



MAMIE MARTIN

SINCE 1993

EDUCATING GIRLS. EMPOWERING MALAWI.

Our support of girls' education in Malawi

AN IMPACT REPORT





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Girls' education is fundamental to the development of any country.

Malawi, like so many African countries, struggles to provide education for all its children. Girls are less likely than boys to complete their education and this trend was already obvious to Mamie Martin in the 1920s. The Mamie Martin Fund (MMF) continues the work that Mamie Martin did in encouraging and supporting girls to complete school.

Executive summary

This report presents the data collected in an impact research study funded by the Scottish Government to support capacity-building in the organization. The study explored the impact of the Mamie Martin Fund's work through interviews with a range of stakeholders in Malawi.

The MMF currently supports girls at four schools but ex-pupils and teachers from other, previously supported, schools were also included in the respondents for this study. Forty six interviews were held and written up; nine of these were teaching staff, six were girls who currently receive funding support from MMF and 30 were ex-pupils who received support in the past. The term 'beneficiary' is used in the report because it is how those involved in Malawi describe those who are or were in receipt of funding support.

The interviews with teachers and ex/pupils present a picture of severe poverty among families who want to send their children to secondary school. Typically girls are not able to afford their fees because of the death of one of more parents and the subsequent financial pressure on the extended family. School fees in Malawi have risen in recent years, putting extra pressure on families who have low incomes. Many girls start secondary school on the basis of a deposit towards the fees and are then 'chased'¹ home but do not return because their families cannot meet the fee demand. It is often at this point in the process that most girls are

identified by the teachers as needing financial support and are referred to the MMF. In the context of widespread poverty it is difficult for the school staff to identify the girls who are in most need of financial support.

Interviews with ex-pupils provide data on the long-term importance to those girls of MMF support. More than half had been successful in gaining a place at a University or Teacher Training College in Malawi and were now studying or had graduated. None of them could have studied at tertiary level without MMF support at secondary school. The ongoing problem of funding for Higher Education places is evident in the stories related in this report.

The data collected in this research demonstrate the value placed on education by Malawian girls and their families. The data also illustrate the widespread poverty which restricts educational opportunities for so many children and the wider needs (transport, medicine, building work etc) which the MMF is unable to meet. The greatest unmet need which is recorded in this study is funding for tertiary education.

In spite of these challenges, the interviews in this study indicate how support with school fees is such a powerful force in the lives of the girls who are involved. MMF provides for approximately 80 girls a year; it enables them to be at school and it is an essential part of their education so that they can play their part in the future development of Malawi.

¹ This term is widely used to mean that the girls are asked to return home and come back with the fees.

1 Introduction



1.1 Girls' education in Malawi

Although most Malawian children enrol at primary school, just one third complete this stage of their education and most do not have the opportunity to access secondary education. Only 26% of children complete their schooling, with completion rates as low as 16% for girls (*Moore, 2011*). In 2010 one third of women aged 15 years and over were unable to read or write, over a quarter having never attended school. At that time only 20% of young women held any kind of qualification (*National Statistical Office, 2012*).

Poverty is a major barrier to children's education, impacting on children's basic rights to health, and protection from harm and exploitation (*UNICEF, 2015*). Malawi continues to face the consequences of an AIDS epidemic, with far-reaching social and economic impacts on the population. An estimated one million Malawians live with HIV and over three quarters of a million children have been orphaned because of AIDS (*USAID Malawi, 2015*). Secondary schools in Malawi are fee-paying, even those funded by the Government. When young people lose one or both parents they often grow up without the necessary financial support to attend school beyond primary level; they then become reliant on the resources of extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles.

Malawian girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys, facing a range of gender-specific cultural and practical barriers to continuing school including early marriage and pregnancy. Lack of money is the primary reason for Malawian girls not attending school (*National Statistical Office, 2012*). It is this basic inequality that the MMF aims to address in order to enable more girls to access secondary school education.



1.2 MAMIE MARTIN

The Mamie Martin Fund is a Scottish charity which was established in 1993 to take forward the work of Mamie Martin.

Mamie, with her husband Jack, worked as a missionary in Northern Malawi in the 1920s. She, ahead of her time, saw the need for girls to be educated and to take their place alongside men in Malawian society. Her letters and diaries, published in the book *Salt and Light* (Sinclair, 2003), resonate with comments from more recent writers and researchers who have emphasised the importance of girls' education for a country's development.

'In all my visits to the schools I try to encourage the girls to continue their studies past the L.C., i.e. Standard 1. Very very few girls ever get past that.'

Letter dated March 1923 (Sinclair 2003, p123)

The Mamie Martin Fund works with its partners in Northern Malawi to enable girls, who would otherwise be denied secondary education because of poverty, to access secondary school. The Fund pays the fee costs for girls who have been allocated a place at school but are not able to afford the annual fees. Girls may also be helped with costs for clothing, medicine, educational material, travel and boarding. MMF is funded by voluntary donations which are sent to Malawi and by the Scottish

Government for capacity-building work to help the organisation to be stronger and more effective.

In the past 22 years, MMF has funded over 2,500 school places for girls and disbursed more than £350,000 to Malawi to that end. Currently approximately 80 girls are supported each year. The work of the fund is managed by an MMF administrator in Malawi, supported by the MMF Malawian Committee. This Committee sits within the Education Department of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Synod of Livingstonia, which covers the Northern Region of Malawi. It is made up of the head teachers of each of the schools where MMF supports girls' education, the MMF Malawian Administrator and the Synod Education Secretary. The Committee is independent and meets at Mzuzu three times a year to decide on the support required and to report on progress and finances. Decisions about funding are then made in consultation and partnership with the MMF Scotland Committee.

1.3 The schools

The Mamie Martin Fund has supported girls at a number of schools in the north of Malawi since 1993. See map, figure 1, for the locations of schools currently being funded.

Bandawe Girls Secondary School is in the southern part of Nkhata Bay district, 100 km from Mzuzu. MMF has been paying school fees for an average of 52 girls per year for over 15 years, a total of about 780 pupils². The school was originally established in 1997 as a girls-only boarding school, using the boarding facilities of the Bandawe primary school. The MMF funded the building of the first hostel. During the research the head teacher highlighted the benefits of the hostel to the school, saying that it has helped to promote and safeguard the right to privacy of hundreds of girls.

Ekwendeni Girls Secondary School is situated in the northwestern part of Mzuzu, 100 Metres from the main road. MMF started helping students there in 1995 and in 2011 the school changed its funding status to private; there are currently only two MMF-supported pupils at Ekwendeni.

Elangeni Secondary School is in the northern part of Kasungu, south west of the Nkhamenya trading centre, 9 km from the nearest main road, and 110 km from Mzuzu. The school was established in 2007 and to date MMF has supported 28 students at the school.

Karonga Girls Secondary School is in the northern part of Mzuzu at the centre of Karonga town, 1 km from the main road. The school was opened in 1998. MMF started assisting girls there in 2006 and so far has supported 72 students in this school.

Robert Laws Secondary School is located in Embangweni, in the southwest of Mzimba district, 130 km from Mzuzu. Girls at Robert Laws have been supported in the past but there are no current beneficiaries because this is now a boys-only school.

² 'Pupils' in the school records relates to annual fees –so 'pupil school years' might be more accurate but is too clumsy to include in main text.



1.4 Aim of evaluation

The Mamie Martin Fund (MMF) has been directly supporting girls' secondary school education in Northern Malawi, in partnership with the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (CCAP) Synod of Livingstonia, since 1993.

MMF's guiding principle is:

“ No girl whom has gained a secondary school placement should have to forfeit it on account of poverty or hardship. ”

This report summarises the methods and outcomes of an evaluation of the impact on the lives, families, and communities of the girls supported by MMF. The evaluation was funded by the Scottish Government International Development Small Grants Programme.

Figure 1: Map of Malawi with currently funded schools

2 Methods



2.1 Management

The evaluation process was jointly managed by the MMF Malawi and Scotland Committees. A Research and Information Assistant (RIA), Martha Chirwa, was employed to take the research forward. The research combined process and outcome measures to gain a better understanding of processes and outcomes.

- **The processes** whereby the need for educational funding from MMF was accessed and funds allocated and managed.
- **The outcomes** of MMF support from the perspectives of school educators and both former and current beneficiaries of the MMF.

The RIA visited all the secondary schools which were currently making, or had previously made, use of MMF funds to support their pupils. She conducted semi-structured interviews with current and former pupils, head teachers, bursars and one family member (*see Appendix 1 for the interview schedule*). She sampled former beneficiaries using a snowball method, whereby former beneficiaries were asked if they knew the whereabouts of others who had been recipients of MMF funding. Snowball sampling is a useful method when it is difficult to identify and make contact with members of a networked population (*Robson, 2011*). This method involved the use of online social networks (e.g. Facebook and email) as well as direct contacts. Numbers and other details of interview

participants are summarised in Table 1.

Inevitably conducting research in Malawi, which experiences considerable infrastructure problems, involved some challenges, including difficulties accessing:

- Up to date records
- Fit for purpose research equipment
- Some research participants, including former beneficiaries.

Some of these issues will be reported on in more detail in the Findings section of the report.



Martha
Chirwa
researcher

2.2 Methodology

The data on which this report is based was collected by face-to-face semi-structured questionnaires (see Appendix 1) with a range of stakeholders, shown in Table 1.

Beneficiaries of MMF funding were identified by the school teachers in the first instance. They were able to identify current recipients of MMF support and, sometimes, to provide contact information for girls who had received this support and had now left school. From that point, ex-pupils were often able to put the researcher in touch with other beneficiaries, in a typical 'snowball' sampling technique. One of the former beneficiaries identified herself when she recognized the MMF logo on the bag carried by the researcher in a town.

The numbers of girls to be interviewed was capped at 36 because of resource limitations. Efforts were made to include girls and young women from a range of geographical areas and with a range of outcomes.

SCHOOL	STAFF	CURRENT BENEFICIARIES	FORMER BENEFICIARIES	FAMILY MEMBERS	TOTAL
BANDAWE	3	2	7	-	12
EKWENDENI	1	-	8	-	9
ELANGENI	1	2	6	1	10
KARONGA	3	2	3	-	8
ROBERT LAWS	1	-	6	-	7
TOTAL	9	6	30	1	46

Table 1: Numbers and roles of evaluation participants at each school

2.3 Ethical considerations

The report is illustrated with case study accounts and photographs of participants. All participants were over 16 at the time of interview and have given written consent to their publication for this purpose, on the form reproduced as Appendix 2.

Only one former pupil declined to give consent for her photograph to be taken; all the others were happy about that and expressed clear approval for those pictures to be used publicly in order to benefit the work of the MMF.



3 Findings



3.1 Profile of MMF beneficiaries

Six current school attendees (aged 17 to 19) and 30 former beneficiaries were interviewed. Half had started receiving support from MMF during their first year at secondary school, with others accessing this support later in their school careers.

Many of the young women had experienced the deaths of one or both parents during their childhood, and had been brought up with the help of extended family members, including elder siblings, uncles, aunts and grandparents.

One third came from families in which both parents had died before or during their attendance at school and a further 13 had been brought up by single parents, sometimes with support from other family members. Almost one third (11/36) of the beneficiaries interviewed used the word 'chased' to indicate that they had taken up their school place but the outstanding fees were unpaid and so they were required to return home to get them. Finding the money for the school fees proved impossible for a range of reasons and it was usually at this point that those girls were identified as being in need of and eligible for MMF support.

The need for MMF support was said to arise from a range of financial difficulties, related to:

- The death of one or both parents
- Low income
- Loss of employment
- The strain on responsible adults with multiple financial responsibilities (e.g. for other children from the extended family)
- Rising school fees
- Cost of transport, school uniforms and other necessities

Often it was a combination of these kinds of stresses that led to a request for MMF support. A frequently described chain of events involved mounting difficulties in keeping up with fee payments soon after a girl started secondary school. This then resulted in the girl returning to her family for an extended period because there was no money available, before a request for support was made (*see e.g. Box 1*). Some described having fallen behind their peers as a result of extended periods at home for these reasons.

Box 1

‘Desiree’
Born in a family of nine



Desirée' lost her father when she was still at Primary School. Her mother is not working; she brews beer for their survival. Her Uncle is the one who has been taking care of the family together with her mother.

She was selected to go to Ekwendeni Girls through government selection. She was very excited as she was the only one out of 52 students but she was also worried about school fees. When she was in her first term of Form 1 she was chased to go and collect school fees. She stayed home for a long time and then went back to school without school fees, her uncle wrote the head teacher to keep her. Then the head teacher interviewed her on her background. Then after some time she was put on the bursary³. She has stepbrothers who are well-to-do but they refused paying her School fees knowing they are not of the same mother.

As of now, she is a student at Mzuzu University doing Bachelor of Arts Education finishing this year. She says it made a difference that she finished Secondary School. She has reached this far because of MMF, if not for them she would have been in the village married with kids. She is proud she is finishing her tertiary education. She is so grateful for the MMF.

³ 'Bursary' is used in this report in the Malawian context where it is used to mean payment of fees.

**...she brews beer
for their survival.**

3.2 Process evaluation: Accessing MMF support

Interviews with school staff revealed varying arrangements for identifying and selecting girls for funding support from MMF.

3.2.1 Management of support funding

Three of the schools described committee structures which enabled them to identify and assess the pupils' need for financial assistance through MMF. The committees variously included class teachers, bursar, deputy head teacher and matrons. Elangeni Secondary School said that they had never had a committee to run sponsorship, and there was no information about Ekwendeni Secondary School's previous arrangements. At Karonga Secondary School the committee is renewed annually to bring in new ideas and perspectives. The school also particularly valued regular visits from the MMF Administrator and synod officials so that they remained up to date with funding arrangements.

The students at all the schools were said to know that their fees were paid by MMF and how much that support was. There had been a history in some schools of pupils occasionally benefiting from being supported by double 'bursaries'. Three schools explained their mechanisms for ensuring that this could no longer happen. They sometimes had to take away MMF funding and give that money to another pupil if it was found that the first pupil had a previous scholarship from another source that they had applied for at home. School staff also described mechanisms to ensure that there are no 'ghost students' i.e. students who had left a school but were still in receipt of funding. Instead students who had graduated were routinely replaced by Form 1 pupils in financial need.

⁴ It should be noted that this is not part of the MMF policy and that selection processes have been formalised in the past year.

3.2.2 Identifying pupils who need help

A number of different ways of identifying pupils who may need help were described by head teachers and bursars at the schools:

- Drawing on knowledge of class teachers
(*Elangeni, Bandawe, Karonga, Robert Laws*)
- Checking with the school bursar to identify any financial problems in paying school fees, late payments and paying in small amounts
(*Elangeni, Robert Laws*)
- Sending students with fee balances home and then identifying those unable to return because of financial difficulties
(*Bandawe, Robert Laws*)
- Letters of recommendation from PEAs (Primary Education Advisors) and primary school head teachers describing girls' circumstances (*Bandawe*)
- Involving fellow students who know which of their peers are having financial problems (*Bandawe*)
- Interview of potential beneficiaries by the selection committee (*Robert Laws*)
- Monitoring by matron in the hostel e.g. of clothing, bedding (*Robert Laws, Ekwendeni*)
- Direct application to the committee/ office by students (*Robert Laws, Ekwendeni*).



3.2 Process evaluation: Accessing MMF support

3.2.3 Criteria for awarding MMF funding support

Criteria for selection varied from Elangeni Secondary School, which did not have standard criteria for selection of girls, to Karonga Secondary School which had three criteria:

Level of poverty

Academic ability

Evidence of interest in class and good conduct

Other schools seemed to have less explicit criteria than Karonga but all referred to financial difficulties, and some to girls who were orphans. The head teacher at Robert Laws Secondary School suggested that performance and behaviour should be part of the criteria applied, with misbehaviour being a potential reason for withdrawing MMF funding. At Elangeni there was a misconception that only those who were selected by the Synod should be eligible for MMF support.

When selection processes were discussed by the Head Teachers as a group early in 2015, it was agreed that the schools should apply common criteria. A major difficulty is that the vast majority of the girls are very

poor; the teachers struggled to articulate indicators of poverty which could be used for the selection of pupils because it is so commonplace. It was agreed by this group that the need was for standard ways of identifying need rather than the measurement and comparison of that need and that the school, along with the CCAP Education Department, would have to prioritise the needy girls according to their situations at the time. Identifying very poor girls in the context of such pervasive poverty is a challenging task for the schools and is likely to remain so for some time.

3.2.4 Challenges related to allocating funding support

A number of challenges with managing the funding system were highlighted by schools:

- Delay in receiving MMF funds, resulting in some anxiety for funded students (Bandawe, Karonga).
- A shortfall in funding additional costs such as school uniform and stationery for some pupils (Bandawe).
- Increasing school fees were resulting in an increase in financial hardship for families and so there is more competition for any source of funding.
- The time it could take to identify which Form 1 pupils were most in need of assistance with fees.
- Beneficiaries sometimes received their MMF funding after having been at home for some time because of non-payment of fees. This could make it difficult for students to catch up with other pupils when they did eventually receive the funding.



3.3 Outcome evaluation: Assessment of Impact

3.3.1 Impact on girls at school

Evidence about the impact of receiving MMF support on students' school experiences came from current and former beneficiaries, and members of staff at the schools. All the young women interviewed said that their MMF support had changed their lives. For the former beneficiaries, the financial assistance from MMF had enabled them to complete secondary school education, which would not have been possible otherwise.

In every case but one (a pupil repeating Form 4 at another school) these former pupils had achieved their Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) in Form 4, opening up opportunities for further study and future employment (see 3.3.2). One pupil said that she had had to repeat Form 4, and another had to leave her school because of vandalism, but was able to complete her education at another school.

Both past and current beneficiaries explained that their performance at school had improved after receiving MMF support, most of them citing the removal of personal and family stresses, and the threat of being 'chased' from school for non-payment of fees, as the main cause of this. One pupil commented that it was not easy having fees paid by unknown people, but

that her bursary had nevertheless made her work harder. Two pupils also described how receiving the bursary had made them more inclined to give to others, developing a 'heart of giving' as one current beneficiary, who would like to become a doctor, expressed it (see Box 2).

The significance of MMF funding support to the young women's educational opportunities, motivation and emotional health is conveyed in this selection of quotes from the RIA's interviews:

'In the past she could face problems before being enrolled on MMF, she could just stay in the hostels, not attending classes and just crying, but, after being enrolled, everything changed. She can easily study because she did not have any worries.'

(Taken from interviewer's notes on current beneficiary, CB1)

'Getting the bursary helped her with her secondary education as she could not worry much with school fees issues, she was free minded. It made a big difference that she finished Secondary School, she passed her Form 4 exams and went to do a nursing course.'

(Taken from interviewer's notes on former beneficiary)

‘Getting the bursary helped her as she was able to concentrate on her studies. It also made a difference that she finished Secondary School because now she has a paper [MSCE]. If not for MMF she would have nothing by now.’

(Taken from interviewer's notes with former beneficiary, FB22)

School staff also provided a commentary on the impact of MMF funding to the beneficiaries whilst they were at school. For the most part, staff told the RIA that girls' performance in school improved once they received this support:

‘On the issue of performance, most students change in performance from failure to being a star. They are encouraged by class teachers to work hard so that they should not be dropped. If they are not doing well they are given remedial work. They are also involved in debate and group works. She also said there is change in behavior, they are shaped into good behavior.’

(Teacher, Bandawe Girls Secondary School)

Explaining how MMF support helps the girls to concentrate on their work, the Head teacher at Karonga Girls Secondary School said that:

‘The students put [in] dedication and motivation; they are not chased to collect fees so they concentrate.’

Reports from 2 schools suggested that some girls may be less successful after receiving MMF support. For example, one head teacher said,

‘On performance, most girls improved their performance once they were enrolled but others relaxed since they felt that they were not losing anything, so concentration was very low.’

(Head teacher, Robert Laws Secondary School)

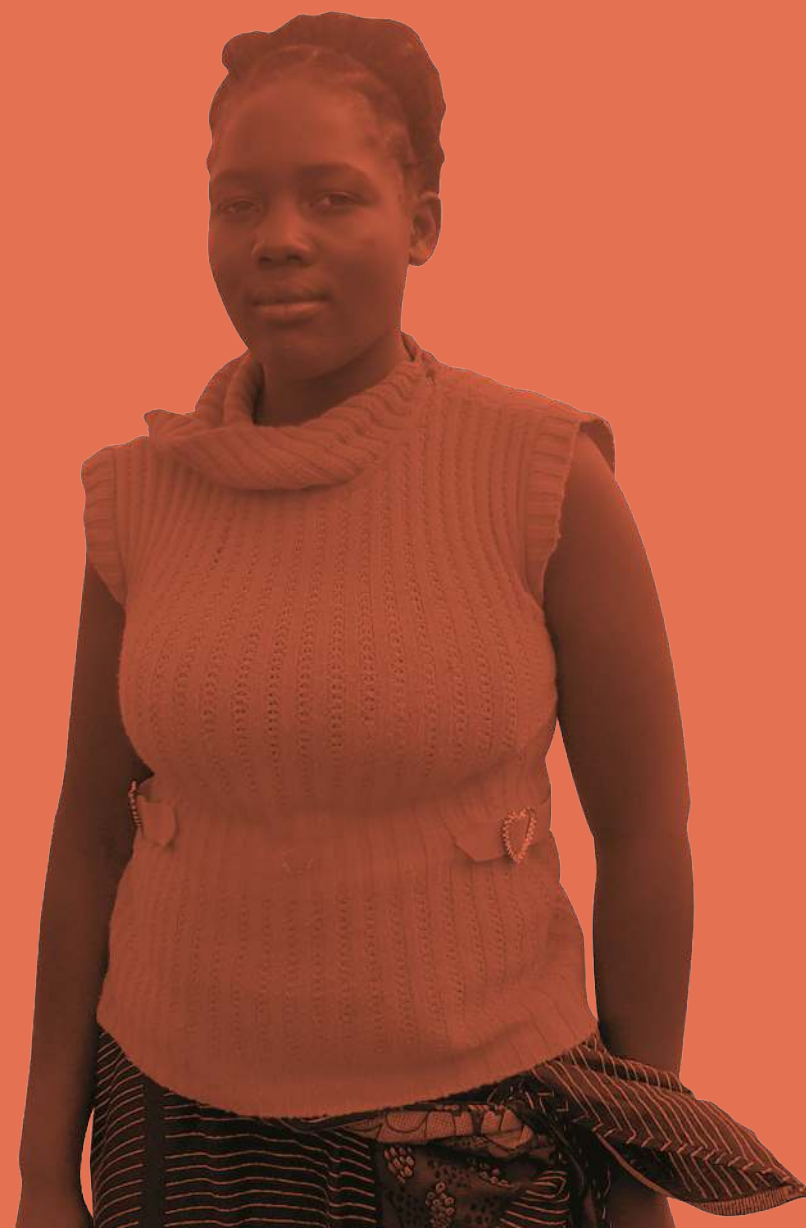
However, no schools reported any current examples of pupils who were less successful at school as a result of receiving funding support from MMF. Two schools highlighted the importance of regular visits from the MMF Administrator, which were thought to be motivating for girls in receipt of fee support from MMF,

‘The Co-ordinator should continue visiting and it should be frequent; through her they get motivated and they should be warned or told that if they are not performing, they will be removed from the fund that will put in a hardworking spirit in them.’

(Teacher, Karonga Girls Secondary School)

Box 2

Current beneficiary 'Ruth'
Aged 17



'Ruth' is the last born and only one to have reached Form 4, all her siblings are married. She is a double orphan and has been raised up by her aunt who is married, but her aunt and the husband are not working.

She became a beneficiary in Form 1. When 'Ruth' was selected she had fears of how she was going to pay fees. When she reached Karonga Girls, she found the Head teacher and explained to her about her problems and her background. Then she was put on the fund. The fund has helped her, has changed her life and has helped her finish secondary education because she would not have reached this far if not for the fund. Her aunt has been relieved. In Form 1 she was not working hard but when the Co-ordinator visited, she encouraged them to work hard, she pulled up her socks, and her grades are good now. She changed performance because she knows the MMF are struggling to help poor girls so for her to play is not good.

'Ruth' strongly feels she will pass Form 4, if she does not make it to public universities she will start a small business. She wants to become a medical doctor. She also wants to help others like MMF is doing; she has developed a heart of giving. She is so thankful to the fund; they have helped her to be where she is now and able to complete her secondary school. Without MMF she would have been at home doing nothing because there is no other person to help her.

**She is a
double orphan...**

3.3 Outcome evaluation: Assessment of Impact

3.3.2 Impact on girls' future choices

Beneficiaries were also asked about their future plans and career choices. Current beneficiaries all had ambitions to go to University and to find employment as professionals: lawyers (2), doctors (2), a journalist (1) and a nurse or accountant (1). Interviews with present and past pupils and with teaching staff suggest that the encouragement of MMF funding raises the girls' expectations of themselves, their academic achievement and their ambitions for the future. This chimes with the comments of Mamie Martin herself, almost a century ago, describing a visit to the school in Bandawe,

'I told the girls about how clever Scottish girls were ... As I was afraid the boys might be feeling left out, I warned them that unless they wanted the girls to beat them, they must work hard too. To both boys and girls this is a totally new idea, for the few girls who bother at all are miles behind the boys and content to remain so – the woman's proper place.'

– Letter dated February 1923 (Sinclair 2003, p 119)

Well over half of the former beneficiaries had been successful in gaining a place at a University or Teacher Training College in Malawi (see Figure 2). Some of these students were at University when interviewed, and others had finished their degrees.

However, it is significant that, of the 17 students who gained University places, six had either been unable to take up their place, or had had to return home because of difficulties in paying fees (see Box 3). Of the three former beneficiaries who had left school and not gone on to a job or tertiary education, one was married with a child and two were unmarried and living at home. All three wanted to continue their education but could not afford to. Some of the young women in employment or at teacher training college had also had to relinquish plans to attend university because of funding problems.

Interviews with school staff consistently reinforced the message that having successfully completed secondary school lack of funds makes it very difficult for girls to go on to tertiary education, particularly at private universities. After speaking to a head teacher at one school, the RIA summarised,

'...a myriad of challenges faced by students who do not make it to public universities since by finishing secondary education means going back to the same challenge of lack of resources to support tertiary education, hence going for alternatives such as early marriages, promiscuity... just mentioning a few as sources of easy income to households.'

(RIA summary of comments)

Several schools made a plea for continuing MMF support for their more able students to enable them to take up opportunities for university and college qualifications without which it is very difficult for young women to support themselves:

‘... they [MMF] should follow up the beneficiaries even in tertiary education. At MSCE they pass very well but stay idle after MSCE which has lost its value; the [...] MSCE cannot sustain someone or make one self-reliant today.’

(Head teacher, Bandawe Girls Secondary School)

The former beneficiaries were asked what they thought they would be doing now if they had not benefited from MMF funding for their school fees. The answer to this was unanimous - that they would not have completed secondary education, and would be in their villages, possibly married or with children. In the RIA's account, one young woman also mentioned the risk of prostitution:

‘She is so thankful to MMF for paying her School fees, if she had not completed Form 4 she would have been involved in early marriage or started prostitution. She is able to help her siblings with what she is doing now.’



Figure 2: First destination of 29 former beneficiaries of MMF

Box 3

Former beneficiary 'Tamani'
Aged 17



When she was doing her first and second term it was relatives who contributed, but they could not pay anymore because they had many responsibilities. She was then sent home to go and collect school fees, she stayed home for some time then she was called back by the Head teacher and she was told that she had been put on MMF. The balances she had were all squared.

Being on the bursary helped her a lot because without it she could not have completed Secondary School. The bursary came as a relief to her grandparents because they really wanted her to finish Secondary School and it also paved her way.

She said it made a difference that she finished Secondary School; it beamed a way for her and also opened up her future. If not for MMF she would have been married, life could have been worse, she believes she is destined for a better future so if not for the bursary her destiny could die. Currently she is a student at Catholic University doing Degree in Economics though she has not been in College for two semesters because of College fees. She lost her grandfather when she was doing her Second year in College; since then, things changed. She was then chased from College. She is still struggling to find fees. If she gets the fees then she will go and continue with her third year.

...they could not
pay any more...

3.3 Outcome evaluation: Assessment of Impact

3.3.3 Impact on families and colleagues

The beneficiaries were asked about any impacts on their families related to receiving funding for their fees from MMF.

Most students said that the funding had had positive outcomes for other family members. In particular, it had made budgeting for basic needs, such as food and clothing, at home easier and had enabled families to pay for the education of beneficiaries' siblings. Other benefits were less tangible, including a sense of relief and making family members proud that their daughter 'is going to be somebody'. In relation to one former beneficiary, the RIA explained that,

'Getting the bursary helped her because it laid a good foundation for them. Generally at her home village they do not take education seriously but with the bursary they were encouraged, the bursary motivated them to work hard. She felt lucky being on MMF and it made a great difference that she completed Secondary School, the family is proud that she finished school.'

The RIA conducted one joint interview with a former beneficiary and her father (*Figure 3*), describing how he was

'.. all smiles to the support provided by MMF and the impact made to the daughter, and the easiness brought about after being relieved from supporting the daughter, and being able to support other siblings properly.'

One former beneficiary also talked about how she was now earning a wage that could support her grandmother and younger children in the family.

Finally, a former beneficiary who is now a football coach described how her educational experiences had prompted her to encourage her team mates to take education seriously.

3.3.4 Impact on communities

Evidence of broader impacts on communities in Malawi is, inevitably, more difficult to substantiate. However, it was clear that the MMF is valued by the schools that work with the MMF committee and that its support of girls' education enables young women to complete secondary education and, in many cases, go on to contribute to Malawian society.

Former beneficiaries interviewed during this evaluation were making important contributions to their communities through employment in, for example, nursing, orthopedics, primary teaching, data analysis, resource management and community health. Summing up the impact of MMF, one head teacher told the RIA that,

'.. the fund has helped both the school and the country to produce very productive citizens over the years. The fund has also assisted a lot in alleviating the challenges associated with orphanhood, especially in this HIV and AIDS era. It helps girls avoid rejection in society, school dropout, early marriage, suicide and unwanted teenage pregnancies. MMF has been a long term solution to the challenges faced by the girls, unlike the handouts given elsewhere by some local or international organisations.'



4 Recommendations made by participants in Malawi



4.0 Recommendations

Many of the contributors to this evaluation emphasised the benefits of the MMF to young women, families and communities and expressed the wish that the fund would not only continue but also find ways to increase the number of young women it could assist.

- Funding for tertiary education continues to be a major unmet need for young women who complete secondary school education.
- Visits from the MMF Malawi Administrator are highly valued for information and motivational purposes. It was suggested by one school that these might be increased from a visit once a term.
- One school highlighted the need for financial assistance with building projects.
- One school suggested that there should be a reward for outstanding MMF students.

Challenges in the current management systems were identified by the Head Teachers and other non-pupil stakeholders, viz.,

- Better record keeping at all levels of the local management of the fund would support those involved.
- Late payment of fees and delays in identifying those for whom this meant inability to pay those fees is a challenge. Better recording systems would help with this difficulty.

5 Conclusion & looking forward



5.0 The impact report

This impact study involved interviews with 46 teachers, girls and young women, of whom six girls were currently receiving support with their school fees from the MMF and thirty were ex-pupils who had received such support during their time at secondary school.

The clear view from all participants is that the support of the MMF is vital to the education of the girls it supports. Data about the progression of those girls suggest that MMF is a vital part of the journey to University, Teacher Training College and professional jobs for most of those it was able to support. An element of the feedback suggested that support with their secondary schooling raised the girls' expectations of themselves and their futures. This is reported in the girls' responses and supported by many of the teachers' comments.

Recommendations made by respondents in the study are reported in section 4. Those recommendations highlight the ongoing value of MMF funding to the education of girls in the schools supported. Within those recommendations the paucity of funding for tertiary education is a strong thread along with consistent expressions of concern about the unmet needs for many of the girls supported. In addition to the need for support for transport, medicine, uniforms etc. for the girls, the schools indicated an ongoing need for financial support with building costs within the schools. In the past, the MMF has provided these kinds of supports but this has not been possible for some years because of a drop in MMF income and the considerable increases in school fees in Malawi.

5.2 Key lessons

Key lessons from this research for the Mamie Martin Fund appear to be:

- Impact on girls, their families and communities is considerable
- The ongoing funding of school fees is a vital support to the girls, their families and the communities from which they come
- MMF funding has impacted positively on the vast majority of those who have received it over the years
- That impact has been educational, financial and personal.
 - *Local management of the Fund could be improved and further supported*
- The role of the Malawi Administrator is important in managing the funding allocations and in supporting the schools and pupils
- Better record-keeping at school and Synod level would enable MMF funding to be more tightly targeted and its impact measured and monitored.

Measures are in hand to improve record-keeping at a local level and these will be supported by work made possible by a further grant from the Scottish Government to establish and support monitoring and evaluation systems in relation to MMF funds in Malawi.

Managing the selection of pupils to benefit from the Fund is an area which needs further support and ongoing dialogue

- There has been considerable variation (and at one school confusion) about criteria for MMF support, as well as evidence of the difficulties experienced in identifying the pupils who are most in need of assistance. Not all schools have committees to make funding decisions.
- Shared criteria for eligibility for funding and consistent application of those criteria would help the schools to identify and offer support to those most in need, and make best use of MMF funding to improve outcomes for girls in Malawi.
- Work started early in 2015 on shared understandings of the basis of eligibility for MMF funding. This includes agreed ways of eliciting the necessary information about particularly needy girls without causing further distress to the girls concerned.

5.3 Recommendations for ongoing work

A clear recommendation which emerges from this study is that the MMF should strive to continue its work of supporting girls at secondary school.

The support of these pupils should be matched with support for the local Administrator and the Head Teachers of the schools involved.

Such support would facilitate a shared understanding of the principles behind MMF funding. The Malawi Administrator and the Head Teachers of the partner schools are a vital part of continuing to develop systems of selection of girls for MMF assistance.

Associated with this support and local work is the need to continue the development of good record-keeping at school and Synod level.

Record-keeping processes should be integrated with management of the fund in Scotland and work is underway to develop robust systems in this area of our work together.

Communication is the key to good support systems and the data in this study suggest that communication at a local level and, particularly, between the MMF in Scotland and their partners in Malawi can be improved.

Annual visits by one or more trustees would facilitate improved communication and be a support to those who are dealing with the challenges of managing this fund on a daily basis in Malawi. As staff change, the mission of the MMF and the principles of its funding can

become less clear and that information needs to be constantly refreshed. Going forward, it is clear that the historic work of Mamie Martin and its continuation by the MMF is still vital in the villages and towns of North Malawi. Because the organization has been working in that area for more than 20 years, strong relationships are evident and there is considerable commitment to continuing that partnership in the most effective way possible, to the benefit of girls and young women and, ultimately, to the benefit of Malawi itself.

Enhanced communication between Scotland and the Malawi partners could support solutions to some of the issues identified in this study.

Trustee visits could be used to support work on record-keeping systems and shared understandings of eligibility criteria and their application. Such communication would be aimed at supporting those working on the ground in areas of great need and would help them to target MMF funding in the most effective way. It is clear that ongoing funding of secondary school places has enhanced so many lives and communities by supporting the education of girls in those communities. Feedback from those directly involved confirms the need to continue that funding.

6 References



6.0 Miscellaneous references

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7 Appendices



7.1 Appendix 1: Semi-structured interview schedule

(interview to last no more than 45 minutes)

NAME	AREA OF RESIDENCE CCAP SCHOOL ATTENDED & DISTANCE TO RESIDENCE IF KNOWN	WHEN ATTENDED MMF SUPPORTED SCHOOL

1. Can you tell us about your family (including your parents) and where you come from?
2. How did you gain a place to go to secondary school? How was that experience?
3. Why were you granted an MMF bursary to help with your secondary schooling?
4. How did getting an MMF bursary help you at secondary school?
5. Did it make a difference to you and your family that you finished secondary school?
6. What do you do now? (including occupation, job etc)
7. If you had not completed secondary school, where do you think you might be now and what might you be doing?

7.2 Appendix 2: Consent form used in the research

CONSENT FORM

(please make sure that any interviewee fills out the consent form before interview)

I have read the information about the study information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print Name of Participant _____

Do you consent to your name being used in our report? YES / NO (please circle)

Do you consent to your photo being taken and used in our report? YES / NO (please circle)

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/month/year

Please provide an email or phone number so that we can send the report to you when finished:



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