



SCOTLAND MALAWI PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

Bannermans Secondary School, Glasgow

Ages 11 to 18, 1400 pupils

Partnered with **Masalani Community Day Secondary School**, Chiradzulu, 200 pupils.

- **How did your School partnership begin?**

The Depute Head had a personal link with a school in Malawi (through a previous school she had worked in) and we got funding as part of the Global School Partnerships scheme in 2012 to visit in order to establish the partnership and discuss expectations. Just a teacher went out on this initial visit but this will be the third student trip coming up this summer. The Malawian students and teachers have been back to visit twice as well. The students in Malawi are selected by grades and the Headteacher has reported an increase in attainment since the partnership started.

- **What have been the main activities since the (new) partnership began?**

The students get the chance to go to Malawi in the 4th year so the topic gets discussed during 4th year tutor time. They do a sponsored fast. In the 1st year, in Geography, Malawi is used as a topic and they revisit it twice. They look at lifestyle/economy and consider the similarities and differences. Then there is also one week of lessons where Malawi is the focus for Geography, History, Modern Studies and Maths. In the 3rd and 4th year they pick it back up again, they study WaterAid and the case study they choose is Malawi.

I think we could possibly have a 'Malawi week' written into the curriculum where all subjects do activities around the Malawi topic to build on the existing Interdisciplinary learning links. We don't want them to come back to it too often though as the students may start to say 'We've done this before' so it's important to progress them on at each year group.

During the trip the students spend 1 week at our partner school in Malawi, visit Mount Mulanje, the lake and go on safari. When they come back from the trip the students do a presentation in their Tutor classes and to the 1st years who have been studying Malawi in Geography.

- **What have been the benefits for your school?**

Since the partnership has started, pupils have shown a much greater interest in global issues. Being able to see direct connections with their partner school and share experiences with teachers and pupils who have visited Malawi has widened pupils' awareness of how others live their lives.

I think that, with the Curriculum for Excellence, the focus is on offering wider opportunities and the partnership certainly does that. The trip itself helps students to develop their communication skills, leadership skills and allows them to experience another country first hand. They learn a lot from feeding back what they have seen to the rest of the school too. During the trip they learn alongside Masalani students and this enables them to see the similarities between High school students. Alongside these similarities it is clear that life in Malawi is very different to life in Scotland. This not only challenged their thoughts on identity and belonging but also on fairness and equality.

The host families learn a lot too, when the Malawian visitors come here it breaks down stereotypes and they talk about everyday life and learn about similarities too. It broadens everyone's mind because they see beyond the stereotypes and realise that not all houses in Malawi are mud huts etc. like the images they've seen in the media.

I think for a lot of students here it makes them more motivated in terms of their studies, they appreciate the resources they have access to here and how they have life pretty easy compared to others in the world.



I think it also raises the profile of the school within the community too, they realise we have a good ethos and that we are broadening horizons for students here.

- **What do you think have been the benefits for your Malawian partner school?**

The Headteacher has told us that attendance and grades have improved. It does the same where it raises the school's profile in the community in Malawi too, it shows that the Headteacher is successful and sees the value in school partnerships. It also draws attention to the school from politicians etc. which helps spread awareness.

The money we have fundraised has also been able to subsidise fees for some families, we have been able to put electricity into the school. It also helps the Malawian students feel proud, that they have visitors and can show them life in Malawi and this helps them see their own value and worth when they feel proud.

- **What has been the highlight of your partnership for the school?**

The trips have been a massive highlight, the activities that the Malawian school has arranged for us while we've been there, such as the welcoming ceremony and the ceilidh in Malawi. The Sports day we did in Malawi was excellent as well and going to people's home and getting a sense of real life was amazing.

- **What have been the challenges and how have you overcome them?**

For previous school partnerships the main challenges were setting it up in the first place. We tried setting up a link with a school in Tanzania but communication was too difficult. We then tried to work with another school in Bangwe in Malawi but again the communication wasn't strong enough to set up the partnership in the first place. I think it worked this time because the Depute had that personal connection, someone in Malawi who was dedicated and had access to reliable communication. I know it's important to take into consideration cultural differences in terms of timescales but we do have strict deadlines and timescales here and, if the communication is minimal, it just won't work. You have to find the right lead teacher and the right partnership that works for everyone involved.

I think we have found time a big challenge, the amount of work that lead teachers have to put in.

- **Looking at the SMP Partnership Principles, which areas do you think are the strengths of your partnership?**

Planning and implementation – we had the partnership agreement right from the start and we were both involved in that.

Respect, trust and mutual understanding – this develops each time we visit each other and because we have seen each other's cultures.

Transparency and accountability – we have always shared information with everyone involved.

Effectiveness – shown by the support from the community and evidence from the children. Reciprocity- we have had fundraising from both sides. Sustainability – we share the same goals.

- **Which Principle(s) do you think your partnership is working on but could be improved?**

Appropriateness – we could reflect more on the whole partnership in general, how does it fit with Scotland's priorities? What support could Scotland get from the experience? We could maybe think more about the trip itself and how it fits in with the culture in Malawi.

No one left behind – we need to think about how the partnership will continue once Cosmos the Headteacher leaves.

- **Which Principle(s) do you think you are finding difficult and need to focus on now?**

Do no Harm – this is very hard to judge and we would need to have a think about this and how we could monitor this. Parity – there is scope for us to do more on UNCRC.

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Interconnectivity – it would be good to link up with other schools and share good practice, Jamie (Maths Teacher) will be doing this at the SMP schools forum. It would also be good to think about the interconnectivity within the school and make links between the different subjects more. Jamie has led a session on Malawi to the teachers so things like this will help.

- **If you were starting the partnership over again, what advice would you give yourself?**

Make sure you take the time to get the right partnership for you and you get a strong connection with one person that will help start the partnership. Don't be overambitious and try to do everything all in one go. Try a partnership out and, if doesn't work out, go elsewhere-don't be afraid to fail.

- **What do you think makes a good partnership?**

Mutual understanding, welcoming each other into communities and homes and taking the time to get to know each other and respecting our different cultures. Getting the right viewpoint on it from the start, not seeing it as a 'rich school' partnered with a 'poor school' but thinking of what we can learn from each other and the ways in which we are the same and equal. Taking part in a range of activities and understanding all of Malawian life and all of Scottish life, not just focusing on one thing.

I think a whole school approach strengthens the partnership and benefits of global education.

- **What would you say to encourage other teachers to get involved?**

It's an amazing experience, great to get to know the children and a chance for them to get to know you in a different setting. It's great to get enjoyment from school activities by getting out and experiencing something else. School life is so busy so it's important to be able to step out from that and see it all come together. As a Geography teacher it's amazing to see the lessons become real for the children as they can see with their own eyes everything we've discussed in class.

- **Why do you think it's important to continue links between Scotland and Malawi?**

Because of that heritage there the relationship is more equal, it's a true partnership and we support each other and work together, it's not blanket aid. Because of the history there are so many partnerships between people too, it's not just between schools and organisations, it's between friends and families and communities. Sustaining links over such a long period of time allows us to truly understand another culture and vice versa.

- **Where do you see your partnership developing from here?**

We might possibly connect with a Youth Centre in Malawi as well as the school to develop the link further. It would be good to expand the partnership too and develop the activities. We might start up a Fairtrade group again and focus on Malawian products. We might think about some sort of joint enterprise that we can do with our Malawian partners.

- **How have the SMP supported you so far?**

The meetings I have been to, and the forums, have all been really helpful and have allowed me to meet people I might not have otherwise, the nurses at the SMP Schools Forum gave some really good advice. You have also helped us with Visa applications which has been great.

- **What could the SMP do to support you going forward?**

I think it would be great to have some school specific things at the AGM. It would be great if you could help us with language and culture sessions before the trip and reflection sessions after the trip. Some kind of resource pack with lesson/activity ideas for a 'Malawi week' would be helpful.