

Linda's Fund

Newsletter February 2024

**Celebrating 18 years and
36 bursary students**

**A Fund for Education in
Malawi in Memory of
Linda Nelson 1954 – 2006**



**New students Sipiwe and
Richard started plumbing
courses at Milonga College**

A Message from the Trustees

This is our seventh Newsletter to everyone who has helped us or expressed an interest in the Charity. Linda's Fund was set up in 2006 to improve educational provision for over 600 pupils of Mulanje Mission Community Day Secondary School in Malawi, through bursaries and school projects. Girls and boys have equal access to the funds. Mulanje School is partnered with Fortrose Academy on the Black Isle in Scotland.

The aim of the Newsletter is to show what has been achieved with your help over the last year and what current activities are taking place. Please do let us have any feedback through the website at www.lindasfund.org.uk.

Charity News

We had sufficient funds to start 2 new students in 2023. After a quiet year and lack of funds, following the Pandemic years, a further 2-3 students are being allocated in 2024 which will bring us back to 4-5 students a year in total. We have been delighted to have been allocated funds from the Pignatelli Foundation and also received more personal donations since the end of our financial year allowing us to be more optimistic.

Since the start of Linda's Fund in 2006 36 students have now been awarded bursaries for the following subjects.

Teacher training	1	Hairdressing	1
Electronics	1	Motor vehicle maintenance	8
Bricklaying	4	Plumbing	6
Electrical Installation	6	Accounting	3
Agriculture and Rural studies	2	Public Health	1
Welding	2	Tailoring	1

Details of past bursaries are available on www.lindasfund.org.uk

Students starting in 2023

Richard Ned, Sipiwe Limited

Students completing in 2023

Giff Alula completed a welding course at Nansomba Technical College. He hopes to purchase a welding machine to start a business.

We try to assist each student with some start up tools at the end of courses.

Videos of two previous bursaries are included on the website.



Typical Course Costs

Student costs

Medical, safety and equipment	£45 - £150
Computer (2 nd hand if required)	£220
Course fees per term	£140 - £325
Boarding Fee per term	£80 - £120
Exam fees per term	£25 - £50
Start up grant if appropriate	£20 - £70
Tools at end of course	£0 - £75



Completed Teachers houses



School celebrations at Fortrose Hall.



The Headmaster receives a laptop for the school for their excellent performance

**Our website is
www.lindasfund.org.uk**

#1 Best NCD Clinic in Southern Malawi 2023



Mulanje Mission Hospital won a first prize for best non-Communicable Diseases clinic in Southern Malawi for the second year in a row.

Mulanje School News

Mulanje school is growing with the largest enrolment of 750 since the school opened in 1989. Evening classes have grown from 225 to 488. Teacher pupil ratio is 1 to 75 or even 1 to 80 and there is a need for additional furniture for students due to the increases.

Academically, the pass rate for national exams grew from 66.7 last year to 99.75 this year and 7 students went to university which is rare in most of the rural community schools. This year the school have produced the best results in a region of 122 schools and were awarded several prizes including a laptop for their success.

Mulanje Mission Hospital

Mulanje Mission Hospital is a close friend to Linda's Fund and on our visits we have toured the hospital, joined the Youth Club visits to the community and seen first hand the fantastic work they do. Below is one of their recent stories. Further details of their work can be found at www.mmh.mw

Welding for a living: meet businesswoman Agnes Lifa

—by Wise Ndawa

The year 2023 ends with a smile on the face of Agnes Lifa, 23 year old. A very courageous young woman who thought her economic chances had diminished when she had a baby in 2020.

It came as a dream when she was identified and enrolled in vocation skills training through our Teenage Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) project, funded by EMMS International (Scotland). This programme was introduced to prevent teenage pregnancies through women empowerment and increasing awareness on reproductive sexual health services and rights to adolescent girls and young women. It also features a back-to-school programme.

Agnes Lifa is one of the beneficiaries in the TPP project. This is her story:

" I did a welding training for six months in 2021 with support from Mulanje Mission Hospital through the TPP project. Today am glad to say that I got a job and am able to support my child and my family through welding. I have gained vast experience in welding and I don't just do welding of windows or door frames but I have also learnt how to do roofing of houses using steel metal. My plans are to become independent and start my own business. Currently I am saving money to start buying my own equipment, I have given myself one and half a years to raise funds and open up my own welding shop. To my fellow young women: never give up in life"

Empowering women is not just a matter of social justice; it is crucial for achieving sustainable development and creating a more prosperous and inclusive world.



▲ Agnes Lifa at the new work shop at the Youth Centre



Fundraising

We approached several philanthropic trusts in 2023 and were delighted to have received an award from the Pignatelli Trust. The Trust support various charities including those that help young people develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.

We and all staff and bursaries in Malawi are extremely grateful for all the donations in support of the work in Malawi. We can't do everything but small steps add together to make a big difference.

Malawi

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world. The estimated population of 21 million (2022) is expected to double by 2038. The economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which employs over 80% of the population, and it is especially vulnerable to climatic shocks. Following Tropical Cyclone Freddy in 2023 Headline inflation rose to 28.4% in July 2023. Food inflation reached 39.3%.

Student Stories



Photos of Richard and Siphwie getting experience at Mulanje Mission Hospital

Our new 2023 bursaries are currently working in the Mulanje Mission Hospital gaining industrial experience before returning to College later in 2024 to complete their studies.

Richard Ned

Richard is 23 in 2024. He has six siblings and attended MMCDSS. He Wishes To obtain a certificate in Plumbing.

Siphwie Limited

Siphwie is 21 in 2024 and has four siblings. She enjoys watching football and playing netball and is keen to obtain a certificate in Plumbing.

2024 New Bursaries

In early February 2024 we have just agreed to support two students Geoffrey Kamwendo and Madalitso Musewu to study Motor cycle Mechanics. Further details will be shown on the website when available.

www.lindasfund.org.uk



Past and Present student News

We encourage bursaries to keep in touch with us after completion of their courses. Here are some of their stories from current and past students.

Gift James Alaula Completed his welding course in 2023 at a local college.

Gift was born in April 1998 and is the last born in the family of four. Currently he is unemployed but hoping to set up his own welding business so he is currently looking for funding to help purchase equipment.

Louis Mbingwani Studied Electrical Installation 2014 -2018

One of our star pupils who now works in Lilongwe working in the food industry for a poultry supplier. Louis now has a son and is very pleased to have a fulltime job to provide for his family. He returns to Mulanje most years to visit school friends and the wider family. Well done Louis!



Finances

All UK funding goes to Malawi with no costs in UK (apart from bank charges). Linda's Fund is run by a small group of volunteers. Our accounts year end is June but figures below also show the situation at the end of the calendar year.

Our yearly expenditure in 2022/23 was £2070 and income, all from donations, was £2141. The fund maintains reserves to allow students to complete their courses. Since the end of June we have received numerous individual donations and an award from the Pignatelli Trust leaving us with a working balance of approximately £8000. The Fund has charity status in the UK and over the years has distributed over £74,000. This money has been raised by generous donations from individuals, sponsored events, pupils fundraising, company donations and The Pignatelli Trust. The long-standing link between Fortrose Academy and Mulanje Mission continues and is supported in both communities.

Finally

Thank you for your interest in the charity, and its work in Malawi that is helping to improve education in one of the many community schools and giving opportunities and hope to students and their families.

If you wish to make a donation to the Fund this can be done from the Donations page on our website at www.lindasfund.org.uk

Or by post to

The Treasurer

Linda's Fund

Fortrose Academy

Academy Street

Fortrose

IV10 8TW

Left over holiday Currency?

Donate it to Linda's Fund at

<https://www.leftovercurrency.com/charity/lindas-fund/>