



Membership Needs and Impact Survey 2015: Summary of Results

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year the SMP conducts a Membership Needs and Impact Survey, asking members what impact the SMP has had on their work with Malawi over the last year, and what members would like the SMP to do to support their work in the following year. In keeping with our core principles of transparency and accountability, and as a member-led organisation, we're happy to share in full the unedited results of the survey. This is what our members told us.

Key headlines:

IMPACT: 94% felt that membership of the SMP in 2015 “helped strengthen, support and develop their links with Malawi”.

SERVICES: The most useful SMP services in 2015 were the bulletin (useful for 90% of members), SMP events (85%), networking (78%), office enquiries (78%) and member forums (71%).

CAMPAIGNING: Through 2015, the SMP supported and encouraged members to:

- Raise awareness of the [Global Goals](#): 92% knew this was an SMP priority and 47% changed their work as a result of the SMP.
- Work within the SMP’s [Partnership Principles](#): 82% knew this was an SMP priority and 41% changed their work as a result of the SMP.
- [Support the economy](#) of Malawi: 82% knew this was an SMP priority and 35% changed their work as a result of the SMP.
- Work within [Malawian priorities](#): 62% knew this was an SMP priority and 25% changed their work as a result of the SMP.

IMPROVING QUALITY:

- 78% felt the SMP’s information had improved the quality of their work in 2015
- 68% felt the SMP’s advice and support had improved the quality of their work in 2015
- 67% felt the SMP’s networking had improved the quality of their work in 2015
- 39% felt the SMP’s sharing between members had improved the quality of their work in 2015

FORUMS: 84% had attended an SMP Forum in 2015, 100% of whom said forums had been valuable, 40% said “very valuable”.

Based on the needs and priorities of members identified through this survey, the SMP has developed a [number of new areas for further development](#) in 2016.



The Membership Needs and Impact Survey 2015 was conducted during November and December 2015, using the online survey software, 'Survey Monkey.' 25 members completed the survey.

There was generally very good feedback on the impact of SMP services provided in 2015. The data received will be valuable in developing member services in 2016, and in demonstrating SMP impact in strategic reports, potential funding applications and in operational planning.

This report provides a summary of the survey results and outlines potential member services for 2016, based on member needs.

1) Process and Participants

The SMP Needs and Impact Survey 2015 was conducted during November and December 2015, using the online survey software, 'Survey Monkey'. 24 SMP Members completed the online survey. 60% of the respondents were organisations, 20% were individuals, 16% were schools and 4% were youth members. There were 24 questions surveying opinions on both the impact of SMP work in 2015, and membership needs for 2016.

2) Impact

94% of respondents felt that membership of the SMP in 2015 "helped strengthen, support and develop their links with Malawi".

Some members gave examples on how the SMP had helped strengthen and support their links:

- *"Access to flood relief money for Blantyre Synod, discussion about church partnerships videography opportunity, discussion on visa issues and e-news"*
- *"Forums and events have provided a great insight into what's going on in Malawi and allowed us to adjust our priorities accordingly."*
- *"GALVmed has had the opportunity to present its work at a number of SMP events, to network and to learn from other Members."*
- *"We have the potential for office space for our clients in Malawi and also had the chance to network with good folk"*
- *"I feel I have a large organisation and support network at my disposal"*
- *"The Scotland Malawi partnership has given my students a better insight into Malawi."*
- *"Excellent support from SMP has helped to deepen our understanding and allowed us to foster more fruitful links with our partner school."*
- *"Apart from our links with the people we work with in Malawi, the Partnership is our primary source of information and support."*
- *"Networking opportunities at events"*

The following core SMP services were considered by most respondents to be either “extremely useful” or “quite useful”:

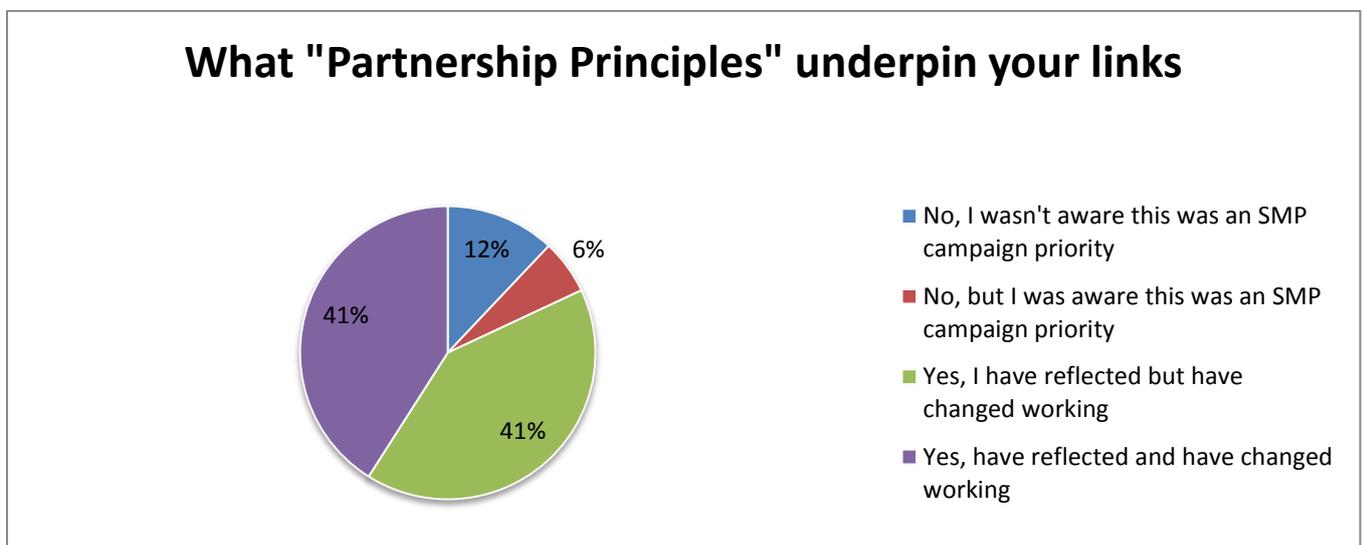
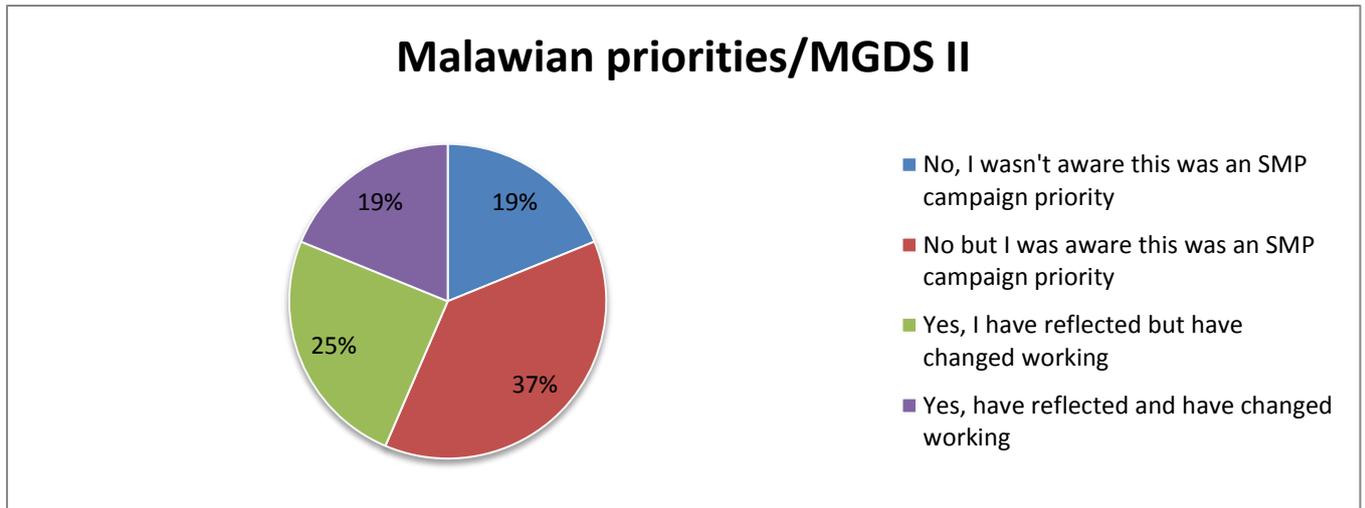
- Dissemination news/bulletin (90%)
- SMP events (85%)
- Networking opportunities (78%)
- Office enquiries and support (78%)
- SMP member forums (71%)
- Publications (63%)
- Use of social media (53%)
- Website & online database (53%)
- Representation on social media (48%)
- Funding advice/support (43%)
- Support for visa applications (30%)
- Representation in media (18%)
- Advocacy and lobbying (12%)
- Training (12%)

We asked our members how we could improve our work, and were told:

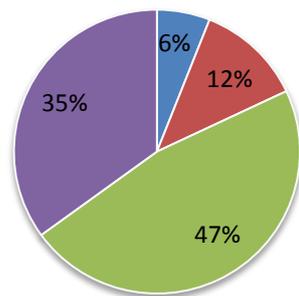
- *“Continue dialogue with us to engage better with **churches**”*
- *“I am a new member of the SMP. A **new members starter kit** or webpage may help to fully maximise the available resources and expertise.”*
- *“I feel across SMP events, **networking sessions** could be more led, this would be especially useful in avoiding members 'catching up' with old colleagues. We fall into this trap at almost every event and end up failing to network.”*
- *“We've really enjoyed the opportunity and exposure at business forums. However I feel like we could really benefit from a lot more interaction with the education and youth side. We've interacted with more than 500 schools through the 90kg rice challenge, not only does it help to support the economy of Malawi but is able to engage and teach a huge amount of Scottish kids about the realities of life in Malawi. It'd be great to see more ways that a mutually beneficial relationship could work in this area.”*
- *“Perhaps **regular scheduled visits with DFID/ Scottish gov?** Scheduled **blog posts** from members?”*
- *“I feel that you are already doing a good job.”*
- *“Take more time to identify the extent of **IT** use and understanding, perhaps even to the extent of more traditional communication. This is particularly so for those of us who prefer to communicate more in personal terms.”*
- *“The services I use are very effective. No dramatic update or improvement needed but obviously ongoing development will be needed.”*
- *“As our capacity grows we are taking more advantage of the services offered by the Partnership. “*
- *“Only been member for a short period and still finding my way around.”*
- *“More relevant targeting to school students.”*

Members were asked whether the SMP has encouraged reflection on a number of key work areas.

The results were as follows:

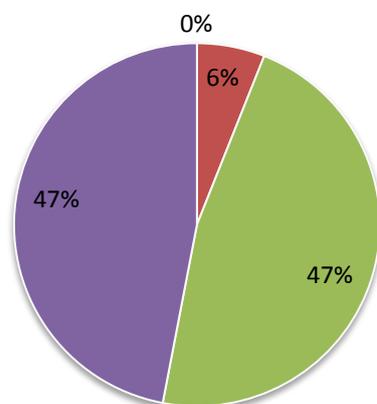


How your link can support economic development in Malawi (e.g buying Mzuzu coffee)



- No, I wasn't aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- No, but I was aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- Yes, I have reflected but have changed working
- Yes, have reflected and have changed working

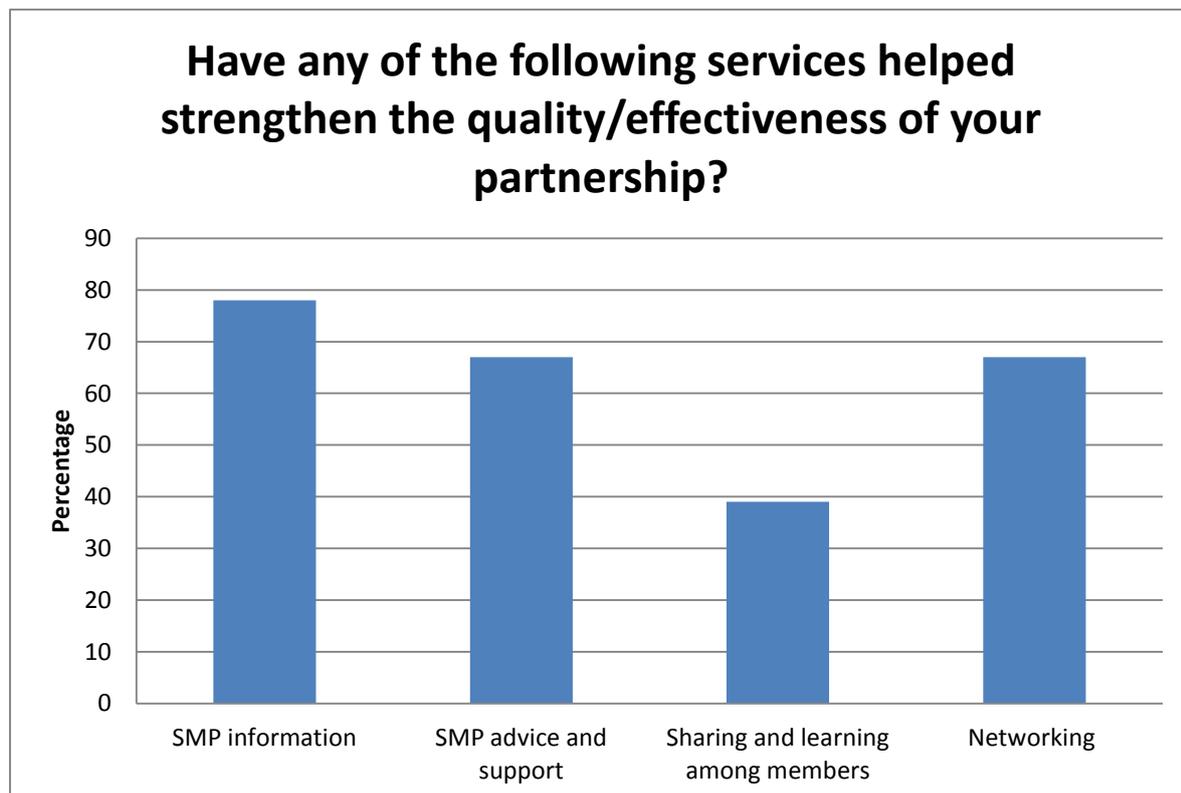
The UN's Sustainable Development Goals/Global Goals



- No, I wasn't aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- No, but I was aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- Yes, I have reflected but have changed working
- Yes, have reflected and have changed working

These graphs illustrate the majority of SMP members are aware of and reflecting on our strategic priorities and campaigns (very few members said they were completely unaware of these four areas of work). **The greatest area of reflection and change was in what Partnership Principles underpin links (41%) and in the UN's Global Goals (47%).** In instances where reflection is taking place but working remains the same perhaps more services need to be offered to help members who wish to practically implement these aspects, for example in how links can support economic development in Malawi.

SMP members were also asked how member services helped strengthen the quality/effective of their partnership.



When asked what impact membership of the SMP had on members links with Malawi in 2015, the following reflections were offered (most comments centred on the benefits of strengthening partnerships, networking and information-sharing):

Strengthening partnership working:

- “Our membership has led us to focus a lot more on **support the development of our partner NGO in Malawi**, seeing them get to the level where we can truly be **equal partners**.”
- “Our direct, **dignified, people-people links** have increased.”
- “It has allowed me to reflect on the **value of our partnership** and allowed me to **plan to improve our partnership** in the future.”
- “Through SMP membership and networking we have a better understanding of our partnership, what it is and what it could be. Through networking and link projects we have been able to **develop new learning skills** and demonstrate our learning to others in our local community, across Scotland and other countries across the globe.”
- “It has been vital to **how we have thought about the development of our project in Malawi**. It has also played a key role in keeping our volunteers motivated and engaged.”



Networking:

- *“Improved overall **networking opportunities.**”*
- *“It's provided a good opportunity for us to network with other people who are passionate about Malawi. It has helped to keep us informed of **what's going on with Malawi** and how other organisations and individuals are looking to help.”*
- *“We have the potential for office space for our clients in Malawi and also had the chance to network with good folk.”*
- *A very useful 'bridge' or portal, from Scotland into Malawi.”*

Information-sharing and support:

- *“It has **provided information and support**, which has greatly enhanced working partnerships.”*
- *“**Great source of fast, practical information and contacts.** Good way to disseminate information. “*
- *“We have felt more **supported and inspired by SMP leaders and events.** Language and Culture lessons arranged for March.”*
- *“Contacts, advice, funding.”*

Other:

- *“Maintained my interest.”*
- *“As an individual member my Malawi interactions tend to be sporadic and I have not had many this year. “*
- *“Only been member for a few months so not had opportunity to explore possibilities.”*
- *“We would still have substantial links with Malawi if not member of SMP so hard to answer this.”*

The final set of questions assessing the impact of SMP's services, were on the SMP Member Forums.

84% of the respondents had been to one or more Forum Meetings, 40% of respondents who had been to a forum said the meetings were “very valuable” and 60% reflected that they had been “somewhat valuable.”

Comments and suggestions on the Forums were as follows:

- *“A church forum would be useful.”*
- *“Very well structured, lots of useful updates on the state of Malawi and existing projects running in Malawi. It would be of great benefit if members could Skype into the forums.”*
- *“There is little active debate at forums and whilst they are useful, I feel this could make them more useful, seeing members think a lot more about the topics in question.”*
- *“It strikes me as wise that the SMP is reflecting on the timing of events which seek to engage the private sector.”*
- *“Good networking opportunity but perhaps need more time for this.”*
- *“Very well organised, very useful.”*

- *“From a limited perspective, I think the SMP staff needs to be expanded with experts considering the numbers of members who attend, but I realise the funding would need to be increased. Possibly a more accurate relationship between NGO funds and membership costs could resolve that issue.”*
- *“It's helpful to receive the notes of meetings even if you can't make the meetings.”*
- *“Youth forum needs to be relevant and not a token gesture i.e. opportunities for discussion/ networking is much more welcome than a film night etc. which could appear patronising/ not valuable.”*
- *“Excellent!”*

3) Needs

The following results outline the respondents' interest in potential SMP member services in 2016.

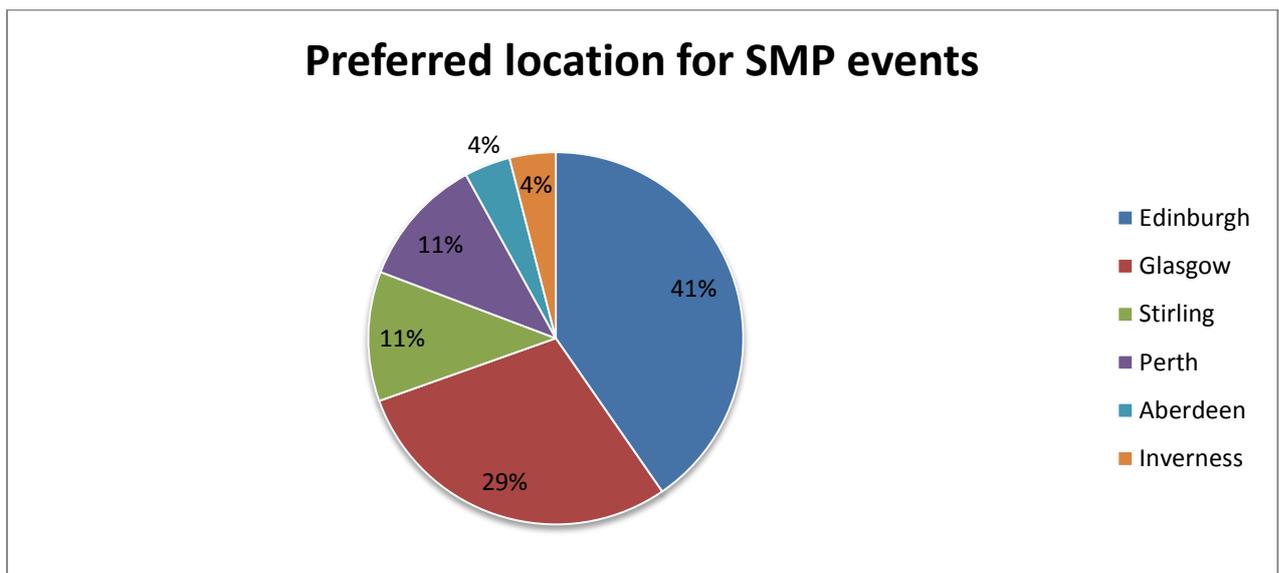
Respondents suggested they would like to see the SMP take forward the following topics, themes and challenges in 2016.

- *“Support for smaller NGOs in obtaining funding to support Malawian partners.”*
- *“Education, Gender equality, eHealth / health , mLearning”*
- *“Promotion of the importance and impact of research/academic projects, however ensuring non-academic institutions do not get overlooked.”*
- *“I trust in the SMP's listening to its and MaSP's memberships and in the office and board working together to identify priorities.”*
- *“Job creation and connectivity, networking of orgs on the ground in Malawi.”*
- *“Help bring SDG universality to life with ongoing examples, esp. of how carbon emissions/waste disposal and other environmentally damaging actions here in Scotland, can adversely affect families in Malawi, e.g. global warming and changes to rainfall patterns, temp, therefore agriculture.”*
- *“More on the partnership principles and how to make a school partnership sustainable.”*
- *“Develop linkages with MaSP in Malawi and better use of those links by Scottish based organisation that are thinking of, or perhaps already are, working on the ground in Malawi.*
- *We work in healthcare so any work in that area would be particularly useful. “*
- *“I specialise in aviation systems and regulations. I am unsure whether that area of assistance/partnership can be developed, or if it needs to be developed.”*
- *“Protocol on per diems/allowances.”*
- *“Effective fundraising techniques.”*
- *“Increased networking, awareness of support/fundraising/training etc. Promoting Global Goals in a practical way Support youth organisations etc. with international links as well as schools - huge appetite and interest out there.”*

When asked what training the SMP could offer members to support their link the following ideas were suggested:

- *“I have not used the funding support services in place; however this is one key area of interest to action items on the ground.”*
- *“Provision of support/signposting regarding effective M&E.”*
- *“Media training. Events planning.”*
- *“Networking ops more than anything else.”*
- *“Project management, grant applications training.”*
- *“Training probably n/a to NIDOS's small secretariat.”*
- *“More events for the students: e.g. Chichewa, Malawi Culture. I understand that the Scotland, Malawi Partnership will come into schools and facilitate this, but it would be nice to have classes in which the students could attend and network with others. “*
- *“Responsibilities for expat volunteers/staff and Malawian staff/service providers including tax issues.”*
- *“Help us help them - using theatre in education to support our partner school. Project training.”*
- *“Structures/ contacts in Malawi, communicating what you're doing (not basics like how Facebook works, but useful ways to communicate effectively and gain support.”*

The following results were shown relating to preferred locations for SMP events:





As in previous years, events hosted in the Central Belt are most popular. A couple of specific comments were made about location:

- *“Skype or other online tools.”*
- *“The SMP rightly holds its events around Scotland. I believe it important that this continue.”*

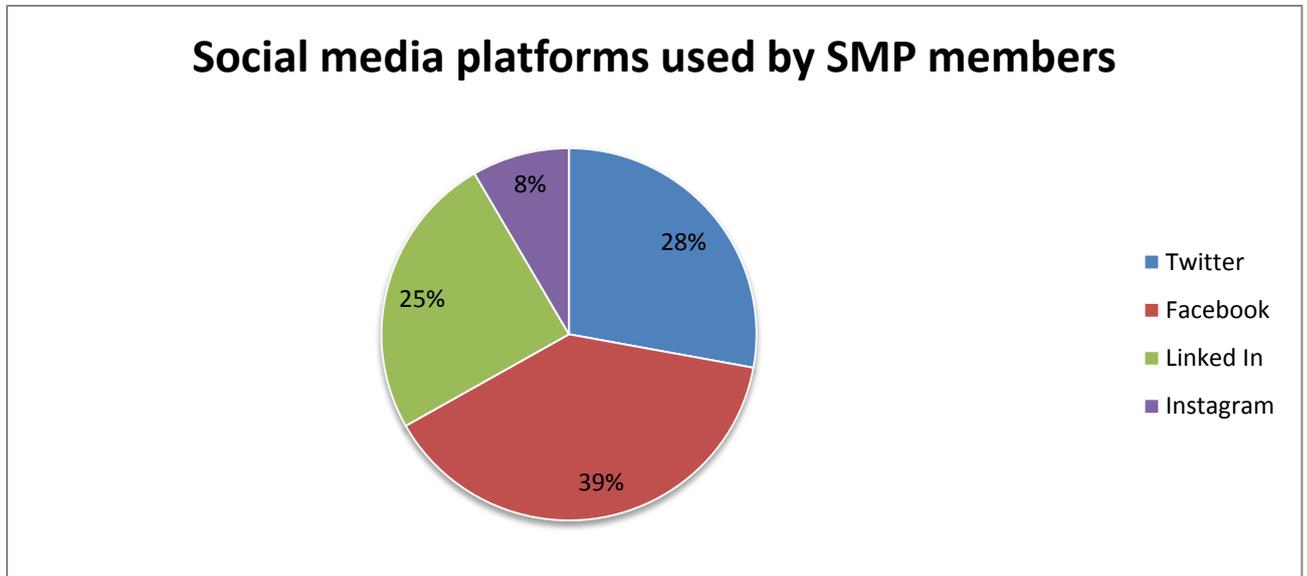
The following suggestions and ideas were offered for ways in which the SMP website could better support Members’ links:

- *“List of complete list of projects.”*
- *“If there was an area of the website that linked members who were in need of support, partnerships, research or collaboration of any sort with other members.”*
- *“Please could you put on a link to NIDOS web? NIDOS has one to SMP.”*
- *“N/A it is a good, well laid out and easy to navigate website.”*
- *“Supply video instruction by experts 'in the field' or arrange partnerships with Open University.”*
- *“Unsure. Maybe a section that identifies the Malawi government departments (not just those currently part of aid supported activities) and where they might benefit from assistance.”*
- *“You're great!”*
- *“Drive more people to using it - networking opportunities.”*

The following suggestions and ideas were offered for ways in which the weekly news bulletin could better support Members’ links:

- *“None, I love it!”*
- *“The bulletin is well formatted and easily accessible.”*
- *“Keep doing what you are doing with the consistency and length that they are.”*
- *“I think it is already very good.”*
- *“Its excellent - can't think of any improvements to suggest.”*
- *“The pictures do not open in my browser so I only manage to read half of it in s strange format. “*
- *“I would quite like a PDF version that I could print off and read - but I appreciate that I am a bit behind the times in that respect.”*
- *“Seems fine at the moment.”*
- *“A digest at the top listing what is in it with links to the entry so that you don't have to go over it all.”*
- *“Section it into target areas.”*
- *“Include youth members in circulation/ allow opt in. Don't understand logic in not including as there is no additional costs etc. involved.”*

We asked members which social media platforms they're most likely to use:



Members were asked that their vision for the SMP in 2020 was and where do they want the SMP network to be and what the SMP should be doing?

- *“Promoting **education, research, innovation**. With strong focus on **gender equality**.”*
- *“If there was the capacity, it would be great for the SMP to **undertake more campaigns**, particularly around **Climate Action** as well as feeding into national campaigns, promoting these to members.”*
- *“We would like to see the SMP continue to facilitate a **dynamic and interconnected network** of individuals and groups with a passion for Malawi. We'd like to see objectives and goals which would ease Malawi's shift towards self-sufficiency while at the same time identifying key areas where aid was necessary. Overall it would continue to give a platform for Malawian voices to be heard when deciding on developmental projects and priorities. We want to have developed our network to the point that our Malawian imports where making a significant difference to development in the North of Malawi. We want to be recognized as a company that gives people an opportunity to live out their compassionate values and affection for Malawi through their everyday purchases. We would like to be known for the standard of our educational work and our contribution to a huge number of school kids to learning about Malawi in a practical and dynamic way.”*
- *“As an organisation which continues to **champion dignified people-people links** and where the **model is recognised as valuable within the UK**, in Europe and internationally; where MaSP and SMP aims and activities are even more in synch; where the **diaspora** is even more*

engaged; in which the **high calibre of existing practitioner staff** is maintained; where there are diversified funding sources.”

- “Facilitating **in-depth MEL from 15 years** of cooperation agreement, disseminating results and supporting building on lessons learned to achieve more from partnership.”
- “Continue to support local viable NGOs in their work, **act as examples for other "developed" small nations**, who could partner small developing countries.”
- “An organisation that **responds to member needs** in Scotland and facilitates member activity in Malawi (either in its own right or through MaSP).”
- “Given the amount of good work the partnership and its members do it is a shame that more people don't know about it. The ties between the two nations could have even greater impact if **more of the public were aware** of the fantastic work.”
- “Extend the reach of the SMP beyond charitable partnerships and consider how **business links might be developed** and supported.”
- “Continuing to facilitate links within Scotland, within Malawi as well as between the two countries.”
- “**More voices from Malawi** - what do they want from the partnership?”

Members were asked what thematic areas they wanted the SMP to be engaged in 2017-2020?

- “**Faith based partnerships.**”
- “**Education, eHealth, e-learning, Health Research, partnership building.**”
- “**Young People (18-35) Energy Access Climate Action Gender.**”
- “**Sustainable economic development** of Malawi. How it can complement our charitable activities, our everyday purchasing decisions can help to support Malawi in a lasting and meaningful way. The promotion of the 'Lake of Stars' music event last year provided a meaningful non JTS example of this.”
- “**Governance; Gender & themes** which draw upon best practice from pragmatic Development Economists such as Esther Duflo.”
- “**Job creation** and how orgs can work together to do this.”
- “**Poverty alleviation, disaster planning** i.e. floods/ famine.”
- “**Livelihoods, Inequality, Capacity building.**”
- “**Maternal and Child Health** is clearly the most important but has further behind in the MDG results. The SDG need to develop this aspect of work, including SRHR education in Scotland and Malawi.”
- “At the end of the day life in Malawi will get better for the majority of people if the economy expands and income per head grows. **The economy** needs to be the focus.”
- “**Regulation and governance improvements within government** departments/directorates.”
- “**Rehab** (as distinct from health) or as a sub-set of health if there was enough interest?”
- “Sustainable living.”

SMP members were asked what they want the SMP to be doing in this space. What practical services do members want to see the SMP delivering?

- *“**Practical information** - e.g. changes in visa procurement, voice of network organisations at Government level.”*
- *“**Grant writing support**, EU and UK representation.”*
- *“**Support members collaborating in Scotland**, sharing knowledge and experience, potentially seeing the creation of joint programmes and projects. I feel that the current Youth and Schools work the SMP does is good. However, I feel there is little for **school leavers, students and young adults**, if something could be developed here I feel it would be incredibly useful and popular, especially with our (SfMs) members. Support for members gaining funding, especially through non-traditional means i.e. CSR.”*
- *“Continuation of the forums and using these as a platform to facilitate people thinking about how they can positively help Malawi out with their specific purview.”*
- *“Learning how organisation can work together on this.”*
- *“Working with MASP and GoM to explore demand for these thematic areas and if yes, jointly plan for optimal implementation.”*
- *“Give more support to **fund raising** for those NGOs who have no experience of the skills. In conduction with this, encourage reports to the donors.”*
- *“This is too big an issue for SMP but what SMP should do is remind member groups that **developing the economy** is key for Malawi. It is vital that SMP or members organisations are not involved in activities that (unconsciously or otherwise) deter that economic growth.”*
- *“Support on how to engage people with internationally focused community fundraising would be helpful. I'd also appreciate guidance on developing non-exploitative fundraising messages.”*
- *“Providing **networking opportunities** with any visiting Malawi government ministers.”*
- *“**Shared shipping** would be useful.”*
- *“**Language and culture**. Project ideas.”*

SMP members were asked if there was anything the SMP is currently doing that they think we should stop, or change in some way, in 2017-2020?

- *“Add **more networking** time to the agenda”*
- *“Give more **support to fund raising** for those NGOs who have no experience of the skills. In coordination with this, encourage reports to the donors.”*
- *“Not really. All the services being provided have merit. I suppose the key issue is to prioritize them so that we know which we must preserves and which we might decide to pursue less vigorously.”*
- *“Youth membership is a big opportunity, outwith school links - maybe alter some of the focus.”*



SMP members were asked if they had one big idea they want the SMP to consider for this next period.

- *“Stop people using pictures only of 'poor people' who need our help.”*
- *“Health Promotion.”*
- *“To develop a **funding directory** similar to SCVOs Funding Scotland, using organisations relevant to the SMPs members. “*
- *“Rice.”*
- *“**Sir Alex Fergusson** and some of his African English Premiership Footballing chums participating in a campaign delivered on TV around screenings of Eng. Premiership football matches (watched across Africa) in Chichewa, French, Swahili and English on the importance of **good management (governance)**! French & Saunders doing a take-off of the Cluny Nespresso advert, for Mzuzu coffee. You did ask!”*
- *“**Lobbying for better online access/ easier email contact with partners in Malawi. Lobbying Govt to help IT in Malawi.**”*
- *“**Percentage of all institutional grant funding (say 5%) to be for partner capacity building in governance/finance/organisational strengthening** (but see 20 and 21 above for appetite for this, in Malawi)”*
- *“Encourage Malawian interests to review the various "donors" to be involved in all the aspects of development, but in villages most in need. **So much is missing in rural villages**, and each is important. The villagers know that, but do not know how we have achieved what we have in UK (and what we have been deprived of, like some other areas of UK over the generations). They need to be educated in the wider world.”*
- *“Identify sponsorship/grants that would allow **experts in specialist domains to provide training and/or mentoring to Malawian businesses or government departments in Malawi.** For instance, I could provide Safety Management System training and mentoring to the Malawi CAA staff as well as examine their existing SMS to see what improvements (if any) could be made to improve their score against ICAO audit criteria.”*
- *“**Helping us to bring our partners over here.**”*

Final comments included:

- *“**SMP is a fantastic organization and I am delighted to be a member.** If I can assist in the development of eHealth, e-learning, public health, Health promotion activities please let me know.”*
- *“You do a fantastic job!”*
- *“Great work guys!”*
- *“**SMP is an excellent organisation that improves as it grows. It provides a great support network to all members.**”*
- *“Congrats to SMP for great work.”*



- *“My son, and many other children took part in exchanges within Europe around aged 15 years. Is it a possibility that this could be continued with Malawi for today's children?”*
- ***“The individual bits of work that SMP does may seem small when looked at in isolation but when looked at as a whole they make a big contribution to the development of the nation.”***
- *“The questions in this are too serious for a 'short' questionnaire. I have not given it my best shot as I have not had time to reflect and think about it. Not the best use of survey monkey type online questionnaire.”*
- *“I look forward to the coming year and (hopefully) beginning to network with more experienced SMP members.”*
- *“Thank you for all you are doing!”*
- ***“Brilliant support - keep it up! :)”***



4) What we heard from members, and what we'll do as a result

Impact:

As in previous years the SMP's weekly email bulletin, events, networking opportunities and office support were identified by SMP members to be "extremely useful" in strengthening members' links with Malawi. In particular, the strength of such core services was seen to be best enabled through information-sharing and networking, which are highly valued by SMP members and central to the SMP's strategic remit. It's encouraging that as the team has grown over the past 18 months these key services, which members' value, have gone from strength to strength. It's important we ensure these remain front and centre for 2016. We are also delighted to see that our Partnership Principles and Global Goals work has had such an impact: with 41% and 47% of members respectively actually changing their work as a result of the SMP.

Feedback from members was overwhelmingly positive, so we will not look to make any major changes as we move into the second half of the [2014-17 Strategic Plan](#).

Needs:

Based on the needs identified in the Member Survey the SMP office will develop an outline of events, engagements and other member services for 2016. Among other things, there will be further development of the work around the SMP's Partnership Principles and raising awareness of the UN's Global Goals across all the SMP's member forums.

In addition, as a result of information from this survey, the Partnership will look into:

- Increasing active networking in forums;
- Supporting smaller NGOs fund-raise;
- Support job creation in Malawi;
- Developing our member forums, tapping into technical expertise and exploring skype-in options;
- Supporting members to use positive images of Malawi;
- Developing an information pack for new members;
- Looking at the impact of climate change in Malawi;
- Doing more to connect members together in MaSP;
- Developing the SMP's training offer, thinking about: MEL, media engagement, events planning, project management, grant applications, Chichewa, student-specific training, tax issues, media and external communications;
- Increasing information on the website about Government of Malawi structures;
- Developing the bulletin to have a digest at the top and a print-friendly PDF option; and
- Doing more to engage student age young adults.