

Scotland and Malawi: Partnership, Knowledge Exchange and the Power Relationship Between Donor and Recipient

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The research focuses on the sustainability of partnerships and knowledge exchange within the Malawi Education sector as a result of development assistance programmes funded by the Scottish Government. The research considers the role of such partnerships between Scotland and Malawi and further reflects on the nature of the power relations inherent in the partnership, given how both countries use the relationship to strengthen their position on the international development stage. The relationship between donor and recipients within these partnerships reflects the need for developing countries to take a more prominent leadership in the aid relationship. The move towards partnerships; supports the idea of the reversal of the traditional aid relationship of donor and recipient, towards a more equal relationship which allows developing countries such as Malawi to take ownership of development assistance.

This new style of donor-recipient relationship is evident even in the 2005 Co-operation Agreement between Scotland and Malawi, which in its very creation expounds partnership which is Malawian owned, rather than Scottish led. Without doubt, there is clear argument that the development assistance given by the Scottish Government, does as much to put Scotland on the international stage as it does to further the existing partnership between Scotland and Malawi.

Theoretically the 2005 Scotland-Malawi Co-operation Agreement puts Malawi centrally at the aid relationship, focusing on partnership and Malawian input. The Scottish Government Malawi Development Programme, which puts partnership and co-operation at the centre of its aid programme strives to demonstrate that the input of the developing state is key and so development assistance is more sustainable.

The paper will argue that the relationship between Scotland and Malawi, based around co-operation, partnership and knowledge exchange is prevalent in the attempt by both donor and recipient to strengthen their position on the international development stage. Further to this the paper will consider the sustainability of partnership and knowledge exchange particularly within the Malawian Education sector. Based upon case study research, the paper will question the partnership between Scotland and Malawi as a power relationship to strengthen their own positions on the International Stage.