The Mamie Martin Fund works to advance the education of young women and girls in North Malawi

‘Girls’ education strengthens economies and reduces inequality.’

https://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education

The Mamie Martin Fund supports Malawian girls who have a place at secondary school but cannot afford school fees. MMF pays their fees and also provides a little support for other essential items, some school-related and some very personal. The charity started in 1993 to carry on the work of Mamie Martin who was a missionary in Malawi in the 1920s and believed that girls had the same rights to education as boys.

Sara (pictured) was an orphan in North Malawi. Her grandparents sold their blankets to pay some school fees before this poverty was identified by the school and she was given an MMF bursary (2007 – 2010). Sara is now a paediatric nurse in Malawi and is pictured here on an exchange programme with a University hospital in Oslo, Norway.

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Malawi is a land-locked country in the southeast of Africa. Lake Malawi takes up about a third of its area. It is one of the world’s poorest countries. Scotland - Malawi relationships go back to 1859 when David Livingstone first visited Malawi.
Why support girls’ education in Malawi?

Malawian girls are more likely to drop out of secondary school than boys, facing a range of cultural and practical barriers to education, including early marriage and pregnancy. The MMF aims to combat these fundamental inequalities, fighting poverty through education which empowers girls and improves their employment opportunities. Educated women tend to have fewer children and they are better able to educate those children in turn. The death or absence of a father is a factor that comes up repeatedly in the stories of MMF girls about why they need MMF’s help. Daughters of subsistence farmers are always very poor too. Small scale farmers produce about 80% of Malawi’s food but make only a meagre living, with little cash available to pay for school fees.

In the last 27 years, MMF money has funded over 2600 school places for girls and MMF will support 138 girls across six secondary schools this coming year. The girls are selected by the schools on the basis of need alone. They are supported until they finish secondary school and 81% of MMF girls complete their schooling as against the national average of 21% (2013).