



CASE STUDY: **UPGRADING EQUIPMENT AND SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**

International development of the Malawi Institute of Tourism

Scotland and Malawi have a long history of collaboration, particularly in health and education. Their co-operation agreement signed in 2005 aimed to build upon this history by actively engaging through partnership. Scotland and Malawi agreed to establish sustainable economic development in Malawi, one of the poorest countries in the world, by stimulating enterprise through the exchange of skills and business expertise in relevant sectors and exploring opportunities to develop tourism.

The Malawi Institute of Tourism (MIT) and the Moffat Centre at Glasgow Caledonian University joined up as key partners to develop a sustainable and state-of-the-art education and training facility in order to supply Malawi's emergent tourism industry with quality trained and educated staff.

The Malawi Institute of Tourism infrastructure upgrade project has catalysed and impacted positively on a wide range of recipients since Moffat Centre involvement from 2007. Following an award of development grant funding from the Scottish Government, the Moffat project team was able to lever in significant additional support to Malawi.

While the country has tourism potential due to stunning scenery and employment prospects for trained students from MIT are good, a lack of finance, facilities and educational resources was limiting MIT's expansion in the medium term. There was a clear need for the upgrade of staff qualifications and facilities.

Stage one of the project involved development of library and IT labs. The initial number of computers planned (25) was extended significantly by GCU donations of a further 55 machines allowing the project to develop two rather than one IT facility. Similarly the library has been the recipient of a range of donated books that have added significantly to the stock.

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The work undertaken on teaching and learning has led to the upgrade of syllabus, the introduction of case study techniques and a more effective use of technology across the institution. Working with Moffat staff, a range of commercial short courses for industry have been developed which have become a critical revenue stream for MIT. The college now brings training to the consumer and offers a range of IT training courses from the newly refurbished labs.

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The second stage of development has involved the upgrade and redevelopment of a training and production kitchen and all day food operation. This will provide a seven day income stream that will function as a realistic training environment and location of short course provision. Sponsorship of equipment and donation of a range of items has meant this element of the project has increased its proposed impact.

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Professor John Lennon of the Moffat Centre says: "With a new distance learning element and industry-relevant assignments, the programme is realistically grounded. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and has low bandwidth, so it shows that such an educational programme can be achieved anywhere. We are not just upgrading assets but the knowledge and skills of the people."

GCU teaching content and education materials have cascaded down to positively impact on MIT teaching practice to benefit the wider tourism industry and help develop a more stable economy. Whilst this project has been ongoing, Moffat staff have also raised money on behalf of a nearby orphanage called Yamikani House, and donated shoes, books and clothes (www.kenyawiki-kids.com).

Raising money for food, clothing and education materials has meant that GCU's relationship with the local community has also grown. Sponsorship of children through the school system and volunteer teaching activities by wider family members have also characterised efforts to make a real impact at a local level. The relationship will continue after the formal project input and the impact of this GCU project will be much greater than initially anticipated.