

TAKING FORWARD THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY IN SCOTLAND:

The Poverty Alliance Annual Report 2010-11



CONVENOR'S STATEMENT

This report covers an important year for all of those fighting poverty in Scotland, the UK and across Europe. It was the year, 2010, that was designated the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The year when, according to the strategy set by European leaders in 2000, we should have been able to observe 'a decisive impact on poverty'. To say that we were disappointed is to put it mildly.

It was also the year that saw the election of the UK Coalition Government, made up of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. The primary aim of the new Government has been to reduce the UK's budget deficit to zero by instituting a wide ranging programme of cuts. Despite assurances, it is clear that these cuts will hit the poorest hardest. The combination of frozen benefit levels, cuts to local services, rising prices and a faltering economy means that people living on low incomes face the toughest of times. As poverty starts to increase in the coming years there will be a real need to find better solutions to the problems we face. We need to look for alternative approaches and avoid repeating the problems of the past.

Members of the Poverty Alliance must play an active part in finding these alternatives. Building on the many activities outlined in this report, we will work with people living in poverty, community groups, voluntary organisations, unions, faith groups as well as policy makers and politicians to identify the changes we need in Scotland. Strengthening our Alliance is essential if we are to make the difference we need. We hope you will help us become a stronger alliance over the coming year and beyond.

Jim Boyle
Convenor

DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

The last year has been one of real challenge for all those who are concerned about poverty and inequality in Scotland and the UK. Cuts to services, the reform of the welfare system and rising unemployment have rightly dominated the agenda. People living on low incomes face a challenging time over the coming years, and it is vital that we do not allow the issue to slip down the political agenda.

The new emphasis in Scotland on prevention, on community empowerment and on community assets is to be welcomed. But we need to ensure that these approaches are part of a comprehensive approach to addressing poverty in Scotland. The new Scottish Government needs to use its mandate to ensure that its policies for economic growth reach all parts of Scotland, and reach those people who remain locked out of the prosperity that others have felt.

As this report shows the Poverty Alliance has had a full year, working to ensure that poverty remains high on the political agenda. Over the last year we have had real success in pushing forward some of our key campaigns, and in building a broader network of supporters. This has only been possible because of the active engagement of members of the Alliance. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have supported our work over the last year, and encourage all those who want to take forward the fight against poverty to get involved. Next year will be the 20th anniversary of the Poverty Alliance. As the report highlights we have never been more active and more necessary. We hope you will continue us to work with us in the fight against poverty and inequality in Scotland.

Peter Kelly
Director



WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

The active engagement of grassroots community groups and individuals experiencing poverty is central to the Alliance's approach to our work. Over the last year we have carried out a range of activity from capacity building, training, awareness raising work to involvement in research. We have worked with a diverse range of communities and individuals from across Scotland including refugees, faith groups, disability people's organisations, youth groups and carers.

One of the key highlights of the year included working with a group of community activists to take part in the 9th European meeting of people with experience of poverty. Participants took part in three preparation seminars before attending the conference in Brussels. This was a real opportunity to raise Scottish concerns at the European level.

As part of our work to mark the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion we worked with the Document International Human Rights Film Festival to commission three films about poverty in Scotland. The film makers collaborated with community members in Fife, Edinburgh and Clydebank to make three hard hitting and thought provoking films. The films were screened at locations across Scotland, including the Scottish Parliament, and at the Document film festival. The films can viewed on line at <http://documentfilmfestival.org/makingadifference/> We are grateful to film-makers and the participants who gave so much to this project and in particular to Paula Larkin at Document for bringing it all together.

The Scottish Assembly for Tackling Poverty has become a key event for the Alliance, bringing together a wide range of people who debate how we tackle poverty in Scotland. Community involvement in this event is central. In preparing for the Assembly in February 2011 more than 30 discussion groups were organised to help grassroots groups feed into the Assembly. As we prepare for the next Assembly in 2012, we hope to deepen that engagement and create further opportunities for debate and dialogue.

We have also carried out training for community groups which included EPIC training with sessions for groups in Fife, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow involving young people, lone parents, Muslim women and children and adults.

The Alliance has been fortunate to reach a wide range of community groups in Scotland over the last year. Over the coming year we will continue to place a strong emphasis on working directly with community organisations to enable them to be more directly involved in the fight against poverty.



BUILDING THE NETWORK

A key focus of our work over the last year has been to create a stronger anti-poverty network in Scotland. One of the measures of our success in this area is the continuing increase in the number of groups and organisations joining the Alliance. However we are aware that many groups are struggling to survive in these difficult times and we will continue to ensure that membership is open to all, regardless of the level of income.

Across a range of measures we have seen signs that the breadth and diversity of the network in Scotland is improving. The numbers signing up to our free monthly e-news service has continued to increase and reaches more than 1,200 per month. As part of our development of the network we have begun to implement a comprehensive new communications strategy. This will see further revisions to our web presence and an increased use of social media.

Of course, we remain committed to the 'traditional' ways of building our network – through face to face meetings, seminars, events and conferences. During 2010-11 we organised our most successful event to date. More than 400 people took part in the two-day Scottish Assembly for Tackling Poverty in February 2011. Participants were drawn from community, voluntary, and academic settings, as well as people with direct experience of poverty.

A key challenge for us over the last year has been converting participants at our many events and seminars into members of the Alliance, and ensuring that they are able to guide the work and priorities of the network. Our work through the campaigns we support, particularly the Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform and the Scottish Living Wage Campaign, have been important in forging links with a wide range of organisations, and it is essential that we are able to bring more of these organisations into active membership of the Alliance in the coming year.

The Poverty Alliance's networking activity has always extended beyond Scotland. In the past we have taken a prominent role in UK networking initiatives such as the Social Policy Task Force, the UK Coalition Against Poverty and the DWP's Social Inclusion Advisory Group. It is unfortunate that all of these opportunities for UK wide networking on anti-poverty issues have now closed or been disbanded. One of the few networking opportunities remaining is the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) UK which links the Alliance with anti-poverty networks in Wales, England and Northern Ireland. During the past year we carried out a review of options for developing the role of EAPN UK, and we will continue to seek opportunities to strengthen the network in the year ahead.

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL POLICY

We seek to influence the development of social policy through a variety of means: direct lobbying of politicians, supporting a variety of campaigns, producing evidence and responding to consultations. Over the last year we have supported the coordination of both the Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform (SCoWR) and the Scottish Living Wage Campaign (SLWC). SCoWR has developed into a strong national voice on welfare issues. The campaign now has around 60 members, and has produced a variety of materials including briefings, press releases and a Manifesto for the 2010 UK General Election. A great deal of activity was carried out by members of the campaign as the latest phase of welfare reform has been launched by the UK Coalition Government, lobbying MPs during the consultation phase and as the new Welfare Reform Bill has progressed through Westminster. We will continue to play a leading role in SCoWR over the coming year.

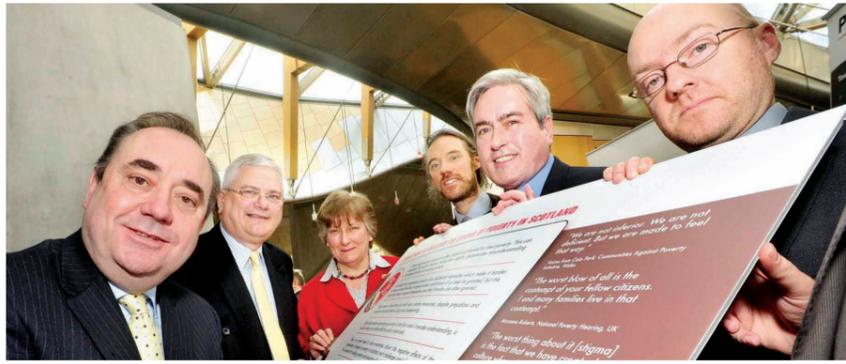
The campaign for a living wage in Scotland has also made significant progress over the last year. With the adoption of the policy by the Scottish National Party, the Labour Party and the Scottish Green Party prior to the Scottish elections in 2011 the idea of the living wage has become part of the debate regarding how we address poverty in Scotland. The involvement of the STUC and the Church of Scotland has helped secure this support for the policy, alongside the active campaigning of Unison, Unite, the PCS and GMB together with Oxfam Scotland and CPAG Scotland. Perhaps the most important breakthrough has been the introduction of the living wage for all directly employed staff in the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland. We believe that around 14,000 workers have now benefited from the policy. But there is much still to do, particularly in relation to extending the living wage to more workers in the private sector. This will be a key challenge for the future.

In addition to our core campaigns, we have also remained active in End Child Poverty (ECP) Scotland and have supported the development of the STUC led 'There is a Better Way' Campaign.

Alongside our direct campaigning we have also sought to influence decision makers through a variety of other approaches. The Tackling Poverty Stakeholder Forum (TPSF), part of the EPIC project, has continued to work throughout the year to feed into Scottish Government approaches to tackling poverty. Two forums were held during the year with short life working groups focusing on issues such as health inequalities, stigma and child poverty. These working groups have brought grassroots activists together with policy makers, and have had a direct impact on policy makers.

Alongside the TPSF, the Alliance has also been represented on the Scottish Government/COSLA 'Tackling Poverty Board' which was set up to oversee the ongoing development of the approach to tackling poverty in Scotland. We are continuing to follow up on the recommendations of the Board with the new Scottish Government.

The EPIC community research provided another opportunity to influence policy at both the local and national levels. This research centred on young people in Stirling and their experience of moving on from school and ex-offenders experience of temporary accommodation. Two research reports were produced. These reports have informed discussions into future provision of youth services in Stirling and enabled us to have discussions with civil servants working in criminal justice. Over the coming year we will carry out further research into issues around rural poverty, the results of which will be published later in 2012.



RAISING PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT POVERTY

The Alliance has long been concerned about the level of public debate regarding poverty in Scotland. Our revised approach to communications is ensuring that we begin to make a bigger impact on these debates. As previously mentioned, we have revised our web presence and will continue to do so over the coming year. We have also improved the design and frequency of our publications, centred on the Scottish Anti-Poverty Review. In the preparations for the Scottish elections in 2011 we contributed to the publication of the latest edition of 'Poverty in Scotland', published by CPAG Scotland along with the Alliance, the Open University and Glasgow Caledonian University.

Our media work over the last year has also improved, with more press releases issued and increased level of coverage. Much of this coverage has come through more effective joint working through campaigns. During the course of the year we also developed a new anti-stigma campaign, 'Stick Your Labels'. This campaign seeks to challenge the ideas and actions that lead to people living in poverty and areas suffering poverty to be unfairly labelled and stigmatised. Part of the success of the campaign, which developed out of one of the EPIC working groups, was to have all of the leaders of the Scottish political parties sign up to a statement against stigma. This campaign will continue during the next year, with plans to provide media training to community activists to help them intervene in public debates.

As part of our efforts to influence public understanding of poverty we have continued to deliver Poverty Awareness Training (PAT). Over the year we delivered six PAT sessions involving Aberdeenshire Council, Lothian Health Promotion, SAMH Gateways, Scottish Borders Council, and Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire. As part of our work to tackle the stigma associated with poverty we will continue to develop this work over the coming year.



FUNDING

Like most voluntary organisations the Poverty Alliance had to face the prospect of cuts to funding from regular sources. We have been fortunate in being able to retain our core grant from the Scottish Government, although this is only on a one year basis. We have also maintained core funding support from Glasgow City Council. In addition, the support from the Big Lottery Fund has enabled us to continue to implement the EPIC project in full. Over the last year we were able to identify a number of projects that helped increase our capacity to deliver more activities. This included work with Glasgow Caledonian University to deliver a range of briefing materials, and the funding from the DWP/European Commission to carry out the Making a Difference DVD project. We are grateful to all the funders of the Alliance and hope for their continued support in the year to come. Despite the good financial health of the Alliance, there is little doubt that our finances are under pressure. If we are to continue to operate at the same level as in previous years there is a need to develop new sources of support. This will be a key priority in the year to come.

Income	2010-11	2009-10
Scottish Government	184,500	185,981
Local Authorities	56,304	60,304
EAPN	6,507	16,585
Big Lottery Fund	155,909	167,596
Oxfam	-	3,000
DWP/European Commission	30,000	4,567
JRF	-	3,402
STUC	3,000	-
Glasgow Caledonian University	28,247	-
Membership Fees	4,405	4,225
Other Grant	2,160	-
Other Income	18,079	23,318
Bank Interest	199	170
Total	489,310	469,148

Expenditure		
Cost of generating income	30,863	29,807
Charitable activities	451,295	380,530
Governance costs	7,854	5,321

Total	490,012	415,658
Net Surplus	(702)	53,490
Balance b/fwd	192,639	139,149
Balance c/fwd	191,937	192,639

STAFF AND BOARD, APRIL 2010 - MARCH 2011

Peter Kelly, *Director*

Robin Tennant, *Fieldwork Manager*

Poe McHugh, *Administrator*

Kathryn Collins, *Administrative Assistant*

Twimukye Mushaka, *Fieldwork Development Officer*

Fiona McHardy, *Community Research Officer*

Maggie Kelly, *Policy and Campaigns Officer (p-t)*

Eddie Follan, *Policy and Campaigns Officer (p-t)*

Sarah Welford, *Policy and Parliamentary Officer*

Kelly McDade-Walker, *Assistant Policy Officer (p-t)*

Volunteers and Placements

Laura Jonasova, *student placement*

Board Members 2010-11

Jim Boyle, (*Convenor*) *Oxfam Scotland*

John Dickie, (*Vice- Convenor*)
Child Poverty Action Group

Nick Bailey, (*Treasurer*) *University of Glasgow*
(*co-opted*)

Marion Davis, *One Parent Families Scotland*

Elizabeth Gore, *Energy Action Scotland*

Myra Mackenzie, *Tayside Social Inclusion Network*

Mary McLean, *Western Isles Healthy Partnership*

Irene Graham, *Save the Children*

David Liddell, *Scottish Drugs Forum*

Dave Moxham, *Scottish Trades Union Congress*

Heather Gowans, *Community Activist Advisory Group*
(*co-opted*)

Hugh Foy, *Conforti Institute*
(*until 6th September 2011*)



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