Malawi Scotland Partnership

Newsletter

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Celebrating Collaboration, Transforming Lives and Building Stronger Communities

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Partnerships That Create Lasting Change

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Partnerships in Action, the official newsletter of the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP).

Every partnership begins with a conversation. Over time, those conversations grow into collaborations, friendships, and shared commitments to addressing some of society's greatest challenges. For more than two decades, the Malawi Scotland Partnership has served as a bridge connecting people, institutions, communities and organisations in Malawi and Scotland, fostering relationships that continue to transform lives.

This edition celebrates the remarkable achievements made possible through collaboration. From strengthening higher education partnerships and advancing research, to supporting scholarship recipients who are now shaping the future of education in Malawi, each story reflects the power of investing in people.

You will also read about an important collaboration between Police Scotland and the Malawi Police Service, where listening directly to survivors of Gender-Based Violence is helping shape a more responsive and accountable policing system. These stories remind us that meaningful partnerships extend beyond institutions—they improve lives, strengthen communities and contribute to national development.

Behind every initiative featured in these pages are individuals whose dedication continues to inspire positive change. University leaders working together across continents, researchers generating evidence to address local challenges, scholars returning to serve their communities, and police officers committed to improving services all demonstrate that sustainable development is achieved through cooperation.

As we look to the future, the Malawi Scotland Partnership remains committed to expanding opportunities for collaboration in education, health, governance, research and community development. We believe that lasting progress comes from learning together, sharing knowledge and investing in people.

We thank our members, partners, universities, government institutions, donors and volunteers whose continued support makes this work possible. Together, we are building stronger institutions, empowering communities and creating opportunities that will benefit future generations.

We hope you enjoy this edition and are inspired by the stories of partnership, resilience and impact that follow.

Linda Dembo

MASP CEO

WELCOME TO THE MALAWI SCOTLAND PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

The Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) continues to strengthen the long-standing relationship between Malawi and Scotland by connecting people, organisations, and ideas that create meaningful change. Through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strategic partnerships, we are working together to improve lives and contribute to sustainable development.

This edition of our newsletter highlights inspiring stories, innovative projects, strategic engagements, and the collective impact of our members across sectors including education, health, governance, culture, youth development, and community empowerment.

As you explore these pages, you will discover how partnerships continue to break barriers, foster innovation, and create opportunities that benefit communities in both nations. We invite you to celebrate these achievements with us and to remain part of this growing movement dedicated to mutual respect, inclusivity, and shared progress.

Together, we are building stronger connections and creating lasting impact.

FEATURE STORY

Strengthening Higher Education Through Partnership

Universities unite to expand collaboration between Malawi and Scotland.

Higher education plays a critical role in driving innovation, producing skilled professionals and generating the research needed to address national and global challenges. Recognising the importance of strong academic partnerships, the Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) continues to create opportunities that connect institutions, academics and researchers across Malawi and Scotland.

In a significant step towards strengthening these relationships, MaSP convened an advocacy and partnership-building meeting with higher learning institutions from Malawi's Central Region. Hosted at the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS) Lilongwe Campus, the meeting brought together representatives from public universities, private institutions, faith-based colleges and development partners with a shared vision of expanding international collaboration.

The gathering provided a platform for universities to learn more about the opportunities available through the Malawi Scotland Partnership while sharing experiences of existing collaborations that are already delivering tangible benefits to institutions, students and researchers.

Building Partnerships That Deliver Impact

International academic partnerships have become increasingly important in today's interconnected world. Universities are no longer isolated centres of learning but active contributors to solving complex global challenges through research, innovation and knowledge exchange.

For Malawi, partnerships with Scottish universities have created opportunities for staff development, curriculum improvement, collaborative research, student exchanges and institutional capacity building. These collaborations enable universities to share expertise, access new resources and strengthen their ability to contribute to national development.

Speaking during the meeting, representatives from MaSP emphasised that partnerships should move beyond formal agreements to become practical collaborations that produce measurable impact for institutions and communities alike.
The advocacy meeting therefore served not only as an introduction to MaSP's work but also as an invitation for institutions to actively participate in building meaningful international relationships.

Learning from Existing Success Stories

One of the highlights of the meeting was the opportunity for universities already engaged in partnerships to share their experiences with fellow institutions.
The Kamuzu University of Health Sciences presented several successful collaborations established with Scottish partners, demonstrating how sustained partnerships can strengthen academic programmes and improve professional training.
Among the achievements highlighted was the development of Malawi's dental curriculum through collaboration with Scottish institutions, helping expand specialised training opportunities for future health professionals. Participants also learned about the Blantyre-to-Blantyre partnership, an initiative that has strengthened laboratory services through knowledge exchange, professional mentoring and technical cooperation.

These examples illustrated how partnerships extend beyond institutional agreements to produce practical improvements that directly benefit students, lecturers and the wider health sector.

Representatives from participating institutions expressed interest in exploring similar opportunities that could strengthen teaching, research and innovation within their own universities.

Unlocking the Power of Research

A recurring theme throughout the discussions was the importance of ensuring that research reaches those who can use it.

While universities across Malawi continue to produce valuable research, much of this knowledge remains confined to academic journals and conference presentations, limiting its potential to influence policy and development practice.
MaSP Chief Executive Officer Linda Dembo encouraged institutions to strengthen research dissemination and collaborate more closely in translating evidence into practical solutions for communities.

Research, she noted, should not only contribute to academic knowledge but also address the real challenges facing Malawi, from healthcare and education to agriculture, climate change and economic development.

By creating stronger networks between researchers in Malawi and Scotland, universities can generate innovative solutions while increasing the visibility and impact of their work internationally.

> “RESEARCH SHOULD NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTE TO ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE BUT ALSO ADDRESS THE REAL CHALLENGES FACING MALAWI

A Shared Vision for the Future

Throughout the meeting, participants recognised that sustainable partnerships are built on trust, mutual respect and shared goals.

Institutions committed themselves to exploring new areas of collaboration, strengthening existing relationships and identifying opportunities that benefit both Malawi and Scotland.

As the meeting concluded, there was a clear sense of optimism about the future of higher education partnerships. The conversations held in Lilongwe represented more than an exchange of ideas—they reflected a shared commitment to strengthening institutions, expanding opportunities for students and researchers, and contributing to Malawi's long-term development through international cooperation.

By bringing universities together around a common purpose, the Malawi Scotland Partnership continues to demonstrate that collaboration remains one of the most powerful tools for creating lasting educational and societal impact.







SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Determination Beyond Barriers:

The Inspiring Journey of Funghie Mtsinze

A SCHOLARSHIP OPENED THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY DETERMINATION TRANSFORMED IT INTO A LIFETIME OF IMPACT.

For many people, education is a journey filled with opportunities. For Funghie Mtsinze, it became a journey of resilience, courage and unwavering determination.
Living with visual impairment presented challenges that extended far beyond the classroom. Accessing learning materials, navigating unfamiliar environments and overcoming societal perceptions required perseverance that many students never have to consider. Yet these obstacles never diminished his ambition to pursue higher education or his belief that disability should never define a person's potential.

Instead, they strengthened his resolve.
Growing up, Funghie understood that education would become his greatest tool for creating opportunities—not only for himself but also for others facing similar challenges. He developed a passion for learning from an early age, recognising that knowledge had the power to change lives, challenge stereotypes and open doors that once seemed impossible to reach.
That belief eventually led him to a scholarship opportunity supported through the Malawi Scotland Partnership, an experience that would transform both his academic journey and his future aspirations.

More Than Financial Support

Scholarships are often viewed simply as financial assistance, but for Funghie they represented something much greater. They provided access to quality education, opportunities to connect with academic mentors and peers, and the confidence that his aspirations were worth investing in.
The support removed many of the financial barriers that often prevent talented students from completing their studies.

More importantly, it allowed him to focus his energy on learning, personal growth and preparing for a future where he could make meaningful contributions to society.

The scholarship also demonstrated the importance of partnerships in expanding educational opportunities. By investing in students with potential, organisations such as the Malawi Scotland Partnership help create future educators, researchers, innovators and community leaders whose work benefits countless others.

Funghie's experience is a powerful example of how one opportunity can have far-reaching effects that extend well beyond graduation.



Turning Challenges into Strengths

Every educational journey has its obstacles, but Funghie's required exceptional resilience.

Navigating university life with visual impairment demanded creativity, determination and adaptability. Accessing learning resources often required additional support, while completing assignments and participating fully in academic activities meant overcoming barriers that many of his classmates never encountered.

Rather than allowing these difficulties to discourage him, he embraced them as opportunities to demonstrate what is possible when determination meets support. His success challenged assumptions about disability and highlighted the importance of creating inclusive learning environments where every student has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Throughout his studies, he became an inspiration not only to fellow students with disabilities but also to lecturers and university administrators who witnessed first-hand the importance of accessible education.

Becoming an Advocate for Inclusion

Education transformed Funghie's life, but it also deepened his commitment to improving opportunities for others.

He believes that disability should never determine a person's future. Instead, institutions should focus on removing barriers that prevent talented individuals from reaching their potential.

This conviction has inspired his continued advocacy for inclusive education, equal access to learning resources and greater awareness of the challenges faced by students living with disabilities.

His story demonstrates that inclusion benefits everyone.
Universities become stronger when they embrace diversity, create supportive learning environments and recognise the different experiences students bring into the classroom.

By sharing his journey, Funghie encourages institutions to view accessibility not as an additional responsibility but as an essential component of educational excellence.

A Story of Hope

Today, Funghie's achievements stand as a testament to the transformative power of education, partnership and perseverance.

His journey reminds us that investing in people is one of the most effective ways to create lasting change.
The scholarship that supported his education has become much more than an academic achievement—it has become a story of resilience, possibility and hope.

As more young people pursue higher education, his experience continues to inspire others to believe that circumstances need not define ambition, and that with determination and opportunity, remarkable things are possible.



"Education becomes truly transformative when every learner, regardless of ability, is given the opportunity to thrive."

FUNGHIE MTSINZE

Scholarship Spotlight

Empowering Communities Through Education:

The Journey of Modesta Simwaka
A scholarship became the foundation for a career dedicated to teaching, research and community transformation.

Behind every successful educator is a story of determination, opportunity and an unwavering commitment to making a difference.

For Modesta Simwaka, education has never been simply about personal achievement. Throughout her career, it has been a means of empowering others, strengthening communities and contributing to Malawi's development through teaching, research and mentorship.
Her journey illustrates the lasting impact that educational investment can have—not only on an individual but on the countless lives that individual goes on to influence.
Receiving a scholarship through the Malawi Scotland Partnership marked a turning point in her professional journey. It provided an opportunity to pursue further studies, expand her expertise and develop the skills needed to contribute more effectively to higher education in Malawi.
Like many scholarship recipients, she recognised that the opportunity carried both privilege and responsibility.

She was determined to use the knowledge she gained to improve the lives of others.

Education as a Catalyst for Change
Throughout her academic career, Modesta has remained passionate about improving educational outcomes for learners across Malawi.
She believes that education has the power to break cycles of poverty, promote equality and create opportunities that extend far beyond the classroom.
This philosophy has guided her work as an educator and researcher, where she has consistently sought to bridge the gap between academic theory and practical solutions that respond to community needs.

Her research interests reflect a deep commitment to addressing challenges affecting education, particularly those relating to equity, inclusion and opportunities for girls and young women.
She understands that strengthening education requires more than improving schools—it requires empowering teachers, supporting learners and creating policies that leave no one behind.



From Scholarship Recipient to Mentor
The knowledge and experience gained through her scholarship have enabled Modesta to mentor the next generation of students and young professionals.
She has become a role model for aspiring educators, demonstrating how dedication, continuous learning and professional integrity can create meaningful change.
Whether teaching in the classroom, supervising research or engaging with community initiatives, she encourages students to think critically, pursue excellence and use their education in service of society.

Her influence extends beyond academic institutions.
Through outreach activities and professional engagement, she continues to advocate for educational opportunities that are inclusive, equitable and responsive to Malawi's development priorities.

Research with Purpose
Modesta's work highlights the importance of research as a tool for improving policy and practice.
She believes that universities have a responsibility to generate knowledge that addresses real-world challenges while contributing to national development.
By collaborating with colleagues, communities and international partners, she continues to promote research that informs decision-making and supports evidence-based solutions.
Her story reflects the broader vision of the Malawi Scotland Partnership: building strong institutions by investing in talented individuals who return to strengthen their communities.

Creating a Lasting Legacy
Today, Modesta Simwaka continues to inspire students, fellow academics and community members through her dedication to education and service.
Her achievements remind us that scholarships are not simply investments in individual careers—they are investments in future generations.
Every student she teaches, every young researcher she mentors and every community initiative she supports represents another chapter in the lasting impact created through educational partnership.
Her journey demonstrates that when opportunity is matched with commitment, education becomes one of the most powerful tools for national transformation.

"When one educator is empowered, hundreds of learners benefit. When those learners succeed, entire communities prosper."

LEADERSHIP PROFILE

From Commonwealth Scholar to Transformational Academic Leader A journey of scholarship, leadership, service and an unwavering commitment to shaping the future of higher education in Malawi.



Education has the remarkable ability to transform lives, not only by expanding knowledge but also by opening doors to leadership, innovation and service. Few individuals exemplify this more clearly than Alistalico Chilanga, whose professional journey demonstrates how investing in education creates lasting benefits for institutions, communities and future generations.
From his early years as a teacher trainer to becoming one of Malawi's respected academic leaders, Alistalico has consistently demonstrated that true leadership is built on integrity, continuous learning and a commitment to serving others. His career reflects the broader mission of the Malawi Scotland Partnership—to invest in people whose knowledge and leadership will strengthen institutions and contribute meaningfully to national development.

Today, as Dean of the Faculty of Education at the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA), he continues to influence the lives of hundreds of students while helping shape the future direction of higher education in the country.

A Scholarship That Changed a Career

Every successful journey has a defining moment.

For Alistalico, that moment came in 2013 when he was awarded the prestigious **Commonwealth Scholarship** to pursue a Master's Degree in **African Social History** at the University of Malawi.

Receiving the scholarship represented much more than an academic achievement. It was an opportunity to broaden his understanding of African societies, strengthen his research capacity and prepare for greater leadership responsibilities within higher education.

African Social History is an interdisciplinary field that explores the political, economic, environmental and cultural forces that have shaped African societies over time. Through this programme, Alistalico developed analytical skills that enabled him to understand contemporary challenges through historical perspectives.

The experience transformed not only his academic knowledge but also his philosophy of leadership. He came to appreciate that history is not simply about studying the past—it is about understanding how societies evolve, learning from previous experiences and applying those lessons to build stronger communities and institutions.

That perspective continues to influence his work today.

History as a Tool for National Development

For many people, history is viewed as a record of past events.

For Alistalico, it is something much more powerful.

He believes that history helps build patriotism, strengthen civic responsibility and encourage citizens to become active participants in national development.

Understanding the past enables communities to appreciate their cultural heritage while making informed decisions about the future.

History also promotes social justice by helping societies examine previous successes and failures, understand inequality and recognise opportunities for positive change.

These principles have shaped both his teaching and leadership philosophy.

Rather than teaching students to memorise historical events, he encourages them to think critically, analyse evidence and understand how historical experiences continue to influence contemporary society.

In doing so, he prepares graduates who are capable of addressing today's challenges with informed perspectives and responsible leadership.

Rising Through Academic Leadership

Upon completing his postgraduate studies, Alistalico returned with renewed determination to contribute to higher education in Malawi.

His commitment to excellence quickly became evident.

Beginning as a teacher trainer and university lecturer, he steadily advanced through a series of leadership positions, each bringing greater responsibility and wider influence.

He was appointed **Head of the History Department**, where he led curriculum development, strengthened academic programmes and mentored younger lecturers entering the profession.

Recognising his leadership abilities, colleagues later elected him to serve as **Faculty Representative to the University Senate,** providing him with an important role in institutional governance and policy development.

These experiences prepared him for one of the most significant chapters of his career—his appointment as **Dean of the Faculty of Education.**

The role placed him at the centre of strategic planning, academic quality assurance, staff development and institutional growth.

It also presented an opportunity to shape the future of teacher education in Malawi.

Strengthening the Faculty of Education

Leadership is measured not by titles but by impact.

Under Alistalico's leadership, the Faculty of Education has continued to strengthen its academic reputation while expanding opportunities for students and staff.

Student enrolment has increased, academic programmes have continued to develop and the faculty has strengthened its contribution to research and professional training.

He has encouraged lecturers to pursue research that responds directly to national development priorities while promoting a culture of continuous professional development across the faculty.

Recognising that universities thrive through collaboration, he has also supported partnerships with national and international institutions, creating opportunities for knowledge exchange and institutional learning.

These initiatives have enhanced the visibility of the Faculty of Education while strengthening its contribution to Malawi's education sector.

Today, many regard the faculty as one of the university's strongest academic units—a reflection of the collective efforts of staff working under committed leadership.

Investing in Young People Beyond the Classroom

Although education has always been central to his career, Alistalico's commitment to young people extends well beyond lecture theatres and university offices.

He has long recognised that learning takes place in many different environments.

Sport, in particular, has become one of the platforms through which he supports youth development.

Through active involvement in sports administration and mentorship, he has encouraged young people to develop discipline, teamwork, resilience and leadership—qualities that are equally valuable in professional life.

Many students have benefited from opportunities to participate in organised sporting activities while receiving guidance that extends beyond academic achievement.

For Alistalico, education is about developing the whole person.

Academic excellence, physical wellbeing, moral character and community responsibility are all essential components of preparing young people for leadership.

Leadership Guided by Service

Colleagues and students often describe Alistalico as a leader who leads by example.

Throughout his career, he has remained committed to ethical leadership, transparency and service.

He actively supports initiatives that promote integrity, responsible citizenship and positive values among students.

His leadership philosophy is grounded in the belief that universities have a responsibility not only to produce graduates but also to develop responsible citizens capable of contributing to national progress.

This holistic approach continues to shape the culture within the Faculty of Education.

Students are encouraged to pursue academic excellence while embracing values such as honesty, accountability, compassion and community service.

Giving Back Through Education

Looking back on his journey, Alistalico views the Commonwealth Scholarship as an investment that carried an important responsibility.

The opportunity he received inspired a lifelong commitment to giving back.

Rather than seeking personal success alone, he chose to invest his knowledge and experience in strengthening institutions, mentoring future educators and supporting national development.

His story illustrates the powerful ripple effect created when education is combined with leadership and service.

One scholarship produced one graduate.

That graduate became an academic leader.

That leader has since influenced thousands of students, strengthened an entire faculty and contributed to the development of Malawi's higher education system.

It is a reminder that investing in one person's education can ultimately transform countless lives.

"True leadership is measured not by how many people follow you, but by how many people you empower to lead after you."

FEATURE STORY

Listening to Survivors

How the Malawi–Scotland Partnership is Strengthening Responses to Gender-Based Violence

Listening to Survivors, Strengthening Justice

Every survivor's story has the power to inspire change. Through the Malawi Survivors Insight Pack, Police Scotland, in partnership with local organisations, gathered the experiences of survivors of gender-based violence who interacted with the Malawi Police Service. Their voices paint a picture of both progress and opportunity.

Many survivors spoke positively about officers who responded quickly, treated them with respect, and followed through with professionalism and care. These experiences demonstrate the impact that timely action and empathy can have in helping survivors feel heard and protected.
At the same time, the findings reveal important challenges. Some survivors described delays, inconsistent investigations, poor communication, and a lack of confidence that their cases would lead to justice. Family pressure, fear of stigma, and concerns about corruption also emerged as barriers that discouraged some from pursuing their cases.

The report highlights a clear path forward: strengthen professionalism, improve communication and survivor support, and remove barriers that undermine trust. By learning from these lived experiences, stakeholders can continue building a justice system that is more responsive, transparent, and survivor-centred.

Ultimately, this insight is more than data—it is a call to listen, learn, and act so that every survivor who seeks help can do so with confidence and dignity.

Empowering Girls to Learn, Lead and Shape Their Futures





The Malawi Scotland Partnership (MaSP) joined stakeholders at the closing ceremony of the Girls' Education Summer Camp held on 27 August 2026 at Machinga Teachers Training College. The three-day camp brought together 110 girls from 11 secondary schools in Balaka and Machinga districts under the Girls' Initiative for Resilient Learning and Support in Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia (GIRLS-MARZ) project.

Implemented by Oxfam, with funding from the Scottish Government and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the initiative aims to address barriers to girls' education through scholarships, mentorship, counselling, career guidance and safe learning environments.

The camp provided girls with opportunities to strengthen their confidence and leadership skills, interact with role models, learn about gender-based violence and explore their future education and career aspirations. The participation of teenage mothers and girls facing other educational barriers highlighted the importance of inclusive support that enables every girl to pursue her dreams.

MaSP Chief Executive Officer, Ms Linda Dembo, attended the closing ceremony, which was presided over by the Deputy Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Francis Folley, MP. All participating girls received starter packs to support their education and personal development.

The event reaffirmed the importance of collaboration between the Government of Malawi, development partners, civil society and communities in promoting inclusive education. Through partnerships supported by Scotland, initiatives such as GIRLS-MARZ are helping girls build resilience, remain in school and become confident agents of change in their communities.

Looking Ahead

As the Malawi Scotland Partnership continues to grow, our commitment remains clear: to strengthen collaboration between Malawi and Scotland while creating opportunities that empower people and communities.

Every partnership formed, every project implemented, and every story shared reflects the power of collective action and our shared vision for a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable future. None of these achievements would be possible without the dedication of our members, partners, supporters, and communities who continue to invest their time, expertise, and passion.

We thank you for being part of this journey and invite you to continue engaging with MaSP as we expand our networks, deepen our impact, and create new opportunities for collaboration.

Connect Us

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Together, we connect.
Together, we learn.
Together, we thrive.

