

Cross Party Group on Malawi

Wednesday 23rd November 2016
Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 5

MINUTES

Co-Conveners: Alexander Stewart MSP and Liam McArthur MSP

Scotland-Malawi Faith-Based Links

Attendees

1. Alexander Stewart MSP
2. Ash Denham – MSP
3. Kate Forbes – MSP
4. Clare Haughey – MSP
5. Liam McArthur MSP
6. Elaine Smith – MSP
7. Alexander Stewart – MSP
8. Maree Todd – MSP
9. Ishbel Adamson – Old Parish & St Paul’s Church
10. Nan Arnott – Dalgety Parish Church
11. Robin Arnott – Dalgety Parish Church
12. Jean Bareham
13. Charlie Bevan – Scotland Malawi Partnership
14. Colin Cameron – SMP Member
15. Alison Campbell - St Andrew's and St George's West
16. Patrick Cashman
17. Catherine Chambers - Ross Presbytery
18. Jennie Chinembiri – Church of Scotland
19. Kathryn Chipperfield – Scotland Malawi Partnership
20. Rev. George Cowie – Aberdeen South Holburn
21. Anne Dawson – SMP Member
22. Bill Duncan – Ayr Presbytery
23. Geraldine Fleming – St Bernadette’s Partnership
24. Carol Finlay – Church of Scotland
25. Ruth Forrester – St Andrew’s and St George’s West
26. Sally Foster-Fulton – Christian Aid
27. Ewen Gilchrist
28. Jane Gilchrist-Adams – Cults Parish Church
29. Karen Gillon – Church of Scotland
30. Andrew Gilmour
31. Maureen Gowans
32. Nigel Harper – LUV +
33. Pat Hiddleston
34. Lois Hinley- Innerleithen, Traquair, Walkerburn
35. David Hope-Jones – Scotland Malawi Partnership
36. John Hutchison – St Columba’s Church
37. Brian Kerr – Soko Fund/Mamie Martin Fund
38. Elyse Kirkham – Toilet Twinning
39. Kay Laing – Aberdeen South Holburn Church
40. David Logue – Mid Argyll Twinning Group
41. Louise Logue – Mid Argyll Twinning Group
42. Hazel MacIver – Tearfund
43. Grace Manyika – SMP Board
44. James Mays – St Bernadette’s Partnership
45. Gordon MacRae – Humanist Society Scotland
46. Margaret Merchant – Churches of God
47. Alison O’Connell – CBM UK
48. Maureen Potter – Kwenderana Group
49. Catherine Rawlinson-Watkins – EMMS Int.
50. Denis Robson - Innerleithen, Traquair, Walkerburn
51. Gray Sidira – LISAP
52. Lauren Stahly – St Columba’s Church
53. William Steven – Kwenderana Group
54. David Stevenson- University of Edinburgh
55. Jack Thompson- SMP Board
56. Chris Thornhill – Netherlorn Churches
57. Peter West – Hon Consul to Malawi
58. Percy Patrick – SCIAF
59. Lawrence Sum – Scottish Bible Society
60. Adah Younger

Apologies

1. Mario Aguilar – St Andrews
2. Anna Boni – Education Scotland
3. Donald Cameron – MSP
4. Alex Cole-Hamilton – MSP
5. Elspeth Davey -Overseas Committee of Scottish Episcopal Church
6. Bob Garrow – RS Garrow Ltd.
7. Julie Griffiths – Alloway Parish Church
8. Johann Lamont – MSP
9. John Mason – MSP
10. Sue Pattison – SMP Member
11. Jane Salmonson - NIDOS
12. Anas Sarwar - MSP
13. Ross Thomson – MSP
14. Maree Todd – MSP
15. Tome Utting – MSP
16. David Yacamini – St Mark’s Church

1. Welcome and introductions

The CPG on Malawi Co-Convener Alexander Stewart MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and a number of apologies were noted (see list opposite). Minutes were approved from the previous CPG meeting in September.

2. Key updates from Malawi

Liam McArthur, CPG on Malawi Co-Convenor, spoke about his recent visit to Malawi as part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary delegation. The workshops that took place were focused on building capacity in the national assembly; they covered budgetary processes, government accountability and constituency engagement.

Liam expressed concerns over the amount of UK aid spent on short-term emergency humanitarian crises (approximately 80%), at the expense of longer-term development programmes. There are 6.5 million people on the hunger list, which is likely to rise to 8 million by the end of the lean period. There is little mention of this in the media. Liam questioned how we can publicise the food security crisis more widely.

David Hope-Jones, Principal Officer of the Scotland Malawi Partnership, stated that James Wharton, Minister for International Development, announced £8.3 million more funding for food security in Malawi. The UK and Scottish Governments have been quick to respond, with the Scottish Government match funding four NGOs (EMMS International, Christian Aid, Oxfam Scotland and SCIAF). The appeal by Christian Aid finished this week, with £20,000 still to be raised.

David told the group that Holly Tett, the incoming British High Commissioner to Malawi, is coming to meet Scotland Malawi Partnership members on December 7th in the Edinburgh City Chambers.

3. Gray Sidira, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer at Livingstonia Synod AIDS Programme (LISAP)

LISAP was founded in 1994, and works with people affected by HIV and AIDS. They aim to reduce the prevalence of HIV and AIDS, as well as mitigate its impacts on those affected.

Livingstonia Synod has long-standing connections with Scotland, with partnerships with the Church of Scotland, EMMS and Tearfund. The focus of all these links has been on supporting those marginalized because of their HIV status, with projects aimed at improving nutrition, girls empowerment and health.

4. Faith in the contemporary Scotland-Malawi relationship:

CBM UK: Alison O'Connell, Programme Manager

CBM UK works towards disability inclusive development around the world, and has been working in Malawi since 1971. Alison shared how faith affects both their focus (in terms of inclusion) and their programme approach (working with partners, civil society and led by a participatory approach). CBM UK works with a number of Malawian partners, including MACOHA, FEDOMA and the College of Medicine.

EMMS International: Catherine Rawlinson-Watkins, Director of Fundraising

EMMS International is a Christian NGO, which recognises the value of the church and its faith-links at a practical level, working alongside community, and also connecting with faith groups on a spiritual level. EMMS works with LISAP on HIV programmes, contributing towards significant reductions in parent to

child transmission rates. EMMS is also involved in palliative care work and has held a match funding campaign for the food crisis. Cat shared that, as a Christian organisation, EMMS believes every life is precious, and in their palliative care programmes individuals should have the opportunity to face death with dignity.

Tearfund: Hazel MacIver, Advocacy and Campaigns Manager

Tearfund is a relief and development charity, working in partnership with Christian agencies and churches worldwide to tackle the causes and effects of poverty. In Malawi Tearfund works with churches to target the neediest, especially women, and have set-up microloan schemes. Churches are trusted actors in the community, addressing spiritual and emotional needs, as well as material needs. Churches can also play a key role in terms of ending stigma, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS. Tearfund has been working with their partners in Malawi using self-help groups. The groups, mostly of women, use the profit towards income-generating initiatives, developing entrepreneurial skills and addressing impediments to gender equality such as early child marriages.

Christian Aid: Sally Foster-Fulton, Head

Christian Aid began 70 years ago, and has been working in Malawi for many years. Working with churches in Scotland, and 17 partners in Malawi has allowed them to deepen their impact. Sally reflected that churches can get into parts of the community that not all NGOs can, they can play a leading role in challenging stigma and have the ear of the community, able to advocate on their behalf. Christian Aid has also been running a match giving campaign to raise funds towards the food security crisis in Malawi.

Scottish Bible Society: Lawrence Sum, Director of Communications

The Scottish Bible Society is a non-denominational Christian charity that works with churches and other Bible Societies around the world. The primary mission of the Bible Society is to translate and distribute the bible. The Malawi Bible Society is involved in a number of programmes, including literacy, awareness raising on the social stigma of HIV and AIDS, trauma healing and providing emergency aid.

Church of Scotland: Jennie Chinembiri, Africa and Caribbean Secretary

The Church of Scotland has a longstanding partnership with the CCAP in Malawi. Jennie spoke of the churches trusted position within communities, emphasizing that as a predominantly Christian country, the church has a huge role to play, and she also spoke about the great bond that is formed between people when they pray together. The Church of Scotland works alongside its partners and follows their priorities, waiting to be asked before acting. Dependency can still be an issue, however the focus is on relationships and the people involved. C of S offers scholarships to members of partner churches in Malawi, and is exploring opportunities to work with Edinburgh University to bring Malawian students to Scotland. They also organize summer placements for Scottish people to visit Malawi. The Church of Scotland supports an active twinning programme between Scottish and Malawian congregations, and of the 180 links, 80 are with Malawi.

SCIAF: Percy Patrick, Programme Manager

SCIAF works in 16 countries to help the poorest people in the world, they have been working in Malawi since 1985. They work mainly with women and focus on smallholder farmers in the southern districts of Malawi. Their work involves improving husbandry, irrigation, seed banks, cash crop production, livestock and establishing credit unions. SCIAF is starting to work with people facing stigma due to their albinism, an area that few organisations are working on but that has featured heavily in the media recently. Percy reflected that albinos are one of the most marginalised groups in Malawi society. Percy requested that the issue of albinism be raised in Parliament. SCIAF has raised £140,000 during their food security appeal, and are pleased to be sending £280,000 to Malawi thanks to match funding by the Scottish Government.

5. Open discussion around the impact of faith-based links between Scotland and Malawi

Jack Thompson:

Jack commented that certain organisations become experts at attracting aid which means that people can fall through the cracks. It is vital that assistance is spread fairly to communities and regions that don't typically receive support.

Jack suggested that a committee to coordinate faith based groups working in Malawi would be extremely useful. David H-J commented that in March 2016 the SMP and Church of Scotland hosted its first annual faith-based forum in Dunblane, which will be repeated on 18th March 2017, in Glasgow.

David encouraged individual churches to become members of the Scotland Malawi Partnership. Churches are automatically members if part of Church of Scotland, however there are many benefits to signing up for free as an individual church. For more information or to provide details of your church, speak to Kathryn (Kathryn@scotland-malawipartnership.org). Having individual churches named will enable the links to be mapped out, helping to see where work is focused.

David Stevenson:

David commented that in the 1960s, albinos that survived to adulthood seemed accepted in the community. The group spoke about the difficulties facing children, who are not attending school for fears for their safety. Within the villages there is a lot of social stigma and albinos are kept isolated from society, even being handed over by their own family members. It is difficult to support albinos without knowing where they live.

Peter West:

An important way to support Malawi is to contribute to funding campaigns that are being matched by the Scottish Government. The group commended the Government for its match funding initiatives.

Denis Robson:

Denis commented that his church group have been fundraising for their partner church in Malawi and are keen to network at a grassroots level in order to share experiences.

Carol Finlay and Hazel McIver:

A number of the group commented that climate change is having a big effect in Malawi. There is huge value in working with faith based organisations on this issue, and the church has been involved with supporting DFID's developing strategy in this area; however congregations often cannot access government funding because they are a religious body. It's important that the Government recognises the contribution that they are making. There is a role here for the SMP to lobby the Government on this issue.

Carol also thanked the SMP for their support relating to visa applications. It continues to be very difficult for Malawians seeking to visit their partners here in Scotland.

6. Any other business

- The deadline for the Scottish Government's Small Grants Programme is next week.
- On December 1st there is a meeting with DFID to discuss implementation of their civil society review. You can book a place on the SMP website.
- A £4 million grant has been awarded to support the David Livingstone Centre.