

Report To:	Education & Lifelong Learning Committee	Date: 07 September 2010
Report By:	Corporate Director Education & Communities	Report No: EDUC/55/10/IM
Contact Officer:	Iain Mills	Contact No: 01475 712816
Subject:	Update on Inverclyde-Malawi school links	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide elected members with an update on progress (Appendix 1) with Inverclyde-Malawi school links.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This paper provides examples of good practice to illustrate the progress that is being made.
- 2.2 Funding from a Scottish Government grant and a British Council grant has allowed the visits described in the appendix to take place. This is the final year of three-year funding.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director of Education and Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Links between schools in Inverclyde and Malawi were established in 2007. Work to nurture and expand these links has been ongoing. A government-funded initiative has helped with this building process through funding visits to partner schools.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 This is an update report. There are no proposals attached. As there are no proposals, there are no implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance

There are no Finance Implications in this report.

6.2 Legal

There are no Legal Implications in this report.

6.3 Personnel

There are no Personnel Implications in this report.

6.4 Equalities

There are no Equalities Implications in this report.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 Most school partnerships now have a solid base and are moving forward. Direct contact through visits has been a major factor in strengthening partnership working.

8.0 EQUALITIES ISSUES

8.1 Equalities issues are central to the work our visiting teachers have been doing in Malawi. They deliver training modules to teachers there, including modules on gender equality and children's rights.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Attached paper: 'REPORT: Update on Inverclyde-Malawi school links'

APPENDIX 1

REPORT: Update on Inverclyde-Malawi school links

For this update report, I thought that it would not be appropriate to repeat details about how many schools are involved, what our aims are, how it started up and so on. I thought it would be of greater interest and value to elected members if I could give some insight into what is actually going on, and share some of the success stories that have emerged. The rate of progress across our partnerships varies, but most schools have taken major steps forward over the last eighteen months. In some cases the work being done is quite outstanding. I'm able to report that we really *are* making a difference, and that the lives of children in Malawi are being changed by our interventions.

I asked teachers from some of the partnered schools to provide me with details of initiatives that they are particularly proud of. The rest of this report consists of their statements: these focus in on particular aspects of their links.

Something that will be apparent from their statements is the highly enterprising nature of the work schools have been doing. This link with enterprise is also a feature of the Scottish Government supported project we are involved in. The support within Inverclyde from Determined to Succeed and from Robert Lamb should be acknowledged as a significant factor in the success of what we are doing.

It should be mentioned that Provost McCormick has been working to send goods such as surplus school furniture to Malawi. At present he is still investigating ways to move forward with this. Difficulties to be overcome include the very high cost of shipment and the unsuitability of wooden items for the Malawi climate. Advantages of sending goods have to be balanced against alternatives such as sourcing furniture and equipment in Malawi from local suppliers, which reduces transport costs and provides local employment.

Iain Mills
July 2010

Examples of successful partnership working

Wemyss Bay and Malire Primaries (Elyse Buchanan)

(i) Sewing Machines

Along with Sandra Eaglestone, I visited my partner school in March 2009. During this time we persuaded them to purchase sewing machines from a local Singer shop in Limbe. The machines are the traditional style using pedals rather than electricity. They were also able – with our support – to buy materials and thread.

Since then, groups of pupils at Malire have been trained in how to use the machines. This has been carried out by both staff members and older pupils. As a result the school is now able to make school uniforms and bags. They have sold these (making nearly 3,000 kwacha) and given some to less fortunate families. They have also sent various items to Wemyss Bay and these will be sold to the local community over here. The money will be used to support this enterprise as well as the food programme.

This enterprise has been very successful in that it not only helps Malire to support itself financially but also teaches the children new skills. The staff explained that not only will this help pupils to find jobs but that it would encourage them to teach their families – promoting learning across communities.

(ii) Food Programme

Pupils, parents and staff of Wemyss Bay Primary have spent the last year fundraising to start a food programme in Malire Primary. Activities include “Bags for School” (collecting unwanted clothes, bed sheets etc), a sponsored walk by a staff member, raffles, copper bank and a ‘bring and buy’ sale.

Mr Gawani, the head teacher of Malire, agreed to begin setting up a kitchen to make nsima for the pupils (a maize-based food). The kitchen is in the process of being completed and Mr Gawani has bought stoves, cooking utensils and plates. The next step is for them to work with members of the community to help organise the cooking and serving of the food. We hope to continue to raise enough money to pay the volunteers a small amount and we hope this will encourage others to become involved – as well as supporting the local community. Finally, we aim to eventually support various enterprises within the school so that they can support themselves, using the money to buy ingredients and pay a small wage.

Port Glasgow High School and Nguludi Secondaries (Lorna Anderson)

During their visit to Malawi in September, 2009, our Head teacher, Alan Dick, and Maggi Kyle spent a number of days at our partner school, Nguludi Secondary School. The priority for Nguludi was a library. A library was needed for a number of reasons: as a place for study; as a quiet place; as an exam room; and as a library/research area. However, the cost to complete the build was £4000. The challenge for Port Glasgow High School and the community was to raise this amount by Christmas 2009. This was achieved in a number of ways. The Modern Languages department and some 6th Year pupils took charge of a range of fundraising events to help towards the target. A cake & bake sale led by the Home Economics department and their pupils provided many edible items, assisted by generous donations from family and friends. They participated in bag packing at Tesco's, held a Bring and Buy/Charity shop and provided tins in classes to collect small change. They presented pupils, teachers and parents with the opportunity to buy a brick during parents' evenings. Alan Stanley, the school librarian, suggested running this year's annual 'Readathon' in aid of the Nguludi's library fund. During November, pupils of S1 and S2 read their hearts out and thanks to the generosity of their families and friends, they raised £139.50. A very generous private donation also allowed us to reach our target by our deadline date. The pupils and Staff at Nguludi Secondary School are just delighted with the efforts of the community of Port Glasgow.

We are now beginning to raise funds again. This time it is a greater challenge - to raise £12,500 for the construction of Science Labs. This is bigger and more expensive as it requires the installation of underground pipes - much more construction and planning than the library. If you could only see how these teachers try to teach Science to their pupils you would understand their desperate need.

King's Oak & All Saints – Chiradzulu Primaries (Susanne Provan)

(i) Re-connection of the Water Supply

My colleague Angela and I visited our partner school, Chiradzulu Primary School, in Malawi in September 2009. During one of our first tours of the school and grounds we noticed a wooden built structure just outside the school office and we asked the Head Teacher, Alan Wasi, about it. He told us that they had built it so that they could provide

water for the children throughout the day as it becomes very warm. Sadly the school hadn't been able to keep up the water payments to the Water Board and as a result their supply had been cut off six months ago leaving the pupils and staff without any drinking water at all. Mr Wasi said there had also been problems because the bills they had been receiving had included costs for providing water to some of the staff houses and accommodation round about. The staff and Education Committee of Chiradzulu Primary School wanted to install some piping to allow the children to have drinking water again but also hadn't been able to afford to have that work done. My colleague and I asked the Head Teacher for the paperwork/bills and could see for ourselves how much was owed. We suggested to the Head Teacher that maybe we could try to sort this problem out and suggested we make a visit to the Water Board. On our first visit there we told the 'Head of Operations' that we were very unhappy about this situation and we wanted him to provide us with a comprehensive set of paperwork from which we could work out a plan. After discussion between ourselves and the Head Teacher, we decided to go ahead and pay the full amount owed, reconnection fee and the amount needed to provide the correct piping so that the school would only be charged for the water going directly into the school itself. We also bought buckets with taps attached and plastic cups for each class so that when the water supply was reconnected then the children could access this for themselves.

The necessary plumbing work was carried out soon after our departure from Malawi and now that the water supply has been reconnected we are thrilled that all pupils at Chiradzulu Primary School can have fresh drinking water each day.

(ii) Toilets

In our discussions with the Head Teacher of Chiradzulu Primary, we had learned about the very poor toilet facilities at the school. We agreed that we would undertake a series of fundraising activities which would raise some money to fund the building of new toilets. Fundraising activities included Fun Days, raffles, a 'bag pack' at a local supermarket, jewellery making and loose change buckets.

In September 2009, during one of our first visits around the school and grounds my colleague and I were shown the toilets which the pupils had to use. Sadly there were only 10 toilets for the 2200 pupils to use and these were very simple brick structures with nothing more than a drop hole in the ground. The number of toilets at the school was nowhere near adequate for the large number of pupils attending. Before our return to Scotland we deposited money that all schools had raised, into the Chiradzulu School Bank Account, which would go towards new toilets being built at the school.

In January 2010 we received an email and photograph from Mr Wasi, Head Teacher, showing the first of the new toilets which had been built in the school grounds. All children, staff and parents feel proud that we have helped our colleagues and pupils in our partner school by having these new toilets built for them.

Greenock Academy and Namadidi Secondary

(i) Provision of text books

Namadidi Secondary had virtually no resources in terms of books, jotters, pens and pencils. Liz and I observed a Maths lesson on our first day where the teacher had one textbook (the only maths book in the school) and the pupils copied all information onto scraps of paper using pencil stubs to write with. The teacher asked me if I would take the following day's lesson on Income Tax. Liz and I went into a book shop in Blantyre and

purchased all stocks of the Maths textbook - 20 copies. We also bought a jotter and pen for every pupil in the school. When we returned the following day the teacher and the class cheered when they saw the new textbooks - even though they were still sharing one book for three pupils. The pupils were incredible - highly receptive, very keen to learn and also very able - all calculations are completed longhand and they had never seen a calculator. We had intended to present the school with a laptop but clearly there were far more urgent needs. On the next day we took Patrick (HT) to a book supplier in Blantyre (Macmillan Press) - we had told him beforehand to prepare a list of resources. For almost two hours Patrick assembled piles of textbooks and resources for the whole school. The total cost was £1400 - but unfortunately the company could not take card transactions (using my personal credit card) and we did not have that amount of cash with us. Liz negotiated with the manager that we pay by an International Bank Transfer. We exchanged details and departed with the books. When we arrived at the school there was great celebrations - apparently it would have taken 6 years to purchase those quantities with their own resources. I have phoned and spoken with the manager of Macmillan Press to ensure that he did receive our bank transfer. He had and was only too pleased to help in the future - i.e. we could tell the school to purchase resources and we could pay directly to Macmillan's.

(ii) Gender Equality

While we were in Namadidid CDSS, Liz and I delivered some in-service. I explained 'Enterprise' and how it could be used to develop our partnership as well as developing a range of learning opportunities. Liz delivered a module on 'Gender Equality' - it provoked a lot of debate about the role of girls and barriers to learning.

Inverkip Primary School and Malawi primary

(i) Building and infrastructure initiatives

After securing a British Council Reciprocal grant Morag Paul and I visited our partner school, Malawi Primary, in September 2008. Through discussion with the school staff, village elders and pupils we agreed a list of priorities for the development of the school's education provision and much needed communication links.

The list included: completion of the cooking area, the building of an administration block, installation of electricity and the extension of the existing toilet block (at that time there were six boys' and eight girls' drop hole toilets for 1200 pupils). Another priority high on our list was to open a bank account for the school so that we could transfer the necessary funds for the completion of the listed work.

To date, through various fund raising activities we have raised *all* the money required for these projects. These included a rock band concert in Gourock, 'Bags for Malawi' nights in the Inverkip hotel, a 'Chilly Dip for Malawi' organized by the employees of the Inverkip Hotel, the sale of Malawi calendars comprising of photographs from our visit, pupils' bring and buy sales, a 'Summer Solstice' concert and a coppers jar in the staffroom. Inverkip school community has been able to meet *all* the identified priorities. The provision of two solar panels was through contacts with a Strathclyde University project researching power in rural areas in developing countries.

(ii) Other projects

We have agreed to continue to support the much needed feeding programme started in Malawi three years ago by the World Health Organisation. Inverkip will fund the purchase of maize for the provision of one bowl of porridge per day for all pupils.

Another visit priority was the establishment of curricular links. This was achieved through a joint project on Sugar Production. This has been very successful with the pupils of Malawi receiving a visit from the Casanthula sugar company manager and pupils in Inverkip presenting the completed topic to a group of local councilors, education representatives and the chair of the Scottish Fair Trade Organisation.

A condition of the reciprocal grant is that visits must be made by both schools within a year of receiving the grant. This resulted in Mackson Timba (HT Malawi Primary) and Henderson Chipondeni (link teacher) visiting Inverkip Primary in May 2009. In September 2010 a further two members of Inverkip staff will visit Malawi through the government grant awarded to Inverclyde for this purpose. As we have secured the next level of funding from the British Council (curricular grant) we are now planning a visit from another two members of Malawi staff in November 2010 and a third visit by Inverkip to Malawi in May 2011.