



Membership Needs and Impact Survey 2016: Summary of Results

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every year the SMP conducts a Membership Needs and Impact Survey, asking members what impact the SMP has had on their work with Malawi over the last year, and what members would like the SMP to do to support their work in the following year. In keeping with our core principles of transparency and accountability, and as a member-led organisation, we're happy to share in full the unedited results of the survey. This is what our members told us.

Key headlines:

IMPACT: 89% felt that membership of the SMP in 2016 “helped strengthen, support and develop their links with Malawi”.

SERVICES: The most useful SMP services in 2016 were events (useful for 80% of members), networking (60%), office enquiries and support (51%), and use of social media (49%).

CAMPAIGNING: Through 2016, the SMP supported and encouraged members to:

- Raise awareness of the [Global Goals](#): 81% knew this was an SMP priority and 42% changed their work as a result of the SMP.
- Work within the SMP's [Partnership Principles](#): 70% knew this was an SMP priority and 37% changed their work as a result of the SMP.
- [Support the economy](#) of Malawi: 70% knew this was an SMP priority and 37% changed their work as a result of the SMP.
- Work within [Malawian priorities](#): 68% knew this was an SMP priority and 16% changed their work as a result of the SMP.

IMPROVING QUALITY:

- 67% felt the SMP's information had improved the quality of their work in 2016
- 67% felt the SMP's networking had improved the quality of their work in 2016
- 63% felt the SMP's advice and support had improved the quality of their work in 2016
- 59% felt the SMP's sharing between members had improved the quality of their work in 2016

FORUMS: 52% had attended an SMP Forum in 2016, 62% of whom said forums had been valuable, 38% said “very valuable”.

The Membership Needs and Impact Survey 2016 was conducted during November and December 2016, using the online survey software, 'Survey Monkey.' 35 members completed the survey.



There was generally very good feedback on the impact of SMP services provided in 2016. The data received will be valuable in developing member services in 2017, and in demonstrating SMP impact in strategic reports, potential funding applications and in operational planning.

This report provides a summary of the survey results and outlines potential member services for 2017, based on member needs.

1) Process and Participants

The SMP Needs and Impact Survey 2016 was conducted during November and December 2016, using the online survey software, 'Survey Monkey'. 35 SMP Members completed the online survey. 37% of the respondents were individuals, 26% were organisations, 26% were schools, 11% were youth member and 6% were "SMP Partners". There were 19 questions surveying opinions on both the impact of SMP work in 2016, and membership needs for 2017. During 2016 the SMP had also consulted member on their needs and priorities as part of its preparation for the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan. [Click here](#) to see the plan presented to members at the AGM in October 2016.

2) Impact

89% of respondents felt that membership of the SMP in 2016 "helped strengthen, support and develop their links with Malawi".

Some members gave examples on how the SMP had helped strengthen and support their links:

- *"Participation in **cross party discussions** most helpful to **contribute and learn from others** and Govt Policy."*
- *"Opportunity for **Malawian visitor to visit SMP offices** very helpful"*
- *"Promoting **SMP in schools**"*
- *"Douglas Young has been able to draw from the SMP advice on how to move our **school partnership** forward. Very useful."*
- *"Our Malawi Links are in transition with new heads in both schools again. I have also recently retired so it has been a challenge keeping up momentum."*
- *"I only go in as volunteer or to supply teach. There is still some interest in keeping link going."*
- *"Big help in sorting out **visa problems** whilst organising a visit to Scotland by a Malawi an Head Teacher."*
- *"AGM was **good to network** and catch up with old friends in SMP"*
- *"In this time of scarcity of food we **used your reports to help us meet our objectives**"*
- *"The opportunities for **networking** set up by SMP are a great support."*
- *"**Advice and networking** opportunities."*
- *"As a very small agency membership of **the SMP is hugely valued.**"*



- *“I was unable to make a link directly with Malawi but I was able to talk about the links with the country in my lessons.”*
- *“Hugely useful source of **up-to-date information**”*
- *“It focused us on the importance of creating a **sustainable partnership.**”*
- *“SMP were very helpful in providing info and a supporting letter about **visa requirements** for entering Malawi.”*
- *“In a way it helped strengthen them here and am waiting to see if the connections with Malawi follow through. A slow process.”*
- *“Malawi is presently in 'dire straits' and the Partnership **makes people feel that 'they are not isolated' because of all the wonderful things that are being done by the SMP: a truly 'excellent rescuer'.**”*
- *“Our Country Office is our main operational delivery base in Malawi but the **SMP/MaSP relationship is very helpful.**”*

The following core SMP services were considered by most respondents to be either “extremely useful” or “quite useful”:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| • SMP events | (80%) |
| • Networking opportunities | (60%) |
| • Office enquiries and support | (51%) |
| • Use of social media | (49%) |
| • Representation on social media | (48%) |
| • Dissemination news/bulletin | (46%) |
| • Website & online database | (40%) |
| • Publications | (37%) |
| • SMP member forums | (29%) |
| • Training | (29%) |
| • Representation in media | (18%) |
| • Funding advice/support | (17%) |
| • Advocacy and lobbying | (17%) |
| • Support for visa applications | (14%) |

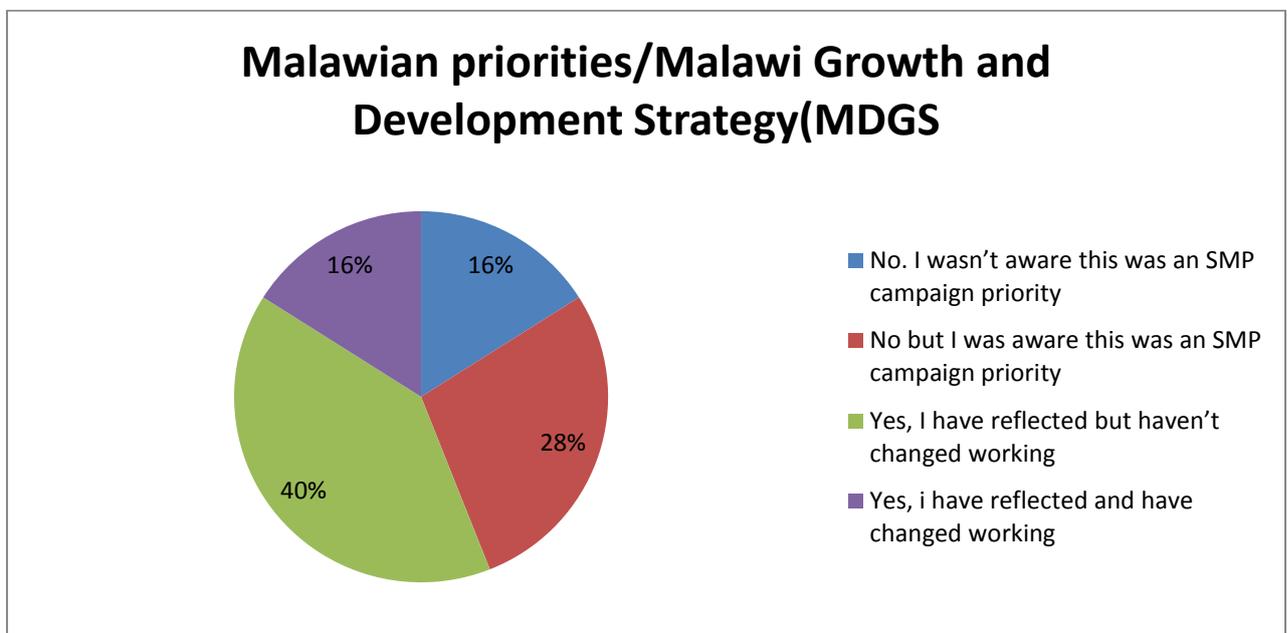
We asked our members how we could improve our work, and were told:

- *“**Include students** who may wish to be involved in the partnership more. I am a Honours year Horticulture with Plantsmanship student, and have a special interest in food production and green manures, I would love to go back to a country I love to work by helping communities grow their own food. But don't know where to start. I have tried, but anyone I email doesn't get back to me, here or in Malawi.”*
- *“Continue pressure on Westminster to change **visa application process** to make it more user friendly. “*
- *“**Just keep doing it!**”*
- *“I would be good to **have more networking with other schools** so we could learn from them about their links.”*

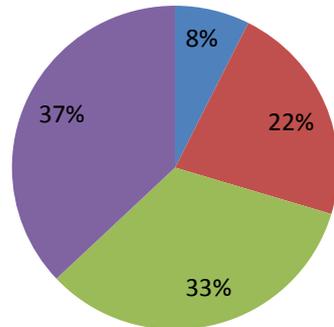
- *"Media training needs to be a full day, not half day. Take account of distance and travel from outside Central Belt, e.g. Aberdeen in timing of events."*
- *"Support for small NGOs to source funding for projects outwith Scottish government £ would be great."*
- *"Spotlight in the bulletin on smaller members making a difference too."*
- *"As a user I find I can only use certain aspects of your work. What is used is usually very helpful."*
- *"Keep up the pressure to simplify procedures for visa applications."*
- *"I know it is difficult to choose a venue for an event - but even Edinburgh or Glasgow are often difficult for us to manage. A Stirling event would be appealing! Or encouragement and advice about setting up local peer-support groups - it would be helpful to have more knowledge of other groups operating in the same part of Malawi as us."*
- *"Not sure"*
- *"The info on visa applications could be broadened to include non-UK passport holders"*
- *"I can only comment on the two things I have come in contact with as ticked above. I have attended one event so far and I found both excellent. I would like to get involved in the other events but presently unable due to current physical disability."*
- *"Good services provided at the moment"*

Members were asked whether the SMP has encouraged reflection on a number of key work areas.

The results were as follows:

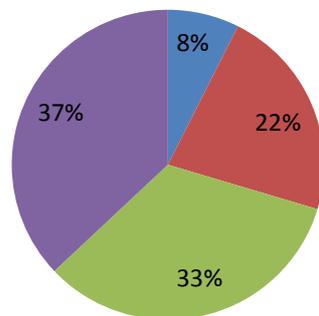


What "Partnership Principles" underpin your links



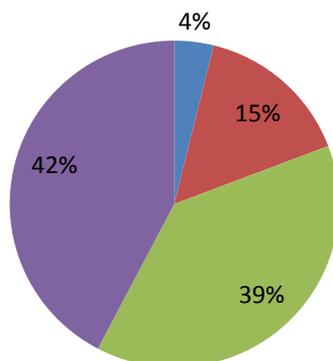
- No. I wasn't aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- No but I was aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- Yes, I have reflected but haven't changed working
- Yes, i have reflected and have changed working

How your link can support economic development in Malawi



- No. I wasn't aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- No but I was aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- Yes, I have reflected but haven't changed working
- Yes, i have reflected and have changed working

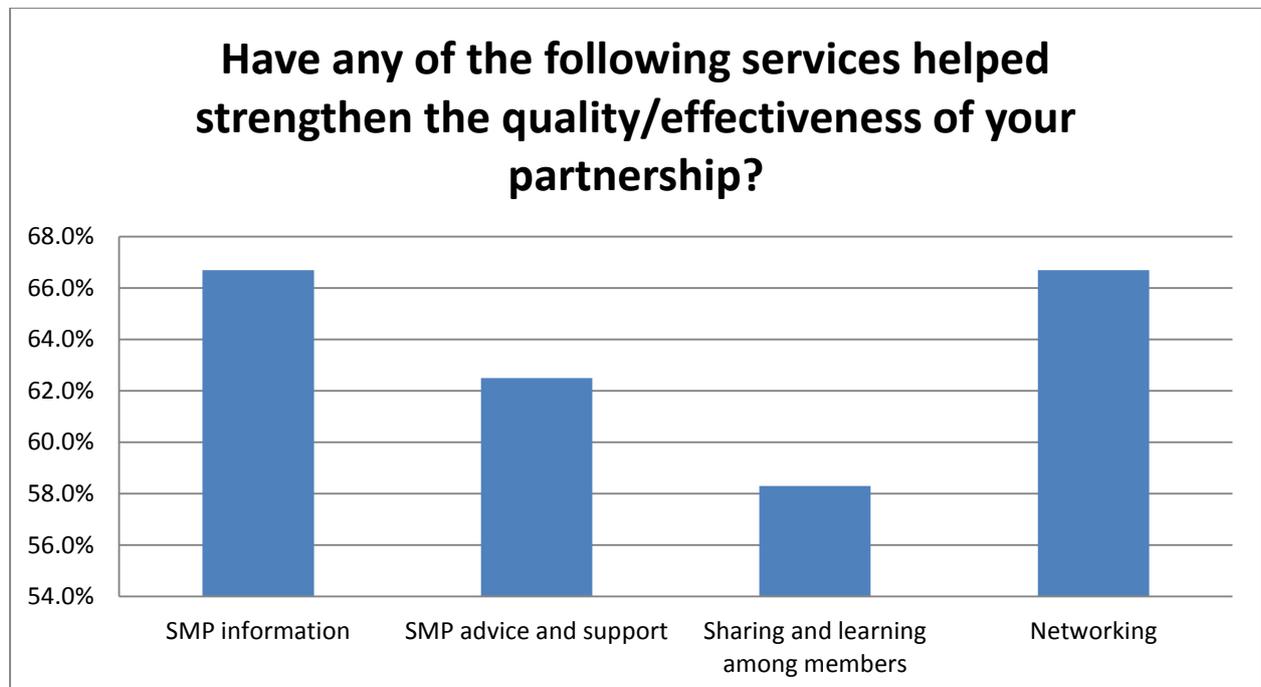
The UN's Sustainable Development Goals/Global Goals



- No. I wasn't aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- No but I was aware this was an SMP campaign priority
- Yes, I have reflected but haven't changed working
- Yes, i have reflected and have changed working

These graphs illustrate the majority of SMP members are aware of and reflecting on our strategic priorities and campaigns (very few members said they were completely unaware of these four areas of work). **The greatest areas of reflection and change was in the UN’s Global Goals (39%), followed equally by the Partnership Principles and support for sustainable economic development (37%).** In instances where reflection is taking place but working remains the same perhaps more services need to be offered to help members who wish to practically implement these aspects, for example in how members can ensure their partnerships are being led by Malawian priorities. We could perhaps support this by ensuring all our forums have good Malawian input, either in person or via skype where possible.

SMP members were also asked how member services helped strengthen the quality/effectiveness of their partnership.



When asked what impact membership of the SMP had on members links with Malawi in 2016, the following reflections were offered (most comments centred on the benefits of networking strengthening partnerships, information-sharing and support, and connecting with MaSP):

Strengthening partnership working:

- *“Made us **aware of the number of people and organisations** involved with projects in Malawi. This gave us a feeling of community and that we are supported.”*
- *“As a new charity, only 5 years old, it offers a platform **to increase awareness of our partnership relationships** with Malawian organisations.”*
- *“Definitely **strengthened the link** we have.”*



- *“Not a huge impact as we are already working with partners in Malawi. I was able to be **represented at the Malawi Independence Day** celebrations through the SMP.”*

Networking:

- *“**Regular communication and networking** most helpful.”*
- *“**Networking links** have enabled us to seek advice from other members engaged in similar projects. More recently these links have helped provide specific guidance in relation to shipping items to Malawi.”*
- *“**Networking advice** and help regarding equipment donations”*
- *“Great to **network with other professionals to strengthen links in Scotland** and provide opportunities for our learners.”*

Information-sharing and support:

- *“It has enabled us to **see the bigger picture in Malawi** as we cannot always have fact finding missions out there.”*
- *“Definitely benefitted from **increased access to information and partnership details**. it has made the prospect of further developing my links seem more realistic and feasible as support is available.” Made me more aware of the work of SMP and **increased knowledge about Malawi***
- *“SMP gives vital **up to date info about Malawi** - accessed in weekly bulletins and also support with visas.”*
- *“I am hoping the **support and advice** will have an impact in 2017”*
- *“Highlighted Malawi. I could do more to support. Will prioritise in 2017”*
- *“Great input to our AGM informing our donors of MMF's role in the whole Malawian/Scottish partnership and also **advice/encouragement on all our work** including funding approaches”*

Connections to MaSP:

- *“**Support on the ground in Malawi, through MaSP**, has been useful in a very **practical way**, but **also in a 'moral support' way**.”*
- *“Mainly **through links with the MaSP** - as this is in country.”*
- *“Helped **build our link with Malawi Scotland Partnership**”*

The final set of questions assessing the impact of SMP's services, were on the SMP Member Forums.

52% of the respondents had been to one or more Forum Meetings, 62% of respondents who had been to a forum said the meetings were “very valuable” and 40% reflected that they had been “somewhat valuable.” None of the respondents said the forums hadn't been valuable.

Comments and suggestions on the Forums were as follows:

- *“I would like to be more involved”*
- *“Our pupils attended the Youth Forum. Again, it gave them the sense of purpose and that they are not alone in supporting projects in Malawi.”*



- *“I attended the meeting for all members whose link is faith based & it was excellent. Not sure if you would consider that a Member Forum”.*
- *“My only comment is that of travel into the cities.”*

3) Needs

The following results outline the respondents’ interest in potential SMP member services in 2017. It should also be noted that throughout 2016 the SMP has also consulted member on their needs and priorities as part of its preparation for the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan.

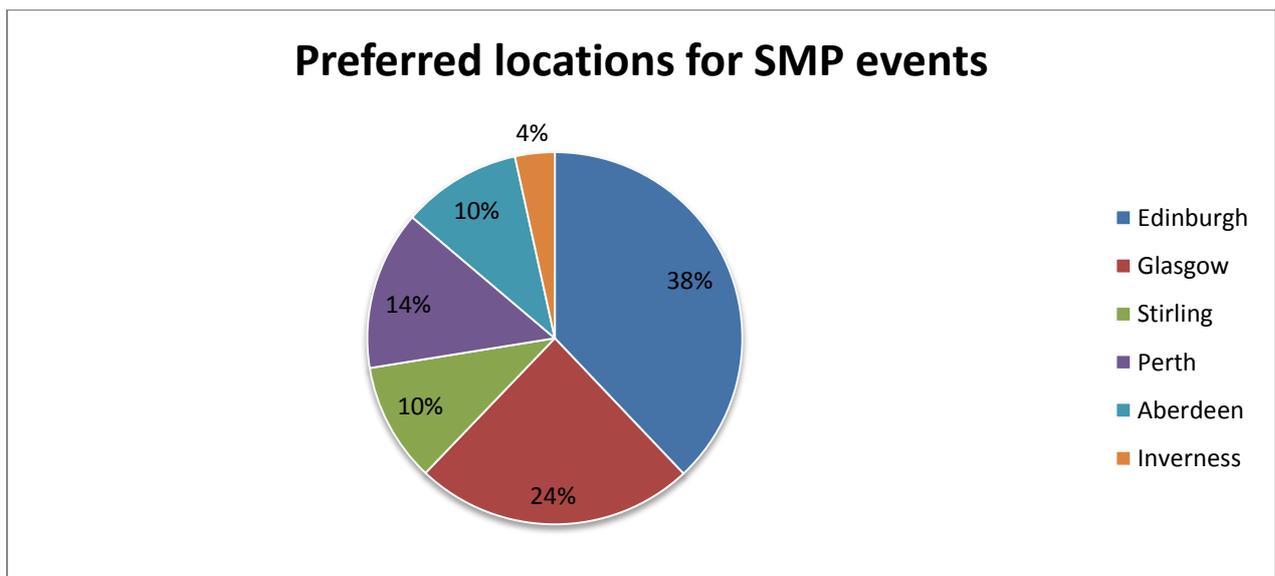
Respondents suggested they would like to see the SMP take forward the following topics, themes and challenges in 2017.

- *“I'd like internships to be offered.”*
- *“Benefit to Scottish community of Malawi links? Micro Finance workshop”*
- *“More education activities, especially STEM.”*
- *“Rights of women and girls. I think there is already a movement in Malawi in this direction but I think it needs more support. Especially in training men!”*
- *“Further developing access to Malawian products in the U.K. As this has been brilliant this year”*
- *“Funding opportunities for small NGOs”*
- *“I see two major barriers to Malawi's progress as being institutionalized corruption and rapid population growth. So for the former a focus on capacity building of civil society groups might be appropriate. Not sure of how SMP could impact the latter.”*
- *“Making sure that every partnership is sustainable”*
- *“Unsure of any specific help in meeting our challenges”*
- *“We have a particular focus at the moment on children with additional support needs, I'd like to see that become a priority. Also please continue to push support for visa applications, it is so important to facilitate visits from Malawi to Scotland.”*
- *“Health care”*
- *“Continue to act as a strong bridge to the Scottish Government.”*
- *“Refugee and Asylum issues. British Imperialism and the Slave Trade”*
- *“Links to other school awards such as ECOSchools and RRSA.”*
- *“Thinking about tourism - is this a good way forward in terms of Malawi's development? I am an individual who used to live in Malawi and have decided to go on holiday there in March. I know there are many potential problems associated with tourism in every country (including Scotland!), but it seems to have potential for jobs and development if properly handled. Also, I am a tour guide in Edinburgh, and wondered about the possibility of linking with similar in Malawi?”*

When asked what training the SMP could offer members to support their link the following ideas were suggested:

- *"I'd like internships to be offered through the partnership."*
- *"Economic empowerment of small communities."*
- *"SMP teacher twilight at MDEC HQ in Aberdeen?"*
- *"Not sure - I will think about this one and let you know."*
- *"Tumbuka language lessons for volunteers heading out"*
- *"I don't think you could mount training that would be non -specific enough to encourage others to attend"*
- *"Anything that would help us to build capacity in our partnership community in Malawi and in their partnership team."*
- *"Developing a social enterprise in Malawi - practical details"*
- *"Some general information about the state of the Malawian economy/society in general would be helpful. For those volunteers or Trustees who have not been to Malawi this would be helpful."*
- *"Global citizenships place within Learning for Sustainability in Scottish Education."*
- *"Thinking about the above. How to be a sustainable tourist to Malawi. Learning about the barriers to good development - what works and how to support democracy and anti-corruption there."*

The following results were shown relating to preferred locations for SMP events:





As in previous years, events hosted in the Central Belt are most popular. A few specific comments were made about location:

- *“Possibly all, in turn”*
- *“Elgin, Peterhead, Kirkwall, Lerwick.”*
- *“Personally Dundee - then Perth or Glasgow”*
- *“We are very remote, so access is difficult wherever”*

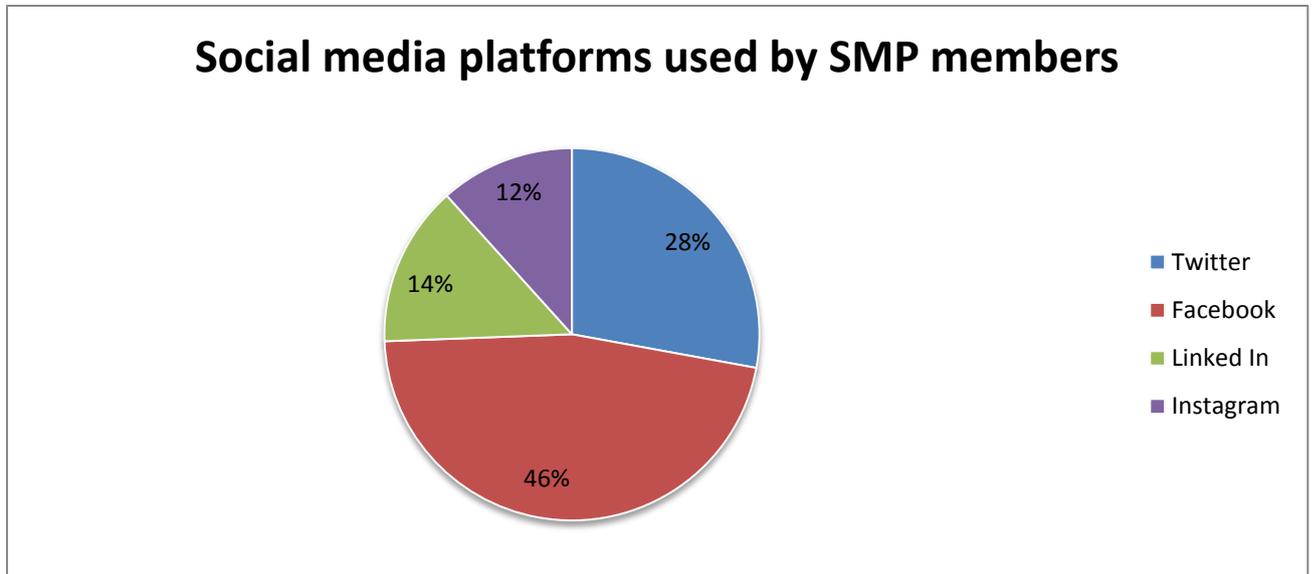
The following suggestions and ideas were offered for ways in which the SMP website could better support Members’ links:

- *“Up to us to support you by providing links.”*
- *“More networking with other schools.”*
- *“I am not a frequent user of the web site”*
- *“Continue to encourage us to keep you informed of developments within our partnership. You are very good at keeping us informed of ongoing developments, events, visits etc.”*
- *“Looking forward to help to update my profile to reflect what I do and so link better with other partners.”*
- *“Ok at the moment”*

The following suggestions and ideas were offered for ways in which the weekly news bulletin could better support Members’ links:

- *“Keep it coming”*
- *“Weekly bulletins are fine.”*
- *“Include youth members in circulation”*
- *“I love it!”*
- *“It is fine for me”*
- *“I think the bulletin is very good. I think if members contributed more information on their partnerships that would be interesting & helpful. We’re not so good at contributing so perhaps we need to make that a focus for improvement in future.”*
- *“Ok at the moment”*

We asked members which social media platforms they're most likely to use:



Final comments included:

- *"I would like to know how to get involved, in Malawi, and support from there."*
- *"SMP is Brill!"*
- *"Keep up the good work."*
- *"Keep up your great work team SMP!"*
- *"Occasionally throw in a "yewo chomene" for Northerners.Tawonga!"*
- *"I appreciate the help that has been given in the past."*
- *"I felt the roadshows this year were most enjoyable and the organisation to ensure maximum participation at this year's AGM also worked really well. I know the plan is to hold an annual meeting for all members with a faith based link, I hope this goes ahead."*
- *"Many thanks for all your hard work and attention to detail."*
- *"You have a great team spirit and enthusiasm for the work you do."*
- *"I have an interest in International Development and hence the work of SMP even though as a Supply Teacher I cannot always make use of the resources produced by the SMP. However I do appreciate the work of the SMP. Thank you"*
- *"Thank you for all your hard work and dedication to making learning about Malawi and creating successful sustainable partnerships much easier!"*
- *"I am very impressed with the way SMP operates - e.g. your events I find have just the right balance of efficient organisation and friendly, open atmosphere. Thank you. However, I do have lots of questions about aid and corruption in Malawi"*
- *"I must encourage our partner school to join!"*



4) What we heard from members, and what we'll do as a result

Impact:

As in previous years the SMP's weekly email bulletin, events, networking opportunities and office support were identified by SMP members to be "extremely useful" in strengthening members' links with Malawi.

With a dedicated Media and Comms Officer, our social media platforms are also becoming increasingly viewed as a valuable place for up to date information, and a useful service for strengthening members' partnerships with Malawi. This year it was also clear that our sister-organisation, the Malawi Scotland Partnership is becoming an even more trusted partner and useful support for our members, and their partners. Members also reflected on the valuable role we can play in keeping them informed of "the bigger picture" in terms Malawian needs and priorities, to ensure their links are leading to maximum impact. We were also delighted to see that being led by the Global Goals agenda, has had such an impact, with 37% of members actually changing their work as a result of the SMP.

Needs:

Based on the needs identified in the Member Survey (as well as the broader consultation with members for the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan) the SMP office will develop an outline of events, engagements and other member services for 2017. Among other things, there will be further raising awareness of the UN's Global Goals across all the SMP's member forums, development of the work promoting Malawian products and continued investment and support for schools and young people.

In addition, as a result of information from this survey, the Partnership will look into:

- Supporting smaller NGOs fund-raise and build capacity;
- Ensuring gender equality remains on the agenda of all Scotland-Malawi engagements;
- Supporting members to reflect on the effectiveness and sustainability of their partnerships;
- Exploring models of social enterprise through the BITT forum – for example microfinance;
- Working with education partners to support the global citizenship agenda in schools;
- Updating the SMP's Guide to living and working in Malawi;
- Continuing the promotion of Malawi as a great place to go on holiday.