



June 2026

The Soko Fund Annual Report

The Soko Fund was founded in July 2004. The Soko Fund believes in promoting the value of higher education for women in Malawi. To do this, we offer scholarships at university, support after graduation for the early stages of employment, and a peer support programme to encourage young women in secondary school to apply for university. This is the sixteenth formal report since the Fund was created and covers the period from June 2025-June 2026. It summarises the numbers of students supported, the links with Universities in Malawi, the financial position, and developments during the year.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS 2026

The last few years have been challenging for fundraising and as a small charity entirely dependent on individual donation, we are constantly assessing the number of scholarships we are able to offer. This last year, we have been very pleased to support 83 scholars across our partner universities.

Every year the Trustees allocate each university a number of new scholarships and Deans of Faculty are invited to nominate twice that number. Their pre-screening means that only the names of the most able and neediest students reach the Soko Fund. This makes the task of awarding scholarships a very difficult one, though always full of interest.

This annual report is a celebration of all that the Soko Fund does, including graduate and student stories and a Trustee trip!

From Malawi...a Trustee Trip

This year we were fortunate that two of our trustees were able to visit Malawi and meet all our partner universities as well as many of our students and graduates.

Lindsay Graham, trustee and UK Director, along with our newest trustee, Ceris Jones, visited Malawi in November. Working alongside our Malawi Manager, Nancy Dent, the team started with KuHES and MUST in Lilongwe before going north to visit Mzuzu University and finally travelling all the way down to Blantyre in the southern region to visit MUBAS, KuHES Blantyre Campus and University of Malawi in Zomba.

Ceris had never visited Malawi before and enjoyed the seeing all the universities and the students even though it involved a 12 hour bus trip! She said: *"It was a great pleasure to meet all the Soko Scholars and the Graduates. To hear their stories of how much determination and persistence it has taken to get to university is very inspiring."*



Soko Scholars at Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KuHES), Lilongwe.



Soko Scholars at University of Malawi - Clara Bvutani (centre) is one of our Campus Coordinators



Nancy (left, front row) with Soko Scholars from MUST, KuHES and Mzuzu University. The students are studying a range of subjects from Water Management, Nursing, Business and Software engineering.

Graduate Stories....

Ruth Kaphiri, BSc in Nutrition and Food Security

I chose Nutrition and Food Science because I want to bridge the gap of the double burden of malnutrition: both over nutrition and under nutrition. My goal is to work through community sensitization and awareness, promoting good nutrition for better future.

University equipped me with considerable skills in nutrition, food safety, and community work. Field attachments were a particular highlight, allowing me to be involved in educating mothers and conducting screenings. I graduated with both knowledge and practical experience. Currently I am doing a government internship at Chikawa district and I really want to start a community initiative promoting affordable healthy diets.

Graduating was a proud and emotional moment. I felt grateful, relieved and excited to finally use my skills to serve communities. Thank you for investing in my future. You turned my fear of dropping out into a degree that will serve Malawi.

Mary Nkwazi, BA Humanities

I chose to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities because I have a strong passion for understanding people, society, and real-life challenges affecting communities. The programme has allowed me to develop critical thinking, communication, and analytical skills, which are essential in contributing to social development.

After receiving the scholarship, my academic life became much easier and more stable. I was able to focus better on my studies without constant financial stress. The support gave me peace of mind, improved my performance, and motivated me to work even harder towards my goals.

Currently, I am working as a part-time Enumerator, working with Research insight for learning limited participating in data collection exercises on behalf of World Food programme (WFP) and World Bank's DIME. In addition, I also work as a part-time Secondary School Teacher.

I am truly grateful to Soko Fund for the support they provided throughout my academic journey. Your support goes beyond education. It transforms lives. Because of you, I was able to complete my studies and build a strong foundation for my future. Thank you for believing in me and many other students.

Fundraising

The Soko Fund requires approximately £50,000 to support our students and our programmes. This requires a lot of fundraising.

Music for Malawi: *Come and Sing*

On Saturday 18th October 2025, we held our ninth Come and Sing. We were very pleased to have the opportunity to hold this at Stockbridge Parish Church again.



We greatly appreciate the support from the church. This year's offered the opportunity to sing Handel's Choral Classics. The total raised was £3500, enough to provide 6 year-long university scholarships for talented women in Malawi.

The Kilt Walk



being a trustee for many years.

Here are the three friends on one of their training walks. Thankfully the weather on the day was kind to them but so were their supporters - they raised a wonderful £2400!

The Soko Fund is grateful for everyone who donated over the last year. We are fortunate to have regular donations, whose monthly donations bring in nearly £14,000 a year. These regular donors are so important in enabling us to guarantee that we can continue in offering the scholarship. We are also grateful for other grants and donations:

The Ascent Trust has renewed its support for a eighth year, and made a grant of £2000. This is the last year of the Ascent Trust grants but we have been extremely fortunate to benefit from this grant for so many years. In total, the Ascent trust has donated £23,000 to our work. A huge thank you to Angus and Jill McLeod who administer the Trust.



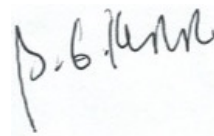
Finance - Accounts and Reserves

A statement of audited accounts and a balance sheet are prepared each year in accordance with the Trust Declaration. The accounts are prepared for the period to end of September 2025 and submitted to OSCR, in accordance with regulations.

An investment report on the endowment fund is prepared by the financial Trustee for each meeting of the Trustees. The financial trustee advises on past performance, and risk exposure, to see if performance could be improved, as well as ethical considerations. Regular reviews are undertaken and changes are made to the investment portfolio following decisions by the Trustees.

The value of the reserves was £69,689 in June 2026. It remains the Fund's priority that the endowment exists to provide finances for all current students to graduation, presently 83 students, should no further fundraising be forthcoming in any year.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'B. Kerr'.

Brian Kerr
Chair of Trustees
29th June 2026