



INITIATING, PLANNING AND MANAGING COALITIONS

AN AFRICAN LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE HANDBOOK



**AFRICA
LIBERAL
NETWORK** | **RESEAU
LIBERAL
AFRICAIN**



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.



**FOR FREEDOM
AND DEMOCRACY**

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Dear reader,

We are delighted and proud to share with you, this publication relating to initiating, planning and managing coalitions. This handbook is a reflection of insights shared by our valued member political parties, whom all operate in different countries on the Africa continent.

As the President of the Africa Liberal Network, I present to you, this publication.

As a politician, future politician, a liberal and a committed voter in your country, I hope this handbook would give you and liberal political parties throughout Africa, useful tools and insights, to understand the benefits of alliances and working with partners, to achieve common goals of democracy, good governance, economic freedom, maintaining the rule of law and leading society towards development and success. With this handbook, I hope you may find the necessary insights and guidance, to help you define an impactful campaign which attracts voters to you and your political offer.

This handbook was coordinated from our Secretariat office during September 2020 – May 2021. As the President of the Africa Liberal Network I express gratitude to our strategic partners: the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, D66 International and VVD International.

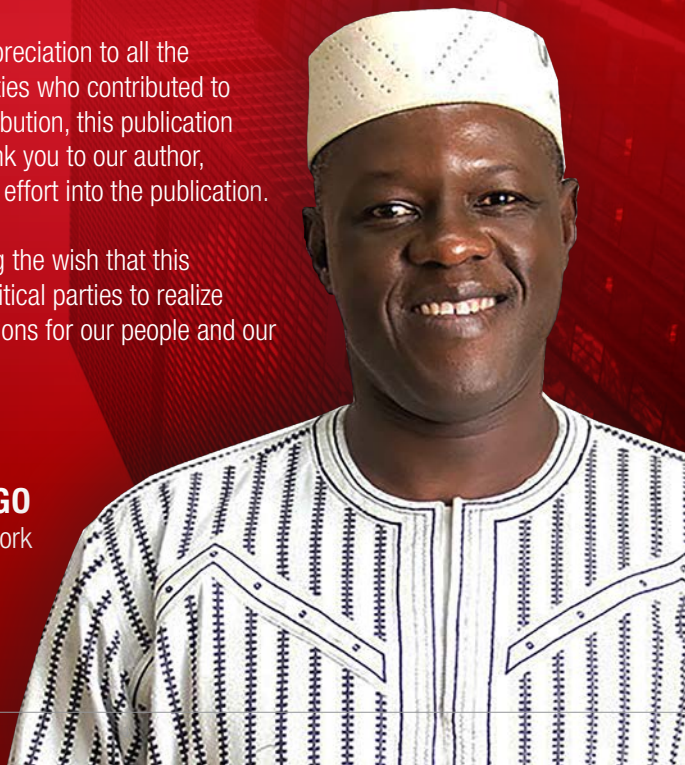
I also express a special word of appreciation to all the representatives of our member parties who contributed to this publication. Without their contribution, this publication would not have been possible. Thank you to our author, who did a great job and put a lot of effort into the publication.

Allow me to conclude by expressing the wish that this handbook will help many liberal political parties to realize their ideals, manifestos and aspirations for our people and our countries.

Sincerely,

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This publication is written and edited by **Iain Gill**.

Iain is a political party specialist in the field of political communications, internal party development, civic society engagement and inclusive leadership. Iain has 18 years experience in the political field, has worked with over 200 political parties globally and was formerly Director of Westminster Foundation for Democracy's for the Liberal Democrats, UK.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR





INTRO

Coalitions are an expected outcome of elections in most of the democratic world. Research shows that in the second half of the last century, more than half of all governments in the democratic world were coalitions of one form or another. A coalition government is an expected post-election norm from Germany and the Netherlands to Scandinavia, and most Central and Eastern European new democracies. It is becoming more common in South America, Asia and the Pacific Islands too.

Increasingly, liberals are forming part of those national governments. These endeavours with parties on the left and right of the political spectrum are advancing progressive causes, building stronger economies, and producing fairer societies. Yet, in Africa, coalitions remain a rarity. In part, this is due to the different electoral systems. Presidential and First Past the Post System (FPTP) models lend themselves towards single party governments. Whereas proportional representation varieties, more common in Europe, favour multi-party governments. For the majority of African Liberals, this means they operate in political environments where socialist or conservatives take turns in dominating government. Parties, characterised by their populist inclinations, a thirst for power at any cost and a distinct lack of value-based policy solutions.

and informal arrangements at local and national levels are occurring fuelled by voters hungry for value-based policy alternatives. Indeed, several of our African Liberal Network (ALN) members have broken the mould of two-party politics from Kenya to Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, Senegal and Morocco, to name but a few.

Amidst the optimism we must be realistic. The majority of our membership are emerging, developing or opposition parties. We have few mechanism to instil liberal values at the foundational level of our organisation. Our policy making processes lack inclusive community-based dialogue and we operate in top-down structure exclusively to the detriment of our membership. In order to widen our electoral base, we must engage in long-term strategic planning that includes reform, internal democracy and local community engagement through campaigning and a two-way feedback mechanism.

We must consider how to initiate inter-personal alliances and political relationships with other parties, not just in election season when tensions are high.

We have a vibrant and growing regional network of parties. Through the promotion of policies defined by the pillars of liberalism, we can achieve great

INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, this is a harsh environment for liberals but there is room for optimism. A combination of electoral reform, decline in traditional party membership and changes in voter behaviour are creating ripples of change in the electoral foundations. Coalitions are becoming more common and acceptable as an alternative form of government. Different formal

success and enrich the political discourse.

As we prepare for the long-game we must use this time to consider our regional and national coalition strategies. This publication attempts to answer the question: in this changing political climate, how do we position ourselves strategically for our advantage?

This publication is a joint collaboration between the ALN Secretariat, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), and liberal parties from the Netherlands, VVD and Democrats 66 (D66).

The booklet is divided into three sections, covering the initiation, planning for, and management of coalitions. Each navigates a different journey on the road to government.

Coalitions don't just happen. New emerging parties don't just win elections. Coalitions don't start with negotiations between parties after an election. **They start years beforehand, decades even, with preparation and planning.**

This document does not aim to show you everything there is to know about coalition governance, preparation or strategy, but to evidence some useful examples from other liberal parties. We, as liberals, can learn from each other's successes and mistakes.

While reading this publication, remember that coalition politics is too complex to apply a single rule to succeed. Some examples mentioned in this book will apply to your political dynamics; others will not. Different countries have different institutional and cultural backgrounds.

interviews with the ALN team. Those meetings provided much of the content of experiences, challenges, hopes and fears on the subject matter.

Initiating:

The pre-election phase is the first step on the road to a coalition. It is about ensuring your house is in order, anchoring the party on a bedrock of liberal values, developing a credible brand, building interpersonal relationships with other parties, and devising strategies at a local as well as national level. Importantly, it is also about bringing your party members with you.

Planning:

This post-election phase will deal with the period after the election is over, but before a government is formed. It will help you understand the different strategies deployed by liberals regarding the profile of negotiators, techniques inside negotiations, and getting the best from a coalition deal.

Managing:

This section will explore the difficulties one might face in the coalition government, around keeping your identity, day-to-day dealings in government, and the means by which to resolve disputes.

M E T H O D

Thus, **there is no one-size-fits-all rule to apply to issues involving political coalitions. We have organized the booklet to be as African-centric as possible with international dimensions to engage our membership.** In preparation for this publication, we communicated with ALN member parties to participate in virtual

We can only hope this publication will help our sister parties with some 'real-time' practical advice to consider for a future coalition government. We thank those parties for their contribution and continued active involvement in the ALN Network.

A close-up photograph of a group of African children. In the foreground, a girl on the right is smiling broadly, showing her teeth, with her hand near her mouth. To her left, another girl looks directly at the camera with a slight smile. In the background, other children are visible, some looking towards the camera. The image has a warm, slightly blurred quality.

LOGY

A photograph of a man in a grey cap and glasses speaking into several microphones. He is wearing a blue patterned shirt. In the background, another man is visible. A red banner with the word 'FOREWORD' is overlaid on the image.

FOREWORD



Nangamso Kwinana

Coordinator: Africa
Liberal Network (ALN)

The Africa Liberal Network is thrilled to present to you this first of its kind publication about political alliances and coalitions in Africa. This publication is a culmination of strategic collaborations between the Africa Liberal Network, Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD), Politieke Partij Democraten 66 (D66), the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and political parties operating in Africa. The central theme which resulted in this publication is Coalition Negotiation & Management: Initiating, Planning and Managing Coalition in Africa.

As liberals, we understand that political ideas do not develop in a vacuum. They are shaped by debate. By silent and not-so-silent revolutions. And by the exchange between nations and cultures.

The reflections found in this publication form the basis of the political choices of different liberal political parties operating in similar and sometimes wholly different political contexts. Beware! — their reflections are points of departure, not policy positions. They are starting point for the debate, not its destination.

With this guide, we hope to encourage as much debate in Africa and abroad and initiate a platform for engagement regarding alliances and coalition partners. We hope this publication will serve as a guide to political parties, in your political campaigns. May Africa thrive, because we made the right choices for our people.



Inge Herbert

FNF Sub-Saharan Africa
Regional Director

Dear Liberal Family,
As Regional Director of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Sub-Saharan Africa (FNF), I am very pleased to present the handbook: Initiating, Planning & Managing Coalitions in Africa, in collaboration with our cherished long-time partner, the Africa Liberal Network.

As even formerly established governments may gamble their voters' support, coalition building is of higher importance and significance than ever before. Coalitions allow forming stable governments and fill democracy with life. Only through coalitions, parties that would not make it into government on their own now have the chance to govern and to implement their ideas and principles.

It fills me with joy to see that the ALN has grown steadily over the past few years. Some members have experienced coalition-building in the past, and others may be in the midst of their own coalition negotiations. This publication is for all of you, who would like to learn about coalition building and improve your political work. At the very least, it is to foster fruitful exchange among you.

For their next elections, be it local, general or presidential, we wish all ALN members good luck and success at the polls and with their talks with potential coalition partners.



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.



Martine van Schoor

D66 Head of
International Office



Gijs Houben

Head International
Affairs VVD

Dear reader,
With great pleasure, we, D66 International and VVD International have the honour to introduce this publication to you!

Both international foundations provide best practice support to political parties in transitional democracies. We understand that if a political party wants to translate its ideas and values into reality, it needs to be organized and self-sufficient.

Only at that point, political parties can be truly competitive in elections and entertain the possibility of forming a coalition. And it is mainly in forming a coalition, where both parties' expertise, D66 and VVD, lies.

D66 has been part of five governments in its 54 years of political existence, subsequently, VVD has been part of 16 governments in its 73 years of political existence.

The common thread herein is the fact that all these governments have been coalition governments existing out of at least two political parties. VVD and D66 have formed four governments, together with other political parties, including the last one at the time of writing.

The Netherlands has one of the oldest coalition forming traditions worldwide; for more than 100 years, not a single party government has been formed. Parties of different ideologies often work together, to give an example: between 1998 and 2002, both liberal parties D66 and VVD, formed a government with the Social Democrats. Noteworthy fact, it worked!

These days, D66 and VVD form a coalition with parties that have a confessional background, not the first logical partner for a liberal party. The result of more than 50 coalition governments is a well known Dutch phenomenon: Polderen, which means as much as finding compromises and consensus on every topic you can name.

Management of a coalition is a skill-based on mutual interests, respect for one another and certain basic values of democracy. Coalitions are also a safeguard for democracy because it is a power-sharing mechanism.

It is why VVD International and D66 International are strong advocates for publications and training on coalition management.



During the production of this handbook, the Central Africa Vice President of the Africa Liberal Network, Dr Guy Brice Parfait Kolélas passed away on 22 March 2021.

At the time of his passing, he was contesting the presidential elections in the Republic of the Congo. May this handbook be an inspiration to his political party, the UDH-Yuki to carry the torch forward and liberalise good governance in the Republic of the Congo.

**In memory of
Dr Guy Brice Parfait Kolélas**

REST IN PEACE

Dr. Guy Brice Parfait Kolélas
1959 - 2021





INITIATING

(the pre-election phase)

A clear advantage of coalition government is that it better reflects the popular opinion of the electorate and leads to more consensus-based politics in the country. To form part of a coalition, smaller liberal parties need to be tactical and strategic. Typically, successful liberal parties secure 8-15% of the total vote.

For emerging liberal parties, this can be less than 3%. Global and regional factors such as the rise and fall of class-based politics, post-colonialism, the domination of former liberation movements, challenging political environments and limited media attention or funding often mean we as liberals have a distinct disadvantage and must 'punch above our weight' to better position ourselves.



BOOK TIP

THE POLITICAL BRAIN BY DREW WESTEN -

Explains democratic/conservative ways of communication, to learn about emotional communication.

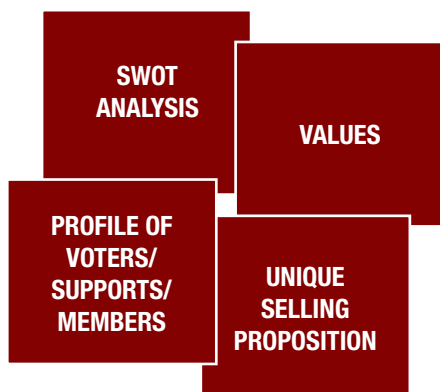
To achieve this, we need to return to basics and ensure our values are authentically liberal. Delivering evidence-based policy based on liberal principles can help to increase the vote share dramatically. In a competitive political market place, standing out is critical. Having a distinct brand provides for long term sustainability. This is truer in political systems dominated by populist personas. In the eyes of citizens, political parties that are driven by values are easier to comprehend. Smaller parties tend to have less funding and less access to state media. Having a clearly identifiable brand can help in voter outreach and communications, helping to bridge the gap with larger, more well-financed parties.

We practice horizontal and vertical communications. Infrastructure for smooth communications is critical. We have 'event communication' on any activities so that party members are well informed and involved.

- UDH-Yuki, Republic of Congo

1. 'Back to Basics; Get Your House in Order!'

Step 1- Internal SWOT analysis



WARNING: You will be surprised at the results you find! Keep an open mind!

Before you can go live with a product, you must fully understand your organisational and political context. This means clarity of values, identity, purpose and persona. What does our typical voter look like? What is our brand? What sets us apart from other parties? Do our liberal values consistently underpin this?

Find out what's working well and what's not so good. Ask yourself where you want to go, how you might get there – and what might get in your way. These are big issues, and you'll need a powerful but simple technique to help you: SWOT Analysis. The SWOT Analysis will help assess your organisation's current position before you decide on a strategy.



“Single party dominance is coming to an end, but in the meantime, ALN members parties need to focus on planning and strategic positioning with regards to partners.”

- Democratic Alliance, South Africa

Step 2 – Building a Political Home on a Set of Values.

- Organise an 'AWAY-DAY' to conduct the analysis.
- Invite 20-50 representatives from different arms of the party; national, local, senior figures, representatives from the youth & women's branches, member, voter, activist.
- Invite people who bring something different and not just those who will agree with you. Objectivity is essential.
- Identify an outsider facilitator to manage the event. This should not be someone from inside the party with a bias towards or against the leadership.
- **Desired Outcomes:**
 - The values that underpin our party are?
 - These values are underpinned by liberalism, how?
 - Our typical voter persona is?
 - Our typical activist and member persona is?
 - Our unique selling proposition (USP) is?

Before we can sell our product, we must know what our product is.

Our values must be underpinned by our commitment to the pillars of liberalism: separation of religion and state, the rule of law, free-market economics, and individual and human rights.

These principles need to be understood throughout the party, from the leadership to the newest member. Once parties have a consensus around values as their party's guiding feature, it provides stability and a sense of purpose throughout the party. We can call this the 'roof' of the house. From our values stem our policies, and from our policies comes our message.

The majority of undecided voters are motivated to vote based on values. Most citizens vote on an emotional level with their gut instinct, which is why clarity on values is the bedrock of a successful political party. To do this, parties must have systems to convey

We recognise that liberalism marks us as different. Supporters at the community level may not understand these terms, but if we explain the idea behind our positions in terms of democratic, inclusive, openness it is easier.

- UDH-Yuki, Republic of Congo

complicated policy into a language voters understand that will be moved on an emotional level. Too often, liberals speak in an almost foreign, policy-heavy language when communicating with voters.

Most developed liberal political parties have a clear continuity between their values, policy and messaging. Historically this is not the strength of ALN members and therefore poses a distinct disadvantage. Consequently, ensuring your political house is in order is the starting point for initiating conversations in the community and building relationships. Having this unique selling proposition – a USP - can bolster your position in negotiations by showing a unified party brand. It also helps mitigate potential fallout inside the party by having everyone on the same page.

To give you an example of how values connect to policy and message, please see the graphic below. The red line denotes the points at which voters engage in elections. (more in next session) Through an inclusive SWOT analysis and reordering of values as the centre-point of your party, you will create a distinct identity. A product that is clear to every section of your party and those other parties you wish to develop formal and informal relationships with.

2. Building a Realistic Campaign Strategy. Hope vs Reality

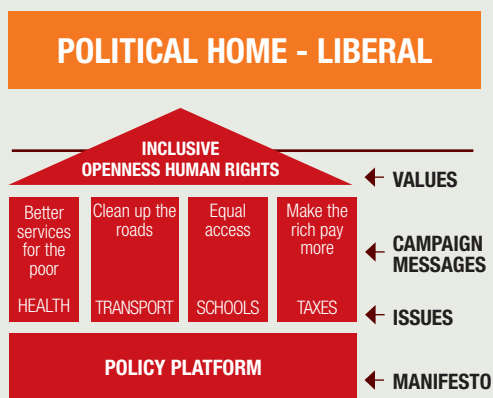
For emerging and smaller liberal parties, your first campaign out can be daunting. For more established parties it is also difficult to measure popularity and success. Building a strategy on a platform of evidence and realism will help manage expectations and therefore keep your party unified. Hope is important, be it to energise supporters around realistic goals or convince donors to fund you. But hope alone does not win elections. A more nuanced approach to campaigning will ensure resources are available where necessary to provide the best outcome.

Case Study: Progressive Peoples Party (PPP), Ghana.

- Party Formed: **2012**
- Total Constituencies: **247**
- Contested Constituencies: **247**
- Constituencies Won: **0**

Context:

The PPP was formed in 2012 amidst great excitement among supporters and organizers. Nationally, there was widespread frustration with political classes and the two dominant parties. PPP offered a progressive and alternative vision for the future. In this political context, the party hoped to cause a significant breakthrough. Despite never contesting an election, the national executive decided to field candidates in all 247 parliamentary constituencies in the country. Unfortunately, it left the party overstretched, under-resourced and out-paced by its rivals. The party failed to win any seats and secured only 33,857 total votes. In 2016, the party focused on a more nuanced and targeted strategy lowering its expectations and choosing to contest 169 seats. Unfortunately, this failed to elect a candidate for the party, but it made progress and brought direction and perspective.



Central to the revised strategy was building an understanding of the party's strengths and informal alliances with small parties at the local constituency level. It is through these endeavours that the PPP began to target success by winning a handful of seats. In this way, they could focus their resources, finances, and energies into seats they had the best chance of winning.

**Progressive Peoples Party, Ghana
reflecting on how they have learned from
their experiences**

"Select candidates at least one year before an election and give them time to get to know the community and build inter-personal relationships"

"The key to success is youth; use them wisely in elections, not just as ground troops but as candidates and leaders. Prioritize quality over quantity when it comes to candidates"

"Go for what's realistic and possible"

"Use your campaign budget wisely, save money for last few weeks. Through our experiences, we now try hold back 80% in terms of spending for the end of the campaign"

3. Leadership for the 21st Century

Often we think of strong leadership as the person (let's be honest; the man) who speaks the most authoritatively and loudest in a room. Whilst communication is critical to deliver an effective message to the public, there are other attributes that can lead to even greater success. Often these strengths are ignored or under-appreciated in political parties.

The majority of women inside political parties still operate at the lower levels of the organisation, youth are often ignored as nothing more than campaign assistants. In order to nurture talent, we must identify the characteristics of modern leadership in the 21st century and use them as indicators in our selection processes for candidates.

“

The key to campaign success is youth, use them wisely in elections, not just as ground troops but as candidates and leaders.

”

**- Progressive Peoples Party
Ghana**

There are many ways to construct a campaign plan, and how you do this in practice should reflect your own needs and assets, the type of election you are facing and what the election law allows. However, the following elements should be considered and included in this context and should work together as your plan's building blocks.



ALN Advice Corner

RESEARCH

GOAL SETTING

TARGETING

MESSAGE

VOTER CONTACT

DELIVERY & PROTECT

1. Research: collecting the information you need for planning your campaign.

If you want to build a firm footing campaign, establish a strong research and analytical team. Speak to non-members, non-voters and other party supporters to give yourself a reality check. You can do this through surveys, focus groups, roundtable discussions at a local and national level.

2. Goal setting: deciding what you want to accomplish.

Ensure your campaign goals is measurable and achievable. If you overpromise members, voters and funders can become disillusioned, and momentum and energy levels are damaged.

3. Targeting: determining which voters you will be focused on.

- The most successful political campaigns are those that have a clear process for targeting a range of voters. Answering questions like; how many votes do I need to win in constituency x or as a percentage of the national vote?
- Once you have determined the number of votes you need to win, you need to figure out approximately how many people fall into the five groups of voters illustrated on the chart on the right side.
- If we do not have enough votes within our True Believers group, we are going to search for the remaining votes within Soft Supporters or Undecided Voters. If this is not enough, then we'll have to work for the support of our Soft Opponents.
- So who are these people and how do we find them? Unfortunately there isn't a magic list that gives you the names of each individual in each group. But if you think creatively, you can get a general idea of who they are based on geographic or demographic trends and interests. For example, voters who live in rural areas where there are lots of farms would likely support a candidate who proposes to establish a minimum price for produce but urban voters who end up paying more for these products would not. You should also consider voters' groups based on demographic characteristics like age, sex, education, income, profession, religion, race, etc. Young people are likely to support a candidate who promotes subsidized university education for students, while associations for

retired people would likely be unhappy about the idea of their tax dollars supporting such a program. Look at it from the opposite direction and consider who would support your opponents based on their policies and platforms. The research that you conducted as a first step in developing your campaign plan should provide you with most of the information you need to successfully identify your target voters.

- Don't forget that not everyone you identify as a potential supporter will vote on election day. This means that you need to target more people than you need AND that you need to focus some of your campaign resources on doing everything you can to make sure that as many of them as possible do.

4. CATEGORIES OF VOTERS

FIRMLY OPPOSED

SOFT OPPONENT

UNDECIDED

SOFT SUPPORTER

TRUE BELIEVER

5. Message development

Formulating what you will be saying in your campaign. A message is a short, truthful statement that explains why voters should vote for you and provide a contrast between you and your opponent(s).

6. Voter contact

Conducting activities to get your message out to the voters

7. Deliver and Protect

Conducting activities to make sure that your supporters get out and vote and having your team monitor the election process to ensure that it is free from fraud and manipulation



Nobody starts a party and walks into government. You have to build a brand, be patient, develop a message, target voters and ask them what their needs are.

- United Party for National Development, Zambia



Mutale Nalumango
Vice-President of the
United Party for National
Development, Zambia

Mutale Nalumango who serves as Vice-President of the United Party for National Development, Zambia on what she considers as the characteristics as a modern leader.

Q. What can liberal parties be doing better to develop better leadership?

There needs to be greater diversity at the top, and that includes more women.

Q. Do you believe women bring different styles of leadership?

Yes, undoubtedly. Women see things from a different perspective. They tend to have more empathy and see things from the other side. This is important; when you try to understand the argument from another perspective, you are closer to reaching an agreement and an understanding.

Q. How does that translate into building trust-based relationship with other parties or inside your own?

Remember when it comes to inter-personal relationships, it's not personal acumen you should have; it's political acumen on a policy level. To invest in the growth of your party, you must invest in inter-personal relationships with other parties. Because in politics, alliances are complicated and there are times you will need to build that relationship formally.

Q. What advice would you give to ALN members on building pre-election alliances?

Before you even speak with other parties you must have a clear analysis of what your USP is.

hen you must be clear about what other parties are bringing to the people. Everyone must have a clear purpose and add something to the relationship. Once you achieve, these negotiations can run smoother.



Cellou Dalein Diallo

Président de l'Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée (UFDG)

Cellou Dalein Diallo is the President of Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG) and Prime Minister of Guinea from 2004 to 2006. These are his three tips on leadership

1. "In forming alliances with other parties it's critical to unite around common objectives without ignoring your fundamental principles"
2. "A real test of leadership is knowing when to step aside for the greater good. My party in negotiations with other parties would have to do this frequently to beat the government"
3. "Uniting around one leader between political parties to run for President is a daunting task. This is why you must bring your party with you through the process so they understand the 'greater good' argument"

4. To Build Alliances with Other Parties or Not?

Now that we have tidied up our house, by reflecting on values, strategy and identity we better positioned to contest an election and build alliances.

There are essential distinctions between pre-election pacts and post-election negotiations for the government. The former is defined as less formal, reliant on cross-party campaign experts with a simple goal of winning more votes. The latter

is defined by its formalities, reliance on technical experts, and consensus on a programme for government. (We will deal with that in the following section.) In certain situations, you have to consider the question 'Is building pre-election pacts with other political parties in our best interest?'

How far can we veer from our values in building alliances with non-liberal parties? How do we approach other parties, and on what level? And what strategies can we use to bring our party with us through these changes?

What does an election pact look like?

When we use the term 'election pact', we mean where a party or candidate reaches an agreement not to stand a candidate in a seat to give another candidate or party a better chance of winning the seat. This could be an informal arrangement in a single seat or a more organized agreement by several parties across several seats.

The UK Electoral Commission offers the following examples:

- **You are party A**, and you want to enter a pact with Party B. You publicize this and, in doing so, promote your party to voters. You are Party A, and you reach an agreement with Party B that you will not stand a candidate in a constituency. You do not announce the pact or campaign in any way.
- **You are party A**, and you reach an agreement with Party B that you will not stand a candidate in a constituency. You announce this publicly, but you do not campaign.
- **You are Party A**, and you reach an agreement with Party B. You publicize the pact and promote the party or candidate of Party B in the constituency.
- **You are Party A** involved in a pact with several other parties across constituencies. There are public announcements and campaigning.

Leadership is the ability to bring people with you.
The most important characteristics are:



ALN Advice Corner



Influencing

Having a vision of the desired outcome without using force or coercion, motivating people to work together toward making the vision a reality. For most leaders, influence is the preferred means to a productive end. This is because influence is based on a foundation of trust and credibility that has been solidified over time.



Advocating

An advocate's role is to champion those who feel they are not being heard and to ensure they are taken seriously and that their rights are respected.



Active Listening

Is actively absorbing the information given to you by a speaker, showing that you are listening and interested, and providing feedback to the speaker so that he or she knows the message was received.



Critical Thinking

The ability to consider arguments on research and evidence, process information, balance the considerations of those in the room and offer a variety of solutions.

To select would-be partners, research their positions concerning your core principles.

These should not undermine your brand.

This should be done at the national and local level.

- Use your party members to identify inter-personal relationships in other political parties and gauge their perspectives on possible engagement avenues.
- Build connections with parties at the national as well as local level. You might build an agreement on a local level only for it to be scuppered by respective national leaders.
- Ensure any formal agreement with other parties has the blessing of at least one of the following key figures: General Secretary, President, Vice President, Party Leader, Campaign Director.
- Define the terms of what your working relationships are. (more in the following section)



Democratic Alliance, South Africa:

"Use any personal connections you have at your disposal and court relationships well in advance of the campaign."

D66, The Netherlands:

"No relationship is worth selling out your principles for."

VVD, The Netherlands:

"Avoid personal criticism of other parties. The opponent during the elections can be your partner in government - maintain good personal relations."



Fianna Fáil, Ireland: "During election season, it's important not to burn relationships with potential future partners in government. Criticize the message but not the messenger. Attack the policy, not the people."

FDP, Germany: In Germany, parties mostly pre-electorially voice their intentions on who their preferred (or even only) coalition partner is. This, however, does not always work in complex political dynamics, especially if you are a smaller coalition partner that relies on votes from voters that are not your typical supporters."



5. Defining the Terms of a Pre-Election Pact

Now that you know who will be your preferred partner(s), you have to make sure that you prepare for the process to make your best case and get as much out of the discussions as possible. Pre-election pacts are notoriously tricky to manage, especially at a national level when it acts as a shadow government. It is a ‘high risk, high reward venture. Let us draw on the experiences of our member party in Botswana, the BMD, with the Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC).

Case Study: Botswana Movement for Democracy (BMD)

Context:

BMD has been a leading opposition party in Botswana, established in 2010. According to the party constitution, it was founded “to defend and advance the rights of the peoples of Botswana during and to interrupt and reverse the progressive destruction of their independence and the creation of what, by most accounts, threatens to be an authoritarian government” BMD was a member of the opposition group, Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC), from 2012-2018.

The UDC was founded by members from various opposition parties. They rallied together in the run-up to the 2014 elections with the aim of uniting the opposition in the 2014 elections. In 2018, BMD was expelled due to disagreements over the previously agreed allocation of seats. This break down in relations was caused by a lack of precedent, formalized agreement, and misunderstandings on both sides. Despite the setback for BMD, it provides us with valuable learning points for the future.

BMD experience:

Despite having clear rules underpinning the relationships with other parties, circumstances changed that were not factored in. In the original agreement, the parties devised a format for allocating constituency seats amongst their members.

“...to defend and advance the rights of the peoples of Botswana during and to interrupt and reverse the progressive destruction of their independence and the creation of what, by most accounts, threatens to be an authoritarian government.”

- BMD, Botswana

Several indicators would decide these: past performance of a party candidate or incumbency, the strength of candidates' visibility in the local community. Other issues agreed included the harmonization and integration of party policies into a cohesive unit and routine administrative matters, including budget.

Despite the past agreement on seat allocation, problems arose when the BMD party split. A breakaway group formed the Progressive Alliance, which diminished BMD's original standing inside UDC and ruptured the agreement's spirit. There were now two parties representing what was one. Consequentially, BMD and the wider UDC had a difference of opinion of the allocation of constituency allocations seats.

6. Bringing the Party with You

One of the biggest challenges for ensuring the successful evolution of political party programs is bringing the party membership with you. Without their ongoing support for a pact, your campaign is likely to fall apart. Most political parties organize their structures in a top-down approach. While this can be effective for internal discipline, it tends to create a disconnect with ordinary members by leaving them out of the equation. They must be brought into the process and informed on partnership changes, especially at the local level. Forging relationships with different political parties will create problems inside your party; you will need to mitigate against them as much as possible.

Warning: The critical factor for success for a smaller party is that it keeps the base included, unified and on message.

Reflections from the International Liberal family.



"Prepare for your no-no's.
There are red lines for all parties that can never be crossed and lines in the sand that need to be guarded."

- Swedish Peoples Party, Finland



"Try to personalize the atmosphere in pre-pact discussions. Politics is generally hyper-partisan at the local level and can be even tougher than senior-level cross-party negotiations."

- Liberal Democrats, U.K.



"Before agreeing on a pact, identify the issues which are essential to you to remain faithful to the party program."

- Mouvement Réformiste, Belgium



ALN Advice Corner

Making a pre-election pact.

- Identify what the grounds are for mutual partnerships.
- Make sure to get it in writing and signed at the highest level in both parties.
- Wherever there are opportunities to write the first draft of a joint document, seize that moment: you can then shape the debate and frame the context.
- Prepare for all eventualities, foreseen and unforeseen. This includes a change in your circumstances too.
- Define the terms of the agreement with other parties and measures to hold them to account.**

- Are you asking other parties to stand down candidates?
- Are you asking them to endorse your candidate publicly or just not support rivals?
- Is this an election pact alone or also a post-election pact if in government?

- Make sure to identify key performance indicators to underscore points of understanding? If dividing constituencies between partners, is it on the basis of past national or local performances or a combination of both.
- Defining the indicators can be as important as the relationship itself; use them based on your strengths to maximize your potential.

BMD Botswana reflecting on how they have learned from their experiences

- Pick strong mediators in negotiations with a variety of experience from civil society experience to campaigns.
- Ensure people with good media experience are part of the process to communicate effectively to members and public where necessary.
- Discussions themselves should be confidential, but regular communication on tone and direction are helpful to party members.
- Once an agreement has been reached, party members need to know.
- For an internal communications strategy, lean on your communications team and existing processes to inform members, supporters and voters about changes.
- Articulate the reasoning behind the new partnership and what will be expected of members heading into the election.
- Further enhance this by providing an away day or training for local, regional and national leaders to educate them on the strategy and content going forward. They, in turn, need to communicate this down their chains of contact.
- Details of the informal or formal partnership with other parties will go public soon enough, so prepare your media strategy.
- Create a list of five things that every party spokesperson should aim to say in every interview.**

THESE FIVE THINGS SHOULD REINFORCE YOUR PARTY'S KEY MESSAGES:



Your values



**Your Unique
Selling
Proposition**



**Your campaign
message**



**The reasons for the
new partnership and
desired outcome**



**Call to action for
the audience,
how to get
involved etc**





PLANNING

(the pre-coalition phase)

The party has now completed a successful election campaign and is invited to participate in discussions for a government programme. As mentioned in the previous section, there are significant distinctions between pre-election pacts and post-election negotiations for the government. All too often, parties consider them part and parcel of the same thing – they are not. They are different beasts, and treating them as such is essential.

The former orientates around increasing vote share, which creates opportunities to enter government negotiations. It relies mainly on campaigning strategy and advice from senior party HQ staff. The latter is about advocating your policies for a joint programme for government through a team of technical and carefully selected experts.

At this point, there are many important questions we need to consider: do we publicly voice our preferred coalition partners? What type of people do we involve in the coalition negotiations? How do we position ourselves to punch above our weight?

1. Do we publicly voice our preferred partner in government?

Being realistic, we as liberals are often more than likely to arrive at the negotiating table with fewer seats than other potential coalition partners. Our strengths can undoubtedly be amplified inside the negotiation room but not before. Expect to have events outside your control until then. Larger parties typically invite smaller parties to enter discussions.

Warning: For smaller liberal parties, events may outside of your control during this short period. Be patient.

Union Constitutionnelle, Morocco:

“Negotiations in Morocco have always been



Alliances are not necessarily unions. View it more as a democratic configuration for practical outcomes.



**- Union Constitutionnelle,
Morocco**



“Politics is about brand value; knowing your brand, communicating your brand and standing by your brand. If you go into coalition and it violates your brand proposition, then the cost will always outweigh the benefits.”

- Helen Zille
Federal Chairperson of the Democratic Alliance, South Africa

held after the elections and after the head of government's appointment by the King. He then undertakes negotiations with the political parties that agree to form a government. The Union Constitutionnelle has opted for the opposition until the establishment of a more uniform government. In general, the Political Bureau is informed immediately about the contact of the head of government with the party invited to the negotiating table”

Democratic Alliance, South Africa:

“Single party dominance is coming to an end, but in the meantime, ALN parties need to focus on planning and strategic positioning with regards to partners”

Radikale Venstre, Denmark:

“Before you make a decision, it is worth considering who would be your best partner. One can conclude that for a centrist social liberal party, coalitions to the left seem to be more successful than partnerships to the right. Generally, it seems to be easier to develop the compromises on economic policy, typically needed when cooperating to the left, than the compromises on matters regarding culture, civil liberties which are typically needed within a partnership to the right”.

2. How do we Initiate Discussions with Rivals?

A Case Study From South Africa

Case Study:

Democratic Alliance, South Africa and the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality from 2016 to 2019

Context:

Solly Tshepiso Msimanga is a South African politician serving as the Leader of the Opposition in the Gauteng Provincial Legislature since May 2019. He has been a Member of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature since February 2019, having

previously served from 2014 to 2016. Msimanga was the Executive Mayor of the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality from 2016 to 2019. In September 2015, Msimanga was announced as the DA's mayoral candidate for the City of Tshwane in the 2016 municipal elections. The DA emerged as the largest party after the election but without a majority. By forming a coalition with several smaller parties and with the support of the Economic Freedom Fighters, Msimanga was elected unopposed as the Executive Mayor of Tshwane. He was the first DA member to hold the post. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) are a populist, economically radical-left wing party. They are as opposed to the DA as any party on the political map.



**Solly Tshepiso
Msimanga**

Leader of the Opposition
in the Gauteng Provincial
Legislature

Q: What type of formal and informal arrangement got you over the 50% mark?

Our arrangement varied depending on the party. Inside the arrangement with us was the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), Congress of the People Party (COPE) and the Freedom Front. We also had a line by line arrangement with the Economic Freedom Fighters. These parties had a wide range of positions and belief systems, so it was vital to find a common consensus well in advance.

Q: Why did you entertain a relationship of any kind with the Economic Freedom Voters (EFF), and were you concerned about compromising your values?

The electorate dictates the numbers. The party emerged from the campaign as the largest party after the election but without a majority. You need

to respond to that and attempt to discuss a way forward on commonalities with other parties. We shared a passion for the economic and social development of Tshwane; the focus was there. But we also needed to show there was an alternative to the ruling ANC. It shows another option is possible.

Q: How did you cultivate party relationships after a heated election campaign?

The groundwork was laid well in advance of the election. There are several engagement levels to consider, but the most important is inter-personal relationships to underpin any future relationship. Despite having significant policy differences throughout the election, we kept a good personal relationship with other candidates and parties. Separating the person from the policy person is critical. There will be many times during a campaign you will need to remind yourself of this.

Q: How do you find a working consensus with a major rival?

There is no point arguing about areas you disagree on. This is not an exercise in agreeing on everything. We identified some objective commonalities, local issues of interests through research and experience, a desire for a change in power from the ANC. We all had a long-term vested interest in showing voters that another ruling option was viable. We did not have a working majority alone, so we need to bring in smaller parties and then support the EFF, who would outside the tent but supporting reform areas identified.

Q: What was your strategy for sharing power with other parties?

A commitment to transparency, open communication, and honesty was critical and maintained those personal relationships throughout our time in power. We met every week with the other party leaders to discuss concerns, priority issues and filter out any emerging problems.

Q. What advice would you give to ALN member parties embarking on formal relationships with other parties at the local level?

Firstly, you need to have a clear process to share challenges but also success. You need to own both.

Secondly, striking a balance between a local mayor for everyone and a representative of your party. Sustaining those relationships with other parties by opening dialogue on a regular basis.

Q. Do you have regrets or things you would have done differently?

To have more refined and clearer targets on policy outcomes they are understood between all parties, including those inside the arrangement and those supporting you on a line-by-line basis. This helps building public accountability.

3. Preparing for Negotiations

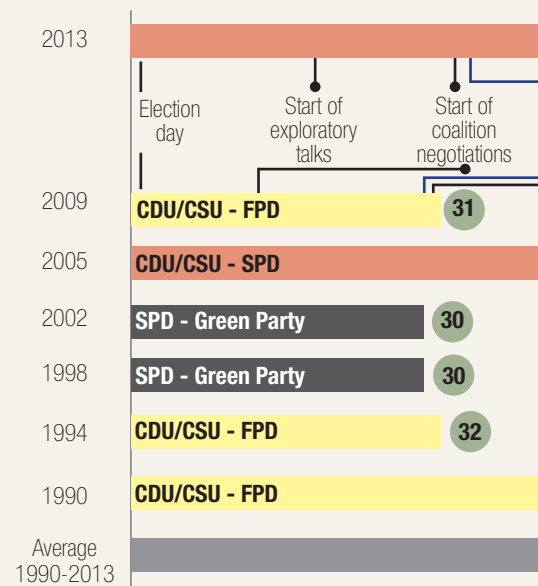
Politics is about emotion, instinct, discussions and conflict resolution. Be that with different factions inside your party, with the public, with other parties, businesses, media, or special interest groups. These skills are universal to politicians, but coalition negotiations are very different. They are intense, slow, technical, detailed, policy orientated and require a specific personality type and planning.

Once you've decided that you want to go into government, you now have to; negotiate to include the things you care about, assemble the negotiation team, and prepare your strategy. Be prepared for the long haul. If we can draw anything from the German experience, you are looking at 1-2 months!

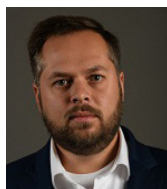
We invited Leon Schriber, to share his experiences in coalition politics from a technical perspective.

From election day to the swearing in of the government cabinet 1990-2013

Data: Bundestag 2017



Leon Amos Schreiber is a South African academic, author and Democratic Alliance (DA) MP serving as the Shadow Minister of Public Service and Administration since June 2019 and the author of 'Coalition Country'.

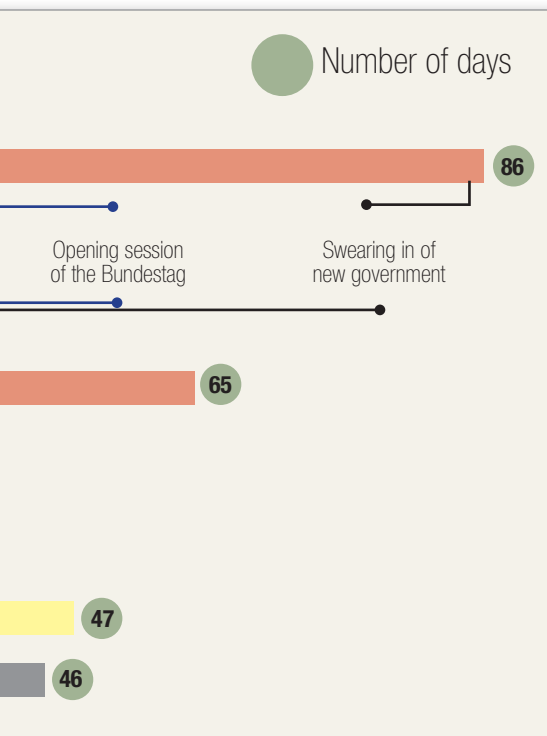


Leon Amos Schreiber

Democratic Alliance
(DA) MP

Q: Are coalitions the future for African liberals?

Yes, they are. This is why liberals need to position themselves now, build strategy, and engage in long-term planning. One of the most important elements to consider when working on a cross-party formal basis is having a codified and detailed agreement. If trust does break down and the coalition is irrevocable, then you have something to evidence it.



When there is no transparency about what these details entail, it's very easy for other political actors to fill in the blanks. The only option is complete transparency and take the public with you on the journey.

Q: Leon, when do you select your negotiation team?

Traditionally political parties wait until towards the end of the election campaign or immediately before the negotiations. I advise something different; find and train people well in advance of the election.

Q. What qualities are you looking for, and what would you train them in?

A certain set of competencies is required. People with an eye for detail, experience in policy matters, understand the party's values and know-how to manage risk. A training programme should determine the indicators for applications,

as mentioned above. The education portion should focus on strategy, troubleshooting for all eventualities, knowing when to walk away, and research on other parties and their weaknesses and strengths.

Q. Don't most politicians have those skills?

Not necessarily. Politicians have different brands, often led by emotion and instinct. Senior politicians should play a role, but the party's hierarchy of political position should not determine who sits on the negotiating team. Delegation and sharing responsibility is critical. The leader of the party will need to be behind this.

Q. Do you have any other advice for ALN parties?

Coalition governments are becoming more inevitable, not just here in South Africa but across the continent. Single party dominance is a thing of the past, and we need to plan now, not during an election campaign strategically. My advice is:

Step 1: Build your brand and protect your brand.

Step 2: Establish internal monitoring systems inside parties at the local and national level that identify members, activists, representatives and leaders with competencies and skills.

Step 3: Start training candidates and streamlining those with suitable competencies.

Step 4: ALN, as a regional body, can help prepare parties for this through training programmes and mentoring.

4. Negotiation Teams

Once you've decided to go into government, you now have to negotiate to include the things you care about in the programme for the government. There is no single model for selecting the person or the team responsible for carrying out the coalition negotiations. Let us draw from the experiences of our international liberal family around the world for their different approaches.

Liberal Democrats, U.K.: The Liberal Democrats served in a coalition government with the Conservative Party from 2010-2015. This is the only national coalition in the UK since the Second World War. “Our negotiating team consisted of four people and was appointed by the Leader of the Party. The key competencies we identified were policy experience, technical understanding of negotiating processes and ideological representation. The leader himself was not part of that team. It was felt that it was preferable for the negotiating team to be able to speak with authority but without necessarily being able to take the final decisions. The negotiating team must be seen to be able to effectively represent the different sections of the party with a balance of “left” and “right”.”

Democratic Party (DP), Luxembourg: The DP is a centre-right political party that has served in government from 2013. “Our main negotiation team was composed of the four leading candidates (Luxembourg has four constituencies), the secretary-general, an expert in finance, an expert in social affairs and health system and two senior advisers of the parliamentary group staff.”

VVD, Netherlands: VVD is a centre-right liberal party and has served in government as the leading party in the Netherlands since 2010. “After the elections, the parliament appoints a key negotiator (an experienced person, less political). Then the party leaders negotiate. When the negotiations are narrowed to the likely governing parties, the party leader normally selects one key advisor as co-negotiator.”

FDP, Germany: FDP is a classic liberal party and most recently served in government from 2009-2013. “The party board determines who is sent to negotiate. Historically this has been the party leader, the secretary-general and several MPs. Normally, working groups with MPs specialized in the respective topics are formed.”



Structure is an essential part of ensuring a party comes with you on any journey. It's the process from policy to education.

- United Party for National Development, Zambia

5. Tips to Get the Best Deal for Your Party

a. Prepare to say NO and walk away. All parties have red lines, so have a firm understanding of what yours are.

b. If the party leader is not involved in the discussions, make sure you have his / her support on these red lines.

c. Come prepared! Identify what the problematic issues will be, not just for you but for the other parties. You can therefore prepare how to best tackle them at the moment.

d. Know when to fight and when to lose. You need to pick your battles in advance. For those issues you lose, what can you muster in return? Make sure you end up with two wins, one from defeat and one from victory.

j. **You may want to secure ministries in every department:** The lure of portfolio, prestige and party positions can be enticing. **Be wary:** the UK Liberal Democrats were offered up to 16 ministries (primarily junior) with restricted power in the department dominated by Conservatives, frustrating reform at every level. **Consider if concentrated power in key ministries could allow you to have more impact.**

k. Try to harmonize your values and policy strengths with your desired departments. Previously D66 in the Netherlands obtained the Ministry of Education, which fit their values and identity as an 'education party'.



ALN Advice Corner

e. All of the parties inside a negotiation need to come out with at least one 'big win'. All those around the table should understand this maxim.

f. A big win defines a significant part of your manifesto or policy area being accepted. This issue should be a cornerstone of your party values.

g. This big win will help you sell the agreement to your members and the electorate.

h. The future coalition partners, of course, have their plan in negotiations. Try to give each other space during the talks so that parties can show tangible results to their supporters.

i. Try to avoid getting the portfolio where you could not deliver the most in respect to your programme.



MANAGING

(the governing stage)

Maintaining personal and professional relationships during this period can be taxing and time-consuming. Your time is spent dealing with national emergencies and intra-party matters.

On the domestic front, party members grow restless at the blurring of the party and government identity. This can be overwhelming, so having crisis management plans, communication strategies and keeping a cool head can help.

1. What Dynamics Are Important to Consider on Day One?

FOUR WORDS:
Privacy | Maturity
Cohesiveness | Transparency

Fighting for your policies in government is one thing; fighting about them publicly is disastrous. Neither sides win. Public perception of the coalition is critical in the early stages. If this starts with a poor impression, the chances of the coalition surviving are seriously diminished.

“Having a clearly defined and transparent agreement is vital. You need to take the voters on a journey with you and leave nothing to chance”.

- Democratic Alliance, South Africa

The opposition will search for the weakest link in your armour and keep prodding at it until something snaps. Nothing energises the opposition as much as seeing several parties governing at their expenses. The opposition will hurt you when they can. They will vote against everything they stand for if they think it will lead to a government collapse: do not count on them for anything.

You may feel closer ideologically to an opposition party than to your government partners, but

your loyalties need to be with the government of which you are now a central part. The less public spats they are, the better the chances for everyone's fortunes. Your coalition partners need to know that if you are not pleased with their behaviours, you will show maturity in handling this.

“If your coalition partner fails to keep their word, don't retaliate immediately or publicly, but do react in-house and show your maturity in crisis management.”

- (The Netherlands, D66)

Trust between party leaders, built on personal and professional level, are sizeable factors in determining longevity. It is your coalition's most significant asset, don't squander it. Once mutual trust is gone, everything becomes much more problematic. Müller and Strom 'Coalition Governments in Western Europe' studied 13 western European governments to ascertain the leading causes for the breakdown in coalition governments. Defeat by the opposition is cited as a factor in less than 10% of cases. (see below)

“If there are major disagreements between the coalition partners, we try to sort them at departmental level. If that fails, the issue is raised between the two leaders of the coalition parties.”

- (UK, Liberal Democrats)

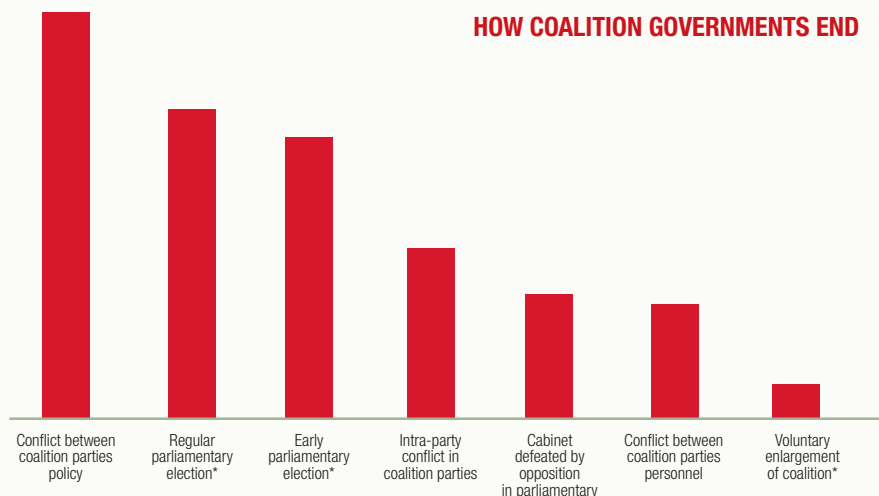
Make sure you have the institutional machinery in place for the coalition to function immediately and effectively. If, under the coalition, new ministers are appointed, ensure the infrastructure exists to sustain them. The civil service and political staff in advance, so you are not chasing your tail on day one. Otherwise, your first weeks will be spent hiring, training and restructuring.

As the smaller party in the Coalition, you may not have enough political advisors, and it will take time to get this right. You have to make sure

that agreement is in place with your coalition partners to keep a grip on policy making across all departments. You have to agree on what rights you will have to oversee departments that you don't have ministers in or the consultation process with your party in those departments.

allocated on a proportional basis. The parties agreed to retain the current mayoral system if the ANC were provided with two additional sub-committees in areas of the city controlled by the ANC. The matter was resolved.

HOW COALITION GOVERNMENTS END



2. Uncharted Waters; Managing a Multi-Party Government for the First Time.

A Case Study from Cape Town, 2006

Case Study:

In the 2006 municipal elections, the DA became the single largest party in Cape Town with 42.0% of the vote, ahead of the African National Congress (ANC). Helen Zille was elected mayor by 106 votes to 103 after the DA obtained several smaller parties' support. Zille faced considerable opposition and confrontation from the ANC. In September 2006, the provincial government announced that it planned to replace the city's mayoral system with an executive committee.

The move would have resulted in reduced mayoral power. The governing party would not itself have been able to assign the ten seats on the committee, which would instead have been

This was the political context of Helen Zille's first experiences in multi-party government.

We invited Helen Zille to share her experiences on coalitions.

Helen has served as the Chairperson of the Federal Council of the Democratic Alliance since 20 October 2019. From 2009 until 2019, she was the Premier of the Western Cape province for two five-year terms and a Western Cape Provincial Parliament member. She served as Federal Leader of the Democratic Alliance from 2007 to 2015 and as Mayor of Cape Town from 2006 to 2009.



Helen Zille

Chairperson of the Federal Council of the Democratic Alliance (DA)

Q: Were you involved in the coalition negotiations?

No. If you are likely to benefit from a coalition you shouldn't be negotiating it as you may make a lot of compromises to get into power.

Q. As a leader how difficult was it to remove yourself from those discussions?

I appreciate that it is complex and difficult but it was very useful in my case. It's important to remove yourself from the situation especially if you are to be executive mayor and leave it to people with technical specialities. They kept me informed. If you make too many compromises in that room then it becomes very difficult to succeed in delivering on everything.

Q. For negotiations, do you think it's better to talk or listen?

Most people prepare for negotiation by focusing on what they will say. But the goal of a negotiation isn't just to get what you want; it ensures that both sides get what they want.

To do that, you need to listen to the other side. This forms the bases of whether a deal is possible or not.

Q. What are the desired competencies for a negotiator?

Those with really sharp intellect. Someone with government experience at senior level who understands the power dynamics of where power lies within ministries. Definitely, add to that, a lawyer and a political strategist. I would also invite an ally from an international sister party who have more experience and can warn us about the traps.

Q. What are the main characteristics of 21st Century leadership?

I would say, very strong intuitive intelligence. When to let things slide and when to challenge.

I learned a lot from Thomas Jefferson's mantra; "on matters of style flow with the current, on matters of principles stand like a rock".

Q: What were the demands of the other parties and what guided your strategy?

To have a clear set of broad principles to guide operations. We had limited processes and mechanisms to work out joint policy positions etc. Instead we had a rudimentary plan to get into power and give every party the portfolio that they would be satisfied with. This was not desirable but it was a reflection of what was priorities for many of those around the table. We needed to ensure we had responsibilities for administrative and compliance areas. Without them it's very hard to ensure a smooth running of government.

Q: Looking back on day one of the executive mayoral coalition what was the most immediate lesson you learned?

I learned very quickly to be pragmatic about style. But remain quite tough on substance and principle. That seemed to suit everyone to my surprise.

Q. As the dominant person in terms of both position and style, how did you ensure the other parties weren't overlooked?

To be a success, government needs to do more than merely survive. It must also show that a coalition government can govern effectively. This is in all the involved parties' interests, even though they will once again be competing for votes by the time of the next election. I encouraged the other parties to promote their brand and get as much news coverage as possible. You have to be overwhelmingly generous to smaller parties so they don't feel squeezed out.

Q: What advice would you give to ALN members as they embark on their coalition journeys?

When it comes to negotiations, be clear to the other parties that no is an option. You must be prepared to walk away from the negotiation table.

It's incredibly important to consult with your members to discuss any major changes and

compromises on party policy. To propose a special conference, to have that aired in the media. It shows you are listening and discussing changes as part of a complex process where give and take is required.

3. Remember the Four Rules of Coalition Club.

Remember coalitions are difficult to discuss, negotiate, enter, maintain. Here are four rules to guide your strategy!

No one should be on your negotiating team who has a vested interest in the outcome. For example, you're being selected mayor, or speaker, or any advantage whatsoever you should not be on that team because you are much too likely to sacrifice principles for expedience. Put faith in those with the right skills.

Have a clear idea of what you are prepared to negotiate on and what you are not. Explain to voters, we didn't get enough votes to determine fully the final policy outcome so we must negotiate. Electorate must understand if you don't get 50% +1 of the total vote you have to negotiate. Remember to bring them with you. Don't leave it to the media or the opposition. to educate your voters.

Negotiations are not about who gets what job, that comes later. What is our plan of action for the next five years not on positions. It is about identifying plan of action for next five years on a common value set.

Produce a new coalition agreement around a five year plan like a joint manifesto and take it back to your voters/ members, through a Federal Council etc, and say; this is the plan, this is what we compromised on, this is what we stood firm on, this is the plan to measure us on. If you don't take your voters with you, they will turn on your savagely and you may never recover.

Warning: If you cannot agree on a plan that upholds your principles, it is better to stay in opposition.

4. Finals Remarks from the ALN Advice Corner.

Our journey has ended for now. We hope this publication kickstart further interest and learning about coalition building, which helps your political work, regionally, nationally and locally. At the very least, we hope it fosters fruitful exchange and greater priority in the ALN family.

- Your brand proposition is everything. Undermine your values, undermine your party.
- Don't tell the electorate before an election that you will go into government with this party or that party because then it doesn't matter who they vote for. (exception in the case of a formal pre-election alliance)
- Getting out of government is never an easy decision. It's like a marriage for better or for worse. But remember that parties are more likely to be rewarded if they complete their terms, not walk away.
- Your red lines for staying or leaving a coalition should be based on your liberal principles. If they are comprised, you are compromised. Issues of human rights, democracy, the rule of law are non-negotiable.
- Do not alienate your members, they are most likely to feel excluded and forgotten when you join a government coalition. They are also the group that will make or break your next election campaign.
- Stay focused on the goal. Expectations are even higher for coalition governments than single-party governments.

- Communicate the role the party has played in government. Not only the successes, they speak for themselves, but also the realities that caused some failures.
- Communicating success is a vital part of the work in coalition, but often very difficult. Suppose other parties take credit for your policies. In that case, you have to make sure that the public (media) knows that they are taking credit for policies that are inherently against their beliefs and were not in their election manifesto.
- Finally, the language that you use in the coalition is imperative. Sometimes, the media and the public will portray you as being the 'larger party's toy' or that you are 'going to bed with the devil' and 'betraying your ideals'. You have to make the point that this is a 'business partnership' rather than a 'love affair'.
- Part of political communication is making sure you describe the situation and explain why it is that way.



There is no point going into power with parties who share none of your values. As liberals, we believe in non-racialism, constitutionalism, rule of law, meritocracy, a professional public service, a market economy, separation of state and party. If you join with them, you will destroy your brand.

- Democratic Alliance, South Africa

INITIATING, PLANNING AND MANAGING COALITIONS

AN AFRICAN LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE HANDBOOK

Progressive liberalism is characterised by its international outlook, its respect for individual opinions and its strive for a lively civil society.

This philosophical torch is carried in Africa by the largest political alliance of liberals, the Africa Liberal Network.

Established during an initial meeting of liberal political parties in Mombasa, Kenya in July 2001. The Africa Liberal Network was formally launched at a subsequent meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa in June 2003.

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