

**Scottish Government International Development Programme
Mid-Year Report**

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1. General project information		
1.1	Project reference Number	SMP Core Funding 2020-23
1.2	Name of organisation	Scotland Malawi Partnership
1.3	Lead partner(s) organisation	(Malawi Scotland Partnership)
1.4	Project title	SMP Core Funding 2020-23
1.5	Reporting period	From: 01/04/2020 To: 30/09/2020
1.6	Reporting year	2020-21
1.7	Project start date	01/04/2020
1.8	Project end date	31/03/2023
1.9	Total project budget*	£828,547
1.10	Total funding from Scottish Government*	£727,609
1.11	Provide a brief description of the project's aims, highlighting which of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) your project is working towards? (200 words)	<p>Core funding of the Scotland Malawi Partnership helps coordinate, represent and support Scotland's many civic links with Malawi. Specifically, this funding aims to increase the knowledge of, participation in, and impact of Scotland's civic links with Malawi. It works to achieve this through the delivery of five agreed outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain mutual understanding, coordination, effectiveness and impact as a result of SMP-hosted activities 2. Maintain awareness and understanding amongst key stakeholders of governmental and civil society work with Malawi 3. Public awareness and engagement across Scotland of the bilateral relationship, the role of government and civil society, and the impact of this work 4. Continued visible and meaningful youth engagement and youth leadership in the bilateral relationship 5. A coordinated and confident sector with strong collaborations, clear mutual understanding, effective two-way assistance and common objectives, if any, identified

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	<p>The SMP supports Scotland-Malawi links across all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, it is therefore a cross-cutting partner of the Scottish Government.</p> <p>It is especially relevant to SDG17 and has been championed as precisely the sort of ‘multi-stakeholder partnership’ which the UN sees as an essential means of implementation for the Goals.</p>
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2. Project progress and results

Please use this section to give an update on the progress the project has made during this reporting period. This should include issues resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1

Provide an update on the progress your project has made during this reporting period. Use this space to update us on what has gone well and any challenges you have experienced, detailing how you have overcome these. (Max 350 words)

The SMP has responded well to the challenges and changes that Covid-19 has brought. We moved the staff team quickly to homeworking and developed a detailed Covid-19 Response Strategy, Risk Register and Implementation Plan.

We have been in constant dialogue with our members and partners, to understand the dynamic situation and what SMP support would be most valuable, within the agreed SG-funded outcomes. It was immediately clear that simply moving our existing plans to digital platforms would not be helpful as so much had changed for members. Members’ overriding concern and priority was Covid-19, so much of our focus in this period was delivering a package of Covid services for our members. Specifically, in this period we:

- Supported 20 Scotland-Malawi covid fundraising appeals, leveraging donations from across the UK, with many of these funds reporting they have exceeded targets.
- Created a Covid digital web-hub for the sharing of news, resources and information.
- Agreed Scotland-Malawi Covid-19 Response Principles of Best Practice for funders and NGOs, after consultations across Scotland and Malawi.
- Hosted 9 major Covid-19 coordination Zoom meetings, each lasting 2-hours, working with the Malawi Presidential Covid taskforce, and with a total attendance of over 680.
- Provided Covid coordination services taken up by 279 organisations and individuals working in this area.

94% of the organisations that have given feedback on the SMP’s covid coordination work have rated it as ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’, and 95% said the SMP’s support in this area has strengthened their link with Malawi

Other notable successes in this period included:

- a sector-leading joint MaSP and SMP Black Lives Matter statement;
- delivering nine Chichewa classes online,

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- supporting two Malawi CPG meetings,
- supporting the SG's international development review,
- hosting a faith-links forum,
- securing strong support from the new President of Malawi with an 8-minute speech sharing his vision for the bilateral relationship.

Challenges in this period have included:

- Supporting staff welfare and mental health through homeworking.
- Ensuring staff have an appropriate, safe and sustainable workplace.
- IT challenges in homeworking, including increased cyber security risks.

The reality is that another (likely) 4-6 months of homeworking will continue to bring challenge and disruption to all, including the SMP, and we ask for SG support, understanding and flexibility as we manage staff and budgets to best respond to these challenges.

2.2 Have you experienced any delays to planned activities? Provide full details including what action is being taken to bring activities back on track.(Max 350 words)

Member forums:

It obviously hasn't been possible to have members meet in person but our move to digital meetings has worked well with good attendance, strong buy-in and increased Malawian involvement. As per above, our usual programme of Forums was suspended and replaced with an overriding focus on Covid-19.

In the second half of the year we will be able to have more conventional Member Forums in other areas, albeit delivered on Zoom.

In this next period we will have a strong focus on:

- Themes around Black Lives Matter, with a strong focus on: decolonizing development, avoiding 'white saviours' and strengthening diverse representation. For the last 15 years the SMP and MaSP have supported members to work within our Partnership Principles, so none of these are new topics to the Partnership but there is an excellent opportunity to further advance our messaging and support in these areas.
- Climate action, especially youth-led. This was one of the challenges set down by the President for Scotland and we have set-up channels for sustained work to build Scotland-Malawi cooperation in this area and, specifically, to help amplify Malawi's voice at COP26.

Youth and Schools:

Schools have been closed for the overwhelming majority of these first two quarters (April-Sept) as a result of Covid restrictions and the summer break, which has obviously significantly reduced our ability to deliver youth and schools engagements.

The Youth Congress has had to be pushed back to Q4 (likely Feb/March) as schools have not had the capacity to be able to engage in this to date. Even then,

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it will not be possible to have an in-person Youth Congress and we are still consulting schools on exactly what would be most helpful.

Given the very significant pressures that schools are under, it is unlikely we would be able to have a single day engagement, as we will need to be flexible, working around the availability and needs of schools, and a full-day in front of a screen is an unattractive proposition for young people even if it were possible. Instead, it will likely have the feel of an online virtual festival, lasting 1-4 weeks, in which schools will be able to pick from a menu of workshops and interactive engagements, as they wish.

2.3 Are you on track to meet your year-end milestones? Give details of any areas that are behind, and how you plan to overcome this. (Max 350 words)

Of 72 indicators, 64 (89%) are all on track. We note:

2.3.2.: Total number of recipients of the SMP news bulletin: 1023 at mid-way, with full year target 1230. This has reduced due to changes in the way we manage our membership data as we have moved to the new systems (Wild Apricot) – cleaning and updating the data and ensuring we are compliant with GDPR. We will aim to increase this in Q3/4. To note the total number of opens (2.3.3) is 9% over target for the midyear point.

3.1.1.: Total number of annual Facebook impressions: At 164,149 we are a little under the midyear target of 200,00. We will aim to reach the end of year target but keen to note that [Facebook has changed the way it calculates impressions](#) since this target was set. This change significantly reduces the number of impressions organic (non-paid for) posts have. In this period the SMP has not been able to have paid posts which has reduced our number of impressions.

3.1.3: Total number of Twitter impressions: Although the number of Twitter followers is comfortably above the target figure at 171,400, we are well under the midyear target for twitter impressions. This is result of: (a) No face-to-face events not driving social media traffic; (b) schools not open for most of this period, so less social media engagement; (c) Media and Coms Officer working part-time due to childcare during lockdown.

3.3.1.: Total number of Malawi features in the Scottish media: At 63, we are a little below the midyear target of 80. This is an area in which we have only limited control. The decrease is partly due to: (a) Covid being the overwhelming focus in the media; (b) Malawi visits and many Malawi engagements not able to happen, so generating less news; (c) Media and Coms Officer having to work part-time due to health and childcare during lockdown.

4.1.1.: Number of Scottish Schools which are members of the SMP: At 242, we are a little under the full year target of 260. To note that It looks like an error was made in the baseline data - 260 was the number of contacts at schools not number of schools. Around 25 schools had chosen to have two contacts (for example if there is a Malawi link in two departments), so the actual figure was baseline figure should have been c235

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	<p><u>4.1.2.: Number and scale of SMP youth and schools points of support and engagement:</u> As highlighted in the monthly reports to the SG we are unsurprisingly behind on this target (16 on midyear target of 40), as schools have been closed for the overwhelming majority of this period.</p> <p><u>4.2.2.: The Total annual attendance at SMP's Schools Forum:</u> Again, this is below the expected midyear point due to Covid.</p> <p><u>4.7.3.: Number of opportunities for the SMP to support the SG Coms team in developing and disseminating multi media communications content in support of the SG's core messaging:</u> None in first half of the year but we hope possible in Q3/4.</p>
2.4	If not covered above, what mitigation measures have you put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic? (Max 250 words)
	See 2.1
<p>3. Partnerships and collaboration</p> <p>This section allows you to discuss how partnership working is progressing on the project, as well as wider collaboration and sharing of learning.</p>	
3.1	<p>Provide an update on how partnership working has gone during this reporting period. Let us know about any highlights, challenges or changes to roles and responsibilities. (Max 350 words)</p> <p><u>MaSP:</u> As always, we worked closely with MaSP in this period. The move to digital engagements has had the significant advantage of increased active Malawian involvement. This has worked well and MaSP has helped facilitate Malawian input to our meetings, as we have Scottish input into MaSP's.</p> <p><u>Association of Malawians in Scotland:</u> We have worked closely with the Association to encourage and support active diaspora involvement in the SMP's work.</p> <p><u>Church of Scotland:</u> The Church of Scotland has been a key partner as we have supported coordination of covid response across faith-based groups.</p> <p><u>David Livingstone Centre:</u> We have worked on the production of short videos for the David Livingstone Birthplace Centre, reflecting on the legacy of Livingstone. This project has been paused due to Covid.</p> <p><u>Orbis Expeditions and the Malawi Travel Consortium:</u> We have been in constant contact with our key contacts in the Malawi travel industry to help</p>

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	<p>support and advise our members, including those who have had trips cancelled or postponed due to Covid.</p> <p><u>Scotland's International Development Alliance:</u> We continue to work closely with the Alliance, including around Covid support and the Scotland-Malawi Principles of Best Practice for Covid Response.</p> <p><u>Scottish Fair Trade Forum:</u> We have been in regular contact with SFTF, with information sharing, mutual support and coordination of effort.</p>	
3.2	<p>Have any international visits to the project taken place in this period? Give details including key activities and outputs of these visits.</p> <p>No</p>	
Date of visit	Key achievements / outputs of visit	Follow-up actions
N/a	N/a	N/a
4. Safeguarding and fraud		
Please ensure you complete questions 4.1 and 4.2 even if you have no incidents to report.		
4.1	<p>Have there been any incidents, relating to the Grant or the Project, in the last reporting period which contravene your safeguarding policy?</p> <p>No</p>	
4.2	<p>Have there been any incidents in the last reporting period of financial mismanagement or fraud, relating to the Grant or the Project?</p> <p>No</p>	
4.3	<p>Have these incidents been reported to relevant authorities, and if so, to whom?</p> <p>N/a</p>	

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4.4	Describe what action has been taken, and highlight any lessons learned.		
	N/a		
5. Risk assessment			
5.1	<p>Have any issues materialised during this reporting period? If so, how were they addressed?</p> <p><i>Please refer to risk assessment provided at application stage.</i></p>		
Assumption	Risk	Action taken	Was this included in the Risk Assessment Table in your application?
Staff able to work agreed hours	Negative mental health impact of homeworking	A staff member signed-off by a doctor was supported to take time away from work and return in a phased and flexible manner	In general terms
Staff retained	Loss of post-holders	Timely recruitment process	Yes
6. Financial information			
This section will be reviewed alongside your mid-year budget spreadsheet, which must be included with this report.			
6.1	<p>Explain any variances or delays to planned expenditure in this period. This should include any expenditure no longer possible (as opposed to delayed) as a result of COVID-19 and should be included as True Underspend on the budget spreadsheet. (Max 350 words)</p> <p>As highlighted to the Scottish Government in a number of reports, we are currently forecasting a year-end underspend in the region of £7,756. This is largely made up of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2,000 saved in rental costs as have been able to negotiate lower rental rates for offices in the City Chambers. • £4,000 saved in office costs resulting from staff working from home • £2,128 saved in in-country (Scottish) travel. <p>To note that staff salaries are currently forecast to be £2,479 underbudget due to gaps between postholders but this is almost entirely offset by £2,301 resulting from extra pension costs resulting from 'death in service' provision.</p>		

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6.2	<p>At this stage, does your projected expenditure look to be on track? If not, outline the reasons why, and what plans are in place to bring spending back on track. If you are requesting changes to your budget at this stage, outline them below. (Max 350 words)</p> <p>Yes, broadly on track, apart from the above stated forecast underspend. We are keen to again note here that the nature of the changing landscape through the Covid-19 pandemic means it is hard to have any degree of certainty in budget forecasting. There are particular uncertainties around HR-related costs, as staff retention and recruitment is not something that can be guaranteed.</p>
6.3	<p>Do you have a proposal for how you would like to utilise any of your ring-fenced underspend, excluding any currency gains? (Max 350 words)</p> <p>Yes. We have made a proposal to the Scottish of how we feel it would be most effective to reallocate this forecast underspend to best achieve the agreed outcomes and advance the principles set down by the SG in its review. This has been declined by the SG because it would involve staffing costs. We are in the process of coming back to the SG with an alternative proposal.</p>
7. Any other information	
<p>Use this section to tell us any other relevant information regarding your project. (Max 350 words)</p>	