



Scotland's role in International Development: *A Submission to the Smith Commission*

30th October 2014

Executive Summary:

Representing the estimated 94,000 Scots actively engaged in people-to-people connections with Malawi, we believe that:

- (1) Over the past decade the Scottish Government has done something genuinely distinctive, innovative and effective with regards international development, especially through its partnership with Malawi.
- (2) International development should be on the agenda as the devolution negotiations continue, and we encourage the Smith Commission to include this in its focus.
- (3) In a new devolution settlement the role of the Scottish Government in international development should be given serious consideration and we would see great advantage in a measure of DFID's work being devolved to Scotland such that what has been done very effectively on a very limited scale could be scaled up.
- (4) Whatever the outcome of the negotiations, the Scottish Government's existing small international development programme finds a permanent and unambiguous constitutional footing, such that this work may be assured of continuity.

Core supporting evidence:

- Rev Prof Kenneth Ross (Oct 2014) '[Malawi, Scotland and a Relational Approach to International Development](#)' – a qualitative analysis of what makes this relational model so distinctive and effective.
- Scotland Malawi Partnership (September 2014) '[Public Awareness Study](#)' – a quantitative analysis of Scottish awareness of, engagement with, and attitudes towards the civic links with Malawi.
- University of Edinburgh (July 2014) '[The value of Scotland's links with Malawi](#)' – a quantitative analysis of the number of Scots and Malawians engaged together, and the number benefitting from these links.

Principles underpinning this submission:

- (1) The Scotland Malawi Partnership does **not look to become a political actor**: we are non-governmental and maintained a strictly **neutral stance** through the Scottish independence debate in the run up to the referendum. However, our neutrality **should not be mistaken for passivity**: we actively engaged the debate, looking to raise awareness of, and build support for, Scotland's links with Malawi, with both sides, *whatever* the outcome in the referendum.
- (2) At the invitation of the Smith Commission, we look to comment briefly on the relevance of international development, and specifically the relationship between Scotland and Malawi, in the discussions surrounding a new devolution settlement. We do so, not led by the internal politics of the United Kingdom but by what we believe to be in **the best interests of our friends and partners in Malawi**.
- (3) We remain **modest as to our work, and respectful as to others'**: we do not look to detract from or denigrate either Scotland's many excellent links with other countries in the global south, or indeed DFID's very strong work in and with Malawi.

www.scotland-malawipartnership.org

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About us: the Scotland Malawi Partnership:

The Scotland Malawi Partnership (SMP) is the national civil society network coordinating, representing and supporting the people-to-people links between our two nations. We represent a community of 94,000 Scots who have active links with Malawi.

We have more than **700 member organisations** and key individuals, including half of Scotland's local authorities, every Scottish university and most of its colleges, 200 primary and secondary schools, a huge number of different churches and faith-based groups, hospitals, business, charities and NGOs, and a wide range of grass-root community-based organisations. Our work permeates almost all aspects of Scottish civil society.

We exist to inspire the people and organisations of Scotland to be involved with Malawi in an informed, coordinated and effective way for the benefit of both nations. We do this by providing a forum where ideas, activities and information can be shared on our website, through our online mapping tool and through regular workshops, training events and stakeholder meetings.

Our project is to **build connections and collaboration**, on a multi-sectoral basis, between two small nations in ways that are transformational for both. There is no template for doing this. So far as we know, we are the first to develop this model of partnership.

Our members' work is underpinned by the historic bilateral civil society relationship which is based not on 'donors' and 'recipients' but on long-standing, mutually-beneficial community to community, family to family and people to people links. It is a 155 year old relationship built on mutual trust, understanding and respect.

This is a **new and innovative mode of international development** and we believe it is powerful force for change.

The Current Situation:

(i) Popular support across Scotland:

In November 2010 the University of Edinburgh conducted an independent analysis of the scale and impact of the links represented under the Scotland Malawi Partnership umbrella. In July of this year, to mark Team Malawi's arrival at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, the university published updated figures, based on new research, allowing them to observe trends through recent years. This updated study, which we enclose as evidence, found that an estimated:

- **94,000+ Scots are actively involved in links** with Malawi (an increase of 10.5% since 2010);
- 198,000+ Malawians are actively involved in links with Scotland (an increase of 33.7% since 2010);
- **300,000+ Scots benefit from their links** with Malawi (an increase of 7% since 2010);
- 2 million+ Malawians directly benefit from their links with Scotland (an increase of 66.6% since 2010);
- **SMP members contribute more than £40 million** in finance and in-kind inputs to their Malawi links (an increase of 33.3% since 2010).

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As a separate exercise, the SMP also commissioned a study to assess Scottish awareness of, engagement with, and attitudes towards these Malawi links; with 516 randomly selected Scots interviewed between June and September 2014. This study, which we enclose as evidence, found that:

- There is four times greater awareness of Scotland's links with Malawi than any other African country;
- **46% of Scots personally know someone actively involved in a link with Malawi;**
- There is an incredible diversity in the links which exist, with more than 40 *different* types of engagements between Scotland and Malawi named by participants;
- **74% of Scots are in favour of links with Malawi (55.4% "strongly" in favour), and only 2.4% are against**

(ii) Distinctive features of the Scotland-Malawi relationship:

In his recent paper "Malawi, Scotland and a Relational Approach to International Development", which we enclose, Rev Prof Kenneth R. Ross identified four distinct characteristics of the links between Scotland and Malawi:

(a) The Priority of the Relational:

"Promoting a people-to-people model of development, focusing on active relationships between individuals, communities, families, businesses etc to foster a shared understanding of the development challenges. This is an approach to development which not only addresses material considerations but also answers the cry for human dignity."

(b) The Mobilisation of civil society:

"Ordinary people and local communities are mobilised to offer their time, energy, resources, experience and expertise to Scotland and Malawi's shared effort. This is not to usurp the role of development professionals but it is to place their work in the context of strong popular ownership and involvement. It represents a vote of confidence in the people and in their capacity for active participation in the close relationship between two nations committed to working together for the common good."

(c) Government in synergy with people

"A creative synergy has been forged between popular activism and Government engagement. The Government-to-Government relationship draws its vitality and finds its effectiveness from the multitude of links made by civil society— schools, universities, health boards, local government, community groups, faith-based organisations, and so on."

(d) A reciprocal partnership for development:

"The Cooperation Agreement between Scotland and Malawi sets out the basis on which the two nations plan to work together: 'Both countries share a wish to build upon this history by actively engaging through partnership. This is a reciprocal partnership based upon sharing experiences and skills. It is an opportunity to learn from each other and to recognise the needs of our two countries' "

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(iii) The Scottish Government's experience with Malawi:

The Scottish Government's Malawi Development Programme, launched by Lord McConnell and enthusiastically continued under the SNP, is extremely small by DFID standards, with just £3 million a year ring-fenced for Malawi. However, by focusing on, building on, and working with, the efforts of wider civil society it has been extremely successful.

According to the University of Edinburgh, the Scottish Government **levers more than ten-fold what it puts in**, unleashing a powerful and enviable multiplier effect. By doing this, as Rev Prof Ross says, it creates a virtuous circle between Government and people where popular support inspires Government efforts while Government support stimulates popular engagement. The result is that resources committed by Government are multiplied many times over by institutions and individuals within civil society.☐

At the most crude possible level of analysis, the ratio between pounds invested and positive media coverage is extremely impressive. This is not a triumph of some innovative communications department at Victoria Quay but rather an insight into the genuine enthusiasm which exists across Scotland for civic-led links with Malawi. At a far more meaningful level, **awareness, reach and impact in Malawi is extremely enviable**: entirely disproportionate with the relatively modest original investments made.

Those involved in the Scottish Government's programme on the ground in Malawi have observed other, very telling, indicators which set this programme aside from others. The Scottish Government is, for example, we believe the only donor in Malawi to strictly forbid the paying of *per diems*. *Per diems* are endemic across Malawi and the region: almost every workshop, conference and training opportunity is absolutely reliant on discrete cash-in-hand payments made to individuals as a sitting allowance. Such payments distort all indicators on impact, buy-in and community engagement; they exacerbate and perpetuate a culture of dependency; undermine sustainability; and allow donors to write the agenda. Perhaps uniquely, not so with almost all Scottish engagements, where Malawians are not 'recipients' but partners - leading with the design of projects, investing time and energy in their implementation, and genuinely 'owning' the outcomes.

(iv) The Scottish Parliament's experience with Malawi:

It is not just the people of Scotland and its Government who are invested in such people-to-people links with Malawi; the Scottish Parliament itself is also an active player.

The Scottish Parliament has a formal partnership with the Malawi Parliament through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and also has an active and well attended Cross Party Group on Malawi. It is often commented in the Scottish media that **no issue brings politicians of all stripes together in Scotland like the friendship with Malawi**. Malawi's President Muluzi was the first Head of State to visit the new Scottish Parliament when reconvened after 300 years and, indeed, when reconvening after its most recent summer recess, it was again to its friendship with Malawi that the Parliament turned for its first business.

A quick search through the Parliamentary records shows that the Scottish Parliament's regular "debates" on Malawi see MSPs of all parties queue up to praise the people-to-people links, each trying to outdo each other with numbers involved in their constituencies. Indeed, such debates are not confined to Holyrood: as this submission is sent, we see active debates celebrating Scotland's links with Malawi in both the Commons and the Lords, encouraging the development of similar people-to-people bilateral connections across the United Kingdom.

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Scotland, Malawi and enhanced devolution:

At the invitation of the Smith Commission, we look to comment briefly on the relevance of international development, and specifically the relationship between Scotland and Malawi, in the discussions surrounding a new devolution settlement. We do so, not led by the internal politics of the United Kingdom but by what we believe to be in the best interests of our friends and partners in Malawi.

To date, almost all of the Scottish independence debate has been purely domestic in focus: inward looking, even introspective. We are keen that, as the Smith Commission takes the dialogue forwards, we do not forget to also look up and outwards as a country. We believe that in discussing a possible new future devolution settlement it is important to consider the existing international activity, interests and expectations of the *people* of Scotland. We believe **international development should be on the Smith Commission's agenda.**

Over the past ten years Scotland has demonstrated, for example through its work with Malawi, new and innovative ways of approaching international development, fundamentally underpinned by the spirit of partnership working. **This approach has proven distinctive and effective**, both in terms of the additional engagement and support it has garnered across civic society, and its overall impact.

Such is the popular and all-party support for the people-to-people links between Scotland and Malawi that, for every pound invested by the Scottish Government in its Malawi Development Programme in recent years, more than ten pounds has been levered from the *people* of Scotland – harnessing a powerful multiplier force by engaging civic society.

We recognize that DFID has achieved a great deal in Malawi in recent decades, operating at a very significant scale with a genuinely nation-wide reach. We believe there are aspects of DFID's work that can inform and enhance the Scottish Government's activities in this area but also that there is very **great value in –and much to be learned from- the relational, or people-to-people, approach** the Scottish Government has chosen to take with regards international development.

In a new devolution settlement we believe the role of the Scottish Government in international development should be given serious consideration; we would see great advantage in a measure of DFID's work being devolved to Scotland so that what has been done very effectively on a very limited scale could be gradually scaled up.

We recognize there are potential challenges with any proposal to increase the Scottish Government's involvement in international development, not least the time needed to build the necessary capacities and in-house expertise. Furthermore, we recognize there are those who fear that such plans could fragment the UK international development effort, resulting in increased duplication and administrative costs.

We disagree. We believe a phased approach, with much close and cooperative working between DFID and the Scottish Government, would allow the development of a scaled-up Scottish Government-led programme which would continue the distinctive, innovative and effective path it has begun, leveraging further involvement from Scottish civic society, while also learning from and working side-by-side with DFID's good work in Malawi. We believe, by **combining the best aspects of both the Scottish Government and DFID's approach**, and by believing in the contribution the *people* of Scotland can -and do- make to international development, we can together achieve far greater impact in countries like Malawi.

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Whatever the outcome of current negotiations we are very keen that the Scottish Government's existing small international development programme finds a **permanent and unambiguous constitutional footing**, and that there is continued and enhanced joint-working, mutual recognition and shared learning between the UK and Scottish Governments in this area.

Finally, we are keen to acknowledge that *all* those involved in international development anywhere in the world must be humbled by the overall reality of experience across the vast majority of Africa. For the "bottom billion", whose situation has not improved in recent decades, we must concede that the traditional, conventional, largely top-down, approach to international development has not delivered. We believe a radical shift is required in all quarters, to **re-prioritise a spirit of genuine two-way partnership** in all aspects of international development and cooperation.