

Malawi, Scotland and a Relational Approach to International Development





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The Scotland Malawi Partnership is the national umbrella organisation which exists to inspire the people and organisations of Scotland to be involved with Malawi in an informed, coordinated and effective way so that both nations benefit.

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Malawi, Scotland and a Relational Approach to International Development

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Forewords

“As the Minister for International Development, I am delighted that the Scotland Malawi Partnership has taken this opportunity to reflect on both the challenges and the achievements inherent in international development in Malawi in the 21st century.

“Scotland has a long and proud shared history with Malawi which we know harks back to the days of Dr David Livingstone’s travels to Malawi over 150 years ago. As important as that past is, it is vital we also examine the present and look towards the future.

“It is particularly fitting that we consider how the landscape looks in 2015 – the 10th anniversary year of the historic Cooperation Agreement which was signed in 2005 by the then First Minister of Scotland, Jack McConnell and the late President Bingu wa Mutharika of the Government of Malawi. It was the first agreement of its kind, committing our two governments to working in a spirit of constructive partnership to the mutual benefit of both countries. As part of this agreement, we have worked together to create the unique Malawi Development Programme, worth nearly £40 million to date.

“There have been many achievements flowing from that initial agreement, however, our most significant has been the evolution of the people-to-people links to create a new model for international development in the 21st century - based on bottom-up, civil society-led partnerships, rather than top-down budgetary aid. It is essential that we build on this and we need civic society’s continued involvement if we are to assist the people of Malawi from poverty to prosperity.

“We should not be complacent - there is still much to do. However, organisations such as the Scotland Malawi Partnership, and its mirror organisation the Malawi Scotland Partnership, contribute a great deal to the lives of the people of both Malawi and Scotland, and can be justifiably proud of their achievements.”

Humza Yousaf, Minister for Europe and International Development,
Scottish Government

“Malawians have long been aware of the warmth and friendship which marks their interaction with the Scots. During the past ten years this special relationship has been mobilised as a resource to address crucial issues of poverty and underdevelopment in Malawi. Mutual respect and reciprocity mark Scotland-Malawi engagement as being quite different from a conventional donor-client relationship. We see today a range of projects across many different sectors, making a positive impact on both nations. The value of this paper is that it distils the essence and captures the inspiration of all that is currently taking place between Malawi and Scotland. I commend it to all who are involved and to all who are interested to learn how two nations can work together for mutual benefit.”

Matthews Mtumbuka, Chair, Malawi Scotland Partnership

Executive Summary

Attempts to achieve international development have proved unsuccessful so far as the “bottom billion” are concerned. As a result, the received paradigm of international development is subject to question. One new approach which has been developed is based on the relationship between two small nations: Scotland and Malawi. As one of the world’s poorest countries Malawi provides a good test case for any attempt to meet the challenge of underdevelopment. On the basis of longstanding shared history, Malawi and Scotland have recently collaborated to create a development-oriented interaction marked by the priority of the relational, mobilisation of civil society, synergy of Government and people, and a reciprocal partnership for development. By building and strengthening the connections which make people feel passionately about Malawi’s development this approach generates both political momentum and practical assistance as the key element of motivation makes for active citizens.

At the same time, many of these citizens are highly competent professionals who offer their knowledge and expertise as a resource with which to engage the challenges of extreme poverty. This approach has qualities which enable it to meet such development challenges as participation and empowerment, local ownership and capacity, accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and an integrated approach. It therefore merits consideration in the wider debate about the future direction of international development. Meanwhile those involved in the growing level of interaction between Malawi and Scotland are challenged to consider how the virtues of their approach can be applied not only at a micro but also at a macro level to help counter poverty and underdevelopment in Malawi.



Acknowledgements

There are so many people who have had a hand in the making of this paper that I hesitate to mention individual names. Successive Board members at both the Scotland Malawi Partnership and the Malawi Scotland Partnership have contributed much to shaping the thinking elaborated in this paper. The members of both organisations have, time and again, added dashes of inspiration. Key players both in the Malawi Government and in the Scottish Government have also played a vital role. This paper simply seeks to gather together and articulate the values and principles which have been hammered out through innumerable encounters on the Malawi-Scotland axis over the past ten years. I am grateful in particular for the opportunity to discuss and refine the ideas presented in the paper at seminars held in Blantyre, Zomba, Mzuzu and Lilongwe during January 2014.

Finally, particular debts are owed to Dixie Maluwa Banda, Maxwell Mezuwa Banda, Margaret Banjo, Charlie Bevan, Colin Cameron, Susan Dalgety, Brian Dornan, Andrew Goudie, Daniel Gunya, David Hope-Jones, Heather Jones, Garton Kamchedzera, Edge Kanyongolo, Archwells Katani, Chimwemwe Katumbi, Happy Edward Makala, Address Malata, Alex Benson Maulana, Jack McConnell, John McCracken, Francis Moto, Matthews Mtumbuka, Silas Ncozana, Howard Matiya Nkhoma, Timothy Nyasulu, Levi Nyondo, Andrew Parker, Elspeth Pentland, Dickson Vuwa Phiri, Kings Phiri, Bernard Sande, Rob Sangster-Poole, Jack Thompson, Brighton Uledi-Kamanga, Maureen Watt and Peter West. Their thoughtful analysis and profound commitment to the shared effort of Malawi and Scotland has been invaluable to me in the preparation of this paper. For its remaining deficiencies I alone, of course, bear full responsibility.



Unfinished Quest: International Development Today

“No one can shave your head in your absence,” states a Malawian proverb invoked by Matthews Chikaonda speaking in the chamber of the Scottish Parliament at the “Malawi After Gleneagles” conference in November 2005.¹ The meeting of the G8 at Gleneagles in Scotland in July 2005 is remembered for the great “Make Poverty History” march which saw some 250,000 people gather in Edinburgh to demand that the G8 take firm steps to counter the extreme poverty that is still the daily experience of too many of the world’s citizens. One way of focussing this challenge in Scotland was to give renewed attention to the strong historical relationship which the nation enjoyed with Malawi, one of the world’s poorest countries. Hence the conference hosted by the Scottish Parliament concentrated on the development challenges faced by Malawi and the role which the relationship between Scotland and Malawi might play in meeting them. Implicit, and sometimes explicit, in the conference was a sense that orthodox development theory was not proving to be very effective and that the challenge/opportunity for Scotland and Malawi was to draw on their shared history and mutual understanding to develop a new approach to international development.

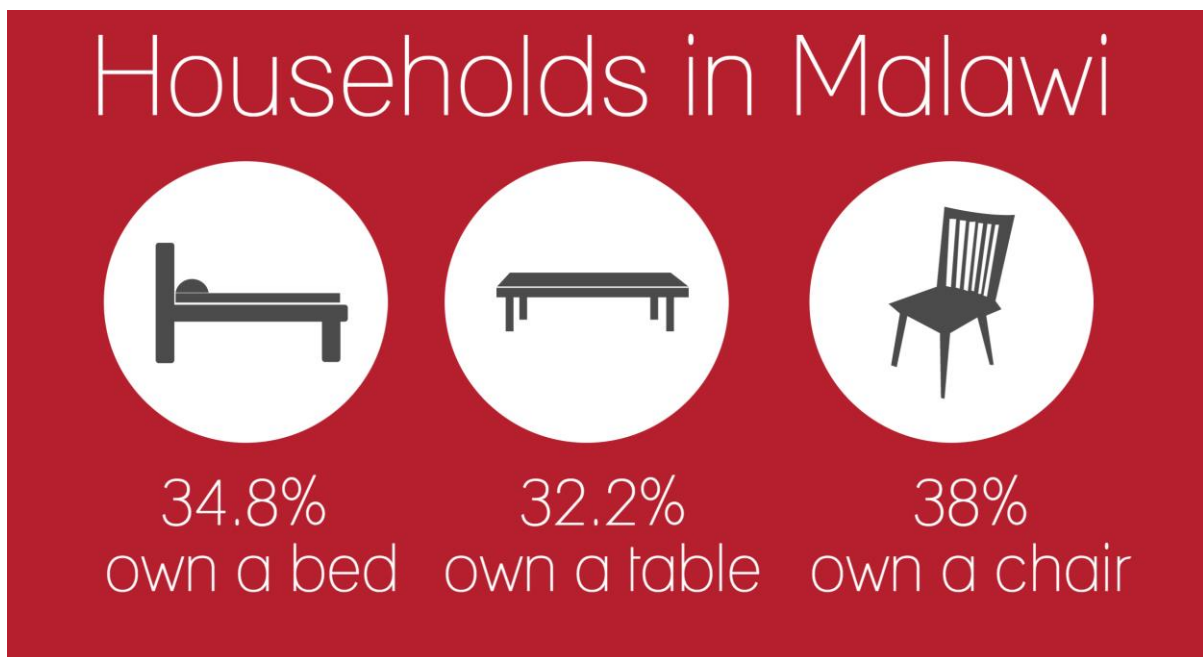


Despite great strides being made in economic development in many parts of the world there remain areas where extreme poverty represents an affront to human dignity and a potentially destabilising factor in international relations in future. As Paul Collier has persuasively argued, the post-war development paradigm was predicated on a “rich world of one billion people facing a poor world of five billion people”.² The early 21st century, however, witnesses many of the five billion (about 80%) benefitting from rapid development. Today, “the real challenge of development is that there is a group of countries at the bottom that are falling behind, and often falling apart.”³ Collier recounts how it was a visit as a young man to Malawi – “the poorest country on the continent” – which focussed his attention on what he came to call “the bottom billion”.⁴ Currently ranked 170th out of 186 countries on the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme, Malawi today remains firmly entrenched in this unenviable category.⁵ It is therefore a country that presents something of a test case when it comes to the quest for a successful model of development.

As we arrive at the signal year of 2015, the end point of the much-heralded United Nations Millennium Development Goals, it is apparent that, while there are areas of substantial progress and achievement, there are countries where most of the goals remain stubbornly unfulfilled. In particular, as of June 2013, in Sub-Saharan Africa on almost all indicators there is, according to the UN’s own data, “progress insufficient to reach the target if prevailing trends persist”.⁶

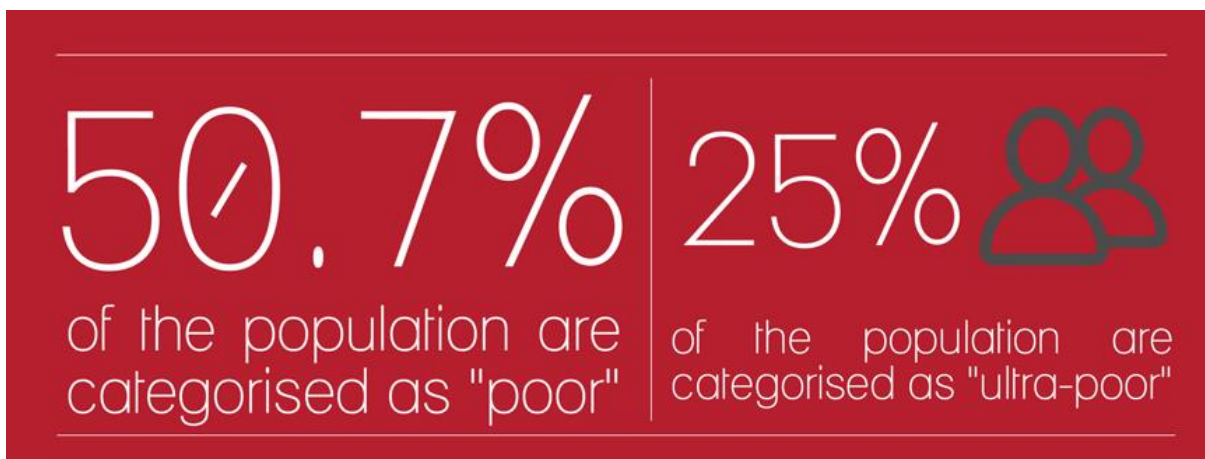
When it comes to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and ensuring environmental sustainability, it is apparent that in Sub-Saharan Africa the MDGs will not be met by 2015. On the contrary, a recent UN report finds that: “Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region that saw the number of people living in extreme poverty rise steadily, from 290 million in 1990 to 414 million in 2010, accounting for more than a third of people worldwide who are destitute.”⁷ Malawi lies at the heart of this region and represents a prime case of this disturbing trend.

The Integrated Household Survey conducted by Malawi’s National Statistics Office during 2010-11 revealed that, “on average, a Malawian consumes about MK150 per day”.⁸ In 2011 the exchange rate averaged around MK250 to £1, meaning that, in sterling terms, a Malawian’s average consumption per day is around 60 pence. In terms of basic necessities, 38.3% of households complained that they had inadequate food, 40.5% that they had inadequate housing, 32.7% that they had inadequate healthcare and 55.6% that they had inadequate clothing.⁹ In terms of basic household furnishing and equipment, only 34.8% of households own a bed, only 32.2% own a table, only 38% own a chair, only 38.6% own a bicycle, only 11.4% own a clock and only 12.7% own an iron.¹⁰



32.5% of the population are categorised as being subject to “very low food security”, where: “Households experience multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. They report reduction in food quality, variety, quantity and frequency of food consumed.

Consumption by adults could have been restricted in order for small children to eat and could also depend on food assistance from relatives or friends.”¹¹ Regarding the nutritional status of children under five, 1.2% are severely underweight for their age and 30.6% are moderately underweight while 14.0% are severely stunted and 48.1% are moderately stunted.¹² The probability of a child dying before reaching the age of 5 is currently 118 per 1,000 live births.¹³ Overall, 50.7% of the population is categorised as “poor” and 25% as “ultra-poor”.¹⁴



To find such a situation prevailing in the early 21st century calls into question how much has been achieved by the conventional post-war understanding of international aid and international development. Serious questions have been raised about the methodology of making large grants or loans from Governments or international bodies to national Governments in order to achieve economic development in poor countries. The traditional paradigm of an endless transfer of aid has become discredited as donor countries face popular concern about the ineffectiveness and misuse of aid while the people of recipient countries often mirror these concerns as they perceive international aid as one pillar of a corrupt system which entrenches an elite and excludes the majority.

Dambisa Moyo has gone so far as to argue: “More than US\$2 trillion of foreign aid has been transferred from rich countries to poor over the past fifty years—[with] Africa the biggest recipient by far. Yet regardless of the motivation for aid-giving – economic, political or moral – aid has failed to deliver the promise of sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.”¹⁵ Moyo argues that aid creates a vicious cycle: “The cycle that chokes off desperately needed investment, instils a culture of dependency, and facilitates rampant and systematic corruption, all with deleterious consequences for growth.

The cycle that, in fact, perpetuates underdevelopment, and guarantees economic failure in the poorest aid-dependent countries.”¹⁶ William Easterly reaches a similar conclusion:

How can the West end poverty in the Rest? Setting a beautiful goal such as making poverty history, the Planners’ approach then tries to design the ideal aid agencies, administrative plans, and financial resources that will do the job. Sixty years of countless reform schemes to aid agencies and dozens of different plans, and \$2.3 trillion later, the aid industry is still failing to reach the beautiful goal. The evidence points to an unpopular conclusion: Big Plans will always fail to reach the beautiful goal.¹⁷

It is a conclusion which it is difficult for the West to swallow since it does not sit easily with its own self-image and view of the world. Nonetheless, the evidence of lack of success is so overwhelming, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, that the case for a rethink is difficult to resist.

The weakness of Western efforts to date is further highlighted by some simple deconstruction of the impressive-sounding \$2.3 trillion of international aid. Doing some rough arithmetic, Andrew Parker points out that if Africa received \$1 trillion of the \$2 trillion over 50 years that would amount to \$20 billion a year. Across an average of 500 million people this would mean that each person received an average of \$40 a year. “That’s not enough to bring a medieval-level of well-being up to standards we wish (i.e. removing low life expectancy and avoidable deaths, giving an education that is both a human right and a pillar of a sustainable economy, building infrastructure). In reality, the money is often diverted back into wealthier countries through consultancy and agency fees. Finally, the amount of aid that is going into these countries is dwarfed by the wealth that is coming out.”¹⁸ The result is that the Government of a country like Malawi remains chronically under-resourced, its entire national budget being roughly the same as that of the London Borough of Hackney. Both in terms of quantity and quality there appear to be questions which the orthodox post-war model is unable to answer. Despite vested interests in the received tradition, the need for fresh thinking is increasingly widely acknowledged.

Ben Ramalingam, for example, has recently argued that the conceptual equipment of most international aid agencies is fundamentally flawed: “Conventional aid conceives of systems and problems, behaviours, relationships and organizations, and dynamics of change in highly abstract, idealized and simplified ways. These are ... poorly matched to the reality of the world.”¹⁹ As a result, “whether for political expediency or administrative convenience, or because of conceptual small-mindedness, there is a pervasive and longstanding bias towards treating the world as a simple, predictable place in which aid can be delivered, as if on a global conveyor belt, to bring about positive changes.”²⁰ The “rules of the game” of foreign aid “... amount to a widespread bias towards seeing interconnected, dynamic, open problems as simple, closed problems that can be planned for, controlled and measured. This leads to a whole host of ill-advised actions and mistakes.”²¹ Ramalingam concludes that, “On the whole, the aid system’s pronounced addiction to seeing the world through a classic reductionist lens is not trivial: such processes lead to problems being defined and solutions chosen prematurely to give a sense of closure and certainty.”²² To make matters worse, “... despite reinventing itself throughout history, the aid industry retains many of its old problems – by not facing up to these systemic problems, those who would seek to transform aid are in fact busily streamlining and improving a system that is known to be flawed.”²³ No wonder the call for fresh thinking and different approaches grows ever more insistent.

The call for a rethink is often expressed in terms of the need for “sustainable” models of development, commonly understood as meaning a short-term intervention from a development partner resulting in long-term impact as the programme continues to unfold through local ownership and commitment. Sustainability is often presented as the opposite of dependency – where the result of provision of aid is that its recipients become disempowered to the point where they are entirely reliant on a continuing flow of aid. Others see market forces as holding the key. Neoliberal critics such as Easterly and Moyo look to the unleashing of entrepreneurial talent and the creation of a favourable environment for business as the most promising drivers of development. As the limitations of Government bureaucracies are exposed, others again look to non-governmental actors - civil society - as the base for effective development work. Another approach prioritises education in the belief that the more educated the population the better it will be equipped to achieve development.

While this debate has been raging, the people of the two small nations of Malawi and Scotland have evolved a development-oriented way of working together that puts a premium on the relational dimension. The strength of their shared history makes Malawi’s development a matter of profound common concern to people in both countries. This paper will briefly trace that history, identify the main features of the approach to international development which has resulted from it, and evaluate these against the principal challenges facing development work today.

The Scotland Malawi Story

The two nations have a long history of interaction going back to the first contact being made in 1859 by David Livingstone during his Zambesi expedition. Livingstone had established a strongly relational approach to his work in Africa and this shaped the thinking of those who were inspired to attempt to continue it.²⁴ Prominent among them were the Scots who established the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions in what is now Malawi in the mid-1870s. The Missions were planned and named as initiatives that would bring to fruition Livingstone’s dream of a central Africa freed from the slave trade, embracing Christian faith and prospering through legitimate commerce.²⁵ In their early years the Scottish Missions built up relations with local communities in a pre-colonial context. Only when faced by the twin threat of Portuguese annexation in the south and “Arab” slavers in the north, did they campaign successfully for the British Protectorate which became a reality in 1891.²⁶ No longer would Malawi be an exclusively Scottish concern but Scots continued to be disproportionately highly represented not only among the missionaries but also among the settlers and planters.

The Scottish Missions, Blantyre in particular, had a robustly critical relationship with the British colonial administration as it came into effect during the 1890s.²⁷ On the crucial inter-linked issues of land, labour and taxation, the Blantyre missionaries consistently took the side of African communities as they faced the pressure of the colonial regime on these fronts. As a settler dominated economy and an accompanying racist ideology came to hold sway, the Missions stood for African advancement and for appreciation of the positive qualities of African life and culture. The primary instrument through which they worked was the vast network of schools that they developed.

Through the schools they cultivated the values which implicitly challenged racism and colonialism, and educated the Malawians who in due course would form the nationalist movement which led the country to independence.



View of Malawi

Though it must be acknowledged that the Scottish missionaries, particularly after the First World War, were by no means free from the prevailing racist assumptions of their day, nonetheless they entered into a sympathetic understanding of African life and community. Fluent in indigenous languages, they formed friendships that proved to be deep and enduring. From an early stage they also invited promising African leaders to spend time in Scotland, further cementing the distinctive connection between the two peoples.²⁸

A growing number of families and communities, in both Nyasaland (as Malawi was known from 1907 to 1964) and Scotland, became aware of one another and of the particular history that united them. This came into focus when Nyasaland faced its political nemesis in 1953 when it was incorporated, against the clearly expressed wishes of its entire African population, into the racist Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The British Government took the view that this new arrangement would be economically beneficial and that the African population would eventually come to recognise its advantages. It was only in Scotland that there was significant resistance as the many personal connections brought it home to people how strong was the African resistance to the Federation.²⁹ When the nationalist movement revived over the next few years to defeat the Federation and pave the way for independence, Scots were prominent among its members and supporters, with one – Colin Cameron – becoming the only European to be appointed to the Cabinet when self-government was achieved.³⁰

During the post-independence era, Malawi continued to have a special relationship with Scotland, grounded in the earlier history. It now moved, as seemed appropriate, into a lower key and might have been expected to become a receding historical memory. Around the time of the Millennium, however, it became apparent that something was stirring in Scotland-Malawi relations. Both nations had undergone significant political changes during the 1990s. Malawi had broken the stranglehold of its one-party dictatorship and embarked on the path of multi-party democracy.



Scotland, after almost three hundred years without its own Parliament, achieved a devolution settlement that provided for the re-introduction of a Scottish Parliament with extensive, though limited, powers. New political energy, both in Scotland and Malawi, created the potential for fresh interaction between the two nations.

A spark, however, was needed to ignite the new possibilities. In the event it came from Strathclyde University, which incorporates David Livingstone's alma mater, and Bell College, the higher education institution closest to his birthplace. Together, as the year 2000 approached and institutions sought meaningful ways of marking the auspicious moment, they created the Malawi Millennium Project, which quickly caught the imagination of a new generation of Scots and completed significant development projects in Malawi.³¹ Meanwhile old links took new forms as many churches and schools, taking advantage of improved communications, formed twinning relationships and such bodies as Local Authorities, Universities and Health Boards built collaborative connections.

This fresh enthusiasm gave rise to a new round of networking, bringing together groups large and small whose work expresses the close relationship between the two nations. Public lectures in Glasgow, by Peter West of Strathclyde University, and in Edinburgh, by Andrew Ross of Edinburgh University, rallied support. The Lord Provosts of both Glasgow and Edinburgh gave their backing as a formally organised Scotland Malawi Partnership came into being in 2004. In their invitation to the launch they invoked the historical memory: "As the Lord Provosts of Glasgow and Edinburgh, we have agreed jointly to launch a campaign to have Scotland commit itself to extending its support for Malawi. The original name of the country, Nyasaland, was given to it by David Livingstone, who is revered there. Over the succeeding 150 years, the force of Scottish opinion has twice saved Malawi. Now it needs further help....."³²

From the Spring of 2004, the Scotland Malawi Partnership took shape as a civil society alliance bringing together a wide variety of organisations concerned with Malawi. It aimed to increase collaboration and multiply best practice. Its stated objective is "to inspire people and organisations of Scotland to be involved with Malawi in an informed, coordinated and effective way so that both nations benefit."³³ Simultaneously in Malawi, through the good offices of British High Commissioner Norman Ling, a Committee was formed to build up the Malawi end of the renewed partnership. In July 2004 this Committee, together with their Scottish counterparts, met with the new President of Malawi, Bingu wa Mutharika, who announced his backing.

This upsurge of activity on the Malawi-Scotland axis found a catalyst in the 2005 meeting of the G8 that was hosted by the UK at Gleneagles in Scotland. This was the G8 meeting which formed the focus of the "Make Poverty History" campaign and had a strong emphasis on meeting the challenges of international development. There was a perceived need to take advantage of the hosting of a major high-profile global event in Scotland and project the country more forcefully onto the world stage. This implied seeking substantive economic advantage for Scotland from trade and tourism, but also looking to demonstrate the global interests and responsibilities of Scotland, over and above those that were represented by the UK as a whole.



In this context, the First Minister Jack McConnell sought to display his support for the G8 Africa theme by raising the profile of Scotland's historic relationship with Malawi, a country that sadly demonstrated the stark nature of the development challenge and the inadequacies of past development policy and, therefore, the case for the G8 seeking real progress in the attack on global poverty.

Until that time, it had been presumed that international development was the sole responsibility of the UK Department for International Development (DFID), but the First Minister succeeded in forging a close working relationship with the UK Development Secretary and secured his agreement for pursuing a modest international development programme in Scotland. Importantly, and in accord with the Scotland Act, Scotland's role would remain subject to the Crown and, in practical terms, subject to the on-going agreement of the DFID Secretary. The new Scottish interest at the governmental level was, however, warmly welcomed by the then Secretary and the Scottish Government international development policy rapidly took root as a small but symbolically significant policy. Indeed, it was more than that insofar as it coalesced with the rising tide of civil society activism and project work which marked relations between Malawi and Scotland at this time.

The development of the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of Malawi and the Scottish Government was the clearest manifestation of this renewed relationship. It was a notable Agreement in many respects: firstly it was negotiated personally between the President and First Minister; secondly, it was widely welcomed in both countries as a potentially valuable step; and, thirdly, it was the clearly articulated view of both the President and First Minister that the Agreement was not to solely represent an expression of friendship and goodwill, but was to lead to real and significant collaborative work that would see tangible outcomes that impacted directly on the people.

Indeed, the insistence of the Malawian President that the Cooperation Agreement should be underpinned by an annual meeting of the Joint Permanent Coordinating Commission, to ensure momentum and hard outcomes from the programmes, was indicative of the seriousness of this aspiration. In addition, the acknowledgement and acceptance that, while rapid developmental progress was indisputably desirable, the reality of past efforts suggested that, even with significant improvements in the model of development that the new relationship sought to capture, the challenge of poverty and development in Malawi required a sustained effort that might last for many years. A relationship that looked well into the future was therefore both realistic and necessary.³⁴

The Government to Government relationship drew its vitality and found its effectiveness from the multitude of links made by civil society – schools, Universities, health boards, local government, community groups, faith-based organisations etc. It was here that the Scotland Malawi Partnership, as a civil society alliance, had a key role to play. The Partnership exists as an independent charitable company and is at pains to clarify that it is not an arm of Government. While it values very highly its close working relationship with the Scottish Government, it is purposely a non-governmental body and is free to offer constructive criticism of Government policy or action when required.



With the full support of the Scottish Government, the Partnership seeks to forge a new form of international relations. It has stated its identity and vision in these terms: “It pioneers a new approach to North-South relations, one built on friendship and respect between two nations built up over generations of close collaboration. It works today on the basis of mobilising a network of Scottish-based commitment to Malawi in order to develop best practice and maximise impact, ensuring that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.”³⁵ This vision has brought together an alliance which is ground-breaking in the range and diversity which it brings to the quest for a vibrant civil society-based approach to the development of the relationship.

This successful creation of a coordinating body on the Scottish side called for an equivalent organising agency on the Malawi side. This came into effect in mid-2012 when the Malawi Scotland Partnership, the Malawi-registered and Malawi-run counterpart to the SMP in Scotland, established an office in Lilongwe, supported by grant funding from the Scottish Government.³⁶ This fresh round of Malawi-Scotland interaction has been consciously inspired by what went before. A sense of affinity, mutuality and affection drives a determination to counter poverty in Malawi. In the process it is evolving an approach to development which is marked by some original features. It is well placed to fulfil the need identified by Ramalingam for the role of “aid” in development and humanitarian assistance to “shift from ‘external push’ – filling gaps in a predictable and linear fashion – to ‘internal catalyst’”. Catalytic aid would not create development but it would identify, expand and sustain the space for change.³⁷ Current interaction between Malawi and Scotland demonstrates a number of features which suggest it can fulfil this kind of catalytic role.

Main Features of Malawi-Scotland Engagement

Drawing on shared values and aspirations built up during the long history of interaction between the two nations, Malawi and Scotland have in recent years developed a distinctive approach to meeting the challenges of development.

Priority of the Relational

First and foremost, it promotes a people-to-people model of development, rooted in the shared history between the two nations. It focuses on active relationships between people to foster a shared understanding of the development challenges facing Malawi and to support the creation of practical, sustainable solutions. A Chatham House study observes that: “Senior UK diplomatic officials have pointed to the focus on relationship-building as a factor which makes Scotland’s involvement with Malawi stand out from that of other donors.”³⁸ Dixie Maluwa Banda, while Director of Higher Education in the Malawi Government, sought to explain the distinctive place of the Scots in Malawi by describing them as “*abale athu*” – “our brothers” or “our kinsfolk”.³⁹ It is through their sense of kinship and their shared human experience that the people of Scotland and Malawi aim to effect real and lasting change, both through their own activity and by influencing the policies and actions of governments and institutions.

The distinctive genius of this approach is its grounding in the friendship—both individual and institutional—which has built up between the two nations over the past 150 years. As the long-serving Scottish missionary Cullen Young once expressed it: “The cry in Africa ... is for the feel of human relationships and comradely activities at all costs, even if great schemes for political or educational or economic amelioration seem to be pushed into an inferior place.”⁴⁰ This perspective was echoed at a seminar on Scotland-Malawi relations held at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, in January 2014 when participants pled for an approach to development which not only addresses material considerations but also answers the cry for human dignity.⁴¹ The relational character of Scotland-Malawi undertakings provides a capacity to reach this level. Though the language of friendship and “auld alliance” is often used by politicians and diplomats to characterise the relationship of two countries, it is rare that this is so deeply grounded in the genuine affection and practical activism of ordinary citizens.

“ The cry in Africa ... is for the feel of human relationships and comradely activities at all costs... ”

The Scotland Malawi Partnership and the Malawi Scotland Partnership, as civil society alliances, do not seek to operate as large, centrally funded aid operations. Rather, they both function by uniting the great variety of organisations and individuals that operate bilaterally between the two nations. By offering a coordinating function they counter the fragmentation that has been identified as an endemic weakness of the international aid system.⁴² Bringing together a wide range of bilateral partnerships, these alliances seek to engage extreme poverty, the great moral challenge of our time, not as an array of statistics nor as TV footage of crisis situations nor with any simplistic mechanistic formula, but by coming alongside in a spirit of mutual respect, forming friendships and working together practically and purposefully.

For example, at the time of writing the SMP is setting up a members’ forum on business, trade, investment and tourism to develop outcome-focused dialogue on areas of common interest, specifically: raising awareness of each other’s activities; exploring opportunities for shared learning; discussing challenges and opportunities; agreeing advocacy priorities; and driving forwards the SMP’s support of activities in these areas.⁴³ The members of the Partnership add value to their often modest budgets by the strength of the relationships which they enjoy and the depth of mutual understanding which they have built up. Benefits flow in both directions, and a cumulative effect is built up, allowing good experiences to inspire further initiatives.

Case Study: Martha Payne and the “Never Seconds” Blog

A major Scottish news story in 2012 concerned a 9-year old Lochgilphead schoolgirl, Martha Payne, and her “Never Seconds” blog about her school dinners. As a critique of both the quality and the quantity of food served for lunch at Lochgilphead Primary School the blog attracted hundreds of thousands of hits from all over the world and Martha became a major focus of media attention.⁴⁴

It was through her grandfather that Martha made the Malawi connection. He was a volunteer with Mary’s Meals, an Argyll-based charity that aims to provide a nutritious meal for school children in developing countries, with a particular focus on Malawi.⁴⁵ Martha was struck by the story of a Malawian girl named Mandida who featured on the Mary’s Meals website: “She’s got no parents and sometimes had to go without food for three days but now she gets a Mary’s Meal at school. Because she gets a dinner she doesn’t have to beg or work so she can go to school. She wants to be a lawyer then president.”⁴⁶

Soon the blog was featuring the powerful parallel between Martha’s efforts to improve the quality of school meals in Scotland and the Mary’s Meals’ programme which provided school meals for undernourished children in Malawi. It invited readers to donate towards the £7,000 that would be required to build and equip a school kitchen in Malawi.

By now Martha’s own understanding of the situation of children in Malawi was deepening: “Meeting the staff from Mary’s Meals made a huge impression on Martha. She heard first hand stories about how the money would change lives for children. Children her age were working for survival and missing out on education. A simple meal was in many cases a life saver. Completing the gaps in her knowledge made Martha more determined to share the work of Mary’s Meals on her blog.”⁴⁷

On 14 June 2012, when Argyll and Bute Council took the decision to ban Martha’s blog, the story became front-page news. The blog attracted more than 150,000 hits per hour and, by the time the Council reversed their decision, almost £46,000 had been donated towards the cost of the school kitchen in Malawi.⁴⁸ This figure eventually rose to over £120,000. Martha and her family made plans to visit Malawi to see for themselves the school kitchen at Lirangwe which had been built through her efforts.

Martha made friends with children at Lirangwe: “One boy in the class was called Gilbert and he had sent me a message through Mary’s Meals. Gilbert’s an orphan. His dad was eaten by a crocodile and Gilbert lives in the market at night on his own.”⁴⁹ Another new friend was Ben whose family the Paynes met: “We had connected with Ben’s family across all the generations and the love and effort both families went to for their children was apparent. Ben’s school dinner debate was about having something to eat at all and ours was about the quality of the food we served our children. We certainly had things to learn from each other.”⁵⁰

Mobilisation of civil society

Through this initiative, ordinary people and local communities are mobilised to offer their time, energy, resources, experience and expertise to Scotland and Malawi's shared effort.⁵¹ This is not to usurp the role of development professionals but it is to place their work in the context of strong popular ownership and involvement. It represents a vote of confidence in the people and in their capacity for active participation in the close relationship between two nations committed to working together for the common good.

It draws on democratic and communitarian traditions both in Scotland and Malawi to move away from hierarchical and top-down approaches in favour of working from below. Scotland has been described as "... a country whose tradition is communitarian rather than individualist, deeply suspicious of its own and everyone else's elites, obsessive about equality."⁵² This strikes a chord with the strong sense of community and mutual obligation that prevails in Malawian culture, as stated in the celebrated axiom *munthu ndi munthu chifukwa cha anzake* (a person is a person because of his/her community).

The scale of civil society involvement is remarkable. Using a form of the Social Return on Investment framework, Lawrence Dritsas of Edinburgh University prepared a report in late 2010 in which he estimated the numbers of people involved and the total financial value of their work. Dritsas concluded that:

- The value of inputs of money, time and in-kind donations made by the membership of the SMP to Scotland's links with Malawi is at least £30 million over the twelve months previous to October 2010.
- At least 1.3 million Malawians and 280,000 Scots have benefitted from these activities over the same period.
- Approximately 148,000 Malawians and 85,000 Scots were actively involved in delivering these activities.⁵³

On the basis of these findings Dritsas concludes that "... there is a very great deal of money, material, time and goodwill invested in the links between Scotland and Malawi. [£30 million] is an impressive figure and, in conjunction with our findings that over one million Malawians and thousands of Scots are involved in or benefitting from these activities, easily demonstrates that the links between Scotland and Malawi are extremely valuable to both countries."⁵⁴

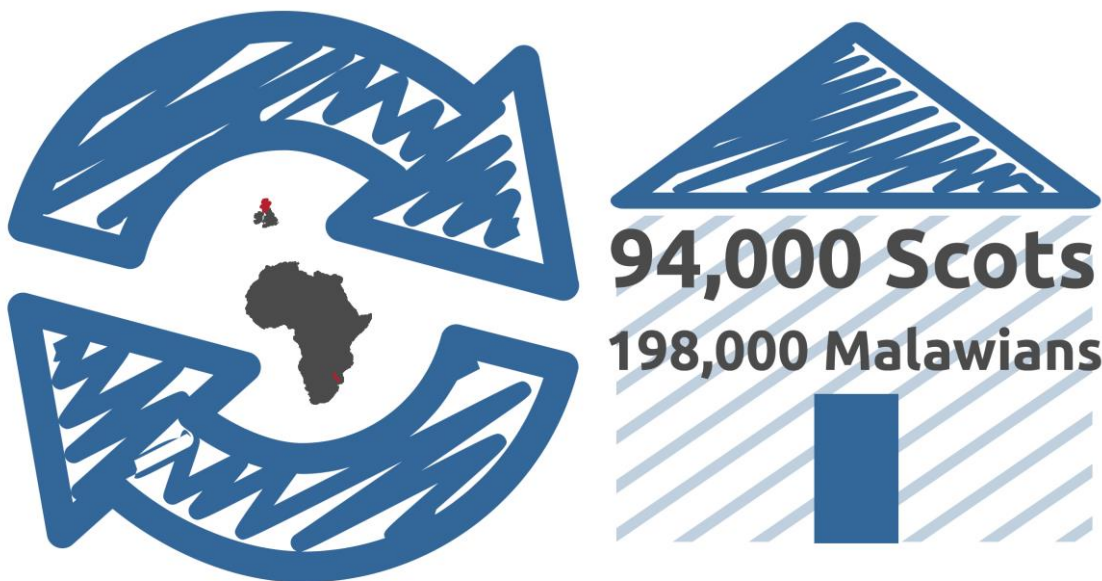
Edinburgh University returned to this study in the early summer of 2014, with Dr Gerhard Anders working in partnership with Dritsas to update these figures using the same methodology as was used in 2010. The results of this updated study were announced on the 29th July 2014, as Scotland faced Malawi on the netball court as part of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Anders and Dritsas found that:

- The value of inputs from Scotland had increased by over 33% to £40 million.
- The number of Malawians benefitting had significantly increased, to 2 million direct beneficiaries and 4 million indirect beneficiaries (a slight adjustment in the questions asked allowed this new disaggregation), and the number of Scots benefitting had increased by 7% to over 300,000.

- The number of Malawians involved had increased by 33% to over 198,000 and the number of Scots involved by 10% to over 94,000.⁵⁵

At the same time, the SMP was itself conducting a Public Awareness Study, for which 516 randomly selected Scots were interviewed between June and September 2014. This study aimed to assess Scottish awareness of, engagement with, and attitudes towards such Malawi links. The SMP found, of the 516 Scots interviewed:

- There was four times greater awareness of Scotland's links with Malawi than with any other African country;
- 46% knew someone actively involved in a link with Malawi;
- 74% were in favour of links with Malawi and under 3% were against.



Coordination of this engagement is provided by the Scotland Malawi Partnership which aims: “to inspire the people and organisations of Scotland to be involved with Malawi in an informed, coordinated and effective way to the benefit of both nations”.⁵⁶ The Partnership works on a basis of networking and collaboration. As a membership-based charitable company, working from a very modest resource base, it acts as the catalyst for an ever expanding and maturing engagement between the people of the two nations. It is comprehensive and multi-sectoral, promoting mutually beneficial interaction which ranges from national Parliaments in capital cities to primary schools in remote areas. This gives it a capacity to address such pressing issues as healthcare or climate change by drawing on a very wide range of perspectives and contributions. It captures the contribution of highly specialised professionals, often unavailable to traditional development practice through NGOs.

This vision has brought together an alliance which is ground-breaking in the range and diversity which it brings to the quest for a vibrant civil society-based approach to the development of the relationship. In his assessment of aid agencies, Ben Ramalingam suggests that: "... a very rigid organisation would soon become obsolete, whereas a highly malleable one would be hyperactive, pushing image over substance. Instead, agencies should aim to be a *poised network*, with some clear areas of focus and stability and some scope for flexibility and adaptation."⁵⁷ The Scotland Malawi Partnership and Malawi Scotland Partnership have already gone quite some way towards fulfilling this aim. As "network weavers" they "... pay serious attention to context and patterns, and do not seek to exert control, but rather foster and facilitate."⁵⁸ The mobilisation of civil society is greatly strengthened by the element of coordination and networking which is found at the heart of it.



SMP 2014 AGM, Glasgow

Case Study: Smallholder Dairy Production

Given the predominance of smallholder agriculture in the Malawian economy, particular value attaches to this sector. Since 2008 collaborative work has been undertaken by the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in Malawi, Bunda College of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Malawi, Mzuzu University and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). The collaboration began largely through the initiative of Mizeck Chagunda, a Malawian working at SRUC who had earlier been on the staff of Bunda College for 7 years.⁵⁹ Through attending a Scotland Malawi Partnership meeting in Perth, Chagunda saw an opportunity to link up with former colleagues in Malawi. The meeting triggered some thoughts and possibilities for collaboration.

The overall aim of this collaboration has been to contribute to strengthening the fabric that develops the infrastructure for smallholder dairy development in Malawi. Most of the work has focused on building capacity of individuals, farmers, graduates and institutions to promote knowledge exchange and networking within and between institutions.

The main challenge has been to make this initiative sustainable and not just work as a single shot at invigorating collaborative research and development. As such there has always been need to put effort and energy in bringing up new ideas and keeping the relationship going. Not all project proposals get funded and yet what has sustained the partnership is the availability of a common activity that binds the group together towards a common goal.

Acute staff shortages and inadequate expertise hamper progress in Malawi's smallholder dairy production despite its potential to substantially contribute to sustainable household income, food and nutritional security. The Scotland-Malawi collaboration has succeeded in training farmers, extension workers, development managers, researchers and trainers and graduate students (MSc, MPhil, PhD, and Postdoctoral). To date eight graduate students and one postdoctoral scientist have been associated with this programme. Twenty-two experts have exchanged visits between Scotland and Malawi. A total of 28 lead farmers and 43 extension workers have been trained in forage production, feeding, animal breeding and recording.

In a recent evaluation of the programmes, 76% of farmers indicated that they had accessed animal breeding services, and there was a drop of 69% and 34% in milk lost due to mastitis and adulteration, respectively. Three of the MSc students trained in this programme have been recruited as lecturers at Bunda College. Through this collaboration and funding from Scottish Government, a practical diploma course in dairy science has been established in Malawi and a flexible programme for life-long learning is envisaged in the future.

As Chagunda et al. have concluded: "The integrated training programme strengthened the individual and organisation networks both within Malawi and between Malawi and Scotland. Scottish partners have benefited through increased knowledge of agricultural production systems in Malawi."⁶⁰

It is hoped that on the basis of these beginnings even stronger working relationships between Higher Education institutions in Scotland and Malawi can be developed so that there is regular staff exchange and even more skills-sharing. It is also hoped that both the approach and the partnership model can be used in other countries across the world to enhance local agricultural education and training.

A SMP report of 2012 details more than forty collaborative projects in the field of higher education being run jointly by Malawian and Scottish institutions across a wide range of disciplines.⁶¹

Government in synergy with people

A particular feature of this new round of Scotland-Malawi engagement is that it forges creative synergy between popular activism and Government engagement. The Government-to-Government relationship draws its vitality and finds its effectiveness from the multitude of links made by civil society— schools, universities, health boards, local government, community groups, faith-based organisations, and so on. It creates a virtuous circle between Government and people where popular support inspires Government efforts while Government support stimulates popular engagement. The result is that resources committed by Government are multiplied many times over by institutions and individuals within civil society.

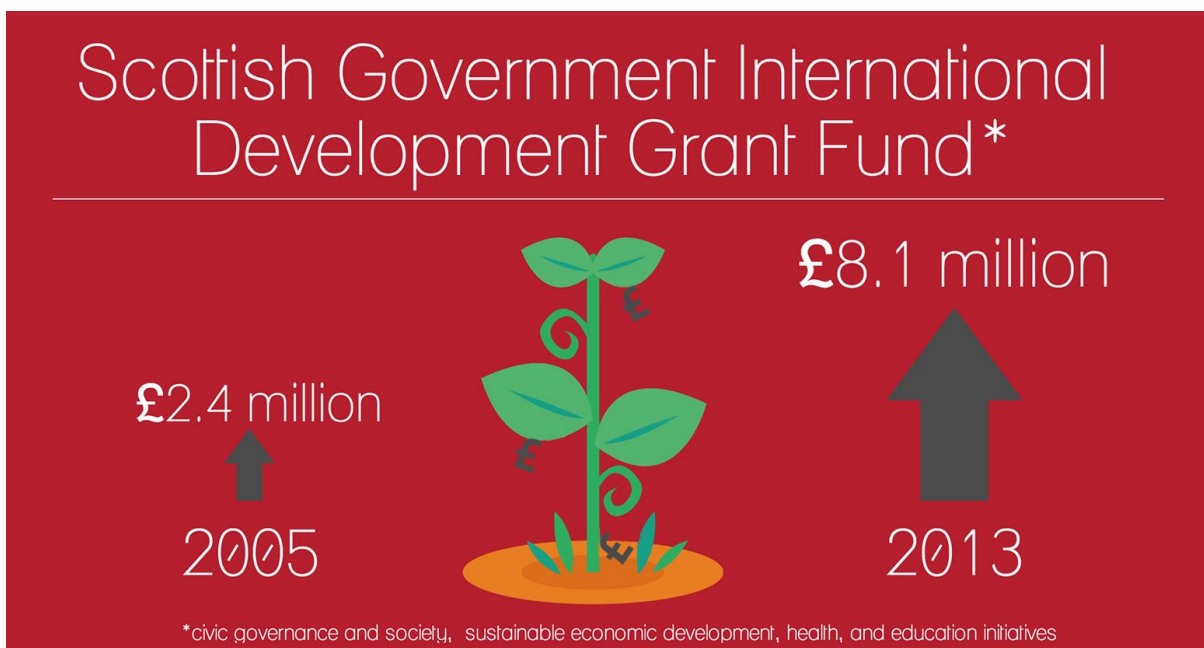
Anyimadu points out how it was this synergy that made Malawi, from the outset, central to Scottish Government international development policy:

The lobbying efforts of the Scotland–Malawi Partnership, an umbrella organization of civil society groups, made the choice of Malawi attractive.... The existence of the Scotland–Malawi Partnership was advantageous for the Executive, as it showed that development initiatives were already taking place which would be bolstered significantly with more funding, so there would be no need to start projects from scratch. Politicians highlighted Malawi’s position as one of the ten poorest countries in the world in 2005, and also adopted the Partnership’s reference to David Livingstone, the nineteenth-century Scottish missionary, and his focus on trade, the church and education in Southeast Africa. This historical association with Malawi was presented as an old friendship with the potential to be reignited.⁶²

Moreover, while the First Minister determined that Scotland could indeed play a greater role in international development than that already provided on its behalf by DFID, Scottish Government resources were clearly very limited and any government-to-government engagement would necessarily be similarly limited. Consequently, he focussed the Scottish effort predominantly on a single country, Malawi, in order to ensure that this new initiative should be meaningful and would make a difference. The existing intensity and extensiveness of the Malawi-Scotland engagement, as Anyimadu suggests, provided the perfect platform upon which to build. This focus did not preclude the demonstration of Scotland’s wider global concerns and small humanitarian resources were effectively deployed alongside the Malawian programmes to signal both a real and symbolic contribution.

There is no doubt that the Scottish Government international development interests rapidly became embedded into Government policy and, indeed, broader Parliamentary thinking. The 2005 initiative certainly captured the prevailing mood of many Scottish people and a genuine wish of the Parliament to play a role on its own behalf. Many have suggested that this emergent Parliamentary interest played a valuable – albeit, of course, small – role in the maturing of the fledgling Parliament. In the early years, it persistently was dogged by claims that it was too insular and too parochial, with no sense of global issues. Many claimed that the Parliament had been actively discouraged from having these interests both by statute – the defining of issues reserved to Westminster – and by personnel – being comprised of people with relatively little global experience. The new Malawi policy provided the opportunity to look outwards. It offered a focus for demonstrating global responsibility and a reduced preoccupation with local self-interest.

The 2005 Cooperation Agreement identified civic governance and society, sustainable economic development, health, and education as broad themes on which collaboration would be developed. Through the newly established International Development Fund, the Government began to make grants to support initiatives in these areas, with £2.4 million granted in 2005, rising to around £8.1 million in 2013.⁶³ A significant innovation in 2013 was the introduction of a Small Grants Scheme. Recognising the unique role smaller and community-led organisation can play in international development, the Scottish Government ring-fenced £500,000 a year of the government's International Development Fund specifically for projects run by organisation with an annual turnover of under £150,000.



While splitting this sum between dozens of different organisations, rather than just one or two large aid agencies, may potentially present administrative costs and challenges, the ultimate return on investment is far greater.

This is due to the strong community links and buy-in, the volunteerism embedded in such activity, and the powerful multiplier effect enjoyed on both sides of such smaller scale projects and partnerships. Crucially, this innovative new programme hasn't just issued conventional project grants (of up to £60,000 over three years); it has also awarded feasibility and capacity building grants (each up to £10,000 over one year), to help develop ideas and organisations – at both sides of the partnership. In this way, the Scottish Government, with the Scotland Malawi Partnership, is able to upscale operations and develop a wider pool of Scottish expertise and experience by increasing the number of, and diversity of, Scottish organisations actively involved in the Government's development programme. It demonstrates the Government's commitment to working in synergy with people.⁶⁴

The fact that the links between Scotland and Malawi extend far beyond any partisan basis has been demonstrated by the evidence of strong cross-party support in the Scottish Parliament for reinvigorating the relationship. This led to the formation in 2005 of a Scottish Parliament Cross-Party Group on Malawi which aims to:

develop and enhance links between Scotland and Malawi and to provide a forum for discussion on these matters. In particular the group will focus on links between the two parliaments and between civil society in each country. In order to achieve this, the group will work with parliamentarians from each legislature, with Malawians living in Scotland and with other organisations working in Malawi.⁶⁵

The cross-party consensus is driven by the grassroots movement which holds MSPs accountable for providing appropriate support for this vital element of Scottish life.⁶⁶ Since the Malawi focus originated under a Labour-Liberal administration there were some concerns about what might happen when the Scottish National Party came to power in 2007. In fact, the SNP Government redoubled the commitment to Malawi. Such was the strength of cross-party support by the 2011 Election that it was clear that, regardless of which party came to power, Malawi would remain at the heart of Scottish Government international development policy. A Parliamentary debate in November 2012 on the approaching bicentenary of the birth of David Livingstone demonstrated the strength of the cross-party consensus as MSPs vied with one another to invoke his memory and highlight Malawi-related projects in their constituencies inspired by it.⁶⁷



Road to Livingstonia, Malawi

Case Study: Implementation of Water Resource Acts

All who are involved in combatting poverty in Malawi become aware sooner rather than later of the importance of a clean and reliable water supply. Whether we are concerned with children's health, maternal health, agricultural development, faith-based involvement, educational perspective, or any other developmental initiative, time and again provision of an adequate water supply emerges as a fundamental concern. Rather than sporadic one-off interventions it is clear that a comprehensive and holistic approach is needed.

The potential of Scotland and Malawi to find synergy is highlighted by the fact that in both nations a Water Resource Act was passed in 2013. Both nations are endowed with an abundance of water resources yet both face significant challenges in terms of delivering suitable yet affordable supply of water everywhere it is needed (especially to very rural communities). This means attaining vertical integration such that there is synergy between all levels from the Government ministry down to domestic consumer. It also means attaining horizontal integration such that there is coordination of provision of water for all the different functions for which it is required.

As both nations turn their attention to implementation of their respective Acts there is an opportunity for shared learning. Through the SMP's Water Forum opportunities have been created for sharing of knowledge from the highest levels of Government down to District Council level. Through being subject to European Union legislation, Scotland has experience of compliance with pollution directives which is relevant to Malawi's obligations under the new Act. Equally, Malawi has experience of using social enterprise to supply the water needs of numerous very small communities which is relevant to the challenges of water supply in rural Scotland. The latter has provided an opportunity for lessons to be learnt for Scotland itself from the experience of the integrated water services management project in Chikwawa District in Malawi, which is funded by the Scottish Government Climate Justice Fund.

Such interaction between Scotland and Malawi in relation to water supply has served to demonstrate the need for large scale international investment. Taking Chikwawa District as an example, the implementation of the Malawi Government's "Water for All Forever" programme would involve the drilling of at least 1,000 wells at a cost of US\$18-20 million! When extrapolated to the remainder of Malawi, we begin to realize the huge task that remains for the Malawi Government, but the Scotland-Malawi connection has served as a catalyst to expand horizons and increase learning in both nations. It creates an environment in which it is possible to make the most of what both Government and people have to offer.⁶⁸

A reciprocal partnership for development

The Cooperation Agreement between Scotland and Malawi sets out the basis on which the two nations plan to work together. It states that: “Scotland and Malawi have a long history of collaboration, particularly in health and education. Both countries share a wish to build upon this history by actively engaging through partnership. This is a reciprocal partnership based upon sharing experiences and skills. It is *an opportunity to learn from each other* and to recognise the needs of our two countries.”⁶⁹ As Adjoa Anyimadu points out in her Chatham House paper:

The first decision taken about the Scottish development policy was that it should focus on encouraging links between communities and schools in Scotland and those in a partner region or country on the basis of the mutual exchange of knowledge and skills. Both sides were to benefit from the experience of linking. The Scottish Executive championed this idea of reciprocity, and it was spoken of as the heart of the policy – signalling a move away from the traditional donor–recipient aid relationship.⁷⁰

Given the great disparity that exists between the two nations in terms of economic development, it might be expected that Scotland has much more to give to Malawi than vice versa. However, Scots who become involved invariably conclude that they have gained much more from their experience than they would ever be able to give. While much of the interaction is currently driven by the urgency of tackling the crippling poverty faced by many in Malawi, it also recognises that no society is as developed as it might be and Scotland too has the potential to learn and grow. By drawing on each other’s culture, history and spirit, the two nations are able to strengthen one another in the quest for human flourishing. Reciprocity is foundational to this way of working.



Keith Bohannon, Member Services Officer for the SMP, meets Bernard Kaunda, Head of Operations at the Mzuzu Coffee Planters Cooperative Union in Malawi.

Education is one field where Scotland stands to benefit significantly from its interaction with Malawi. Jack McConnell illustrated this in the Parliamentary debate of September 2008, when he spoke of a visit he had recently made to Nairn Academy, a school which had been developing a twinning with a counterpart in Malawi:

The most telling comment yesterday came from a girl who is in her sixth year at Nairn Academy. When asked to describe how she had changed as a result of her visit, she said that she and her colleagues would, for the rest of their lives, be less greedy and more appreciative and have a greater understanding of the rest of the world. That is why I want to highlight the importance of the people-to-people relationships, whose role is central to ensuring that we make the most of the resources and the effort that we put in.⁷¹

Many other young people would echo this girl's sense of how much her life and values had changed through experience of Malawi. Reciprocity is taking effect.

“...I want to highlight the importance of the people-to-people relationships, whose role is central to ensuring that we make the most of the resources and the effort that we put in.”

Case Study: Beath High School and Mendulo Catholic Primary School

When it comes to bilateral partnerships between Malawi and Scotland more are to be found between schools than any other sector. In 2008 two teachers approached Douglas Young, the Rector of Beath High School in Cowdenbeath, to suggest that the school might benefit from an international link.⁷² Aware of the educational connections to Malawi which had been reinvigorated through the initiative of Jack MacConnell as First Minister, the Rector agreed, providing that the link would be with a school in Malawi. Through Link Community Development Mendulo Catholic Primary School in Mulanje District, close to the town of Luchenza, was identified.

Soon the pupils of the two schools were exchanging letters in parcels organized by Link Community Development. With the highest level of involvement coming from pupils in their early years at Beath High and in the senior years at Mendulo Primary, they were interacting with counterparts of their own age. It was soon apparent that both schools were operating in contexts of considerable social deprivation but had high educational aspirations and a desire to learn from one another's culture. Sale of lapel badges featuring a Malawi flag and the school crest raised funds at Beath High which were used to pay for the painting of educational murals on the walls of classrooms at Mendulo Primary.

When Link Community Development withdrew from school partnership work in 2011 Douglas Young made a connection with the Scotland Malawi Partnership and began to attend its Secondary School Forum. This involvement enabled him to develop his thinking about how the link could become more reciprocal in character with benefits flowing in both directions. This led in 2013 to an inspirational visit to Beath High by Mendulo headteacher Peter Mchenga and senior teacher Maevie Chaponda. Together with staff and pupils of Beath High they worked on the basis for a Partnership Agreement.

Art, music, drama and English were identified as areas which invited collaboration. Plans were developed to enhance the internet facility at Mendulo Primary so that there will be direct communication between staff and pupils of the two schools. It will also be possible to share teaching and learning, e.g. by Beath High preparing video of science experiments or by Mendulo Primary preparing video of Chichewa lessons. Further plans include the sharing of CPD resources and live connection to share important occasions such as Award Ceremonies.

The development of the partnership has had its challenges, not least with rapid turnover of leadership at Mendulo with four headteachers in post during the five years of the link. An unintended consequence of the Scottish connection may be that its very success in mobilizing resources creates an instability in terms of those involved being vulnerable to transfer. Nonetheless the partnership has already had a major impact on the lives of some of the young people who are involved. A 6th year Beath High pupil is looking to a career which will allow her to be involved in Africa. A Mendulo Primary pupil from a low income family has secured a place in secondary school and will be supported financially through initiatives taken within the Cowdenbeath community.

There is a ripple effect as Malawi comes to have a high profile in the Cowdenbeath community and as Mendulo Primary looks to become an educational hub from which smaller schools in the vicinity can benefit.

The priority of the relational, the mobilisation of civil society, Government in synergy with people, and a reciprocal partnership for development are the hallmarks of the interaction between Malawi and Scotland which has developed during the early years of the 21st century. Taken together these features, it can be argued, represent a new approach to international development. How does this model stand up when measured against the key challenges facing international development work today?

Meeting the Challenges of Development Today

Reports from a variety of well-informed sources have established a reasonable degree of consensus about the principal challenges facing international development today.⁷³ While the approach being pioneered by Malawi and Scotland should not be regarded in any way as a panacea, it does have features that are suggestive when it comes to meeting these challenges.

Participation and empowerment

It is widely acknowledged today that grand plans, even if conceived by well-intentioned experts, cannot be imposed on recipient communities without their active ownership and engagement. In the Malawi context, it is apparent that the criteria of international development bodies often do not correspond with the priorities of local communities.⁷⁴ There is need to engage citizens, especially women, the poor, civil society and other stakeholders in policy formation and decision-making processes. A distinctive feature of the Scotland Malawi Partnership, observed Dixie Maluwa Banda, is that, “they have always challenged us [Malawians] to set the agenda.”⁷⁵

Foremost in the Scottish Government international development work in Malawi has always been the critical principle that any programme of collaboration with the Malawian people, that was to be financially supported by the Scottish Government, should be consistent and aligned with the wishes of the Malawian people. Programmes that were supported therefore needed to be integrated with other on-going programmes on the ground and in accord with the strategic and policy objectives of the Malawian Government and, as appropriate, with the objectives and approach of local authorities and traditional leaders. At the highest level, the Scottish programmes sought to support the Malawi Government Development Strategy. There was, thus, an underlying obligation to both seek to understand Malawian values and culture, and work within the mechanisms and institutions that were already active. While not always welcomed by all those wishing to work in a developing country – not least as differences of view were hardly surprising – the principle of genuine mutual respect within a close relationship was deemed of the utmost importance.⁷⁶

This is an approach which meets current concerns regarding effectiveness in development work. As Tim Unwin has commented: “First, it is important that those involved in ‘development practice’ should listen much more closely to the voices of the poor, to their dreams and aspirations, and take it upon themselves to help deliver them. To achieve this, we need to find more effective ways of giving platforms to those without voices, and to generate new systems of consultation to overcome their lack of representation.”⁷⁷ Here the Malawi Scotland Partnership has an important role to play. It consciously aims to empower and give a voice to those who traditionally have been on the receiving end of development work. It brings Malawians together in an environment where they can speak and listen to one another, and also address their Scottish partners in a coherent and coordinated manner. The close and sustained interaction cultivated by the SMP and MaSP provides the opportunity to know one another at a human level and from that basis engage together in addressing development challenges.

A case in point is the “Moving Forwards in Partnership” Symposium facilitated by the MaSP and the SMP in June 2012. This brought together all the Malawian organizations who are partnered with a Scottish organization in receipt of Scottish Government funding. It thus provided an unprecedented opportunity for Scottish-partnered Malawian NGOs to confer among themselves and also connect with the relevant Government of Malawi civil servants much more effectively than ever before. As a result Malawians were significantly empowered to shape the work in which they are involved. The symposium has since become established as an annual event and a key driver of Malawi-Scotland interaction.

When the World Bank *Voices of the Poor* project undertook discussions with 64,000 poor people around the world, according to Duncan Green: “What emerged from these interviews was a complex and human account of poverty, encompassing issues that are often ignored in academic literature, such as the need to look good and feel loved, the importance of being able to give one’s children a good start in life, or the mental anguish that all too often accompanies poverty.” Green continues: “The reverse of such ‘multi-dimensional’ poverty is not simply wealth (although income is important), but a wider notion of well-being, springing from health, physical safety, meaningful work, connection to community, and other non-monetary factors. That is why good development practices build on the skills, strengths, and ideas of people living in poverty – on their assets – rather than treating them as empty receptacles of charity.”⁷⁸ Here the interaction between Malawi and Scotland has taken a distinctive path since it is predicated on initiative and leadership coming from Malawians.

“...good development practices build on the skills, strengths,
and ideas of people living in poverty - on their assets - rather
than treating them as empty receptacles of charity.”

It also rests on a firm commitment to nurture relationships of friendship and mutuality as the basis for working together on development. Green has argued that: “There is much greater scope for development organisations to pursue strategies that encourage mutual understanding, empathy, and trust by creating personal relationships between those who have and those who have not, and which contribute to changing the attitudes and beliefs of those in power.”⁷⁹ It is this scope which Malawi and Scotland have been seeking to exploit.

It involves an openness to transformation taking place on both sides of the relationship. As Tim Unwin argues, in his critique of the work of Jeffrey Sachs: “Sachs’ argument that we can somehow eliminate extreme poverty without it having a significant impact on our own lives is fundamentally wrong. We have to make a commitment to change, and that in itself is a difference. Simply increasing the amount of our own national budgets that are allocated to aid is not enough. There is so much more we need to do. We need to begin to really listen to poor people. We need to act in their interests rather than our own. We need to focus on minimising inequalities more than we do on maximising profits. Only then will we find our true humanity.”⁸⁰ Such an appeal has a great deal of resonance within the interaction of Scotland and Malawi.

“We need to focus on minimising inequalities more than we do on maximising profits. Only then will we find our true humanity.”

Local ownership and capacity

Development efforts normally have very limited sustainability and effectiveness if they depend heavily on the ongoing intervention of an external party. The philosophy of partnership guiding the interaction of Malawi and Scotland puts a premium on initiatives being owned and led by Malawians. As recalled above, this was deftly expressed at the outset of the current phase of Malawi-Scotland relations when Matthews Chikaonda addressed the seminal “Malawi After Gleneagles” conference hosted by the Scottish Parliament in 2005 and quoted the Malawian proverb: “no one can shave your head in your absence.”⁸¹ The salience of this observation is underlined by the conclusion of an OECD review of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness which found that “what started off as a political commitment to change behaviour and enhance development soon became interpreted and used as mainly a ‘technical’ and ‘process-oriented’ agreement that failed to ‘enlist the political and societal engagement needed to push through some of the most important changes’.”⁸² The Malawi-Scotland engagement is geared to overcome such failure.

As Paul Collier writes: “The societies of the bottom billion can only be rescued from within. In every society of the bottom billion there are people working for change but they are usually defeated by the powerful internal forces stacked against them. We should be helping the heroes. So far, our efforts have been paltry: through inertia, ignorance, and incompetence, we have stood by and watched them lose.”⁸³

Cooperation between Malawi and Scotland is based on providing strategic partnership and support for the “heroes”, of whom there are many, who are stepping up to tackle serious issues of underdevelopment. These may be within the Government sector or within civil society. The form of interaction being cultivated between Malawi and Scotland is geared to fulfil the need identified by Nobel Laureate in Economics Elinor Ostrom for a system which would “leave people in developing countries more autonomous, less dependent, and more capable of crafting their own future”.⁸⁴

The SMP’s commitment in this area was seen during 2013 when it took a specific role in the “IF” campaign in Scotland. This was the campaign which sought – with the slogan “Enough Food for Everyone – IF” - to drive the issue of global hunger to the top of the agenda of the G8 meeting hosted by the UK in Northern Ireland.⁸⁵ The role of the SMP was to coordinate input to the campaign from voices from the Global south. It successfully made the case that: “Southern voices will **not** be seen as passive recipients but as partners, actively involved in the campaign; they will **not** be used solely to communicate the extent of the problems (starving children, beleaguered farmers, etc), but part of the solution (inspirational leaders, communities taking ownership, etc).”⁸⁶ It was able to bring two small-holder farmers from Malawi not only to participate in the IF campaign in Scotland but also to be present in Inniskillin during the G8 meeting and to speak at fringe meetings.

This approach also gives more realistic, manageable and effective roles to the Scottish partners. As William Easterly has argued: “Acknowledging that development happens mainly through homegrown efforts would liberate the agencies of the West from utopian goals, freeing up development workers to concentrate on more modest, doable steps to make poor people’s lives better.”⁸⁷



Accountability, monitoring and evaluation

When vast sums of money can be spent without anything lasting to show for it, there are clearly questions of accountability, monitoring and evaluation.

As William Easterly writes: “The prevalence of ineffective plans is the result of Western assistance happening out of view of the Western public. Fewer ineffective approaches would survive if results were more visible. The Big Plans are attractive to politicians, celebrities and activists who want to make a big splash, without the Western public realizing that those plans at the top are not connected to reality at the bottom.”⁸⁸ The popular mobilization which underlies the development initiatives undertaken through Malawi-Scotland collaboration ensures that there is an informed and motivated public which is looking for results.

The Malawi Scotland Partnership and the Scotland Malawi Partnership, working together, are able to fulfil some of the hopes for civil society organisations expressed in a recent report by the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network: “[Civil Society Organisations] can hold both governments and businesses to account in terms of performance and honesty, organize and mobilize communities, deliver services, and promote 'social enterprises' that work on a business model but do not pursue profit as their main motive. Another important part of civil society consists of universities, research centers, and expert communities that promote innovation for sustainable development and train future leaders.”⁸⁹ The networks mobilized by the SMP and MaSP include all of these features and constitute a considerable force in terms of providing for data collection, monitoring, evaluation and, consequently, greater accountability.

Another significant weakness in the prevailing model of international development is that, as Duncan Green points out, “most aid is still given on a short-term basis (one to three years)...”⁹⁰ Hudson and Mosely concur: “... the volatility of overseas aid is severe ... and increasing over time.”⁹¹ They conclude, however, that “... it is possible to achieve greater stability by achieving a greater climate of trust between donors and recipients, in which donors do not react by withdrawing aid (and thereby making it unstable) each time a performance criterion is breached, but maintain aid levels stable as long as there is agreement on ‘underlying principles.’”⁹²

A feature of the Malawi-Scotland engagement is that it is committed for the long term and puts a premium on fostering a climate of trust. With already one hundred and fifty years of history behind it, the partnership is informed and inspired by challenges that have been met in earlier years. The strength of this history has created values and principles which underpin the development activity being undertaken at any particular time. While particular projects may be time-limited, the underlying relationship continues, drawing on the cumulative benefit of ever-growing mutual understanding.

“ A feature of the Malawi-Scotland engagement is that it is committed for the long term and puts a premium on fostering a climate of trust. ”

An Integrated Approach

There is widespread recognition today that development efforts are often hamstrung by a lack of coordination and integration. It is common to find duplication where agencies are carrying out almost the same work in the same location without any cooperation or even knowledge of one another. Well-intentioned efforts can easily turn out to be counterproductive. Stephen Carr, the World Bank's former principal agriculturalist for Sub-Saharan Africa and long-time Malawi resident, observes that: "Foreign NGOs in Malawi distort the labour market by paying their Malawian staff huge salaries, which attract well-qualified people away from government service and local civil-society organisations. Many foreign NGOs also bring confusion and duplication to development efforts by failing to co-ordinate their activities with the government and ignoring government policies."⁹³

Engagement between Malawi and Scotland is geared to avoid such pitfalls. Both at Government and civil society levels the discipline of working in alignment with the official Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II is continuously applied. This comprehensive strategy document identifies six key thematic areas: (1) Sustainable Economic Growth; (2) Social Development; (3) Social Support and Disaster Risk Management; (4) Infrastructure Development; (5) Governance; and (6) Gender and Capacity Development.⁹⁴ Not only does this provide an overarching policy framework for the Government itself, it is also intended to be a comprehensive reference document for all of Malawi's development partners – including civil society organisations, the private sector and bilateral donors. The Scottish Government has responded to this by aligning the priorities of its own Malawi work with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II and making this document a central point of reference in its grant-making programme.



This makes for “vertical integration”: ensuring that development policies are pursued coherently across different levels/branches of government. It also makes for “horizontal integration”: multi-sector collaboration between public sector, private sector and civil society. Such horizontal integration is at the core of the day-to-day work of the Malawi Scotland Partnership and Scotland Malawi Partnership. It comes to expression particularly in annual conferences, held both in Malawi and Scotland, which bring together all those engaged in projects funded by the Scottish Government for a time of mutual learning, networking and collaboration. More specialized forums have been developed by the SMP to deepen collaboration and integration among those working in particular sectors. MaSP is currently developing a parallel forum structure. Though the wide range of engagement between Scotland and Malawi includes cases where attitudes and approaches do not comply with this approach, the structures have been built which make for integration and, overall, this is a strong feature of the work as a whole.

Such an integrated approach also provides the capacity to identify threads that need to run across every sector. Such threads include the need to be pro-poor, ensuring that development efforts are geared to assist the poorest; gender awareness, ensuring that gender-based injustices are clearly in focus; and environmental awareness, ensuring that all interventions are carried out with a clear understanding of their environmental implications.



Countering Poverty: Both Heart and Head

When Robert Sangster-Poole held interviews about sustainability and best practice with a sample of SMP members during the early part of 2013 he found that they emphasized the following themes:

1. Local ownership (including: local decision-making and local 'buy-in')
2. Capacity building (in government, the private sector, and Malawian CSOs)
3. Working genuinely with Malawians (local authorities, government, communities)
4. Collaboration (ie. with other organisations working on the same issue)
5. Rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation (including looking at past projects)
6. Thorough preliminary research

Other prominent themes noted by Sangster-Poole were:

1. Better alignment (ie. with local/national priorities)
2. Building genuine partnerships
3. Less paternalism and assumptions of what Malawians need
4. Finding local solutions to problems
5. Engaging in more participatory methods
6. Encouraging good governance and strong Malawian leadership (at every level of society).⁹⁵

This sample suggests that those engaged in development work between Scotland and Malawi are highly sensitive to the challenges facing international development today and are geared to meet them. Far from being naïve amateurs, the diverse range of individuals and institutions becoming involved in development work in Malawi are proving to be highly informed and sensitive to the challenges it entails.

Paul Collier has been highly critical of Western NGOs and charities which, he claims, work on the basis of a “headless heart”.⁹⁶ They are moved by the plight of the poor but, Collier alleges, they lack the intellectual depth and analytical accuracy to offer viable solutions to it. For his part, Collier persists, as a development economist, in viewing extreme poverty as an intellectual conundrum which will be resolved if only the right model can be constructed. This might be dubbed the “heartless head”.

Those who approach development issues from this perspective appear to be, like Collier, oblivious to the track record of Western development experts whose prescriptions over 40 years have resulted in a deteriorating situation prevailing in the world's poorest countries.

The approach being taken by the Scotland Malawi Partnership seeks to engage both heart and head. By building and strengthening the connections that make people feel passionately about Malawi's development, it generates both political momentum and practical assistance as the key element of motivation makes for active citizens. At the same time, many of these citizens are highly competent professionals who offer their knowledge and expertise as a resource with which to engage the challenges of extreme poverty. In terms of "head" a virtue of the relational approach is that it brings leading professionals in many different spheres to put their expertise at the disposal of the work being done between Malawi and Scotland – something they are willing to do because of the amount of "heart" which they put into it.

Joseph Stiglitz reports that when he gave an address at Union Theological Seminary in New York and presented his case for inequality in America to be countered through "self-interest properly understood", he attracted a response from Cornel West who argued that historically great injustices were not corrected through the exercise of self-interest:

Something else was going on. Strong moral forces, strong spiritual forces, linked to stories – about a nation, in terms of national identity, in terms of what it means to be human, our connection to other countries.... There's not going to be a matter of even "self-interest properly understood" if it's not informed by very rich stories of the art of living, loving, serving others.⁹⁷

These are notes that carry resonance in the interaction between Malawi and Scotland. Two nations share a story in which they have learned from one another what it means to be human, what is involved in "living, loving and serving others". It is a story that engages both heart and head, uniting passionate concern with professional skill, to engage the unmet challenges of underdevelopment.

Partnership Principles

A framework prepared by the Scotland Malawi Partnership which encourages its members to ask this series of questions before embarking on any project or intervention.⁹⁸

Planning and implementing together: Whose idea is this?

- What do you want to achieve, and why?
- Who was involved in the planning?
- How do you communicate with your partners?
- Is this an equitable, and effective two-way dialogue?
- Are roles and responsibilities clear?
- Are expectations clear at both sides?
- Do you have a partnership agreement?
- Who manages the partnership?

Appropriateness: How does it fit within local and governmental priorities?

Does this partnership fit within local culture and customs at both ends?

Respect, trust and mutual understanding: How would you feel if you were at the other side of the partnership?

How well do you know your partners, and how are you improving your knowledge and understanding?

What are the biggest day to day issues at each side, and how does the partnership work effectively in this context?

How is basic human dignity safeguarded?

How do you know if respect, trust or understanding have been compromised, and what then happens?

What do you do when the two sides don't agree?

Transparency and Accountability: How are challenges, issues and concerns listened to?

How do you share information about your partnership?

Who is your partnership accountable to?

How do you communicate with these people?

If an NGO, have you IATI registered your work?

No one left behind: Who is excluded from your partnership?

Who precisely is your partnership with?

How are the marginalised in the community at both sides engaged?

Effectiveness: How do you know if your partnership is working?

Who is involved in evaluating the partnership?

How do you use your monitoring and evaluation to learn, and develop the partnership?

Reciprocity: What does each side contribute in the partnership?

Is it genuinely a two-way partnership?

Who benefits from the partnership?

Are opportunities, like travel, open to both sides of the partnership?

Sustainability: How long is your partnership for and what happens when it ends?

How can you be sure your partnership isn't creating dependencies?

Is your partnership building capacity at both sides?

Do no Harm: Could anyone be worse off as a result of your partnership?

What impact is your partnership having on:

the local economy?

gender equality?

food security?

local culture?

climate change?

democracy, governance and local planning?

Are you compliant with all relevant legislation?

Interconnectivity: How do you connect with what others are doing in this area?

How do you learn from others and share your experience?

Are the local diaspora community at both sides engaged?

Parity (equality): Who ‘owns’ the partnership? Who has the power?

Who benefits from this partnership?

How is each side treated through this partnership?

What rights and responsibilities does each side have?

Malawi and Scotland Today: Achievements and Challenges

A combination of historical, political, social, moral and spiritual forces have been at work to forge between Malawi and Scotland an approach to international development which demonstrates distinctive and innovative qualities. There can be little doubt that a large number of people have derived personal inspiration from their engagement in development-oriented work undertaken between Malawi and Scotland. Nor that many concrete examples of positive and enduring impact can be cited.

Nonetheless, Malawi remains firmly entrenched among the “bottom billion”, a reality that might suggest that its axis with Scotland has been ineffective in meeting the challenges of underdevelopment. On the other hand, it can be argued that Malawi is in the eye of a “perfect storm”, being landlocked, resource-scarce, over populated and exploited by external forces. Without the Scottish connection the situation might have been even worse. More to the point, it may be within the interaction of Malawi and Scotland that an approach has been formed which will enable Malawi to overcome the poverty which has afflicted the lives of too many of its citizens until now.

How successful it will be in fulfilling this ambition may depend on how far the effort can be taken in relation to issues of scale. Certainly large numbers of people are involved on both sides of the relationship and an impressive level of resources has been mobilised, particularly through the multiplier factor of Government grants releasing resources many times their value. Still, when measured against the needs of some 14 million people facing serious levels of poverty, it can be argued that the entire effort lacks the scale needed to make a major impact at national level.

When David Hope-Jones, the Scotland Malawi Partnership’s Principal Officer, carried out nationwide workshops in 2009 aimed at enabling Malawians to shape the future direction of the Partnership, he received, within a very short time, 392 requests from Malawian organisations seeking a Scottish partner with which they could work.⁹⁹ This was a far greater number than that to which there was capacity in Scotland to respond. As the Malawi Scotland Partnership has become fully operational in 2012-13, it has similarly been overwhelmed by aspirations in Malawi to which Scotland currently lacks capacity to respond. Of course, there remains much untapped potential in Scotland in terms of people and organisations still to be engaged in partnership work with Malawi. Sustaining the momentum and continuing the expansion of civil society mobilisation will be key to scaling up the impact.

However, even a doubling or tripling of small scale bilateral partnerships will still leave the effort open to question as to whether it is simply too small to have any significant impact at national level. With its strength lying in the alliance of a wide range of actors at the micro level, so far the Malawi-Scotland approach has had relatively little to contribute at the macroeconomic level in regard to such issues as infrastructure development or capital expenditure.¹⁰⁰ Given the failure of so many grand schemes which have been conceived at macro level, a virtue of the Malawi-Scotland approach is that it offers a great range of micro level initiatives which, in terms of aggregate impact, have been able to achieve a solid result. Looking to the future, however, a relevant question is how far lessons learned at the micro level can be applied to questions of macroeconomic management.

The SMP has campaigned and lobbied on such issues as debt relief and general budget support but it remains a question how much the virtues of the relational approach can be scaled up to contribute to economic development at a national level? Might the time be ripe to engage bodies in Scotland concerned with macroeconomic policy and expenditure with their counterparts in Malawi, seeking to bring the strengths of the relational approach to bear at that level? The qualities of mutual respect, careful listening and reciprocity which have been matured at a micro level could now be tested in application to the macroeconomic questions which require to be addressed before the quest to eradicate extreme poverty can succeed.

A few specific illustrations demonstrate the importance of this perspective, not only because the policy issues are critical to development in their own right, but also because they bear heavily on the success of micro policy and on the outcomes of the relational approach. The vigorous debate over the devaluation of the Kwacha in 2013 provides one such example: a macro challenge of immense importance with profound implications for the macroeconomy and equally for the livelihoods of all the Malawian people. The manner in which this area of policy was determined was therefore of acute importance and it rightly raises the key questions of how that decision was reached, which interest groups participated in the decision-making, where the balance of power lay in the determination of the specific policy and, perhaps most crucially, what were the fundamental objectives and drivers of the policy decision. Had there been a stronger role for a relational approach what effect might this have had on the outcome?

A second example might be the determination of fertiliser price policy in Malawi. Again, while seen as a fiscal financing problem by some and, by others, as a key driver and incentive of smallholder farmer behaviour, it is undoubtedly one of the most significant areas of policy. Is there a place here for a greater deployment of the underlying principles of the relational model? Other examples include decisions over civil service pay, or debt service policy, or the pricing of natural resources.¹⁰¹

A question needing to be addressed is whether we should now be more ambitious in seeking to sensitively extend the relational approach to other critical areas of international development, rather than restrict this approach to the micro – albeit immensely valuable – activities in the economy? Should we seek to complement the technical skills and expertise of many national and international development agencies in these macroeconomic fields with the greater listening, understanding and insight that a relational approach can bring?

The challenge to step up from successful discrete projects of limited scope to a scale of engagement which would register at national level is particularly prominent in regard to the strands of “Civic Governance and Society” and “Sustainable Economic Development”. Even a host of successful projects at micro level can be undermined by poor civic governance. Problems perceived to spring from neo-patrimonialism and corruption in Malawi’s two most recent Governments, the administrations of Bingu wa Mutharika and Joyce Banda, have led to crisis of confidence and suspension of international aid.¹⁰² This alone is enough to highlight the urgent need to address issues of good governance. Here, moreover, is an opportunity for mutual benefit. At a time of political challenge and change in Scotland issues of good governance are likely to arise and there will be lessons to be learned from the Malawi experience. Likewise in regard to trade, business and investment there are opportunities for mutual benefit, even if the initial focus needs to be a concerted effort to enable Malawi to advance in the effort to trade its way out of poverty. It is likely that the interaction of Malawi and Scotland will remain limited in its impact if it is not able to effectively address issues of good governance and economic development at the macro level.

A key challenge for the partnership of Malawi and Scotland is whether it can take the virtues of the relational approach and apply them on a scale which will impact Malawi’s development on the national level. Already it can be demonstrated both that a distinctive new approach has been developed and that it is having an energising and inspiring effect both in Scotland and in Malawi. It answers Ramalingam’s call for “a more systemic, adaptive, networked, dynamic approach...”¹⁰³ While modest in scale and at an early stage in its evolution, the partnership is functioning as “... an open innovation network, catalysing and leveraging change...”¹⁰⁴ Though challenges remain, this is something to celebrate.

Furthermore, an approach based on the priority of the relational, the mobilisation of civil society, the synergy of Government and people, and a reciprocal partnership for development may also have a contribution to make to the wider debate about the future direction of international development. As regards current questions around participation and empowerment, local ownership and capacity, accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and an integrated approach, the work being done between Scotland and Malawi might be suggestive for those wrestling with such issues in other contexts. Meanwhile active citizens of Malawi and Scotland apply both “heart and head” to their shared quest for human flourishing. Together they draw on history, values and experience that suggest a new approach to international development, one that is already inspirational and calls for still more ambitious application and implementation.

“ Though challenges remain, this is something to celebrate. ”

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⁷³ In a recent report for the Scotland Malawi Partnership Rob Sangster-Poole collated points of consensus from the following recent studies: Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness (APDev), “African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness”, AU/NEPAD, 2011; BetterAid, “Development Effectiveness in Development Cooperation: A Rights-based Perspective”, 2010; Beyond2015, “Sustainable Development Goals and the Relationship to a post 2015 Global Development Framework,” 2012; High-Level Fora (HLF) on Aid Effectiveness (2005, 2008, 2011); Independent Research Forum, “Post-2015: Framing a New Approach to Sustainable Development,” IRF, 2013; Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness, “Istanbul Principles”, 2011; Tracey Strange & Anne Bayley, “What is Sustainable Development?” in OECD (ed.) *Sustainable Development: Linking Economy, Society, Environment (2009)*; United Nations, *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development*, Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 2013; United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development: Report for the UN Secretary-General, 2013*; World Bank Sustainable Development Network, 2013 <<http://go.worldbank.org/4G5284K5A0>>. See Rob Sangster-Poole, “Sustainability, Development Effectiveness and 'Best Practice': A Research Paper for the Scotland Malawi Partnership”, July 2013, p.8.

⁷⁴ This point was emphasized to the author by participants at a seminar on development hosted by the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission, Blantyre Mission, 7 January 2014.

⁷⁵ Dixie Maluwa Banda, personal communication, 10 January 2014.

⁷⁶ Professor Andrew Goudie, email to the author, 26 January 2014.

⁷⁷ Tim Unwin, “No End to Poverty”, *Journal of Development Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 5 (July 2007), pp. 929-953, at p. 948

- ⁷⁸ Duncan Green, *From Poverty to Power: How Active Citizens and Effective States Can Change the World*, London: Oxfam International, 2008, p. 7.
- ⁷⁹ Green, *From Poverty to Power*, p. 443.
- ⁸⁰ Unwin, “No End to Poverty”, p. 950.
- ⁸¹ “Malawi After Gleneagles”, p. 104.
- ⁸² OECD, “Evaluation of the Paris Declaration – Phase 2”, Paris: OECD, 2011, cit. Ramalingam, *Aid on the Edge of Chaos*, p. 15.
- ⁸³ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, p. 96.
- ⁸⁴ Elinor Ostrom, cit. Ramalingam, *Aid on the Edge of Chaos*, p. 363.
- ⁸⁵ See <http://www.enoughfoodif.org/Scotland> accessed 11 November 2013.
- ⁸⁶ “Incorporating Southern Voices into the IF Scotland Campaign”, internal SMP paper, 25 February 2013.
- ⁸⁷ Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden*, p. 25.
- ⁸⁸ Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden*, p. 15.
- ⁸⁹ UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, *An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development*, p. 8.
- ⁹⁰ Green, *From Poverty to Power*, p. 364.
- ⁹¹ John Hudson and Paul Mosely, “Aid Volatility, Policy and Development”, *World Development*, Vol. 36 No. 10 (October 2008), pp. 2082-2102, at p. 2096.
- ⁹² Hudson and Mosely, “Aid Volatility, Policy and Development”, p. 2097.
- ⁹³ Stephen Carr, cit. Martin Barber & Cameron Bowie, “How International NGOs Could Do Less Harm and More Good,” *Development in Practice* 18:6 (2008), pp. 748-54, at p. 748.
- ⁹⁴ Government of Malawi, *Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II*, 2012.
- ⁹⁵ Sangster-Poole, “Sustainability, Development Effectiveness and ‘Best Practice’”, pp. 26-27.
- ⁹⁶ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, p. 156.
- ⁹⁷ Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality*, London: Penguin, 2013, p. xxi.
- ⁹⁸ Scotland Malawi Partnership, internal paper, 11 December 2013.
- ⁹⁹ “Civil Society Research Exercise”, Scotland Malawi Partnership Report, February 2010, pp. 166-67.
- ¹⁰⁰ Professor Andrew Goudie, email to the author, 18 November 2013.
- ¹⁰¹ Professor Andrew Goudie, email to the author, 26 January 2014.
- ¹⁰² For analysis of issues pertaining to the Mutharika administration see Diana Cammack, *Malawi’s Political Settlement in Crisis, 2011*, African Power and Politics Programme Background Paper 04, London: Overseas Development Institute, 2011. At the time of writing the revelation in late 2013 of large-scale theft of Government funds, dubbed the “cashgate” scandal, is still being investigated.
- ¹⁰³ Ramalingam, *Aid on the Edge of Chaos*, p. 361.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ramalingam, *Aid on the Edge of Chaos*, p. 363.



Since 2005, Malawi and Scotland have been working together to create an innovative approach to international development. Through an extensive and multi-sectoral engagement they have formed a way of working marked by the priority of the relational, mobilisation of civil society, synergy of Government and people, and a reciprocal partnership for development. This approach has motivated thousands of people to become productively involved in the interaction between the two nations. Though still at an early stage, it may be a suggestive test case for those concerned with the future direction of international development. This paper offers an authoritative account of the origins and development of this way of working, analyses its leading features, and sets out challenges that its proponents need to consider as they look to the future.

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"There have been many achievements flowing from the Scotland Malawi Cooperation Agreement, however, our most significant has been the evolution of the people-to-people links to create a new model for international development in the 21st century - based on bottom-up, civil society-led partnerships, rather than top-down budgetary aid. It is essential that we build on this and we need civic society's continued involvement if we are to assist the people of Malawi from poverty to prosperity."

Humza Yousaf
Minister for Europe and International Development, Scottish Government

"The value of this paper is that it distils the essence and captures the inspiration of all that is currently taking place between Malawi and Scotland. I commend it to all who are involved and to all who are interested to learn how two nations can work together for mutual benefit."

Dr Matthews Mtumbuka
Chair, Malawi Scotland Partnership

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