

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON MALAWI

Thursday 13th September 2018
Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 2

MINUTES

Co-Convenor: Alexander Stewart MSP

Year of Young People and CPG AGM

Attendees

1. Dr Alasdair Allan MSP
2. Alexander Stewart MSP
3. Liam McArthur MSP
4. Sam Baumber, Social Enterprise Academy
5. Lotte Beekenkamp, 2050 Climate Group
6. Johnathan Bowes, University of Strathclyde
7. Stuart Brown, SMP
8. Gemma Burnside, SMP
9. Christine Campbell, University of Edinburgh
10. Sarah Cowie
11. Laura Curtis-Moss
12. Karen Kumakanga, Jubilee Enterprise
13. Andrew Duncan
14. Ross Duncan
15. Mike Elm, 2050 Climate Group
16. Carol Finlay, Church of Scotland
17. Claire Foottit
18. Dermot Gorman, NHS Lothian
19. Maureen Gowans
20. David Hope-Jones, SMP
21. Aneta Kaczor
22. Webster Siame Kameme, University of St Andrews
23. Roger Lambert, Grow Movement
24. Roderick McCafferty
25. Rebecca Mkwezalembe, Dzuka Africa/SEAMalawi
26. Morgan Mkwezalembe, Dzuka Africa
27. Emily Mnyayi, Social Enterprise Academy
28. Ellie Murtagh, 2050 Climate Group
29. Joyce Nicoll
30. Grace O'Donovan, SMP
31. Philippa Ramsden, Scotland's International Development Alliance
32. Kevin Schenk, Care Inspectorate
33. Mercy Sibande, Mamie Martin Fund
34. Dante Sosa
35. Donald Todd, RGU
36. Peter West, Malawi High Commission

Apologies

Stuart McMillan MSP
Kenneth J Gibson MSP
Linda Fabiani MSP
David Stevenson
Kevin Simpson
Robert Garrow

1. Welcome, apologies and minutes of the last meeting

Alexander Stewart MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Scotland Malawi Partnership for running the Cross Party Groups.

2. AGM:

Alexander Stewart MSP opened the AGM and handed over to David Hope-Jones as Secretary for the first two items.

David Hope-Jones noted that of the three current Co-Convenors, Alexander Stewart MSP and Liam McArthur MSP were standing for re-election and Clare Haughey MSP was standing down given her ministerial appointment which precludes CPG appointments. Alasdair Allan MSP also stood for election as Co-Convenor.

Alexander Stewart MSP, Liam McArthur MSP and Alasdair Allan MSP were together elected as Co-Convenors. This was formally proposed by Peter West and seconded by Carol Finlay

Christine McKelvie MSP stood down as Co-Vice Convenor due to her Ministerial appointment. Patrick Harvey MSP (in absentia) and Elaine Smith MSP (in absentia) were together elected as Co-Vice Convenors, proposed by Peter West and seconded by Liam McArthur.

Alexander Stewart MSP conducted the election for the post of Secretary. David Hope-Jones (ex officio, Scotland Malawi Partnership) was elected to this position, proposed by Alexander Stewart and seconded by Liam McArthur.

Alexander introduced the CPG on the Year of Young People.

3. Mercy Sibande, Mamie Martin Fund (MMF)

Mercy thanked all for the privilege to attend the CPG and for the opportunity to speak. Mercy is the Manager for the Mamie Martin Fund, Malawi, a charitable organisation that started in Malawi in 1993 to help pay the tuition fees for girls in secondary school. MMF works in partnership with the Synod of Livingstonia, and currently pays for the tuition fees of 106 girls in schools. Mercy spoke to the fact that even though their tuition is paid for, the girls still have emotional stress due to their physical conditions at home or at school, so Mercy visits these schools to support, encourage and motivate them. For example, Mercy related the story of one girl whom she visited at a school last term who was absent. When Mercy enquired where she was, she was told that the girl couldn't attend school as she didn't have a suitcase in which to carry her books and she was ashamed to carry her books and clothes in a plastic bag to school. After Mercy relayed this to the MMF Trustees in Scotland, Mercy received funds to buy the girl a suitcase and she promptly went back to school. Mercy explained that this is only one example of the hardship these girls face, but through her visits and encouragement and motivation, sometimes this can be enough to give them the courage to persist with their education.

More, however, needs to be done at a higher level in continuing their education through to university. In 2016, MMF partnered with The Soko Fund so that when these girls finish their secondary school education, they can apply through The Soko Fund to have their university tuition fees paid for. Currently, girls have a higher drop-out rate due to their economic, social and cultural conditions. The work that MMF have done thus far has seen a greater impact in that most of the girls they support, now remain until they can finish secondary school, even those who haven't been selected for university. Regardless, they are then at a level where they can run small businesses and excel, and they can also help to raise their own children with an education.

4. Lotte Beekenkamp and Mike Elm, 2050 Climate Group

Lotte Beekenkamp and Mike Elm displayed a video sent from MaSP speaking to their partnership and plans.

Mike Elm introduced the 2050 Climate Group as having arisen out of Scotland's first Youth Climate Summit where it sought to address the question of what 2050 would look like for young people aged 25-30 years old. It was concluded that youth sought more climate change knowledge and leadership in school, and as a result, the 2050 Climate Group has developed the Young Leaders Development Programme. It helps support young people with the professional and political knowledge to make a difference throughout their careers and also helps to build a leadership network across the country where climate action is driven throughout their careers. Mike is on the Board of Trustees, and works alongside 50-60 volunteers. They are supported by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Scottish Water and the Scottish Government to run their programme. While climate change is a major global issue which can't be necessarily 'solved', in the last three years, they have attended the UN Climate

Conference and have spoken widely about their experience to other organisations. Feedback has been that their model is different and is working.

Lotte Beekenkamp is supporting organisations outside of Scotland through a new Climate Leaders' Project in Malawi, where she is working alongside the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) to support 18-35 year olds aiming to educate and empower themselves as community leaders for change. It is based on a social movement and the transformation required to help Malawians address climate change challenges that they face today. The 2050 Climate Group is a collective movement that is facilitating programmes for young people by young people. Lotte thanked the Scottish Government for supporting and funding the Malawi Climate Leader's Project. It seeks to address the social, environmental and economic challenges faced by climate change and support young Malawians in understanding the impact had on a local and global scale, and empower them to take action in their person, professional and political lives. In the next month, there will be a steering group created which will help build activities with those who will be recruited. It will reflect the topics that they want to engage with, and while Lotte noted that they aren't certain what the activities will be yet, it is because the young people will take a leading role to decide these for themselves. It will also seek to be an intercultural learning experience as an exchange with Scotland.

Alexander Stewart MSP thanked Mike, Lotte and MaSP for the video, and for highlighting practical solutions on the ground in Malawi.

Q: Are you in contact with the Climate Justice Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU)?

A: Mike noted that they will pursue this avenue, and while they are still at the start of their journey, they want to emphasise that they are a collaborative organisation so they are open to making new connections and partnerships.

5. Karen Kumakanga, Jubilee Enterprise

Karen Kumakanga thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak at the CPG, and also thanked the Scottish Government for their support in Malawi and for all the work that they do. Karen noted that it was this time last year that an agreement was signed with the Scottish Government and Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, the former Minister for International Development. Last year, they discussed solar and geothermal progress, and she hopes the conversation is still continuing. Karen also stated that she would like to see progress made on the responsible and sustainable production of charcoal in Malawi.

Karen is in Scotland attending the Social Enterprise World Forum, where social enterprises across the world come together to share their practices. The Jubilee Enterprise will be launching their schools programme thanks to the Scottish Government. The social enterprise movement advances social economic development, allowing platforms for different people and businesses to create solutions for communities, seeing people helping others. The Social Enterprise

Academy (SEA) has run 17 programmes in Malawi, trained 195 people, 52 organisations, and looks at how businesses can be socially conscious in being deliberate about who they target, and what they target. It is also about organisations being sustainable instead of working through donorship. Jubilee Enterprise has partnered with a private university which attracts young people in business. They also have a schools programme called Dzuka Africa, which uses the social enterprise model to support 190 primary school students. As the Jubilee Enterprise launches their schools programme, they'll be working alongside MaSP to strengthen the impact in schools. It is about providing the tools and a platform for children that will continue into their future. Going back to Malawi, Karen hopes to start a coalition of social enterprises which are passionate about this, and hopes that this will open up this model to other organisations who want to address the challenges of the environment, and human resources and how we think about Malawi in the future. Talking about youth and social enterprise harks back to last year's agreement with Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, where it was stated that partnerships are important collaborations. Karen noted that the SMP can keep opening platforms for these to happen, and hopes that 2019 will be a year of collaboration.

6. Alexander Stewart thanked Karen and opened the floor to a Q&A.

Q: Malawi has its own presidential and local elections next May (2019). With the demographic shifts in Malawi, one big change since the last elections is that there are more young people interested in politics. A question to each of the speakers: what role will young people have in engaging the political system in the run-up to the election?

Mercy: Mercy stated that the young ones are the leaders now, so they will want to see a leader who can bring transformation and development for young people in Malawi. They want someone who can help achieve their goals, and who will not look at the political system as a means of personal gain, but for the development of the country.

Karen: Looking at transformational leadership, great policies will change Malawi alongside great thinking. When the young people vote, they want accountability and genuine innovation and commitment to change, but only see pre-election posturing and tribal divisions. The youth will be a good place to start to promote awareness of where Malawi is going, rather than tribes and party colours. There needs to be more accountability in the voting system, which is an opportunity for young people to come together to support accountability in the electoral commission. Elections can be rigged digitally, and what is especially worrying is the violence. There is a culture of inciting violence because they belong to a particular party. The Scottish Government needs to put funding towards a dialogue that addresses common values and how everyone can work together to prevent youth violence. If they are steered in the right direction, the youth are crucial.

Mike: In Scotland, the 2050 Climate Group has set up youth groups – one of which is a policy group that works around the Climate Change Bill and is based

on feedback that the youth demographic are looking for Scotland to become carbon neutral by 2050. As the 2050 Climate Group do more work in Malawi, some of the learning will be shared there as well.

Q: Malawi is a deferential and polite country when addressing previous generations. Is there a sense that youth want to do things differently to how the generations that have gone before have done?

Karen: There has been a sense of helplessness about what the future will bring because they think that the vote won't count and it will be rigged. They want to do things differently but in terms of the 'how', that needs to come from them. We need to engage them in what their democracy would look like. It starts from a system of governance that accommodates their ingenuity. There is a lot of great young people with good solutions that have not been recognised by the government yet. Malawi is a beautiful country but it needs a good system of governance.

Mike: The perception of religious leaders vs political leaders is different than it is in Scotland and this is something to think about.

Q: The expectations on Parliament in Malawi can be different than they are here, especially in terms of unsustainable expectations. Is there a hope of changing these expectations placed on parliamentarians?

Mercy: They want to reduce the fee for women to stand in parliamentary elections. The cost deters the youth. If that amount cannot be reduced, the same people will stand for election.

Karen: On high expectations, it is an issue on both sides for awareness and capacity building. MP's don't have much capacity building about how they are supposed to conduct themselves and with their constituencies, what they expect of each other, and how they can create a system that can help them deliver on projects during the time they are there. No leader is perfect, and they know that they must be the change they want to see. It's about empowering youth and MP's so everyone can manage their expectations.

Q: In Malawi, getting more people into education is important. What is the greatest barrier to getting people into education at the moment?

Karen: 80% of Malawians can't afford education, and out of 8,000 students who write a university entrance exam, one is picked because they already don't have the space. Fees are a barrier, as well as university places. Technology could meet this gap, allowing students to study remotely. There are a lot of libraries and post offices in every constituency. They could set up computers and help people learn and earn certificates, which might encourage young people to learn more. Malawians are brilliant but they don't have much exposure, and when people are cutting down resources it creates a creative and analytical thinking barrier. How do you problem solve? That disconnect is how many youth emerge from secondary school and can't make a living. The Malawian curriculum is not

relevant to the needs of the people, whereas global learning and best practice can be flexible and deliver on this gap.

Q: What are the plans for sustainability beyond these partnerships since they won't necessarily last forever?

Mercy: We are starting an association where the girls who have been through MMF funded schooling can come together to support future generations.

Lotte: We are looking at the long-term sustainability of the programme and we will develop this with the steering group of young people. We are now looking to gather more input to make this Malawian-led programme long-lasting.

Karen: It is hard work, and plans need to be looked at again and again. We can look at other services we can offer. We are working in partnership with SEA now, but in three years there will be progress. We get a small fee to make it a sustainable capacity building institution which will be well positioned for future plans and this coalition will help strengthen its value chain.

Alexander Stewart MSP thanked everyone for attending, and invited attendees to continue the conversation alongside networking and Malawian Gin & Tonics.