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Scotland and Wales in Africa: Opportunities for a Coordinated UK Approach to Development

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SUMMARY POINTS

- Despite the limitations of devolution in the United Kingdom, Scotland and Wales have launched independent international development initiatives focused on African countries – the Scottish Malawi Development Programme and the Wales for Africa Scheme.
- These policies place an innovative emphasis on establishing links between communities, schools and institutions in order to gain mutual benefit from sharing skills and establishing friendships. This element has real potential to add nuance to UK-level development efforts in Africa, which are channelled through multi-million-pound programmes run by the Department for International Development (DFID).
- In spite of the possible advantages, until now the UK's central and devolved governments have not collaborated in their African development efforts.
- The fault lies with all sides. In both Wales and Scotland there has been a lack of clarity over what the development initiatives are intended to achieve, and initial enthusiasm has gradually given way to a sidelining of the Africa policies. The initiatives have also received very little attention at a UK level, leaving devolved government officials and Welsh and Scottish NGOs – on whom the policies' implementation hinges – feeling marginalized. The situation is not helped by the ad hoc way in which relations between central and devolved government departments have progressed since devolution.
- With increased focus on the development areas where they can make a real difference, and a clearer set of goals for each policy, the value of Scottish and Welsh development activities in Africa could be much enhanced. At a time when DFID and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) face significant cuts, there is now a great opportunity to encourage innovative and better coordinated development policies across all levels of government.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scotland and Wales in Africa: Opportunities for a Coordinated UK Approach to Development

Despite the limits of devolution, Scotland and Wales have launched international development initiatives with a primary focus on people-to-people and institutional linking with African countries. The Scottish Malawi Development Programme and the Wales for Africa scheme are flagship development policies for each government. Links between Scottish and Welsh parliamentarians and their counterparts in Malawi, Lesotho, Somaliland and elsewhere have also grown, resulting in a network of partnerships based on friendly personal relations.

Both devolved administrations' forays into development and diplomacy in Africa have the potential to contribute more to the UK's engagement in Africa, currently channelled through the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO). The benefits of this for both sides are clear – while Scotland and Wales could enjoy unique leverage as small donors with the ear of a major contributor to African development, the UK could gain access to the familiar partnerships cultivated through the Welsh and Scottish initiatives, helping to increase public awareness and appreciation of the work of DFID, and to ease the sometimes difficult relationships with local policy-makers.

However, there are a number of obstacles to collaboration between the UK, Wales and Scotland in their efforts for development in Africa, and the fault lies with all sides. Within both Wales and Scotland initial political enthusiasm for the development initiatives has gradually declined, meaning that the innovative element of the programmes is increasingly sidelined. There has been little reflection by Welsh and Scottish policy-makers on what exactly the goals of their initiatives are, and where they sit within the context of the UK. The lack of political focus has meant that there is little domestic public awareness of the devolved governments' international engagement despite their cultivation of good relations with their African partners. This sits badly with the concept of community links being the best basis for development.

Many DFID employees are not aware that Scotland and Wales have launched independent policies on development, and this is symptomatic of a second obstacle – the difficulty experienced by those involved in Wales for Africa and the Malawi Development Programme when trying to engage with their UK-level counterparts. For some the distance maintained by representatives of central government is felt to be a slight. This pushes those involved in development towards the idea that their work must be particularly Welsh or Scottish, drawing away from the potential benefits of collaboration. Underlying this issue is the ad hoc way in which relations between the UK government and devolved administrations have evolved since 1999.

At the end of 2010 severe cuts were announced for all UK government departments, with the FCO set to lose almost a quarter of its spending budget, and DFID to cut over a third of its administrative costs. At the same time, overseas aid from the UK is due to rise to £12.6 billion per year, placing extraordinary pressure on DFID to deliver successful projects, and quickly. Closer collaboration with other development initiatives already taking place in the UK would undoubtedly help increase success, and would also contribute to presenting a united but multifaceted approach to development efforts being launched from the UK.

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Yr Alban a Cymru yn Affrica: Cyfleoedd ar gyfer Dulliau Datblygu Cydgysylltiedig y DU

Er gwaethaf cyfyngiadau datganoli, mae Cymru a'r Alban wedi lansio mentrau datblygu rhyngwladol sy'n canolbwyntio'n bennaf ar gysylltu pobl a sefydliadau â gwledydd Affrica. Mae Rhaglen Datblygu Malawi'r Alban a chynllun Cymru o blaid Affrica yn bolisïau datblygu blaenllaw ar gyfer llywodraethau Cymru a'r Alban. Mae'r cysylltiadau rhwng seneddwyr Cymru a'r Alban a'u cymheiriaid yn Malawi, Lesotho, Somaliland a llywodraethau eraill wedi cynyddu, gan arwain at rwydwaith o bartneriaethau sy'n seiliedig ar gysylltiadau personol cyfeillgar.

Mae gan fentrau'r ddwy weinyddiaeth ddatganoledig i faes datblygu a diplomyddiaeth yn Affrica y potensial i gyfrannu mwy at waith ymgysylltu'r DU yn Affrica, sydd ar hyn o bryd yn cael ei wneud drwy'r Adran dros Ddatblygu Rhyngwladol (DFID) a'r Swyddfa Dramor a Chymanwlad. Mae yna fanteision clir i'r ddwy ochr - tra gallai Cymru a'r Alban gael dylanwad unigryw fel cyfranwyr bychan gyda diddordeb gan ennyn sylw cyfrannwr pwysig yng ngwaith datblygu Affrica, fe allai'r DU gael mynediad at bartneriaethau cyfarwydd, sydd wedi eu meithrin trwy fentrau Cymru a'r Alban. Byddai hyn yn helpu i godi ymwybyddiaeth a gwerthfawrogiad y cyhoedd o waith yr Adran dros Ddatblygu Rhyngwladol, ac i leddfu'r berthynas anodd ar adegau gyda gwneuthurwyr polisïau lleol.

Fodd bynnag, mae nifer o ffactorau'n rhwystro ymdrechion Cymru, yr Alban a'r DU i gydweithio ar gyfer datblygu yn Affrica, ac mae'r bai ar bob ochr. Yng Nghymru a'r Alban, mae'r brwdfrydedd gwleidyddol cychwynnol ar gyfer y mentrau datblygu wedi dirywio'n raddol, sy'n golygu bod elfen arloesol y rhaglenni yn cael ei rhoi fwyfwy o'r neilltu. Ychydig iawn o ystyriaeth y mae gwneuthurwyr polisi Cymru a'r Alban wedi ei roi i amcanion eu mentrau, a'u lleoliad yng nghydestun y DU. Mae'r diffyg pwyslais gwleidyddol wedi golygu mai ychydig o ymwybyddiaeth gyhoeddus sy'n bodoli yng Nghymru a'r Alban ynglŷn â chysylltiadau rhyngwladol y llywodraethau datganoledig, er eu bod wedi meithrin cysylltiadau da gyda'u partneriaid Affricanaidd. Mae hyn yn wael o gofio'r cysyniad mai cysylltiadau cymunedol yw'r sylfaen orau ar gyfer datblygiad.

Nid yw llawer o weithwyr cyflogedig yr Adran dros Ddatblygu Rhyngwladol yn ymwybodol bod Cymru a'r Alban wedi lansio polisïau annibynnol ar ddatblygiad, ac mae hyn yn arwydd o ail rwystr - yr anhawster y mae'r rhai sy'n rhan o'r Cynllun Cymru o blaid Affrica a Rhaglen Datblygu Malawi wedi ei gael wrth geisio ymgysylltu â chymheiriaid yn y DU. I rai, mae'r pellter y mae cynrychiolwyr y Llywodraeth Ganolog yn ei ddangos yn cael ei ystyried yn sarhad, ac mae'n gorfodi'r rhai sy'n rhan o'r gwaith datblygu i feddwl bod yn rhaid i'w gwaith fod yn Gymreig neu'n Albanaid iawn - sy'n tansellio manteision posibl cydweithio. Yr hyn sydd wrth wraidd y mater yw'r ffordd ad hoc y mae'r cysylltiadau rhwng llywodraeth y DU a gweinyddiaethau datganoledig wedi esblygu ers 1999.

Ar ddiwedd 2010, cyhoeddwyd toriadau llym ar gyfer pob adran o lywodraeth y DU, gyda'r Swyddfa Dramor a Chymanwlad i gollu bron i chwarter o'i chyllideb gwariant, a'r Adran dros Ddatblygu Rhyngwladol i dorri mwy na thraean o'i chostau gweinyddu. Ar yr un pryd, mae cymorth y DU ar gyfer gwledydd tramor ar fin codi i £12.6 biliwn y flwyddyn, gan roi pwysau eithriadol ar yr Adran dros Ddatblygu Rhyngwladol i ddarparu prosiectau llwyddiannus yn gyflym. Yn sicr, byddai cydweithio'n agosach â mentrau datblygu eraill sydd eisoes ar waith yn y DU yn helpu i gynyddu llwyddiant. Byddai hyn hefyd yn helpu i gyflwyno agwedd amlochrog unedig at ymdrechion datblygu sy'n cael eu lansio yn y DU.

GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS GNÌOMHACH

Alba agus a' Chuimrigh ann an Afraga: Cothroman airson Modh-obrach Leasachaidh Co-òrdanaichte san RA

A dh'aindeoin teòran fèin-riaghlaidh, tha Alba agus a' Chuimrigh air iomairtean leasachaidh eadar-nàiseanta a chur air bhog le prìomh fhòcas air daoine-gu-daoine agus ceanglaichean bunaiteach le dùthchannan Afraganach. Tha Prògram Leasachaidh Malawi na h-Alba agus sgeama na Cuimrigh airson Afraga nam prìomh phoileasaidhean leasachaidh dha gach riaghaltas. Cuideachd, tha fàs air a thighinn anns na ceanglaichean a tha eadar luchd-pàrlamaid Albannach is Cuimreach agus an co-riochdairean ann am Malawi, Lesotho, Somaliland agus àiteachan eile, a' cruthachadh lionra de chom-pàrteachasan stèidhichte air dàimhean càirdeil pearsanta.

Tha comas aig gluasadan gach riaghlaidh tiomnaichte a thaobh leasachaidh agus seòltachd ann an Afraga barrachd a chur ri obair ceangail na RA ann an Afraga, a tha an-dràsta air a stiùireadh tron Roinn Leasachaidh Eadar-nàiseanta agus Oifis nan Dùthchannan Cèin is a' Cho-fhlaitheis. Tha na buannachdan a tha a' leantainn bhon seo soilleir – ged a dh'fhaodadh Alba is a' Chuimrigh tairbhe shònraichte fhaighinn mar thabhartaisichean beaga le cluas làidir do leasachadh ann an Afraga, dh'fhaodadh an RA faighinn faisg air na com-pàrteachasan àbhaisteach a thathas air a dhaingneachadh mar thoradh air iomairtean Cuimreach is Albannach – a' cuideachadh le bhith ag àrdachadh mothachaidh poblach agus meas air obair an DFID, agus faochadh a thoirt do na ceanglaichean le luchd-cruthachaidh poileasaidh, a bhios aig amannan duilich.

Ach, tha grunn chnapan-stara ann an co-obrachadh eadar an RA, a' Chuimrigh agus Alba nan oidhirpean leasachaidh ann an Afraga, agus tha a' choire air gach taobh. Taobh a-staigh gach cuid a' Chuimrigh agus Alba tha crìonadh air a thighinn anns an ùidh a thòisich airson nan iomairtean leasachaidh, a' ciallachadh gu bheil am feart ùr-ghnàthaichte anns na prògraman air a chur nas motha 's nas motha gu aon thaobh. Is e glè bheag de bheachdachadh a rinn luchd-cruthachaidh poileasaidh Cuimreach is Albannach air càite dha-rìribh a bheil na h-amasan a tha aig na h-iomairtean, agus far a bheil iad a' laighe taobh a-staigh co-theacs na RA. Tha gainnead fòcais poilitigeach a' ciallachadh, a dh'aindeoin dàimh mhath le com-pàirtichean Afraganach, nach eil mòran de mhothachadh am measg a' phobail aig an taigh air ceangal eadar-nàiseanta nan riaghaltasan tiomnaichte – rud nach eil glè chofhurtail an cois bun-smuain gur e ceanglaichean coimhearsnachd a' bhunait leasachaidh as fheàrr.

Tha mòran de luchd-obrach DFID nach eil mothachail gu bheil Alba is a' Chuimrigh air poileasaidhean leasachaidh neo-eisimeileach a chur air bhog, agus tha seo na chomharra air cnap-starra eile – an duilgheadas a tha air a bhith aca an t-àite a' Chuimrigh airson Afraga agus Prògram Leasachaidh Malawi ann a bhith a' ceangal a-steach ris na com-pàirtichean aca aig ìre na RA. Dha cuid, thathas a' faireachdainn gu bheil an t-astar air falbh a tha riochdairean an àrd-riaghaltais a' cumail, na dhìmeas. Tha seo a' putadh an fheadhainn a tha an sàs ann an leasachadh chun a' bheachd gum feum an obair aca a bhith gu sònraichte Cuimreach no Albannach – gan tàladh air falbh bho na buannachdan a dh'fhaodadh a bhith an cois co-obrachaidh. Tha seo cuideachd na chomharra air an dòigh anns an robh ceanglaichean eadar riaghaltas na RA agus na riaghlaidhean tiomnaichte a tha air an toirt gu bith bho 1999 gu mòr air an rùn fhèin.

Aig deireadh 2010 chaidh gearraidhean domhainn ainmeachadh airson a h-uile roinn de riaghaltas na RA, le dùil taobh a-staigh an FCO gun cailleadh iad cha mhòr cairteal den bhuidseat cosgais aca, agus DFID gu bhith a' gearradh treas earrann de na cosgaisean rianachd aca. Aig an aon àm, thathas an dùil gum bi taic a-null thairis bhon RA ag èirigh gu £12.6 billean gach bliadhna, a' cur cuideam air leth air an DFID gus pròiseactan soirbheachail a libhrigeadh, agus gu h-obann. Bhiodh co-obrachadh na bu dlùithe le iomairtean leasachaidh eile a tha a' dol air adhart mu thràth san RA gun teagamh a' cuideachadh le soirbheachas, agus chuidicheadh seo le bhith a' nochdadh modh-obrach aonaichte, ach iomadh-fhillte, do dh'oidhirpean leasachaidh a thathas a' cur air bhog bhon RA.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2010 severe cuts were announced for all UK government departments, with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) set to lose almost a quarter of its spending budget, and the Department for International Development (DFID) to cut over a third of its administrative costs. At the same time, overseas aid from the UK is due to rise to £12.6 billion per year by 2015, placing pressure on DFID to deliver success quickly, but with a reduced staff and fewer administrative resources. Innovative thinking will help to maximize the success of the department's projects, and with initiatives already under way within the UK there is ample opportunity for closer coordination with Scotland and Wales in African countries where work overlaps.

The benefits of this would be mutual. While Scotland and Wales could enjoy unique leverage as small donors with the ear of a major contributor to African development, the UK could gain access to the familiar partnerships cultivated through the Welsh and Scottish initiatives, helping to increase public awareness and appreciation of DFID's work, and to ease the department's sometimes difficult relationships with local policy-makers.

However, there are a number of obstacles to collaboration and the fault lies with all sides. Within both Wales and Scotland initial political enthusiasm for the development initiatives has declined, meaning that the innovative element of the programmes is increasingly sidelined. There has been little reflection by devolved policy-makers on what exactly the goals of their initiatives are, and where they sit within the context of the UK. The lack of political focus has meant that domestic public awareness of the range of the devolved governments' international engagement is not high despite the good relations they have cultivated with their African partners. This sits badly with the concept of community links being the best basis for development.

Many DFID employees are not aware that Scotland and Wales have launched independent policies on development, and this is symptomatic of a second obstacle – the difficulty experienced by those involved in Wales for Africa and the Malawi Development Programme when trying to engage with their UK-level counterparts. As a result of lobbying on the part of NGOs and officials from the devolved administrations, the awareness at the centre of devolved development initiatives is very gradually growing, but at ministerial level it remains marginal. For some the distance maintained by representatives of central government is felt to be a slight, and particularly among NGOs this pushes those involved in development towards the idea that their work must be particularly Welsh or Scottish, thereby detracting from the potential benefits of collaboration. Underlying this is the ad hoc way in which relations between the UK government and devolved administrations have evolved since 1999. Collaboration has not been actively encouraged between government departments, even when dealing with overlapping issues.

Scotland's Malawi Development Programme, the Wales for Africa scheme and DFID's work are all part of the UK's efforts to help African countries meet the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Coordinating these efforts can only be beneficial for all in achieving this goal.

Box 1: Scotland's Relations with Africa

July 1999: Power is devolved to Scotland. Newly appointed members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) consider whether to incorporate international development in their work.

November 2001: Jack McConnell, a Scottish Labour MSP with long-standing enthusiasm for international development, becomes First Minister.

September 2002: First Minister McConnell speaks at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. He commits to improving Scotland's sustainability and to helping to reduce the gap between developed and developing nations.^a

October 2004: The Scottish Executive launches an International Strategy, which sets out plans to attract foreign investment and tourism to Scotland. Executive members decide that this focus on what Scotland can gain from international links should be matched by an initiative encouraging Scotland to contribute internationally as well. In the same year, after being invited to address the Scottish Cross-Party Group on International Development, Hilary Benn, then UK Secretary for International Development, endorses Scottish development efforts.

March 2005: Scotland's International Development Policy is launched. The Commission for Africa, set up by Tony Blair in 2004, publishes its report on how to promote 'a new kind of development based on mutual respect and solidarity' in Africa.^b

July 2005: The G8 Summit is held at Gleneagles, Scotland. 225,000 people take part in a Make Poverty History march in Edinburgh, and Live 8 concerts are staged in London and Edinburgh.

November 2005: Jack McConnell signs a Cooperation Agreement with Malawi's President Mutharika. Its recommendations form the basis of a Malawi Development Programme.

October 2006: The Malawi Development Programme becomes the linchpin of the International Development Policy, with over 75% of the Scottish Executive's International Development Fund going to Malawi-related projects.

February 2007: 'The Malawi Millions', a BBC Scotland programme, questions the necessity of Scotland's involvement in Malawi when the UK is already one of the largest donors to the country, and alleges that Scottish inexperience in development has led to money being misspent.^c

May 2007: General election – the Scottish National Party (SNP) forms a new Scottish Government. Leader Alex Salmond upholds manifesto promise to double the International Development Fund.

March 2008: The Malawi Development Programme is independently reviewed. Recommendations to enhance its effectiveness are made.

October 2008: The International Development Policy is altered in line with the review. A Scotland–Malawi Advisory Group is created to advise to the minister responsible for the Malawi relationship.

November 2008: A sub-Saharan Africa Development Programme is launched, providing grants totalling £4 million to Scottish-based NGOs working in four African countries.

October 2010: Edinburgh University research estimates that during 2010, the work of Scottish organizations in Malawi is worth £30 million – more than 10 times the amount of actual cash spent on Malawi by the Scottish government over the same period.^d

a South Africa and Environmental Justice news release, 1 September 2002.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2002/09/2156>.

b Commission for Africa Executive Summary, p. 17.

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20050606200944/http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/thereport/english/11-03-05_cr_executive_summary.pdf.

c 'Searching for the Malawi millions', BBC, 21 February 2007: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/6346247.stm>.

d L. Dritsas, 'Valuing Scotland's Links with Malawi: inputs from Scotland-Malawi Partnership members', Edinburgh University, October 2010. [http://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/documents/60-](http://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/documents/60-EdinburghUniversityValuationofSMPmemberinputs.pdf)

[EdinburghUniversityValuationofSMPmemberinputs.pdf](http://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/documents/60-EdinburghUniversityValuationofSMPmemberinputs.pdf).

ORIGINS OF SCOTLAND'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The terms of devolution for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland specify that all matters to do with foreign policy, including international development, remain under the remit of UK government. This limitation meant that gaining parliamentary support for a particularly Scottish international development policy was not straightforward. MSPs who initially opposed the idea were concerned that a development policy might be seen at Westminster as an over-bold attempt by a young Scottish government to test the boundaries of devolution and assert Scotland's separateness from the UK. There were also fears that it could encroach on the work of the UK government departments responsible for international development and foreign policy – the Department for International Development and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office – without being able to replicate their successes.

Within Scotland, those in favour of the policy were often influenced by personal experiences of Africa or of development overseas. At a UK level, it was significant that at that time a Labour government with a particular interest in African development was in power at Westminster. While the policy garnered cross-party support in Scotland, it is unlikely that it would have been accepted centrally if proposed under a devolved government which was not Labour-led.

The endorsement of Hilary Benn, then UK Secretary for International Development, was crucial in generating cross-party support. During a meeting at Holyrood, Benn expressed his support for Scottish involvement in international development, giving his opinion that there was more than enough development work to go round. His position was seen to mark a changed attitude at UK-government level, which was felt to have traditionally been intent on guarding the boundaries of its departments.

The first decision taken about the Scottish development policy was that it should focus on encouraging links between communities and schools in Scotland and those in a partner region or country on the basis of the mutual exchange of knowledge and skills. Both sides were to benefit from the experience of linking. The Scottish Executive championed this idea of reciprocity, and it was spoken of as the heart of the policy – signalling a move away from the traditional donor–recipient aid relationship. The Executive was also to fund Scottish aid agencies in the event of disasters overseas, and to support the work of the Network of International Development Organisations in Scotland (NIDOS) in order to increase its ability to act as a representative body for Scottish NGOs.

The decision to involve Scottish civil society in international engagement fell in line with advice given to the Executive by DFID and the FCO. The 'linking' approach would be cheap and would, vitally, help Scotland to avoid duplicating existing UK development efforts. Also in accordance with central advice, the policy stipulated that a percentage of funds must be spent within Scotland, and projects which received funding had to prove that their efforts would have a clear domestic benefit.

FCO lawyers helped to find legal space for the Scottish policy by justifying it as an initiative to '[assist] Ministers of the Crown'¹ in relation to foreign affairs, a line taken from Scotland's Devolution Act. This meant that the policy was to complement work already being done by UK government departments responsible for international development.

The Malawi Development Programme

The choice of Malawi

The lobbying efforts of the Scotland–Malawi Partnership, an umbrella organization of civil society groups, made the choice of Malawi attractive. The leaders of the Partnership reflected the diversity

¹ Scotland Act 1998, Schedule 5, Paragraph 7. <http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/content.aspx?activeTextDocId=2044365>.

of the group's membership, and included a former Secretary of the Church of Scotland council, the headteacher of a Scottish primary school with a long-standing link to a Malawian primary school, maternal health experts and an academic active in Strathclyde University's link to the University of Malawi. The existence of the Scotland–Malawi Partnership was advantageous for the Executive, as it showed that development initiatives were already taking place which would be bolstered significantly with more funding, so there would be no need to start projects from scratch. Politicians highlighted Malawi's position as one of the ten poorest countries in the world in 2005, and also adopted the Partnership's reference to David Livingstone, the nineteenth-century Scottish missionary, and his focus on trade, the church and education in Southeast Africa. This historical association with Malawi was presented as an old friendship with the potential to be reignited.

At a conference held by the Scotland–Malawi Partnership in 2005, a formal Cooperation Agreement was signed by the then First Minister Jack McConnell and Bingu wa Mutharika, President of Malawi.

The Agreement identified development areas on which Scotland and Malawi could collaborate: education, health, civic governance and sustainable economic development. The overarching aim was to speed up the achievement of the MDGs in Malawi, and this inspired the framework of a Malawi Development Programme in Scotland.

The Programme's initial £3 million budget was distributed to eighteen Scottish organizations, including Mary's Meals, a school feeding programme which had been active in Malawi since 2002. The Scottish Department for Education also encouraged partnership, providing almost £380,000 to organizations including the British Council for exchange trips between Malawian and Scottish schools. Schools were encouraged to twin with counterparts in Malawi, and this was seen as a novel way of increasing global awareness on both sides. A Joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation was also established with the remit to meet annually and track the progress of work being done under the agreement. It facilitated meetings between official representatives of the partners including the Scottish Government's senior economic adviser and the Principal Secretary of Foreign Affairs from the government of Malawi. The Executive attention paid to Malawi inspired many grassroots initiatives; church groups, schools and universities, businesses and small NGOs looking to become involved in development frequently chose Malawian partners. This engagement of the public in the policy led one NGO member to describe the Programme as, above all, a 'PR success'.

The Malawi Development Programme under the SNP

Following the Scottish National Party's victory in Scotland's 2007 elections, there were fears that the Programme would be dismissed as a pet project of Jack McConnell. Instead the new First Minister Alex Salmond ring-fenced £3 million for the Malawi Development Programme and upheld his manifesto pledge to double the International Development Fund to £6 million for 2008/9 (it was raised again to £9 million for 2010/11 and 2011/12).

Projects which had received funding through the Malawi Development Programme were independently reviewed, and recommendations that the Programme be streamlined to sit more closely with the development objectives of Malawi's government were implemented. New requirements meant that schemes which supported vocational training, gender equality, local business development or strengthening Malawi's civil society could receive up to £400,000. These changes were to make expenditure more accountable, and the government also established a Scotland–Malawi Advisory Group, made up of individuals with expertise on Scottish charitable work in Malawi, to consult with ministers on policy.

Although it was an initiative born from enthusiastic lobbying of parts of Scottish civil society, some larger Scottish NGOs expressed initial concern that the Scottish Executive and civil service lacked the necessary international development experience to deliver effectively on promises made. It was argued that those in charge of the Programme were naïve about the importance of best practice in international development, as grants had been made available to Scottish organizations whether or

not they had lengthy effective experience in Malawi. This attitude was symptomatic of tensions between older and larger Scottish NGOs, many of which had already established well-received projects in Malawi, and the grassroots community-based initiatives which the government policy encouraged.

The mainly positive 2007 review of the Malawi Development Programme allayed concerns that the smaller projects were not suited to aiding Malawi's development, and the Scotland–Malawi Partnership also worked to ensure that views from Malawian civil society were considered in the Programme's adaptation, helping the government's changes to be roundly welcomed by both the established and newer organizations which receive its funding.

The inheritance of an independent international development initiative also fits with the SNP's political ideology. The government has embraced and expanded on Scotland's relationship with Malawi, marking the fifth anniversary of the link in November 2010 by encouraging Scotland's political party leaders to sign the Malawi Pledge which promises ongoing support for the link, and supporting the widely reported appointment of Scottish singer Annie Lennox as Parliament's Special Envoy to Malawi.

For the government, the Malawi Development Programme shows that Scotland is capable of handling its international engagement, and may not need the UK to be the final arbiter on matters of development overseas. The distance which DFID has maintained from the Malawi Development Programme, failing even to mention the Scotland–Malawi bilateral partnership on its website, makes it easy to see why this attitude holds favour.

While the honing of Scotland's Malawi policy was positively received, the government's wider international development actions signal a move away from the person-to-person skills transfer and community linking which were at the heart of the initial policy. The framework for the sub-Saharan Africa Development Programme, announced in 2008, indicates a more traditional aid-based approach to Scottish relations with the developing world.

Where the Malawi Development Programme encouraged linking on multiple levels, allowing those with interest but perhaps little experience of development to contribute, the sub-Saharan Programme awarded £1 million each to four Scottish organizations for projects in Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda and Darfur, Sudan.² Each organization is required to monitor its expenditure, and each is individually responsible for ensuring that its programmes fully reflect the government's aims. This shallow involvement of policy-makers, combined with a significant increase in funding, has meant that only large long-established organizations have been able to meet the requirements for participation in the Programme.

There is a danger that if the Scottish government continues to follow this pattern of traditional aid-giving, any chance for closer collaboration with UK-level development work will be lost. The benefits for Scottish NGOs of closer working relations with DFID include increased access to UK-level funding, which could complement support already received from the Scottish government and help to expand successful projects on the ground in Malawi. The initiative to move closer to DFID will have to come from the organizations which receive funding from the Malawi Development Programme and the Scottish government, but this will not occur if the separateness of Scotland's international development initiatives from UK-level work is over-emphasized.

² In the first round these were: Opportunity International in Tanzania – access to financial services and microfinance; Concern Worldwide in Rwanda – reduction in child malnutrition-related deaths; Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF) in Zambia – food security and improved household income; Tearfund Scotland in Darfur – working with local churches on food security, nutrition and public health for the displaced.

Box 2: Wales' Relations with Africa

March 1985: Wales launches the world's first country-to-country twinning initiative with the southern African nation Lesotho.

July 1999: Power is devolved to the National Assembly of Wales. The terms of devolution state that Welsh ministers are obliged to work in a way which promotes sustainable development.

December 2004: The Welsh Assembly Government consults with development bodies and Welsh NGOs for feedback on its Sustainable Development Action Plan.

August 2005: The UK's High Commission in Lesotho is closed.

March 2006: Officials from Somaliland's parliament attend the official opening of the Welsh Assembly and meet with then First Minister Rhodri Morgan.

October 2006: 'Wales for Africa: a Framework for Government Action on International Sustainable Development' is launched by First Minister Rhodri Morgan and Hilary Benn, then UK Secretary for International Development.

March 2007: Prince Harry becomes patron of Dolen Cymru, the organization which maintains the Wales–Lesotho link. The Prince has a long-standing interest in Lesotho, and his own charity, Sentebale, set up with Prince Seeiso, a member of the Basotho royal family and Lesotho's High Commissioner to the UK, also works in the country.

June 2007: The Wales for Africa Health Links Group is created, inspired by the Wales for Africa Scheme. It works closely with the Welsh government's initiative and supports health boards with links to sub-Saharan medical institutions.

October 2007: The Gold Star Communities project (later renamed the Wales–Africa Community Links project) is launched. A pilot scheme developed by the Welsh government with the support of the UN, it is intended to encourage linking between Welsh and African communities.

June 2008: Wales becomes the world's first Fair Trade nation.

October 2008: The Welsh government signs up to the Territorial Approach to Climate Change project, a pilot scheme sponsored by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), which helps countries to partner with regions in Africa in order to combat climate change.

November 2008: £240,000 is awarded to 11 projects in the first funding round of the Wales for Africa scheme. This rises to £270,000 for the 2010/11 round.

June 2009: Wales co-chairs the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD), an organization of which it is a founder-member. Nrg4SD brings together devolved and sub-national governments to promote sustainability at a regional level.

March 2010: The first Wales for Africa International Development summit is hosted by the Small and Medium-sized International Development Organisations (SMIDOS), a body of Welsh NGOs – many of which work in Africa. Gareth Thomas, then UK Minister of State for International Development, speaks at the event.

October 2010: Plans are set to close the DFID country office in Lesotho in March 2011.

ORIGINS OF WELSH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Wales's international development initiative was actually made possible by the terms of Welsh devolution. The Government of Wales Act states that ministers have a duty to promote sustainable development 'through the exercise of [the Assembly's] functions'. In order to help meet this legal obligation the Welsh Assembly Government formulated a Sustainable Development Action Plan, inviting organizations with development experience to consultations on it in 2004. During these talks members of the Welsh NGO community argued that the Assembly could not be truly sustainable if it paid no attention to the impact which its decisions might have outside Wales.

At the same time there was a sense that then First Minister Rhodri Morgan was increasingly being asked for a Welsh response to overseas emergencies. In the wake of a number of high-profile disasters – particularly the Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 and the Kashmir earthquake in 2005 – Assembly Members (AMs) also found that constituents expected a particularly Welsh contribution to relief efforts. The final aims of the Sustainable Development Action Plan – to facilitate a 'positive Welsh contribution' to the achievement of the MDGs; to encourage Wales in becoming a Fair Trade nation, and to introduce a Wales for Africa scheme to support Welsh organizations working with African partners – were born from these influences, and demonstrated the government's commitment to reflecting Wales's traditional internationalist outlook through its work.

Policy-makers justified the focus on sub-Saharan Africa by highlighting the number of African links already established from within Wales. In addition to the number of Welsh charities working in African countries, the nation's country-to-country twinning link with Lesotho had, at that time, been active for over twenty years and Cardiff was home to a large Somali community.

Both Wales for Africa and the Scottish Malawi Development Programme were planned at a time when UK public awareness of Africa's development issues had reached an unprecedented level. The Make Poverty History campaign took hold during 2004/05, with an estimated 8 million of the movement's white wristbands sold in the UK, demonstrating widespread support for the campaign's anti-poverty message. The BBC and many museums and galleries across Britain hosted programmes and events focusing on African society, history and contemporary art. Tony Blair's Commission for Africa released its final report in 2005, laying the groundwork for commitments made at that year's G8 summit at Gleneagles to debt alleviation and increased aid for Africa. The G8 summit inspired both protests and concerts in London and Edinburgh, all of which attracted a large number of participants from across the UK.

With central government and the general public preoccupied with Africa, it was pragmatic for the devolved governments, both of which would depend on grassroots participation for the implementation of their policies, to set the continent at the heart of their international development initiatives.

As in Scotland, the Wales for Africa scheme was legally justified as a complementary initiative to the work of DFID. Wales for Africa was also similarly supported by Hilary Benn, who detailed the 'real difference'³ he felt Wales could make at the scheme's launch.

The Wales for Africa scheme

Wales for Africa provides a framework for Welsh contribution towards the achievement of the MDGs in Africa. In 2010/11, a total of £270,000 was awarded to organizations which intend to build links between Welsh and African communities, support the African diaspora in Wales or contribute to international disaster preparedness.

As well as funding existing organizations, the scheme encourages initiatives jointly managed by NGOs and Welsh government departments. For example, an International Learning Opportunities

³ Hilary Benn, *Wales for Africa speech*, 5 October 2006.
<http://cymru.gov.uk/newsroom/firstminister/2006/4022074/?lang=en>.

scheme, allowing public-sector managers to share skills while spending eight weeks in Zambia, Lesotho, Cameroon or Uganda, is managed by the government body Public Sector Management Wales, and supported by Adopt a Business, an organization which helps arrange sabbaticals.

A Wales for Africa Health Links Group inspired by the government's development initiative has been formed, bringing together medical institutions with African links in order to share advice on good practice. The organization has drawn attention to the potential of African health linking, and now over a fifth of the UK's health board links abroad are between Welsh NHS Trusts and African medical centres.

Other aspects of the government's Sustainable Action Plan complement Welsh efforts to aid African development. The Fair Trade Wales campaign encourages consumers to buy from small producers in developing countries, and the Plan also funds SMIDOS, an NGO membership body similar to Scotland's NIDOS which has a number of members working exclusively on Africa.

The Welsh government aims to link every Welsh community with a community or region in Africa,⁴ and these partnerships are the final element of the Wales for Africa scheme. Welsh churches, local councils, businesses, schools and universities have been encouraged to make links with similar bodies abroad. As well as providing a better global understanding, the government intends the experience of international linking to indirectly increase domestic cohesion,⁵ thereby fulfilling the legal obligation that Wales for Africa must have a domestic benefit.

Why no single partner for Wales?

Although Somaliland⁶ and Lesotho were obvious potential development partners, Welsh policy-makers chose to keep a general continent-wide scope for the Wales for Africa scheme. A number of reasons were given to justify this, including the need to stay flexible in order to respond quickly to unexpected events and an understanding that international development can be complex. The implication, however, is that the Welsh government has been reluctant to engage actively with the policy. By spreading development funding very thinly and refraining from formal governmental relations with African countries where Welsh NGOs are active, the government has remained detached from its own development initiative.

Although there are no formal political links between them, the relationship between Wales and Lesotho has become entrenched at a community and educational level over the past 25 years. Unlike the relationship between Scotland and Malawi, which was centred around trade and the church for much of the twentieth century, the Wales–Lesotho link was actively sought out by Welsh civil society representatives who wanted to make a lasting difference for a developing country. Since 1985, the civil society aspect of this relationship has been primarily maintained by Dolen Cymru and its Lesotho-based counterpart. Following the closure of the UK's High Commission in Maseru, the Dolen Cymru office was for a time treated as a quasi-embassy by Lesotho citizens, who would come seeking help in obtaining visas.⁷ A community link between Matsieng, the seat of Lesotho's royal family, and the city of St David's, where a Basotho prince was buried in the nineteenth century, has also been enthusiastically supported by the Queen of Lesotho.

Since 2006, the focus of Welsh Assembly involvement in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), an organization linking parliamentarians to encourage democratic governance (and which admits members from devolved and sub-national parliaments), has been to encourage good governance and transparency in Lesotho's Assembly.

⁴ National Assembly for Wales European and External Affairs Committee paper, June 2010.

<http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-other-committees/bus-committees-third-eur-home/bus-committees-third-eur-agendas.htm?act=dis&id=184733&ds=7/2010>.

⁵ Welsh Assembly Government, 'One Wales: One Planet, Consultation on a new Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales', 2008, p. 9. <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/desh/consultation/081119oneplanetsummaryen.pdf?lang=en>.

⁶ Somaliland is an autonomous region in north-west Somalia seeking recognition of its independence. This is where most of the Welsh Somali community hail from.

⁷ Interview, Cardiff, June 2009.

The relationship between parliaments has been markedly long-lasting, not through the efforts of the government but because of the personal friendships between parliamentary staff and representatives in both countries, administrative and financial support from the CPA, and the lobbying efforts of Dolen Cymru. This existing network is a compelling reason for the government to combine its efforts with the Assembly's. If the Wales for Africa scheme had been focused on Lesotho, ministers would have secured a broader, cross-party base of support, similar to that which the Scottish government has drawn from the Scottish parliament for its partnership in Malawi.

The case for a closer relationship with Somaliland is based on the long existence of a Welsh Somali community. Merchant seamen from Somaliland, then a British protectorate, first came to work and settle in the dockland areas of Cardiff and Newport in the nineteenth century. The 1991 civil war in Somalia led to another influx of refugees, and estimates now place the number of Welsh Somalis at between 7,000 and 8,000, making the community one of the oldest and largest African diasporas in the UK. Somalis form a part of Welsh society that suffers the most deprivation and social exclusion and this, combined with a wider UK government agenda of avoiding radicalism, has created interest among Welsh government officials in investing in integration.

Political attention in Wales has also been drawn to Somaliland's status as a region which, despite declaring independence, remains internationally unrecognized. Alun Michael, MP at Westminster for Cardiff South and Penarth, has championed the issue at UK level, chairing an all-party parliamentary group on the region and leading a CPA mission to Hargeisa; and Somaliland MPs have been invited to events at the Welsh Assembly.

The decision not to bolster Wales' existing African connections was, at least in part, likely to have been a result of lessons learned from the Scottish experience. Jack McConnell faced criticism for signing an agreement with President Mutharika, as it was argued that doing so amounted to an endorsement of the political decisions of the Malawian government. In 2005, the leader of the Scottish Conservative party argued that the Cooperation Agreement should not be signed because Malawi had failed to qualify for the G8's debt relief programme after missing targets for good governance, and because President Mutharika was facing impeachment charges.⁸ Malawi's domestic politics have continued to pose a problem for Scottish policy-makers (particularly following the prosecution of a gay couple in Malawi in 2010), but Scotland has always emphasized the grassroots nature of its initiative, with funding going directly to projects and not to the Malawian government. By refraining from creating a governmental link with a particular partner country, the Welsh government may have distanced itself from any potentially difficult political situation, but it has been overly cautious in this.

Political response to the Wales for Africa scheme

Politically, the Wales for Africa scheme has not been contentious. Its limited funding, and the small-scale projects it can therefore support, has deflected accusations of competing with work which would be better carried out at a UK level. The legal requirement that the Assembly be sustainable has also helped to justify expenditure, and because many of the links funded by the scheme are generated from within the community, parliamentarians have felt they are supporting their constituents by supporting the policy. Unlike the political focus on Somaliland or Lesotho, the Wales for Africa scheme has no particular champion within the Welsh government and despite the personal links which some AMs have to African countries (at the time of the Wales for Africa scheme's launch, two of nine ministers had been raised in Africa), international development is not seen as core business of the Assembly. The caveat that part of the money set aside for the scheme must be spent in Wales has not been negatively received by Welsh civil society.

Wales has had a Labour-led coalition government since devolution, and the lack of significant political change at governmental level has meant that Wales for Africa, which is already not seen as a priority, is unlikely to be part of any grand overhaul of policy. As the development policy tends

⁸ David McLetchie, *First Minister's Question Time*, 30 July 2005. <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/sp/?gid=2005-06-30.18648.2>

only to be discussed by the Assembly at celebratory events such as Commonwealth Day, there has been little space for constructive criticism or political debate about the reasons for maintaining an international development initiative.

The Wales for Africa scheme is held together by the activity of NGOs and managed by a small team of civil servants. This reliance on small volunteer-run groups with inconsistent funding arrangements is risky, and some organizations feel that their efforts have been ignored by central development agencies. During a consultation on a DFID White Paper in 2009, SMIDOS issued a statement on behalf of its members, calling for 'greater clarity' in DFID's funding process, and criticizing the department for 'turning a blind eye' to work done in Wales. Since then, DFID officials have begun to participate more in official occasions in Wales, but central awareness of the Welsh initiative remains very limited.

While the Welsh government has maintained a political distance from Wales for Africa, the idea of reciprocity on which its development policy is based is also hindered by weak civil society in Lesotho. The hard work of Dolen Cymru has been the mainstay of the twinning initiative, and the high-level links between Lesotho and both Wales and the UK as a whole – through Prince Harry's charity Sentebale, and the links between parliamentarians in Wales and Lesotho – has kept it on the radar within the UK. However, problems such as this could be eased if the Welsh government were willing to engage at a governmental level with Lesotho, or with another chosen partner country. This would go some way to ensuring that priority remains placed on the reciprocal aspect of linking – a goal which DFID is now looking to follow.

POTENTIAL FOR INTEGRATION OF SCOTTISH AND WELSH DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

The devolved initiatives have encouraged interaction with African countries at a level below that of governments. Although the depth of linking initiatives varies, many solid and dedicated relationships have been built up between communities, civil society and parliamentarians in Wales, Scotland and their partner countries, resulting in a network of familiarity built on personal relationships.

This is in sharp contrast to UK-wide involvement in African development, where engagement often only occurs at a governmental level. If the elements of community involvement and friendly working relationships between those responsible for the Malawi Development Programme and Wales for Africa could be blended with DFID's approach, there is real potential for the devolved initiatives to add to the UK's current development work and to help build an image of the UK internationally which more accurately reflects the make-up of British society.

Scotland and UK-level development

Including money donated multilaterally, the UK gave £82 million to Malawi in 2008/09. This makes it Malawi's largest bilateral donor, and clearly dwarfs the £4.2 million spent by the Scottish government during the same period. A third of DFID money goes to the Malawian government as general budget support, while the rest is channelled through government departments to fund programmes for food security, education, maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS.

British government officials privately maintain that in spite of the amounts donated there is little awareness or appreciation of UK aid efforts in Malawi, because the method of delivery has little visibility among the Malawian public. In contrast, the personal nature of links between Scottish NGO workers and their Malawian counterparts has meant that devolved representatives have a good reputation within Malawian civil society and enjoy influence with policy-makers well beyond the number of projects and the amount of development funding which Scotland provides.

Senior UK diplomatic officials have pointed to the focus on relationship-building as a factor which makes Scotland's involvement with Malawi stand out from that of other donors. The advantages of information-sharing and closer coordination between UK and Scottish aid officials are obvious, as the combination of the UK's financial clout and Scottish reputation among Malawian politicians (who are often regarded by larger donors as difficult to work with) could maximize the success of projects and help push forward to the shared goal of helping Malawi to achieve the MDGs. Coordination with the UK need not undermine the particularly Scottish dimension of the Malawi Development Programme, but relations between the central and devolved administrations of the UK in general have not been conducive to working together in development.

When the Development Programme was launched, Scottish civil servants felt that their UK colleagues dismissed their work as amateurish, and the presence of a DFID office in East Kilbride did not encourage relations. There are now signs that this is changing, albeit slowly. The attitude of UK-level officials, typified by the statement by the head of DFID in Malawi that 'it is really up to the Scottish Executive to choose how much they wish to co-ordinate with [DFID in Malawi]',⁹ is loosening in the face of severe staffing cuts for the UK High Commission and DFID office in Malawi. Somewhat paradoxically, Scottish development workers have reported an easier working relationship with the centre since the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government came to power in May 2010 than when there were Labour governments in both Scotland and London. DFID ministers have met with Fiona Hyslop, Scottish Minister for Culture and External Affairs, and both sides have requested that DFID representatives on the ground share information more readily with their Scottish counterparts. As a result of this, quarterly video conferences between the two sides

⁹ House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, 'Examination of Witnesses in Public Accounts Committee – Eighth Report', 30 November 2009, Response to Q119. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmpubacc/282/9113007.htm>.

have been initiated. MSPs involved in setting up a twinning scheme with Malawian parliamentarians have also noted that they are now being asked to share their expertise on working in Malawi's political sphere.

Wales and UK-level development

The success of Welsh community-linking has been recognized at a central level, as DFID sought advice from the Wales for Africa team when formulating its UK-wide Global Community Links project, which aims to reap benefits at home by linking communities in Britain with those in developing countries. DFID has also begun to provide funding for Welsh work on climate change. Wales is a signatory of the UNDP's *Toward Carbon Neutral and Climate Change Resilient Territories* project, which aims to help developing regions form tailored plans to combat climate change. Wales' involvement demonstrates how civil servants with limited resources are linking up Welsh sustainable development policy to increase its effectiveness. One of the pilot regions chosen for the programme is Mbale in Uganda, which has a community link with the borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff supported through the Welsh organization PONT.

PONT, in turn, is part of the Wales–Africa Community Links project which receives funding from the Wales for Africa scheme, and which has received a number of UN 'Gold Stars'. These are given to volunteer-run community projects that have successfully built relations to combat poverty. The Gold Star is a kind of quality assessment for community links, and for Wales the award has a further importance as it shows there is an international awareness of Welsh development efforts, even if attention from the centre has not always been forthcoming. Civil society representatives report that they have often bypassed the UK when looking for funding, instead targeting funds from Comic Relief, the EU mission in Lesotho or the UN.

The relationships built up through Wales' twinning initiative with Lesotho could also be of benefit to the UK. A 2004 review of DFID's programme in Lesotho described the country as 'arguably the most favourably located lesser-developed country in Africa';¹⁰ but since then the UK-level presence in the country has faced, in the words of Lesotho's High Commissioner to the UK, 'a catalogue of closures'.¹¹ The British High Commission to Lesotho closed in 2005, and the cutting of DFID's bilateral aid programme, with an office which had consisted of only one staff member based in the Irish Embassy, was announced in March 2011. The diplomatic gap has been filled by a British Honorary Consul resident in Maseru, but his powers are limited and UK visas can currently only be obtained when biometric equipment is brought over periodically from Pretoria. Even this has been a stopgap measure, however, with funding due to run out in 2011, meaning that Lesotho citizens will soon have to make an expensive two-day trip to the current Visa Application Centre in Pretoria to obtain UK visas.

Fundraising efforts to establish a Wales Centre in Maseru and the interest of some Welsh parliamentarians mean that there is a possibility, albeit slight, for Wales to represent the UK diplomatically in Lesotho. Talks have taken place between the Irish Embassy and Welsh representatives to use the proposed Wales Centre as a site for consular services. This Welsh–Irish coordination demonstrates the potential for successful 'joined-up support' between political and developmental bodies – something the 2004 review suggested was lacking between DFID and the British High Commission in Lesotho before their closures.

Although the Welsh presence in Lesotho is chiefly represented by a handful of hard-working NGO employees, there is little awareness at the UK level of what the relationship between Wales and Lesotho entails. A senior government official's comment that 'the UK network [in Lesotho] is deeper and better represented by the Welsh-Lesotho link than by DFID'¹² betrays a naive opinion of both

10 Department for International Development, 'Evaluation of DFID's Country Programmes: Country Study Lesotho' (2005), p. 4. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/evaluation/er-ev657.pdf>.

11 Interview, February 2011.

12 Interview with senior UK government official, September 2010.

Wales and Lesotho, and is indicative of the lack of central knowledge about the development activities of the devolved administrations.

Factors hindering collaboration

Since their introduction, the Malawi Development Programme and the Wales for Africa scheme have received progressively less attention from the devolved administrations.

The Scottish parliamentary committee for European and External Affairs conducted a review of Scottish international engagement in September 2010, and this process allowed some organizations which receive Malawi Development Programme funding to give feedback on the progress of Scotland's international aims – including the promotion of trade and relations with the EU, as well as its international development. While this reflection over the progress of the policy is positive in encouraging a more joined-up view of Scotland's international relations – recognizing that links built up through aid projects are as important as, and often overlap with, commercial interests – it does not provide an opportunity for a deep evaluation of the Development Programmes. The Malawi Development Programme has only once been reviewed independently. The need for more frequent central reviews is made even more urgent by the Scottish government's requirement of self-monitoring by projects which receive sub-Saharan Africa Development Programme funding.

The Wales for Africa scheme has not been independently reviewed since its introduction in 2006. As in Scotland, its progress is reported back to the National Assembly of Wales as part of the government's annual report on sustainable development. In the last report, a single paragraph was dedicated to the Wales for Africa scheme – and that mainly detailed the work of the Wales–Africa Community Links group, only one of the thirteen projects receiving funding. Although this does not mean that the policy lacks governmental oversight, it is telling that the project highlighted as successful is also the one which is subject to regular rigorous internal reviews. Reflecting on its work has helped the Community Links project to focus and ensure that its activity is relevant and best suited to its projected goal – that of encouraging every Welsh community to form a lasting, reciprocal link with an African counterpart. The frequent reviewing is also one of the factors that gained the project UN recognition.

In both Wales and Scotland each policy receives attention from political leaders only in passing. When Alex Salmond spoke about what a 'profound failure of leadership' it would be if Scotland's links with Malawi were not upheld,¹³ or Rhodri Morgan stated that the Wales for Africa scheme was 'the best value-for-money programme ... considering all that the Assembly had done in the past ten years',¹⁴ such comments risk creating the impression that these are merely sound-bites for politicians wishing to demonstrate to their public that they have made a positive international contribution.

As well as helping to justify expenditure, regular evaluation on a parliamentary level would provide space for reflection on what projects are actually intended to achieve. Judging by the types of activity that have been supported thus far, the devolved initiatives in Africa seem intended to encourage friendship and partnering at parliamentary, NGO and community levels with a country in the developing world; or to enhance cohesion at home by linking up with regions overseas where migrants come from; or to help Wales and Scotland act in the mould of the traditional donor by providing funding for projects which may not have a thematic link but are able to self-monitor and account for money spent. While each of these is a reputable aspiration, the lack of focus combined with the lack of political attention paid to the initiatives undermines both the Malawi Development Programme and Wales for Africa, as the absence of clear goals implies, however unfairly, that they are vague and ill-thought-through endeavours. Examples of success are anecdotal, with any act seen as establishing a friendship being portrayed as a positive achievement.

¹³ Scottish Parliament, Debate on Government Priorities, 23 May 2007. <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/sp/?id=2007-05-23.58.0&s=malawi+speaker%3A10525#g58.2>.

¹⁴ National Assembly of Wales, Commonwealth Day debate, 10 March 2009.

While these are internal problems, the benefits which the Welsh and Scottish policies can provide have not been considered seriously at the central UK level since Hilary Benn gave his endorsement five years ago. The attitude at this level has not been consistent; Scottish and Welsh policy-makers have noted that, although the relationship is better than it was, DFID's approach to devolved development programmes is strongly determined by the minister in charge at the time; they felt they had great support and enthusiasm from DFID when it was headed by Hilary Benn, but that relations were a lot more distant under his successor Douglas Alexander. Andrew Mitchell, the Secretary of State for International Development has asserted that 'international development is not a devolved matter',¹⁵ but he has also laid plans for all UK international development ministers to consult with their Scottish counterparts on Malawi and has recognized that the links between Scotland and Malawi have been 'extremely successful' and 'worth encouraging'.¹⁶

Analyses of the process of devolution have highlighted the disjointed nature of relations between the UK and devolved governments. If relations between the constituent parts of the UK become more open, greater leeway could be given to central and devolved departments to coordinate on aspects of their work that overlap – such as development. Although there are distinct possibilities for coordination, the time-frame for change (in terms of both the legal arrangements of devolution and the attitudes that have prevailed in departments which have worked separately from each other since 1999) is likely to be long. This is a major drawback, and the issue is compounded by the presence of nationalist parties in government in Scotland and Wales. The idea of a development policy that is distinctively Scottish or Welsh is more likely to make policy-makers at a UK level bristle if it comes from an SNP or Plaid Cymru coalition government than if it came from other parties not aiming for eventual independence. Moreover, 2010 marked the first time since devolution that each government in the UK was led by a different party: with a Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition at Westminster, an SNP minority government in Scotland and a Labour–Plaid Cymru coalition in Wales, it is perhaps less likely that cooperation with the centre will be seen as an attractive option.

15 Andrew Mitchell, 'Emerging Powers and the International Development Agenda', Chatham House meeting, 15 February 2011, p. 7. <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/events/view/-/id/1831/>.

16 Ibid.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has highlighted a number of aspects in which the Malawi Development Programme and the Wales for Africa scheme need to be improved. All recommendations stem from the need for more political attention to be paid to each initiative and for recognition that closer collaboration with DFID would be of benefit to all sides. The initial justification for Scotland and Wales to form their own initiatives on international development was to complement the work of DFID, and over the past five years both have developed unique elements which could enhance the UK's current approach to development in Africa. However, central UK attitudes towards Scottish and Welsh efforts continue to hinder any deeper cooperation.

Although attitudes at the centre may take time to change, coordination and information-sharing between the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and potentially Northern Ireland (where plans for government-sponsored international development have not yet been realized) on development would also help to hone existing efforts. In the past, governmental-level discussions between the UK's devolved administrations has been organized by bodies such as the British–Irish Council, which brought together the First Ministers of Northern Ireland and Scotland to discuss the practical experience of devolution; or on an informal basis, as when Wales took advice from the Scottish government before launching the Wales for Africa scheme. Significantly, there has also been discussion about working more closely together and sharing examples of good development practice between NIDOS, SMIDOS, the British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND) and the Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies (CADA) – the organizations representing international development NGOs in Scotland, Wales, the UK and Northern Ireland respectively.

As members of multilateral organizations, Scotland and Wales can build relationships with other small donors. As well as offering opportunities for collaboration, such organizations provide an environment where experiences of international development can be shared. Wales is a founder member of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development and through this organization has collaborated with other sub-national donors to combat climate change.

In addition to its recent discussions on working more closely with the Flemish programme in Malawi, the Scottish government has drawn up protocols with EU territories including Tuscany and Catalonia. As well as learning from the best practices of donors of a similar size and with similar degrees of autonomy, Wales and Scotland have the opportunity to join up with small donors to maximize their impact in Africa and among the donor community.

It is notable that recent public announcements about DFID's future have emphasized a new focus on global partnerships for the department. International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell has detailed the way in which he intends the UK's relations with its aid recipients to be more equal, with the transfer not just of aid but also of 'ideas and expertise'. His aspiration to create 'meaningful and mutual partnerships for global development'¹⁷ is identical to the rationale behind the Wales for Africa scheme and the Malawi Development Programme. With examples of this approach to aid already evident in the UK through the experiences of Scotland and Wales, there is ample opportunity to move towards a more open and equal working relationship between the central and devolved government departments responsible for development. With more innovative thinking on all sides, the shared goal of helping to achieve the MDGs in Africa can be much better served.

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¹⁷ Ibid.