



Together in Partnership:
2015 National Symposium for Scottish Government Malawi Grant Partners
30th January 2015

EVENT REPORT

[High Res version]

Executive Summary:

“Together in Partnership: The National Symposium for Scottish Government Malawi Grant Partners” was attended by 70+ delegates from around 40 Malawian organisations funded by the Scottish Government. The event aimed to: increase mutual awareness; support networking and learning; build connections with the government; share experience from the recent floods; and support projects through discussions around common challenges and shared solutions.

Through strand breakout groups a total of 40 different implementation challenges were identified by delegates (see pages 7-18), the top five were: coordination of effort; cultural considerations; resource shortages; challenges in partnership; and a lack of effective leadership. This report gives all the comments, experience and ideas coming from all the strand discussion groups.

At the end of the day, each strand presented a handful of action points to take forwards resulting from the discussions (see pages 19-20). Since the Symposium, MaSP and the SMP have further explored the most common challenges and here propose 30 actions (see pages 21-22) they will take forwards in the coming 12 months.

Feedback from the conference was excellent (see pages 23-28), with:

- 92% of delegates saying their expectations had “entirely” or “mostly” been met;
- 0% of delegates saying their expectations had “not been met at all”;
- 100% of delegates saying they made “useful new contacts at the meeting”;
- An estimated 350 new connections were made during the day;
- 82% saying the day strengthened their links with Scotland;
- All five event objectives were “Entirely” or “Mostly” met by 53%-92%; and
- 97% of delegates giving a positive impact statement.



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INTRODUCTION:

The Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) is the national Malawian membership network which exists to support, coordinate and represent Malawi's many civic links with Scotland.

On the 30th January 2015 MaSP hosted ***“Together in Partnership: 2015 National Symposium for Scottish Government Malawi Grant Partners”***, its third symposium, at the request of the Malawian and Scottish Governments.

The event aimed to:

- (1) Increase mutual awareness: including updates from the Government of Malawi, the Scottish Government, MaSP and the SMP, and time for projects to learn about one and others' work.
- (2) Support networking and learning: with good time for informal networking and the sharing of learning between projects.
- (3) Build connections with the Government of Malawi: with time to get to know the four Strand Leaders and learn about the latest governmental policies and priorities.
- (4) Share experience from the recent floods: Sharing experience, learning and challenges, and exploring how best we respond to the new challenges facing projects
- (5) Support projects: with time for discussions around common challenges, shared learning and solutions which can be taken forwards.

This report sets out the key points of discussion at the Symposium. It also sets out what MaSP and its sister organisation in Scotland (the Scotland Malawi Partnership) will do in the coming 12 months to better support, coordinate and represent its members as a result of the symposium discussions.

AGENDA:

Aim	Time	Item	Lead
AIM ONE: Increasing mutual awareness	09.00 – 09.10	Introductory remarks	Happy Makala (National Coordinator, MaSP)
	09.10 – 09.15	Welcoming remarks from MaSP	Matthews Mtumbuka, (MaSP Chair)
	09.15 – 09.35	Government of Malawi opening meeting	Mr. Charles Msosa, (Principal Secretary, Higher Education)
	09.35 – 09.45	Scotland Malawi Partnership	David Hope-Jones, (Principal Officer, SMP)
	09.45 – 09.50	Scottish Government (video pre-record)	Humza Yousaf, (SG Minister for I.D.)
	09.50 – 10.00	Malawi Scotland Partnership	Happy Makala (National Coordinator, MaSP)
	10.00 – 10.40	Strand break-out session 1: Sharing information	Facilitated by Strand Leaders
AIM TWO: Networking and learning	10.40 – 11.00	Locating our work: a networking exercise	David Hope-Jones, (Principal Officer, SMP)
	11.00 – 11.30	Coffee break and active networking	
AIM THREE: Building connections with the Government of Malawi	11.30 – 11.50	Strand Leader introductions	All four Strand Leaders
	11.50 – 12.20	Strand break-out session 2: Working with the Government of Malawi	Facilitated by Strand Leaders
AIM FOUR: Share experience from the recent floods	12.20 – 13.00	Strand break-out session 3: Responding to the recent floods	Facilitated by Strand Leaders
AIM TWO: Networking and learning	13.00 – 14.10	Lunch and active networking	
AIM FIVE: Supporting projects	14.10 – 15.10	Strand break-out session 4: Common Challenges and Shared Learning	Facilitated by Strand Leaders
	15.10 – 15.30	Alternative Strand Break Out Groups	Facilitated by Strand Leaders
	15.30 – 16.00	Plenary discussions	David Hope-Jones, (Principal Officer, SMP)
	16.00 – 16.30	Open Question and Answers	Happy Makala (National Coordinator, MaSP)
	16.30 – 16.45	Closing Remarks	Matthews Mtumbuka, MaSP Chair
	16.45 – 17.00	Time for everyone to complete feedback forms	Happy Makala (National Coordinator, MaSP)

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STRAND DISCUSSIONS:

During the 2015 Symposium for Scottish Government Malawi Grant Partners, delegates were divided into the four strands of the Scotland-Malawi Cooperation Agreement: Civic Governance and Society; Sustainable Economic Development; Health; and Education. Each delegate was given 6 post-it notes and asked to write one challenge they have experienced in the implementation of their project on each.

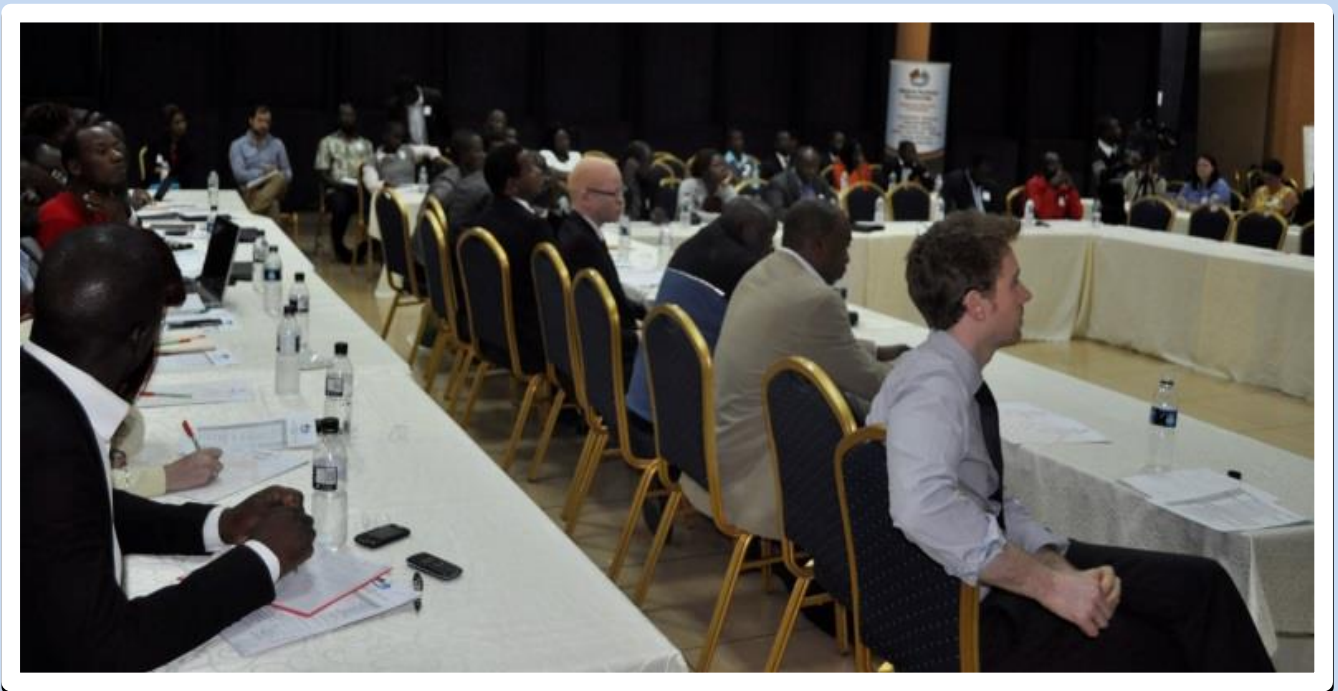
Once each delegate had briefly presented their top implementation challenges, they were then given fresh post-it notes and invited to either summarise their experience of one of the challenges from the group (not necessarily their own), or propose a solution to a challenge.

This document presents all the information from all the post-it notes during this afternoon session of the Symposium. Data from all four strands has been collated together to help identify the most common challenges across the programme. However, to help disaggregate strands, the initial is given in brackets after each comment:

- [CGS] = Civic Governance and Society;
- [SED] = Sustainable Economic Development;
- [H] = Health; and
- [E] = Education

The categorisation of the comments (challenges, experiences and proposed solutions) is arguably subjective: however, hopefully this collation gives a useful overall sense of the common challenges. MaSP, the SMP, and both governments will use the data to consider how best to support current projects in their implementation and help develop new projects in the future which are informed by this learning.

While all this information will be made publically available so as to maximise shared learning and mutual benefit, all the data is absolutely anonymous and cannot be used to prejudice against any organisation or project.



Symposium in plenary

Challenge	Health	Education	Sustainable Economic Development	Governance and Civic Society	Total
Coordination	0	5	9	12	26
Other cultural factors / behavioural change / negative attitudes	5	10	2	1	18
Lack of funding/shortage of resources	0	7	7	1	15
International Partnerships	0	5	9	0	14
Lack of leadership / poor governance	9	0	2	2	13
Economy	0	0	10	0	10
Challenges working with Govt	1	0	1	7	9
Youth unemployment	0	5	4	0	9
Staff shortages	8	0	1	0	9
Local partnerships / collaboration	0	2	6	0	8
Project timescales	4	2	1	1	8
Training	0	1	7	0	8
Allowance Syndrome	3	0	1	3	7
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)	0	2	1	4	7
Engaging Government policy	0	4	3	0	7
Staff retention	6	0	0	0	6
Lack of vehicles	0	0	4	2	6
Lack of accommodation	2	3	0	1	6
Poor quality teaching	0	6	0	0	6
Lack of capacity	0	1	5	0	6
Gender inequality	0	3	2	1	6
Poor infrastructure	0	1	1	3	5
Staff Skills Gaps	4	0	0	0	4
Geography	0	1	2	1	4
Poor educational infrastructure	0	4	0	0	4
Issues with funders	0	0	3	1	4
Early childhood development	0	3	0	0	3
Affordability of services	0	0	3	0	3
Soil quality	0	0	1	2	3
Lack of inclusivity	0	3	0	0	3
Drugs shortages	3	0	0	0	3
Sustainability	0	1	0	1	2
Illiteracy	0	0	2	0	2
Communication	0	0	2	0	2
Research	0	0	2	0	2
Natural environment	0	0	2	0	2
Micro-finance	0	0	2	0	2
Lack of core/admin funds	0	0	0	1	1
Security	0	0	0	1	1

Coordination:

(26 comments)

- “Operate in silos. Need funds for someone to coordinate between sectors / make the linkages in policy” [CG&S]
- “Not enough collaboration and networking” [CG&S]
- “Poor coordination among stakeholders” [CG&S]
- “Lack of networking meetings and absence of funds in proposal to support them” [CG&S]
- “No international visits which are forums for learning” [CG&S]
- “Lack of cultural policy means no coordination amongst various players in the industry/sector, so chaos is prevalent. No guiding principles/structures.” [CG&S]
- “Lack of coordination amongst NGOs in implementing projects” [E]
- “Lack of coordination of partner to compliment on each other’s gaps (e.g. lack of adequate school blocks)” [E]
- “Coordination of CBCC/ECD providers for common standard of service delivery” [E]
- “Lack of coordination/networking” [SED]
- “Coordination with partners in three countries” [SED]
- “Projects antagonise each other on implementation of policies and strategies. E.g. no free gifts but others do” [SED]
- “Unharmonized messages going to farmers CSA/CA” [SED]



Health Strand discussions

Proposed solutions

- “Initiating network amongst projects/organisations” [CG&S]
- “Initiating collaboration and networking among Scottish funded projects” [CG&S]
- “Enhance government and CSO networking on resources available at national and district level” [CG&S]
- “Strengthen networking in order to create synergies and complementarity” [CG&S]
- “Collaboration with government - reporting and database” [CG&S]
- “Pro-active involvement of key stakeholders at the beginning” [E]
- “Coordination - starting point of the project should be consultative and transparent” [E]
- “Collaboration with local entities” [SED]
- “Find good partners through networking” [SED]
- “Coordination. Partnering to other stakeholders” [SED]
- “Collating CSA document through regular CSO meetings” [SED]
- “Need funds for someone to coordinate between sectors / make the linkages in policy” [CG&S]
- “Projects working in the same area need to network and reach compromised stage” [SED]

Other cultural factors / behavioural change / negative attitudes

(18 comments)

- “Little or no repayment culture” [SED]
- “Lack of trust in new technology” [SED]
- “Harmful cultural practice affecting the health of women and girls. Hidden TBAs/house delivery. Traditional practices resulting in high teenage pregnancies and high malaria.” [CG&S]
- “Behaviour change at all levels!” [H]
- “Lack of understanding of the local organisational culture and management style” [E]
- “Parents negative attitudes to girls” [E]

- “Inclusive education preached but not implemented” [E]
- “Negative attitudes” [E]
- “Negative attitudes” [E]

Experience of this:

- “We see this as we do our training” [E]
- “SNE not aware of the SNE allocation at the DEM office . Limited decentralisation of inclusive education. Lack of inclusive education plan/strategy” [E]

Proposed solutions:

- “People should understand the problem and it should be a team effort to make the change” [H]
- “The duration of the project should be long enough to make people change their mind-sets / harmful cultural practices as long as five years onwards” [H]
- “Provide psychological guidance and counselling on effects of behaviours” [H]
- “The approach on behaviour change can determine how the message will be received by the people e.g. if you go through their leaders in the community they will listen more than to a stranger” [H]
- “Development projects need to be bottom to top not top to bottom” [E]
- “Sensitisation campaigns” [E]
- “Reforms in the SNE depart under the M&E to ensure effectiveness and decentralisation” [E]

Lack of funding/shortage of resources:

(15 comments)

- “Inadequate resources e.g. desks and books in schools” [E]
- “Lack of funding. Difficult conditions for accessing Scottish Government funds” [E]
- “Lack of funding.” [E]
- Available funding [SED]
- “Lack of training materials” [SED]
- “Not enough funds for the project hence you are restricted to focus on few issues/areas” [CG&S]

Experience of this:

- “Failing to implement projects. Funding organisations to consider local young registered NGOs” [E]
- “Most local NGOs have failed to access funds for projects due to lack of meeting donors’ conditions” [E]

Proposed Solutions:

- “Funding agencies to consider funding local NGOs as well” [E]
- “Diversify income streams – don’t rely on one source of income” [E]
- “Fundraising” [SED]
- “Proper planning/implementation” [SED]
- “Sharing ideas on how to raise funds / money / how to do business” [SED]
- “Seeking funds from well/wishers donors. Loans” [SED]
- “Scaled down operations to avoid budget overruns” [SED]

International Partnerships:

(14 comments)

- “Coordination with partners in three countries” [SED]
- “Who manages the partnership? Project idea Malawian or Scottish?” [E]
- “Hard to establish long term links with Scotland” [SED]
- “The beneficiaries ownership syndrome” [SED]
- “We are stuck with the existing relationship and cant widen it – want partnership with other SMP members” [SED]

- “International communication hard due to poor internet resources” [SED]
- “Funders must be able to do what the community wants” [SED]
- “Lack of confidence of our Scottish partners – micro-managing projects” [E]

Proposed solution:

- “Coordination - starting point of the project should be consultative and transparent” [E]
- “Transparency from the donors to the local partner in the MOU” [E]
- “Investing in internet improvement to facilitate regular communication through email or Skype” [SED]
- “Partnership with SMP members” [SED]
- “Joint planning with partner” [SED]
- “Projects should be based on demand delivery policy” [E]



Education Strand discussions

Lack of leadership / poor governance:

(13 comments)

- “True leadership. Understanding the qualities of a good leader: visionary, wise, listener” [CG&S]
- “Absence of leadership and support from DHO” [H]
- “Effects of governance issues on implementation” [H]
- “Behaviour change at all levels!” [H]
- “Leadership not taking a role in moving forwards. Lack of initiative. Hand out mentality. Allowances” [H]
- “Not many women taking leadership roles in cooperatives affecting governance of cooperatives” [SED]
- “Limited participation of women during meetings” [SED]

Experience on this:

- “Lack of consistency in approach at all levels. Chasing allowances. Participation of government staff is different” [H]
- “Implementing a project with buy-in and involvement of all staff members requires a leader (in-charge) to be there to encourage, support and enforce. The in-charge is so often absent – this affects the dynamics, hierarchy and responsibility. DHOs need training.” [H]

Proposed solutions:

- “Leadership and good governance training” [CG&S]
- “Empower clinic in-charge improve management skills. Turn them into leaders!!” [H]

- “Improved communication. Networking at all levels” [H]
- “Commitment from all organisations, government etc on acceptable rates for attendance at trainings, activities etc. Consistency of approach.” [H]

Economy:

(10 comments)

- “Economic instability” [SED]
- “Poor economic environment making business hard to do” [SED]
- “High inflation rates affecting business performance” [SED]
- “Poor economic environment” [SED]
- “Currency fluctuations” [SED]
- “Poor economic environment” [SED]

Proposed solutions:

- “Opening FCDA accounts to cushion foreign exchange variations” [SED]
- “Scaled down operations to avoid budget overruns” [SED]
- “Interest rebates. Prompt loans” [SED]
- “Coordinate with banks to provide small loans to the youth” [SED]”

Challenges working with Government:

(9 comments)

- “Lack of M&E by Government of Malawi” [CG&S]
- “Slow response from the Government side and lack of commitment” [CG&S]
- “Limited resource allocation to local government (District Councils). DHO affecting attainment of health outcomes - e.g. limited outreach clinics” [CG&S]
- “Government (Ministry of Health) through DHO not honouring the provisions of the MOU – i.e. provision of drugs ” [H]
- “No resources for strand lead to monitor projects” [SED]

Solutions proposed:

- “Enhance government and CSO networking on resources available at national and district level” [CG&S]
- “Collaboration with government - reporting and database” [CG&S]
- “Follow up and demand implementation of public service reforms” [CG&S]
- “Capacity building to the government on resource management” [CG&S]



Health Strand discussions

Youth unemployment:

(9 comments)

- “The education provided in Malawi is for people to be employed only. But we need education which can help students be able to create jobs. There are no jobs for everyone” [E]
- “Incomplete process for the informal education. After the six months the youths have nothing to do therefore it’s likely for them to go back” [E]

Experience of this:

- “We see many young school leavers jobless” [E]

Proposed solutions:

- “Incorporate entrepreneur skill subjects in the syllabus from primary level” [E]
- “Develop curriculum that is job orientated” [E]
- “Vocational training since most youth are just staying” [SED]
- “Financial support for the youth to start up micro-business” [SED]
- “Youths not adequately involved in cooperatives development” [SED]
- “Coordinate with banks to provide small loans to the youth” [SED]”

Staff shortages:

(9 comments)

- “Staff shortages at health centres” [H]
- “Shortage of staff” [H]
- “Staffing work schedules and shortage of staff” [H]
- “Work overload at both hospital and health centres” [H]
- “Lack of human resource” [SED]

Experience of this:

- “Work schedules: Nurses use day duty roster when off duty locums not provided in project budget – hence clients are sent back” [H]
- “Demand to increase the number of student intake calls for more tutors” [H]

Proposed solutions:

- “Training more staff (VSA providers) (Health workers)” [H]
- “Recruitment of more staff by increasing staff established in training institutions” [H]

Local partnerships / collaboration:

(8 comments)

- “Finding good local partners to collaborate with” [SED]
- “Projects antagonise each other on implementation of policies and strategies. E.g. no free gifts but others do” [SED]
- “Unharmonized messages going to farmers CSA/CA” [SED]
- “Lack of commitment from key local stakeholders” [E]

Proposed solution:

- “Collaboration with local entities” [SED]
- “Find good partners through networking” [SED]
- “Coordination. Partnering to other stakeholders” [SED]
- “Capacity building of key implementing partners and community members” [E]

Project timescales:

(8 comments)

- “Need longer-term projects, 5-7 years” [CG&S]
- “Timeframe for implementation – evidence of impact” [H]
- “Delay in grant approval – affecting gantt charts – only working with farmers for 2 growing seasons instead of 2” [SED]

Experience:

- “Effective formative base for project took one year then six months to develop action plans. Now capacity building but little time left to really demonstrate effective change” [H]

Proposed solutions:

- “The duration of the project should be long enough to make people change their mind-sets / harmful cultural practices as long as five years onwards” [H]
- “Promotion of projects with Strand Leads to improve dissemination and integration of –lessons learnt – scale up etc” [H]
- “Implementation period for projects – longer time is needed for sustainability” [E]
- “Diversify income streams – don’t rely on one source of income” [E]

Training:

(8 comments)

- “Lack of training materials” [SED]

Proposed solution:

- “Using a cost sharing approach with stakeholders to meet the training cost” [SED]
- “Deliver training which is followed by mentoring and coaching” [SED]
- “Vocational training since most youth are just staying” [SED]
- “Set training days when school is closed” [E]
- “Identify short courses to address the gaps and regular M&E” [SED]
- “Become partners with organisations like TEVETA” [SED]
- “Need training – either in-house or outsourced – to build capacity” [SED]

Allowance Syndrome:

(7 comments)

- “Resistance from people to attend some meetings/workshops if there are no allowances” [CG&S]
- “Lack of funding for meeting facilities therefore poor involvement from key players (allowance syndrome)” [CG&S]
- “Leadership not taking a role in moving forwards. Lack of initiative. Hand out mentality. Allowances” [H]
- “Projects antagonise each other on implementation of policies and strategies. E.g. no free gifts but others do” [SED]

Experience on this:

- “Lack of consistency in approach at all levels. Chasing allowances. Participation of government staff is different” [H]

Proposed solutions:

- “Promote projects that economically empower communities (so as to not rely on allowances)” [CG&S]
- “Commitment from all organisations, government etc on acceptable rates for attendance at trainings, activities etc. Consistency of approach.” [H]

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL):

(7 comments)

- “Monitoring and evaluation tools are not standardized” [CG&S]
- “Lack of M&E by Government of Malawi” [CG&S]
- “Late submission of reports, both narrative and financial” [CG&S]
- “No resources for strand lead to monitor projects” [SED]

Experience of this

- “Lack of information sharing between individual and partner” [E]

Proposed solutions:

- "Collaboration with government - reporting and database" [CG&S]
- "Evaluate. Learn. Change projects" [E]

Engaging Government policy:

(7 comments)

- "Inability to implement government policies" [E]
- "Lack of engagement with relevant policy makers to feed in research findings" [SED]
- "Rigid government policies that are hindering implementation of some projects. E.g. denying some species of fish to be grown in Malawi." [SED]
- "Poor motivation and recognition of government officials". [SED]

Proposed solutions:

- "Reinforce the implementation of policies at ground level where people should be aware of these policies" [E]
- "Promote motivation of officer in government and implementation partner" [E]
- "Engage better with cross Government departments" [E]

Staff retention:

(6 comments)

- "Staff retention" [H]
- "Staff retention" [H]
- "High staff turnover in health centres" [H]

Experience on this:

- "Trained staff but within 8 months 2 left the facility – training cost half a million MK" [H]
- "Difficult to retain staff because of the limited incentives that the institution/project provides to staff members. Need more net income" [H]

Proposed solutions:

- "Train all staff as providers" [H]

Lack of vehicles:

(6 comments)

- "Mobility - no provision of vehicles" [CG&S]
- "No transport" [CG&S]
- "Transport – the road infrastructure to reach beneficiaries is poor" [SED]
- "Transport and accessibility" [SED]
- "Lack of transport" [SED]
- "Problems in transport – distribution of solar lamps" [SED]

Lack of accommodation:

(6 comments)

- "No hostels for trainers for vocational training" [CG&S]
- "Limited accommodation" [H]
- "Accommodation" [E]

Experience of this:

- "Girls at CBSS have a grass dilapidated hostel. They need a suitable hostel" [E]

Proposed solution:

- "Long-term mapping of health centres/clinics and link it with other stakeholders at national level" [H]
- "Constructing a hostel" [E]

Poor quality teaching:

(6 comments)

- “Lack of qualified teachers in rural schools” [E]
- *Lack of shared commitment among stakeholders in SFP e.g. some communities and schools not committed in their roles and responsibilities” [E]*

Experience of this:

- “Teachers not focused on classes and children left unattended in classrooms. Reasons: pay, commitment, training, resources” [E]
- “There are some primary schools where there is only one teacher” [E]

Proposed solutions:

- “Invest in better teachers: pay, Ts and Cs, housing, continuous professional development, etc” [E]
- “Set all holidays in advance – even local ones and communicate this. Set training days when school is closed” [E]



Health Strand discussions

Lack of capacity:

(6 comments)

- “Lack of capacity building” [SED]

Proposed Solutions:

- “Capacity building for the specific projects. E.g. cooperatives” [SED]
- “Identify short courses to address the gaps and regular M&E” [SED]
- “Become partners with organisations like TEVETA” [SED]
- “Need training – either in-house or outsourced – to build capacity” [SED]
- “Capacity building of key implementing partners and community members” [E]

Gender inequality:

(6 comments)

- “Female participation. Challenging the norms on women involvement in music and the arts. Opposition from community” [CG&S]
- “Parents negative attitudes to girls” [E]
- “Not many women taking leadership roles in cooperatives affecting governance of cooperatives” [SED]
- “Limited participation of women during meetings” [SED]

Experience of this:

- “Girls at CBSS have a grass dilapidated hostel. They need a suitable hostel” [E]

Proposed solution:

- “Construct a hostel. Parents to be empowered on girls education” [E]

Poor infrastructure:*(5 comments)*

- “Poor infrastructure in facilities discouraging people from up-taking maternal health services” [CG&S]
- “No electricity” [CG&S]
- “No running water” [CG&S]
- “Transport – the road infrastructure to reach beneficiaries is poor” [SED]
- “Inaccessible infrastructure” [E]

Staff Skills Gaps:*(4 comments)*

- “Knowledge gap for some key medical staff i.e. HSAs who come into contact with children about disabilities” [H]

Proposed solutions:

- “Got to consider adding a topic on Disability for the HSAs course” [H]
- “College level curriculum review on health workers to have a strong element/component on disability from the social angle – inclusiveness” [H]
- “Budget allocation on disability training at DHO level” [H]

Geography:*(4 comments)*

- “Poor referral system to cover gaps of long distance to facilities (e.g. no/limited ambulances)” [CG&S]
- “Infrastructure i.e boarding facilities for children who walk long distances to class” [E]
- “Accessibility of some potential project sites” [SED]
- “Poor infrastructure – i.e. road infrastructure makes it difficult to reach target groups” [SED]

Poor educational infrastructure:*(4 comments)*

- “Infrastructure i.e boarding facilities for children who walk long distances to class” [E]
- “Inaccessible infrastructure” [E]

Experience of this:

- “Inadequate number of classrooms for number of classes or children. Learning outside so no classes when it rains” [E]
- “Most schools in Malawi have been gutted or vandalised by children of the community” [E]

Issues with funders:*(4 comments)*

- “Delay in grant approval – affecting gantt charts – only working with farmers for 2 growing seasons instead of 2” [SED]
- “Slow response from the Government side and lack of commitment” [CG&S]
- “Red tape by Scottish Government on budgets” [SED]
- “Disbursement of funds on quarterly basis stalls projects implementation as you are waiting for the coming quarters’ funds” [SED]

Poor early childhood development:*(3 comments)*

- “Lack of strategic fit – early childhood development is in Ministry of Gender, not Ministry of Education” [E]

Experience:

- “Most children go to primary school poorly prepared” [E]

Proposed solutions:

- Lobby GoM for Early Child Development to be within Ministry of Education” [E]

Affordability of services:*(3 comments)*

- “Affordability. A lot of communities are failing to buy the entry price of solar lamps from Solar Aid – this is about MK5,000” [SED]

Proposed solutions:

- “Timing the sale of the solar lamps e.g. during harvest, when funds are available” [SED]
- “Pay as you go – so the community can be saving money for the solar lamps” [SED]

Soil quality:*(3 comments)*

- “Poor soils. Reliant on fertilizers.” [CG&S]

Solution:

- “Agro-ecology - holistic land management” [CG&S]
- “Environment. Agro-ecology. Forests” [SED]

Lack of inclusivity:*(3 comments)*

- “Inclusive education preached but not implemented” [E]
- “Inaccessible infrastructure” [E]

Proposed solution:

- “Development of national plan on inclusive education” [E]

Drugs shortages:*(3 comments)*

- “Lack of key drugs for some conditions nationwide from CMS trust” [H]
- “Government (Ministry of Health) through DHO not honouring the provisions of the MOU – i.e. provision of drugs” [H]

Proposed solutions:

- “Increase funding for drugs to be procured from private source or do external procurement. Partnership in procurement” [H]

Sustainability:*(2 comments)*

- “No sustainability to the project” [CG&S]

Proposed solution:

- “Implementation period for projects – longer time is needed for sustainability” [E]

Illiteracy:*(2 comments)*

- “High levels of illiteracy” [SED]

Proposed solution:

- “Deliver training which is followed by mentoring and coaching” [SED]

Communication:*(2 comments)*

- “International communication due to poor internet resources” [SED]

Proposed solution:

- “Investing in internet improvement to facilitate regular communication through email or Skype” [SED]

Research:*(2 comments)*

- “Lack of engagement with relevant policy makers to feed in research findings” [SED]

- “Determining the scope and coverage of the research” [SED]

Natural environment:

(2 comments)

- “Unforeseeable disasters” [SED]
- Late or erratic rains” [SED]

Micro-finance:

(2 comments)

- “Demand for bigger loans making clients not satisfied with the products” [SED]
- “Little or no repayment culture” [SED]

Lack of core/admin funds:

(1 comment)

- “No provision for office rentals” [CG&S]

Security:

(1 comment)

- “Crime and security.” [CG&S]

PLENARY DISCUSSION:

What can we do in the next 12 months to help address some of these challenges?

At the end of the Symposium delegates took part in discussions in plenary looking at what we could do as a network to respond to these challenges in the coming year. The following points were made:

HEALTH:

- Improve communication among project partners and stakeholders within locality of projects to avoid duplication
- Improve community participation – Communities to be encouraged to identify their own solutions
- Increase staffing levels of health-workers
- Increased advocacy role of MaSP - small projects can be overlooked, need a profile at national level.
- Symposium: Next year have day of presentations – share successes – invite other donors/stakeholders. Have a session on the positives and the negatives

EDUCATION:

- Showing impact in short grant timescales
- Increased support from DEMs office at district level – strong statement from Min of Education to DEMS
- Need to have national strategy on implementing inclusive education in Malawi (specialised teachers, resources)
- Coordinate resources for projects
- Plan for joint funding applications
- Reconsider conditions of funding
- Assist with the implementation of policies

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

[Challenges: Economic environment – instable currency, inflation,]

- Open FCDA accounts so funds don't lose value if MK devalues

[Challenge: Coordination of effort]

- Use technology – Use the website for MaSP - have webpage where strands can discuss issues

Floods: Most projects affected:

- Can MaSP do something to assist the flood victims

- Could MaSP build capacity of projects, esp in policy engagement and influence
- Lack of experience and flexibility by Scottish Government on some of the key issues, esp on the utilisation of funds. Lack of knowledge of geographies and implementation realities – hard to reach areas. Can take too long to come back with a response to a request. Need to be allowed to purchase a 4WD vehicle if working in a rural area – implications on personal security if have small 2wd. Vehicles seen as a luxury: not the case.
- Design projects in the economic sector that have a big impact and longer term– e.g. big factory that will employ lots of people, rather than lots of small projects.

CIVIC SOCIETY AND GOVERNANCE:

- Coordination body needed – learn from resource mapping in health sector – make use of the map to show who is going to work where
- Allowances: Full board allowance means not DSA – concerns that partners are not able to participate because money not provided. Have projects that can empower people. Look at how to motivate people to take part.
- Network meetings valuable – projects can tap experience from each other - more peer learning
- At District offices often lack of capacity and resources on behalf of government departments – limits ability to respond – SOLUTION – continue to empower the citizens to demand full accountability and improved service delivery. Also implementation of public service reforms needed in the long run.
 - Do more to connect with other donors
 - How do we keep momentum and buy-in between the symposiums?
 - Cluster meetings – a lot of small CBOs and CSOs – lack of a link between those who are smaller and want to have a link with Scotland and those, typically larger organisations, that have links/funding. How do we bridge these two? Need to attend these forums.
- Encourage projects funded by the SG to participate in on-going discussions/meetings. Put question in reporting forms



Mphatso speaking about the Partnership Principles

30 Proposed MaSP/SMP Support in Response to Challenges Identified

Challenge highlighted by delegates	30 Proposed actions/support from MaSP and SMP
Lack of coordination, shared learning, networking and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MaSP to host Strand meetings and Regional forums - MaSP and SMP to ask SG to include question in reporting forms asking about collaboration and sharing with other organisations - MaSP and SMP to ask SG to be sympathetic to requests to re-allocate underspent budget lines to supporting attendance at networking and coordination forums - MaSP and SMP to ask SG to amend funding application form and guidance to encourage budget provision to support attendance at networking and coordination forums - Symposium attendees to be encouraged to join MaSP
“No guiding principles or structures”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP and MaSP to promote “Partnership Principles”
Challenges with international partnership	
Lack of consistent policies between donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MaSP and SMP to liaise with various donors in Malawi and encourage greater policy sharing
Lack of effective leadership – leaders too often absent or not engaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free MaSP training every year in all three regions, looking at project management and providing information on Scotland-Malawi links - SMP and MaSP to encourage SG to ensure grant reporting asks specific questions about the direct involvement of the leadership team in the project
“Slow response from the Government side”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MaSP and SMP to highlight this challenge with respective governments
“Staff shortages at health centres”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MaSP and SMP to lobby for greater support for healthcare volunteers from Scotland to volunteer in Malawi
Funding period too short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP to host Sustainability Conference looking at the challenges and opportunities of development work in three-year timescales
Allowances Syndrome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek further Malawian input to the existing Scotland-Malawi Practical Advice and Support on Per Diems document, and promote further
Donor conditions and priorities writing the agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP and MaSP to ask SG and GoM for more details explaining conditions and priorities - SMP and MaSP to facilitated an anonymous FAQ with the SG
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP and MaSP to ask SG for short anonymised ‘common challenges and key learning’ collated from end of year project reports. This would be publically available and would encourage greater shared learning.
Lack of funding, especially for smaller NGOs and SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP and MaSP to lobby the SG for the continuation of the small grants programme beyond the current pilot period - SMP and MaSP to lobby the SG for the Malawi Development Programme to remain open to a wide range of organisations. The great strength of the programme is the range of different organisations, each bringing different expertise, working together for the implementation of projects - SMP and MaSP to lobby the Scottish Government through the Inter-

	<p>national Development Fund Review to continue to invest in Malawi as the mainstay of its development work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MaSP and SMP to work with a range of donors to ensure members are aware of, and well placed to apply to, a range of funding opportunities - SMP and MaSP to explore crowdfunded microfinance to increase investment in Malawian SMEs
Too little Malawian ownership in the design and delivery of projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP and MaSP to promote "Partnership Principles" - Encourage MOUs between partners which establish two-way systems for transparency - SMP and MaSP to ask SG to include more emphasis/questions on Malawi ownership as part of the application and selection of projects
Challenges communicating with partners in Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MaSP to provide free access to computers and internet in Mzuzu, Blantyre and Lilongwe, to help members communicate with their partners in Scotland
Economic challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP and MaSP to ensure the members and the SG are always well briefed on the macro-economic challenges/realities in Malawi (including inflation rates and exchange rates), and to lobby the SG to be understanding of the flexibility required to mitigate these challenges. - MaSP and SMP to encourage members to have separate FCDA accounts to mitigate currency fluctuations
Lack of vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP to raise awareness of this issue with the Scottish Government
Geography challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP and MaSP to compile a paper for the SG looking at the implications of the existing vehicle policy and explaining alternatives
Gender Inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that all outputs and outcomes are gender disaggregated in reporting
Poor Soil Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMP to look to into feeding into UN International Year of Soil

APPENDIX: DELEGATE FEEDBACK

70+ delegates attended the Symposium on the 30th January 2015, just over half of whom (36) completed a feedback form at the end.

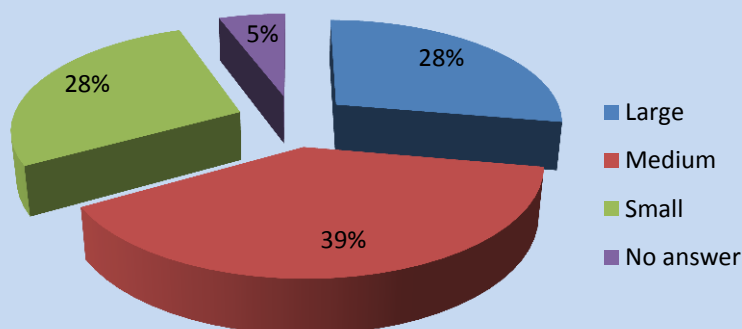
This document presents the data collected from these feedback forms, complete and unedited.

PART A: GENERAL

1. When asked to describe their **organisation** delegates answered:

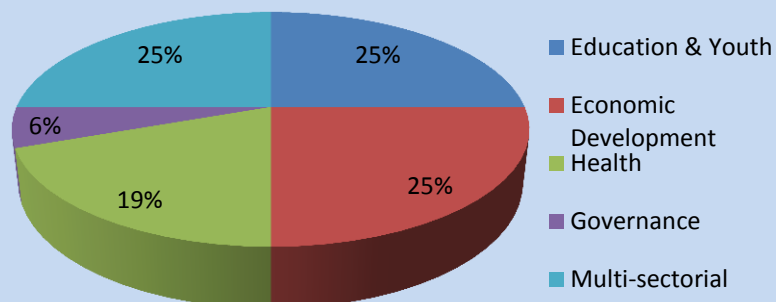
Type

- 28% said they were from a LARGE organisation;
- 39% said they were from a MEDIUM-sized organisation.
- 28% said they were from a SMALL organisation;
- 5% didn't answer



Activity / Sector

- 25% said they were engaged in EDUCATION/YOUTH ENGAGEMENT;
- 25% said they were engaged in SUSTAINABLE ECON. DEVELOPMENT;
- 19% said they were engaged in HEALTH;
- 6% said they were engaged in GOVERNANCE/RIGHTS-BASED;
- 25% said they were engaged in MULTI-SECTORIAL activities, i.e across two or more of the above sectors;



2. When asked **why they chose to attend** the symposium:

- 31% said to SHARE EXPERIENCES & LEARN
- 33% said to NETWORKING (WITH OTHERS IN THEIR STRAND, OTHER LIKEMINDED ORGANISATIONS)
- 36% said both of the above

3. When asked whether their **expectations** had been met:

- 11% said ENTIRELY;
- 81% said MOSTLY;
- 8% said PARTIALLY;

4. *When asked if you made useful **new contacts** at the meeting, and if so how many?:*

- 100% said YES;
- The number ranged from between 1 and 10 contacts and the average number of useful links made was between 5 and 6. This means that an estimated **350 new connections were made during the day**

5. *When asked whether the conference has **strengthened their links**:*

- 61% said YES, a lot
- 22% said YES, a little bit
- 14% said Not much
- 3% said Not at all

6. *When asked whether they previously knew or had worked with their **government Strand Lead**:*

- 42% said YES a lot
- 11% said YES a little bit
- 17% said NO not much
- 25% said NO , Not at all
- 6% didn't answer

PART B: SPECIFIC TO SYMPOSIUM

Respondents were asked to what extent they felt the event had achieved each of its to assess the extent to which the symposium met its five objectives: "entirely", "mostly", "partially" or "not at all".

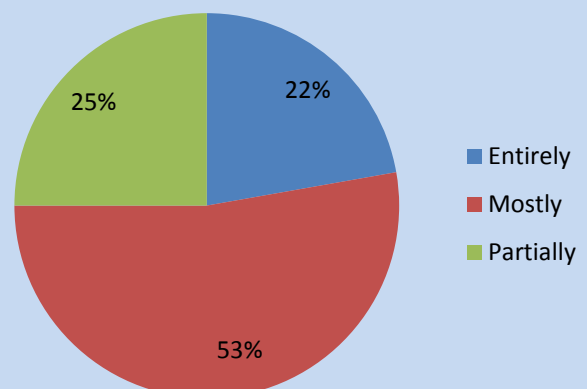
OBJECTIVE ONE: Increase mutual awareness: including updates from the Government of Malawi, the Scottish Government, MaSP and the SMP, and time for projects to learn about one and others' work.

22% "Entirely"

53% "Mostly"

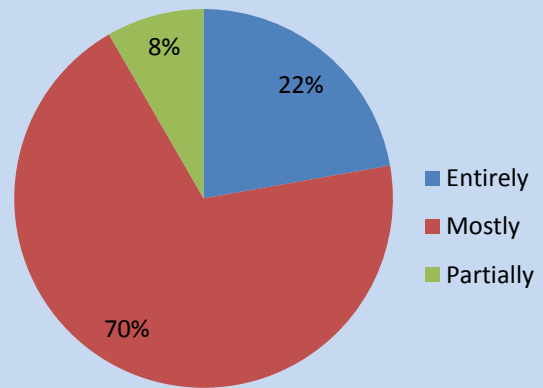
25% "Partially"

0% "Not at all"



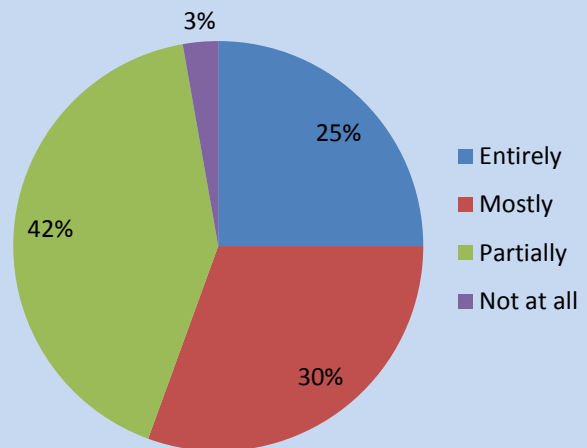
OBJECTIVE TWO: Support networking and learning: with good time for informal networking and the sharing of learning between projects.

22% "Entirely"
 70% "Mostly"
 8% "Partially"
 0% "Not at all"



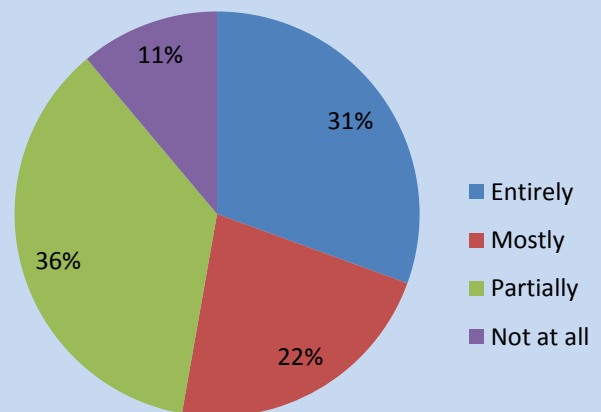
OBJECTIVE THREE: Build connections with the Government of Malawi: with time to get to know the four Strand Leaders and learn about the latest governmental policies and priorities.

25% "Entirely"
 30% "Mostly"
 42% "Partially"
 3% "Not at all"

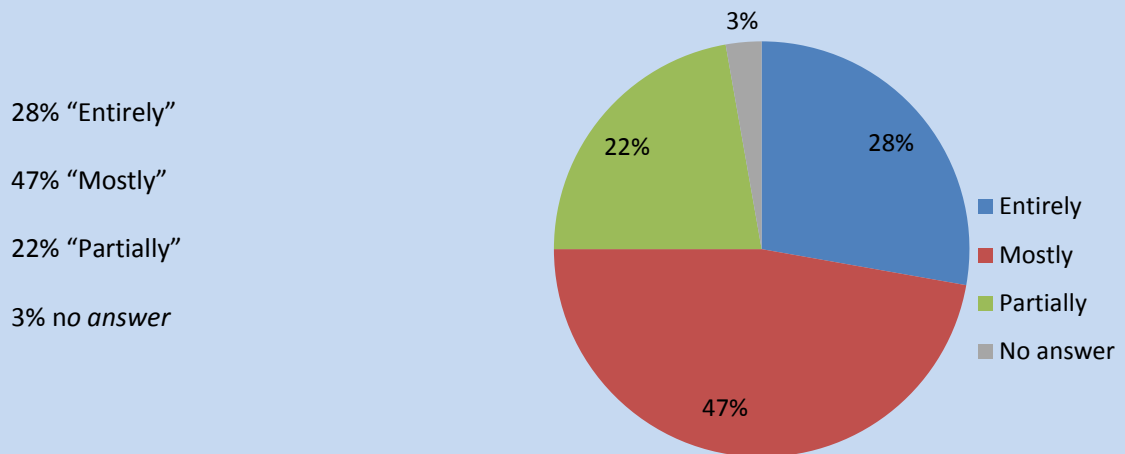


OBJECTIVE FOUR: Share experience from the recent floods: Sharing experience, learning and challenges, and exploring how best we respond to the new challenges facing projects

31% "Entirely"
 22% "Mostly"
 36% "Partially"
 11% "Not at all"



OBJECTIVE FIVE: Support projects: with time for discussions around common challenges, shared learning and solutions which can be taken forwards.



PART C: IMPACT & RECOMMENDATIONS

Responding to the **impact** the conference had on the attendees their links with Scotland the answers were as follows:

- *“Promote/strengthen our partnership.”*
- *“It has allowed us to learn more of what our friends in Scotland are doing and the efforts happening to strengthen the friendship.”*
- *“An idea of how much the Scottish Govt is doing for Malawi - We are becoming a bigger family.”*
- *“So far there has been no impact.”*
- *“I was introduced to a new strand which I felt very linked with our projects and this will really help in the implementation of our project.”*
- *“Am aware of the depth link that exists between Malawi and Scotland.”*
- *“It’s doing a good job by helping Malawi, The four strands are mostly addressing the main issues, I am given an opportunity to help Malawi through Scotland.”*
- *“Improvement in some project policies specifically projects funded by Scottish Govt.”*
- *“Has created a very positive network and led me to focus on MGDs.”*
- *“Partners have similar challenges when delivering their projects.”*
- *“Learnt guidelines through coordination with strand leads at all project process levels.”*

- *“The impact has been positive and it has helped me to strengthen my networks and also learn new things.”*
- *“Networking and (gain) more knowledge.”*
- *“I have understood more on the dedication commitments that Scottish Government has on Malawi by working at the vast number of projects implemented across Malawi.”*
- *“It has helped me to know how the Scottish Government link with its projects together with the Malawi Government and procedures to be taken in projects.”*
- *“I have learnt about the entire funding process and the role of the strand lead.”*
- *“I have made few contacts that I will follow up on regarding support for our project. Some ideas have been sparked.”*
- *“Useful to know the work that SMP does in Scotland advocating Malawi business.”*
- *“Detailed information on real time issues that are being met in the various sectors.”*
- *“A very strong Impact.”*
- *“The link with Scotland has been strengthened because of my belongingness to the MaSP which has been so fruitful.”*
- *“Established relationship with other project and work together in a number of activities”*
- *“It has strengthened the link.”*
- *“None. Already work closely with Scotland.”*
- *“My links have widened up. Have known more people and partner which is of plus for networking and collaboration.”*
- *“It has broadened my scope in terms of getting to know who is doing what, where, with who. Any challenges met and how were they mitigated and how they wil/suggest it done in future.”*
- *“Able to express my gratitude through media on the benefits yield so far through the partners i.e principal support of S.G. Networking with other organisation working on similar areas of work programs.”*
- *“To make contacts to other partners to know more of what they are doing related to CA work.”*
- *“It has impacted very much, I believe that our organisation though local NGO newly registered will be funded by Scotland through MaSP.”*

In terms of feedback to MaSP on **how future events can be improved** the following responses were received: (note, grouped into two broad categories of 'organisation' and 'content')

Organisation...

- *"Finishing time consideration as some leave earlier rushing for public transport."*
- *"Invite small org as well and have a directory for members."*
- *"Increase invitations so that more people attend especially new member."*
- *"Some members walked out of the meeting before the meeting end. Conducting it somewhere away from town could help to have them till end of meeting."*
- *"Better to have a full day with accommodation provided as some participants are forced to leave before end."*
- *"Organise it in time and you should take it to Blantyre if possible. Files to be given to each delegate to keep records safely."*
- *"Improve on allowances so that people should be motivated and that they should not leave before the end as it has been with this one."*
- *"Continue providing refreshments, lunch but add accommodation at the venue of the meeting."*
- *"I think many people did not finish the event with us in the afternoon, It is important to improve attendance especially after lunch."*
- *"Timing needs to be improved. All day on a Friday is not good for those travelling. Suggest over 2 days . Afternoon on day one and morning on day two. This would mean people travelling to Lilongwe can do so on morning day and travel home in the afternoon of day two. Avoid Fridays-Thursday better."*
- *"Improve time allocation, it will be good to finish around 3:30pm taking into consideration that not all have vehicles, some use local transport, some come from far."*

Content...

- *"Put some time for success stories to motivate and help people learn other things."*
- *"Govt strand leader left at challenges/solution session which would have been very useful so need to be involved in this part much more."*
- *"Asking organisations/projects to prepare presentations and select a few that can be presented out the symposium."*

- *“Ask implementers to presentations on the success, more days for the workshop with breakaway sessions and participants not from MaSP forum.”*
- *“Maybe ask while people are working? What do they need that would improve the impact of their project? Match them with organisations in there are and with organisations that would bring their impact. Get them to write a small proposal by end of the day. Potentially have a small pot of funding that would fund one or two of these proposals. This could lead to interesting and creative projects that may not have formed. Encourage entrepreneurship.”*
- *“More preparations by specific projects clear understanding of impact and vision of Scottish Government in Malawi.”*
- *“More active participation not just looking at the negative and challenges.”*
- *“Invite other cooperating partners to appreciate being done.”*
- *“Strand leaders must be present not delegated, Knowledge gap from the representative on network (MaSP).”*
- *“You can improve future events because you will see what Malawians are suffering.”*
- *“Have presentations from individual partners on what they are doing on the ground. One day is tight. Perhaps we need to consider two days.”*
- *“As most people do go through to the end of the meeting, we need to utilise the strand meetings where the strand leaders can present summarised issues from their strand done over the past year.”*
- *“Have selected presentations from partners to share experiences.”*
- *“Exchange visit programs with partners (SMP) should be considered. However the meeting was just good.”*