# SMp education Strand Meeting

# thursday 16th november, edinburgh city chambers, high street, Eh1 1yJ

# 14.00 – 16.00

**ATTENDEES**

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| Janey Andrews | University of Strathclyde |
| Sergio Della Sala | University of Edinburgh |
| Emma Duncan | The Global Concerns Trust |
| Jackie Farr | Scotland Malawi Partnership |
| Charles Fawcett | Aiming Higher in Malawi |
| Lore Gallastegi | The Open University |
| Karen Goodman-Jones | Signal |
| Joanne Gordon | Mary’s Meals |
| Cailin Hart | George Watson’s College |
| Rita Hopper | Sense Scotland |
| Lorna McDonald | Tearfund |
| Keith Murphy | Penicuik High School |
| Grace O’Donovan | Scotland Malawi Partnership |
| Graeme Reid | Scottish Government |
| Emilie Robinson | George Watson’s College |
| Samantha Ross | Link Community Development International  |
| Georgia Strachan | The Turing Trust |
| Dalene Swanson | University of Stirling |
| Kate Sykes | Link Community Development International |
| Gift Thompson | Queen Margaret University |
| Richard Travers | George Watson’s College |
| Emma Wood | Queen Margaret University |
| Kathy Wright | Scotland Malawi Partnership |

**APOLOGIES**

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| Pamela Woodburn | VSO International |
| Tony Wales | University of the West of Scotland |
| Calvin Clarke |  |
| Nick Rowland | University of Edinburgh |
| David Hope-Jones | Scotland Malawi Partnership |

**SUMMARY MINUTES**

# Welcome and Introduction to Malawian Input

Attendees were welcomed to the SMP’s fourth of five strand meetings around the Scottish Government’s Malawi Development Programme current round of grant funding. The purpose of the meeting was to allow for the sharing of opportunities, challenges, priorities and issues alongside Malawian input from a panel of colleagues and counterparts in Malawi. The meeting was conducted under Chatham House Rule and as such these summary minutes are anonymised.

Roundtable introductions were given by each attendee on their organisation and experience of Scottish Government funding and other funded education projects.

All attendees were reminded of the importance of reading the funding round criteria and eligibility requirements before applying. It was noted that this meeting is not the official Information Day; this will be held by the Scottish Government and Corra Foundation on Wednesday 29th November in Edinburgh – full details to be announced.

Attendees were reminded that the SMP is core-funded by the Scottish Government but is independent of them, and of the grant making process.

Malawian input remains at the heart of the SMP and all the meetings held. Thanks were given to the Malawi Scotland Partnership for their role in supporting and gathering input from key stakeholders. For this meeting the Malawian input was fed through an interactive WhatsApp discussion. Attendees were asked to write anonymous questions down, which were sent to the panel in Malawi, and their responses were revisited later (see section in minutes below).

There was discussion around the priorities for the civil society and governance strand from the Malawi government:

**Education (General) strand priorities:**

* Teacher training (including Special Needs, especially teacher training for working with students with Learning Difficulties)
* Internal efficiency of the Primarily school structure
* Decentralisation of education management
* School infrastructure (new classrooms, teachers houses and latrines)
* Provision of teaching and learning materials
* Inclusive education
* Curriculum strengthening at all levels
* Bursaries to support vulnerable students (particularly Secondary school)
* Up scaling of school feeding programme (particularly Primary school)
* Upgrading of Community Day Secondary Schools
* Introduction of more double shift schools

**Education (Higher) strand priorities:**

* Access to Higher Education
* Training of Higher education staff
* Curriculum strengthening in Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training (“TEVET”) institutions
* Cost recovery mechanisms and finance mobilisation in public universities
* Public Private Partnerships
* Support for capacity to strengthen procurement, financial management, planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation systems.

Communication and capacity-building were identified as key themes running through these priorities.

**ACTION:** Attendees to share links to projects with SMP, SMP to add links to these (and others as they are identified) on the past events page [here](http://scotland-malawipartnership.org/news-events/past-events/malawi-call-education/).

An update from the Malawi Scotland Partnership on the current education policy situation in Malawi: the National Education strategic plan ended in June this year, a review has been done and the document will then be shared. That plan will be to address some of the issues in the review into some sort of an interim plan which will run for the next two years during which another long term strategy will be drafted. It is anticipated that the old and new strategy will still focus on access and equality, quality and governance issues.

# Sharing of Learning

The sharing of learning was focused on three areas: application, grant management, and sustainability of projects. Some of the successes, issues and challenges identified were:

Malawian input is the key to a successful project.

The planning phase is the most important, so don’t rush this, and use the SMP Partnership Principles online resources for consultation.

Be aware that the needs analysis and statistics costs money to do as part of the application process, so factor this in when you are preparing your planning.

If you train certain people exclusively and they prove effective, you risk losing capacity if they leave the project. It is better to maximise capacity across a whole team, which will help to avoid having to replace key members.

Consider as many risks as possible within the application as it is better than presenting an application which appears to not consider these risks. This is also relevant for presenting indicators – they may come across well on paper, but in reality, they will need to be measured effectively, so make sure that the indicators you use are able to be measured. It is also important not to rely on government statistics to inform your indicators.

Avoiding duplication is key: glean as much as possible from local partners, NGO’s, and local District Commissioners who should have a clear idea of what projects are being undertaken and where.

Don’t hide your mistakes, if things don’t go according to plan, or if you haven’t met your indicators from the Scottish Government – they are supportive, and are interested to know what you are doing about these issues as they arise.

In order to maintain effective communication channels, it can be helpful to factor into the budget at least one annual visit to Malawi as making assumptions can prove ineffectual.

It is important to work collaboratively, across organisations and also strands – avoid working in silos.

The Scottish Government have been flexible in the past with projects working across two or more strands. Even if the application form requires you to select one ‘lead’ strand that doesn’t mean you can’t work in other strands as well.

Regarding project sustainability, working within government systems and not setting your project outside of the Government of Malawi priorities is crucial to embed sustainability. Capacity training is also key to this, and outcomes should have a long-term impact past the life of the project.

When budgeting, do as much detailed planning as possible, even at concept note stage. There was a question asked about whether the 10% overhead limit for Scotland applied to the rest of the UK as well.

**ACTION:** Graeme to get clarity on this from Corra Foundation for the Info day and their Q&A

With reporting, explain everything every time you write a report, don’t be afraid of repeating yourself. Avoid acronyms.

Disseminate information on your work widely right from the start of your project. Share failures as well as successes.

Be mindful that if you plan on taking on a project with two major grants from separate core funders, you will be balancing two sets of priorities and you risk not meeting one or both.

# SUPPORTING DEVELOPING APPLICATIONS/DISCUSSION

Attendees were given the option to disclose whether they were considering applying for a Scottish Government 2018-23 Malawi grant via the Feedback and Evaluation Form. They were also given the option of having these details made public on the SMP website along with their details to be contacted directly. Others noted that the information could be posted but not their personal details, and as such they would prefer for interested parties to contact them through the SMP.

Emma Wood from Queen Margaret’s University outlined a project they are exploring on vocational training hubs for young people and effectiveness of Scottish school visits. Get in touch with Emma to find out more: ewood@qmu.ac.uk

Georgia Strachan from The Turing Trust outlined a project with I.T. in schools, expanding on the work they have been doing through a small grants programme. Georgia is looking for partners, get in touch with her here: georgia@turingtrust.co.uk

Charles Fawcett from Aiming Higher Malawi outlined opportunities for collaboration with educational projects in the area focusing on access and inclusion to education for children with disabilities (nursery, primary and secondary), operating from Mulanje to Thyold. Charles is seeking partners, get in touch at: h.lifestyle@coatbridge.n-lanark.sch.uk

An anonymous attendee is working on targeting secondary schools across Malawi, building on work putting PC’s into schools in the Northern Region. They are also focusing on teacher training – using IT to strengthen lessons, IT maintenance, and teaching digital literacy. They are targeting gender and urban/rural divides. Please contact grace@scotland-malawipartnership.org to find out more about this project or to get in touch with this attendee.

Linda Jones from the University of Dundee Medical School is developing a Centre of Excellence for Medical Education in Blantyre, building on work already in progress. The project aim is to be a self-sustaining economically viable Medical Education Resource for Sub-Saharan Eastern Africa. Linda is looking to network more extensively with others involved in a wide range of educational projects relevant to the widest range of health. You can contact Linda at l.z.jones@dundee.ac.uk.

Another anonymous attendee is looking at pathways of students in school communities, and providing skills support and vocational training for the community. Please contact grace@scotland-malawipartnership.org to get in touch about this project.

Emma Duncan of the Global Concerns Trust is looking at vocational training for adults with disabilities living in rural areas, (Ntcheu, Dowa, Nkhotakota, Nkhata Bay). Emma is interested in collaborating with others providing equipment/services/education to people with disabilities, including disability aids, medical services and training. Get in touch with Emma at: devonglory@hotmail.com.

Joanne Gordon from Mary’s Meals is looking to expand their school feeding programme in Malawi. They are targeting Educational Centres and primary schools. Joanne notes that school feeding increases participation and enrolment in primary schools, lessening food security burdens of children and their families by providing a meal in a place of education. Joanne is looking to partner with those improving the quality of education, ie. primary teachers providing early education. Malawi is Mary’s Meals largest programme, and Joanne has explained that it is both well established in the community and in government capacity building. Their programme is also owned and run by local community volunteers. Joanne stated that Mary’s Meals provides support, MEL, training, and logistic support – food delivery, kitchen building – to ensure the project runs smoothly and is efficiently delivered for real impact. To get in touch with Joanne, contact her at: joanne.gordon@marysmeals.org.

Rita Hopper of Sense Scotland is looking to conduct a project in the northern region on inclusive education, primary and teacher training. Contact Rita at: rhopper@sensescotland.org.uk

Sergio Della Sala, University of Edinburgh, is developing a project for Mamalija School, from nursery to primary to secondary school. Contact Sergio at: Sergio@ed.ac.uk.

Lore Gallastegi from the Open University is looking at either teacher development or teacher training college lecturers’ development to support special needs learners, or upgrading teachers’ skills in community day secondary schools. She is not looking at specific geographic areas at present. Contact Lore at: lore.gallastegi@open.ac.uk.

Samantha Ross, Link Community Development International is looking to align with the Scottish Malawi Cooperation Agreement so their priorities will depend on this. Samantha notes they are likely to look at community mobilisation, school improvement, national education standards (dissemination/embedding), and inclusion (particularly girl’s education). You can get in touch with Samantha at: Samantha@lcd.org.uk.

An anonymous attendee is currently working in the North of Malawi and has a project that works with communities to address cultural issues that prevent children from accessing education (ie. child labour/early child marriage). They are interested to hear from anyone that has expertise in integrating children with disabilities into primary education. Please contact grace@scotland-malawipartnership.org for more information or to get in touch with this attendee.

**ACTION:** Attendees who did not complete the form at the event can complete [here](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SDTYJBZ).

# Feedback from Malawian Input

Some of the answers to the anonymous questions posted on WhatsApp were shared, and are also posted on the SMP website for future reference.

Read the questions and answers [here](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/download_file/2658/).

The Education Panel were as follows:

Name: Phillip Kamangrah

Organisation: Centre for Legal Assistance

Name: Kisa Kumwenda

Organisation: Civil Society Education Coalition

Name: Chiletso Msang’azi

Organisation: Mary’s Meals

# Closing Remarks and next steps

The Scottish Government will be hosting its own formal Information Day in partnership with the Corra Foundation for prospective applicants, which will be announced soon.

Additional strand meetings will be held on the following dates:

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| [Renewables](http://scotland-malawipartnership.org/news-events/all-events/malawi-call-renewable-energy-water-climate/)  | Thursday 16th November, 4.30-6.30pm | Edinburgh City Chambers |

Everyone was thanked for attending and for their open and honest contributions. Attendees were reminded that the SMP is here to help and to keep in contact.