

Community Planning – International Links

Briefing paper – CPP Management Committee 17 August 2005

Following the 8 July CPP meeting contact has been made with various community planning partnerships and other organisations to determine the nature of international links they have developed (with a particular focus on Africa).

Community planning links

Community planning partnership from Scotland, England and Wales responded to the request. The overwhelming response was that no links have been developed. The most common comments made as part of the responses were:

- to ask what sort of benefits we'd expect to see from such links
- to comment that the priority was to deal with the difficult job of developing links between local partners before trying to develop international links

International links that do exist have tended to be direct from the local authorities rather than the CPPs. These often focus on twinning links or responses to crises – e.g. the tsunami and efforts to help create government structures in countries like Sierra Leone.

The view from COSLA is that there is potential to develop international links for CPPs, but that there is not much in the way of practical examples at present. Links tend to be developed when councils or other bodies approach COSLA (or the LGA) or when there is a major international crisis.

International bodies

There are two bodies that can help develop international links; both have close links with local government organisations such as COSLA, LGA and IDeA. They are:

- the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) www.clgf.org.uk
 - focus is on international development (rather than twinning links) – so links are often made to share best practice or provide support (often in response to requests from councils in commonwealth countries)
 - the CLGF's Commonwealth Good Practice Scheme is focusing on links with South Africa, Ghana, India and Jamaica. The Jamaican project is focusing on strategic planning and community planning and the council in Clarendon, Jamaica is looking for a partner. COSLA has been supporting the development of a Jamaican LGA. A council in Ghana is looking for support on financial management and revenue collection.
 - a longer term project involves support for development of local government in Sierra Leone – links are being made with UK councils and councils in other parts of Africa. Makeni is a town with a new council in the former rebel heartlands that is looking for a partner
 - CLGF is always looking for potential partners and the fact that Argyll is predominantly rural would be valuable when developing links with many other areas
 - CLGF is also about to launch a scheme to enable individual officers with skills that are value internationally to share their experience through secondments/exchanges – this will be launched as a project in the near future

- in terms of Scottish councils, Glasgow has lots of links, but less related to strategic planning; Edinburgh's are focused on twinning; West Dunbartonshire is developing links with Sierra Leone; and COSLA has been developing direct links with Jamaica
- the UK Government Alliance for International Development www.lgib.gov.uk/lg-alliance/ - the main contact is currently on holiday so only brief details available from the web site and a magazine article. It appears that the alliance is keen to develop links between local authorities in the UK and councils in Africa in particular

Scottish Executive

The Scottish Executive is keen to develop links with Malawi and has set up a Scotland-Malawi Steering Group to coordinate activity, draw up a set of actions and oversee their delivery. Further details are not available at present.

Brian Barker

Policy and Strategy Manager

Argyll and Bute Council

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