



# Healthcare Professionals in Malawi

The Soko Fund  
Johnson and Johnson Final report





**Martha Nyrienda**

**Works for Population Services International on their HIV protection programme, a job she found through the Soko Job Centre**

## The Soko Fund is working to strengthen the healthcare workforce in Malawi

The Soko Fund supports women from poor families into higher education in Malawi, Central Africa. Started in 2004, the Soko Fund has enabled women to become teachers, engineers and agriculturalists, among many other professions. It has thereby generated for Malawi, and for these women, the benefits that come from internally educated professionals committed to the development of their country.

The Soko Fund currently provides scholarships for 55 students across 4 universities. Over more than a decade, with the help of University Deans, it has successfully identified talented students hindered by poverty, and enabled them to complete their degrees.

Over 70 Soko supported graduates are now working in a wide variety of sectors within Malawi.

Our aim was:

- To support 10 women studying for degrees in healthcare.
- To build a new network of support for graduates in the early stages of seeking employment – Soko Fund Graduate Association (SGA)
- To create a Job Centre using modern technology to enable information sharing about opportunities.
- To hold workshops for women who have graduated



**Mackness Chisambi has opened a pharmacy in Blantyre, Southern Malawi, with support from the SGA**



Discussion at STEM workshop

What the project has achieved:

- 11 women accepted to study on healthcare courses
- The Soko Fund Graduate Association (SGA) was launched, offering a network of support for female graduates.
- a modern technology “Soko Fund Job Centre” established to enable women to find out about vacancies and to have support in making applications
- employment or training secured through the “Job Centre” for 22 graduates, who were previously unemployed.
- a workshop to support graduates to make job applications, develop their CVs and support for smallscale entrepreneurship (27<sup>th</sup> Oct 2017)
- a workshop on Cervical Cancer prevention (10<sup>th</sup> April 2018). The project is looking to work with this

organization to develop a programme of peer support, using the SGA networks to reach young women in rural schools

- and a workshop supporting women in STEM careers (6<sup>th</sup> May 2018)
- an internship scheme initiated to support healthcare graduates in gaining much needed employment experience
- 2 healthcare graduates accepted as interns in First Aid Africa
- peer mentoring talks in local secondary schools by Soko Scholarship Graduates

*This training has changed my thinking capacity. I can't just wait for an employment opportunity but I have to create my own. I have learnt that it's possible... and it begins with me.*

*Workshop participant*



Sunganani N'gombe, from SGA, talking to girls at Chibavi secondary school



SGA workshop on employability skills, Oct 2017

11 women have successfully secured a place on a healthcare course, thanks to the funding from Johnson and Johnson:

Dorothy Daimon – Pharmacy, College of Medicine, University of Malawi

Walusungu Siliongwe – Physiotherapy, College of Medicine

Lusungu Mtawali – Physiotherapy, College of Medicine

Niya Mdoka – Bachelor of Surgery, College of Medicine

Ruth Njikho – Medical Laboratory Sciences, College of Medicine

Modester Yohane – Nursing and Midwifery, Mzuzu University

Chikondi Kamono – Nursing and Midwifery, Mzuzu University

Happiness Mandala – Nursing and Midwifery, Kamuzu College of Nursing

Chisomo Ndaladi – Nursing and Midwifery, Kamuzu College of Nursing

Mercy Thomson - Nursing and Midwifery, Kamuzu College of Nursing

Mercy Wasi, Optometry, Mzuzu University



The Soko Fund students at our partner universities

## The Soko Fund

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