

Cross-Party Group on Malawi

Wednesday 15th June 2022 6pm - 7pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Liam McArthur MSP (Chair)
Alasdair Allan MSP
Alexander Stewart MSP
John Mason MSP
Stuart McMillan MSP

Invited guests

Shupo Kumwenda
Phil Timoney
Blesco Nyangulu
Cindee Rood
Donald Mavindidze
Dellings Phiri
Dezie Trigu
Patricia Duffy
Leuan James

Non-MSP Group Members

David Hope-Jones (Secretary)
Adam and Leah
Ahab Kafansiyaji
Aiko Imamura
Alan Laverock
Alison Greener
Amy Earnshaw
Anne Brown
Austin Maloya
Benjamin Carey
Blessings Banda
Calum Fisher
Anne Casey
Chad Morse
Chrissie Hirst, Corra Foundation
Davie Luhanga
Di James
Emma Wood
Gaia Marini, Water Witness
Gift Thompson

Ishbel Smith
Jack Norquoy, Office of Liam McArthur
Jack Welch
Jane Forster
Jane Hutchison
Jeremy Bagg
Josephine M
Karen MacIntyre
Lilian Mackenzie
Liza Nugent
Lucy Hunot, Link Education
Mark O'Donnell
Masida Kumwenda
Mick & Kate James, ZMCP
Neil Gilchrist, Turing Trust
Niall Rogerson
Nourishing Minds, ESCA Cancer Support
Peter Webster
Ray French
Robert Baxter
Stuart Brown
Sue Kevan
Tracy Morse
Uchizi K
Victoria
Webster Moyo
Willan Kalinda
Yaphama

Apologies

John Mason MSP
Sarah Boyack MSP
Foysol Choudhury MSP
Jackie Baillie MSP
Michelle Thompson MSP
Sharon Dowey MSP
Rachael Hamilton MSP
Jenni Minto MSP
Beatrice Wishart MSP
Katy Clark MSP

Agenda item 1

Informal Introductions - David Hope-Jones & All

David opened the meeting and gave attendees the opportunity to introduce themselves briefly. David shared the news that Fiona Ritchie has been appointed as the new British High Commissioner to Malawi and encouraged the CPG to send their well wishes to Fiona in her new role.

Agenda item 2

Welcome, apologies & minutes of the last meeting - Liam McArthur MSP

Liam welcomed attendees and David listed apologies where these had been given. The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Alan Laverock and seconded by Ray French.

Agenda item 3

Overview: this meeting heard about an innovative, community-led and multi-party collaboration, spearheaded by Tafika, a volunteer youth organisation in Ekwendeni, Northern Malawi.

Agenda item 4

Presentation: Tafika – Our Community’s Vision: Sharing our Story – Blesco Nyangulu, Programme Manager, Tafika

Blesco gave an introduction to the exciting, community-led model spearheaded by Tafika, a volunteer youth organisation in Ekwendeni. This is a story of a community wanting to educate its young people and provide them with work at the end of the process. It is about starting with the very basics and then building on this foundation by recognising Youth need purpose and pride if they are to succeed.

Tafika knew they could not do this on their own so they looked for partners willing to work with them. Their success has come from actively engaging with multiple NGOs and organisations each of which has a solution to part of the challenges facing the Tafika community. This collaboration has built strong foundations for education to be successful and has also built a sports academy which gives the Youth hope and purpose and which provided the community with an opportunity to come together to watch and share the experience of sport.

This is a community-led programme of activity and at each point in the project, the community have started by asking themselves what can they do to solve their own problems rather than looking for others to solve things for them.

The Malawi CPG was introduced to Speakers from five of the key organisations collaborating with Tafika, speaking predominantly from Malawi:

Mary’s Meals, Josephine Mpango, Programme Partners Support Officer

Josephine gave an overview of Mary’s Meals’ collaboration with Tafika. This brings community-grown food for 5 and possibly more communities in a school feeding programme. Maize, soya and sweet potato are grown for feeding, with cassava being funded as a cash crop.

Formidable Joy, Cindee Rood, Founder and Executive Director

Cindee gave an overview of Formidable Joy’s collaboration with Tafika. This has provided 21 bore holes and refurbishments to provide clean water for cooking, and

provides training to the women of the community so that they can maintain the water supply.

HarvestPlus, Donald Mavindidze, Africa Regional Director

Donald gave an overview of HarvestPlus' collaboration with Tafika. HarvestPlus is a global research programme focused on enhancing the nutrition of local food, and is working with Tafika to sensitise the local population on the production and consumption of biofortified crops, namely maize for vitamin A and beans for iron and zinc.

Classrooms for Malawi, Dezie Trigu, Country Facilitator

Dezie gave an overview of Classrooms for Malawi's collaboration with Tafika. Through this partnership, they have built a block of classrooms at Emazinyeni Primary School, and aim to renovate the four existing classrooms, build new toilets and provide new books and desks.

The Bananabox Trust, Willan Kalinda, Country Director

Willan gave an overview of The Bananabox Trust's collaboration with Tafika. Bananabox is a major supporter of the Tafika Sports Academy, and £15 pays for a banana box full of donated sports gear to be sent to Malawi.

Open discussion & Q&A - Liam McArthur MSP

Q. What are the key ingredients to the success of the project?

A. Speakers answered that the key ingredients to success included *collaboration* rather than *competition*, a shared vision, the hard work of volunteers, and being able to look at the bigger picture.

Q. How transferrable is this model for other communities?

A. If others want to replicate Tafika's model, it is important to acknowledge that problems affecting one group affects the whole community, and everyone must get involved, especially the local leaders. ZMCP would like to bring in other communities to see the project in action and inspire them to adopt a similar model.

Q. What is the age range of the children involved in the project?

A. The children working on the project are aged 10 years and over, and the project also involves adults aged up to 80 years.

Q. How does Classrooms for Malawi plan to achieve economic empowerment through the partnership?

A. Economic empowerment is achieved by ensuring contractors employ local people and impart their skills before they leave.

Q. What funding opportunities are available to projects such as Tafika since the discontinuation of the Small Grants Programme?

A. The Scotland Malawi Partnership has published the article '*Recommendations for supporting diversity and inclusion in Scottish Government grant-making, especially for smaller organisations and under-represented groups*'.

Q. Are there other collaborations between NGO's and community organisations that Tafika could learn from?

A. Tafika is an outstanding example of this type of collaboration, and a lot could be gained if more were willing to put egos and logos aside. We must step out of our comfort zones, listen as much as we talk, identify areas of collaboration and shared endeavor and find innovative ways of working together for mutual impact.

Q. How can Tafika connect with sports clubs in Scotland?

A. Liam McArthur and Ray French are involved with collecting football equipment and sending this to academies in Malawi. Ray shared some of his experiences so far, including interest from the Chairman of a local football team near Edinburgh in partnering with Malawi. There may be a number of Scottish teams interested in doing the same, and building personal relationships between both sides is a key aspect of this.

Close - Liam McArthur MSP

Liam thanked the speakers for sharing their inspiring story, and hoped to see their model replicated by others. Liam thanked MSP colleagues and all others in attendance and closed the meeting.