group to meet in early January to take ideas further

1. **Next Quarterly Meeting:** February 2020, Doodle poll will be sent out

# **Discussion:**

1. **Decolonising development/BLM/ ending ‘white gaze’**

Discussion focused on issues that surround the Scottish Government’s focus on ‘white gaze’ and its seemingly narrow focus, and how this might miss the wider issues of unconscious bias, neo-colonial legacy etc.

All present said their organisations are doing a variety of things on different aspects of decolonisation, unconscious bias, localisiation, anti-racism etc..:

* IIED – set up a race and racism working group – discussions with partners on what decolonising development actually means – but this is not new – conversations like this have been happening for many years – but perhaps complacency has crept in given how long this topic has been around.
* SCIAF – Geraldine agrees that SG are framing like this is new and that none of us have thought about this before, which is just not true, SCIAF committed to localisation
* Simon – the relationship with the Livingstone countries – rooted in colonialism
* WWI – rooted in the concept of citizens’ voice which means engaging a lot in unconscious bias
* WaterAid – D.E.A.D. Aid (diversity, equality, antiracism etc) – doing lots on this. Ben thinks we should be going in there saying ‘we are all guilty’, acknowledge Jenny’s points
* Jamie – localisation, partner-led approach is something we’ve all been doing for a long time – but we are now looking hard at what ‘partnership’ means. A new strategic plan from Oxfam GB published this week, tackles this. They are grappling with what working in a confederated global structure in practice.
* Thrive – Cathy says there is something inherently unequal about our sector – giving/taking financial resources. But our sector is dedicated to reducing equality, so SG simplifying problem
* HALO – don’t sub-contract to partners – they work directly with locals employed directly –this has thrown up how we remove ceilings to career development depending on where staff are based. Changing how they offer and deliver trainings is a big part of this. Being more inclusive takes a lot of time and money – not to mention linguistic differences. Chris’ personal reflections: Time is necessary – this is about broad systems change and could take two generations, let’s not rush in superficial changes. Long haul.
* Chris H, Christian Aid – this issue is multifaceted not just about ethnic diversity within the sector here in Scotland… One thing that’s come up is about how we communicate development.

**Action – The Alliance needs to support members to go further on these multifaceted issues (relating to BLM, Decolonising development, anti-racism, localisation etc.) through creating fora to discuss and signposting resources, to help members ask the right questions, not necessarily provide the answers.**

**All to feed in ideas on how the Alliance can go about this.**

1. **Refresh ToR and group membership/ ways of working review**

Hazel – happy – very useful – it makes her feel more connected to the sector.

Ben – also happy – helps connect up, really useful, but caution against the fact that Capacity is an issue

Simon – there are genuine concerns about SG funding for this work, so knowing whether this group sees it as useful is veryt important for seeking other funding

Chris L – sub-groups set up to work on specific issues has been good. Chris L thinks its been a good group to be part of.

Chris H – seems to be working well – good to able to contract out work to this group when capacity is low in organisations

Question what happens if Lewis isn’t there?

Geraldine – this group has done some really good things, with a lot of hard work from Lewis. It adds value to the ‘bigger members’, through coordination of policy positions etc. But it really is worth having – how do we ensure it happens without Lewis?

Chris L – it would be difficult for this group to function without someone fulfilling Lewis’ role. Highly support the push to get more funding for this work at the Alliance.

On new members – diversity (in terms of type of member (NGO, individual, private sector etc), but also in terms of race and gender - really important – how do we attract new members?

**Decision – ToR fine, all current members present wish to remain on committee. Improving diversity of group remains important – new members should be sought with this in mind.**

1. **Scottish Government Review** **and CTEEA inquiry**

Simon – Alliance CEO and DCEO with chair of BoT have meeting with SG minister and official coming up on this issue.

Hazel – tearfund’s response quite spiky – this is not a consultation

Jamie – lack of clarity, lack of meaningful consultation – not bubbled up his priority list.

Cathy – not responded or done anything on this yet. She thinks this review has come about because of the way Jenny Gilruth has been briefed, not because she genuinely thinks our sector is racist

SCIAF – no written input option, not inclusive e.g. language

Kenneth Watt : Red Cross is not responding, currently

Chris Hegarty : CA not responding at the mo either, for reasons others have stated... not sure what, why, who for...

Ben Wilson : agree Geraldine - try to work with Jenny as much as possible. Nicely nicely, "we're all in this together" to decolonise aid etc.

Simon – let’s not rush into public responses etc. be nice to Jenny, bring her on side.

**Action – once review findings are published, committee should plan public response, not before.**

1. **UK stuff - FCDO, the IDC and cuts to 0.7%**

HALO – Chris thinks we haven’t seen any positive outcomes of merger yet, but time needed to deal with practicalities of merger around jobs and careers. Cautiously optimistic at this stage. Integrated review needed.

Jamie – on previous briefing on Merger – could still be useful – voicing opposition will remain important even if cut is unavoidable.

HALO –agree that opposition is vital. But also opportunity to look at effectiveness and the vast reduction is also a chance to look at efficiencies. Let’s oppose but also be propositional

Jamie – we need to start with opposition, then follow on with looking at efficiencies

Geraldine Hill SCIAF : I agree with Jamie, we have to come out strong on this

Geraldine Hill SCIAF : interesting stats from some exchanges today 30% ODA cut which will offset about 2% of extra government spending due to COVID

Kenneth Watt : <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ruth-davidson-comment-britains-global-ambitions-cant-be-sacrificed-3tdhvxtdp>

Geraldine Hill SCIAF : Catholic faith leaders (Bishops Presidents of SCIAF with Bishops from our sister agencies CAFOD and Trocaire) have also voiced opposition

Chris Hegarty : just to say that CA is being pretty strong on the reduction - alluding to it happening at the same time as the recently-announced increase in military spending and saying it's a worrying direction of travel...broken promises to the poor and so on.

Simon – look to see how members respond, then respond ourselves

**Decision – look at how Alliance members respond to cuts announcement before formulating an Alliance response. Keep working with Bond on this issue.**

1. **Scottish Government External Affairs**

Recent meeting with Michael Russell and Jenny Gilruth

Simon – discussion included chat on loss and damage.

On Scot Gov influencing overseas discussion

Clear opportunities with Brexit and COP26 for SG to take a new approach to wider external affair. Would there be appetite to get a meeting together to throw ideas around on how we think SG can use new arena to better influence Global dev, improve PCSD etc.

Ben – keen to set up a focused discussion on this soon.

**Action – Lewis and Ben to plan meeting to brainstorm ideas on wider SG external affairs opportunities.**

1. **2021 Election – What’s next?**

* Lewis had a meeting with Dave Watson (Labour policy lead), Oxfam had spoken to Dave too, seems like they are now on board with Wellbeing and Sus Dev Act.
* Labour were less interested in "process stuff" hence PCSD was a hard sell. But very interested in increasing Climate Justice Fund, and also on either maintain or increasing real-terms value of IDF.
* There is still chance to influence Labour right through to Labour. Labour still keen to get more inputs
* Lewis and Ben met with Jack McConnell - really useful meeting, and very supportive ally. Speaking tonight and said he would mention our asks. Should stay in touch with him.
* Greens and SNP meetings last month - positive initial meetings, but requiring some follow-up.
* Tories haven't engaged at all with us at all – since meeting Ben and Lewis had meeting with Manifesto lead.
* Lib Dems have said "send stuff to this email address"

1. Wellbeing and SD Bill Update

Need to build support in SDG Network. Lewis working on this. More to follow in the new year.

IIED could help with angles on links between sustainable development and nature crisis.

Jamie – on NPF indicators – SG have now published their composite indicator to measure progress on the international outcome, almost a year after holding an open meeting with some of us at Victoria key as they began to explore options with a consultant. We might want to think about doing an analysis of whether we think this indicator is adequate to measure progess (with PCSD in mind) or not.

Report from consultants that informs new indicator here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/developing-national-indicator-scotland-scotlands-contribution-international-development/pages/5/>

1. Polling and public perceptions data

Meet to decide how we use the data – convene group to discuss. Embargo on data.

Press release – maybe (now done)

Action – those who are interested meet on Monday to discuss data (done)

1. Public campaign? Candidate influencing? Husting event planning?

Chris – had an informal chat with Jaime about running joint campaigning activities, and whther the Alliance and/or other would have appetite to do shared events together.

One idea would be to pick a UN day a few weeks out from the election and get Candidates and other together to discuss international development at quite a high level. Not specifically focused down on the minutiae of SG ID funding, but more general on something like ‘Scotland’s role in a fair and sustainable world’.

What do people think of public campaigning?

Using a world day – how can do that?

Have we thought about how we can leverage what other parties are saying with the SNP?

Chris – let’s keep in mind ideas on how we can use other parties to influence what the SNP might do.

Jamie – need to be careful on campaign restrictions due to lobbying act from Christmas onwards. Ensure that an activities focus on influencing Political Parties, not voting intentions. Need to be careful how we manage such activities.

Chris – perhaps we need to get other things done before manifestos are published.

Jamie – given the implications of restricted activity, much easier to organise (and justify) a campaigning event before manifestos are published, i.e mid spring, march- early April.

Lewis – candidate influencing needs to be on our radar.

**Action – Tearfund, WaterAid, SCIAF, Christian Aid and Oxfam keen to do something public in the run up to the election.**

**Action – election sub-group to meet in early January to take ideas further**

1. **AOB** (20 mins)

Jamie - On COP26 - may need to bring a conversation forward into January if there is a collective desire to put forward an expression of interest for an Alliance event.

Tearfund making massive cuts next years – an FYI but interested to hear if others are dealing with the same.

**Next Quarterly Meeting:** February 2020, Doodle poll will be sent out