

## Temwa Bursary Scheme - End of Year Report for 2022/23

### Bursary Scheme Project Summary

This report covers progress under Temwa's secondary school bursary scheme during the last half of the 2022-2023 academic year, which started in October 2022.

Secondary school education in Malawi is not free, and the fees and associated costs of uniforms and learning essentials are often unaffordable for families with little household income. In turn, school dropout rates are very high. This scheme ensures that students can benefit from secondary school education, reaching their potential and expanding their future opportunities.



### Activities and support provided

**Financial and material support** – Between March and the end of the school year, Temwa continued providing material support for the students, following the provision of uniforms, stationary, school bags, water filters and school fees at the start of the year. Support for the female bursary students proved to be particularly beneficial. Regular provision of sanitary products and boarding support at the hostels in Usisya, Chipunga, and Chikwina schools have improved school participation, concentration and performance among female bursary beneficiaries.

In May and June, no female student was reported to have been absent due to poor menstrual hygiene, or due to poor travelling conditions caused by heavy rains. The boarding support has hugely reduced the distances travelled to school for many female students, while the hostels provide a safe, conducive environment to study (see Jubilee's story below for more information). Reducing barriers to education that female students face is an essential part of ensuring girls remain in school for as long as possible. In July, of the 9 beneficiaries who successfully completed their studies, 7 were female, indicating improved retention among girls.

**Performance monitoring** – Temwa's Project Officer for Education, Blessings Nyirongo, has continued to conduct regular school visits to assess the performance and wellbeing of the bursary learners. The students developed individual performance targets, as well as strategies to meet these targets.

In April 2023, performance visits indicated that there was a significant improvement in the level of school concentration and participation among bursary beneficiaries during the Term 2 examinations compared to



Term 1, following motivational talks at the start of the calendar year. Out of 25 learners supported by Temwa, 21 (84%) were able to reach the average pass mark, while 16 (64%) managed to reach or surpass their personal performance target. These improvements in performance have been largely attributed to interventions such as the provision of sanitary pads, water filters, and boarding support which have contributed to reduced levels of absenteeism due to long distances from school, illness and lack of menstrual hygiene.

In August, 9 bursary students sat for their Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examinations, which is the secondary school leaving certificate in Malawi. All of these students have successfully graduated. Two bursary students sat their Junior Certificate of Education (JCE). While one passed successfully, the other unfortunately did not pass and is no longer on the bursary scheme. In the 2022-2023 school year, three beneficiary students unfortunately dropped out of the scheme, while one student needed to transfer from Chikwina to a school outside Nkhata Bay North.

**Home visits** - In April, Blessings conducted home visits to the households of all the bursary beneficiaries. These visits help understand the welfare of bursary beneficiaries and assess the impacts of newly introduced interventions such as boarding support, provision of water filters, and torches on school participation and performance. These visits demonstrated improvements in a number of areas, including having a light source for studying, having access to safe and clean water, reduced distance to school, and improved nutrition. Although 90% of beneficiaries live in households not connected to the national electric grid, all the beneficiaries now have access to solar powered torches so that their studies are not limited to daylight. Similarly, while 56% of families hosting beneficiaries normally use water from unsafe water sources, now all the beneficiaries have access to clean and safe water using their new water filters, either at home or in their respective boarding facilities.

We also assessed the support students are receiving at home. The visits showed that 44 % of the beneficiary children are living in households headed by distant relatives, with household members ranging between 5 to 8. These children tend to receive less support with their homework, and find family resources are more stretched. All the students live in households currently living below the poverty line of 1.90\$ (MWK1, 900.00) per day, so the bursary scheme is essential to enable them to attend school properly resourced.



**Graduation Ceremonies** - In June, Temwa also supported graduation ceremonies in Chipunga and Chikwina Secondary Schools hosting Form 4 bursary beneficiaries. As mentioned, a total of 9 Temwa bursary beneficiaries graduated from their secondary school having completed their studies this year.



In Chipunga's graduation ceremony, three of Temwa bursary beneficiaries were rewarded with the best student's award in three categories; best student in academics (Precious Tchuwa), best student prefect (Jubilee Kaunda), best student in languages (Veronica Thera). According to Chipunga's headteacher, Temwa bursary beneficiaries out-shined their friends, in large part due to Temwa's holistic approach in its bursary scheme. He praised Temwa's focus on addressing complex, interrelated challenges facing students, rather than solely paying tuition fees.

**Complementary support** – Temwa continues to provide complementary support to the students, either as part of monitoring visits or through funding from other donors. This includes:



- **Motivational talks:** Blessings has continued holding talks with the bursary students to discuss their academic performance and any challenges the students are facing. These talks encourage students to set their own personal goals to reach throughout the year.
- **Library support:** The bursary students continue to benefit from the learning resources at the Usisya Community Library. Since January, there have been 3,336 recorded visits to the Usisya Community Library, with 1,692 of those visits made by secondary school children. Students benefit from accessing curriculum books and the constructive learning environment, as many of them do not have adequate space or facilities to study at home.

## Success Stories

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### *Jubilee is now an aspiring journalist*



*Jubilee lives with her mother, grandmother and sister in Nkolero village. Her mother's income was unreliable and she couldn't make enough to support her girls and send them to school consistently. Jubilee was often sent home for not having her school fees, uniform, or proper stationary. When she was able to attend, Jubilee had to walk four kilometres each way to school and back every day.*

*She says, "before Temwa I had no future with my education. I could have dropped out in the early classes of secondary school. I could have been married like some of the other girls that were not able to secure a bursary. I could not have been able to get all the necessities I need in school".*

*She continues, "ever since I started getting support from Temwa, my studies have been going very well. I have all the necessities I need in school. I am writing and keeping notes to read later after classes. I can also stay in school all the time without being chased away because of school fees."*

*Jubilee's place in the girl's hostel in Usisya near the school allowed her more time to put into her studies. Before her bursary place, Jubilee says, "I was getting home tired most times and could hardly concentrate on reading. But .... now I have enough time to read. This has helped to improve my performance. I will be sitting for my examinations soon, and I am confident that I will do well." Jubilee successfully graduated in June. In future, said she would like to become a journalist and inspire other girls in her village.*

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### *Precious graduated top of his class*

*Precious Tchuwa joined Temwa's bursary scheme in 2020. Having lost his father at a young age, his single mother could not afford to pay for his secondary tuition. Due to his family's financial difficulties, Precious earned money through farm labouring in order to raise funds for his fees. He often could not make enough money for tuition which led to frequent absenteeism at school. In turn, this affected his performance which was very poor throughout Form 1.*

*After Precious joined the bursary scheme, his performance improved and has consistently been among the best in his class.*



During the graduation ceremony of Form 4 students at Chipunga which took place in June 2023, Precious was praised as the best student in terms of academics having outshined all his classmates with his class performance.

## Lessons Learnt and Meeting Challenges

Below is a summary of the key lessons learnt so far this academic year:

**Material support** – Providing access to school materials, as well as water filters and solar lamps, has been vital to the progress of bursary students this year. The solar lamps mean the students are able to study at home without relying on daylight, while the water filters ensure constant access to clean, safe water, reducing cases of waterborne diseases leading to school absences. Since the water filters were delivered to the students, we have had no reported cases of waterborne diseases preventing them from attending school. Unfortunately, rising inflation in Malawi continues to affect the cost of all material provisions, including the water filters.

**Transport** – Severe rainfall has continued to make travel difficult when visiting the students and schools due to flooded, often impassable roads. However, we purchased a new motorbike in 2022, and have recently purchased a new 4 x 4 vehicle which are proving reliable methods of transport to effectively implement the project despite the unpredictable weather conditions.

**Risks affecting dropouts** - The home visits conducted in April were useful in understanding the risks faced by the students in their home environment, particularly in relation to inadequate sexual reproductive health and early marriages. Arranged marriages are still practised in some parts of the schools' catchment areas, and girls from poorer households are at higher risk. There has been some progress in addressing this issue. For example, one beneficiary reported her family's plans for her arranged marriage to her teachers, who were able to prevent the marriage going ahead. However, two other female beneficiaries were married during the Term 2 school holiday, meaning the number of Temwa bursary beneficiaries temporarily reduced to 23. Temwa is working with the schools to revise the agreements made with beneficiaries at the start of the scheme to control early marriages and prevent dropouts.

## Student Selection and Progress

All students attend Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). The table to the right provides an overview of the distribution of all the students across school years for 2023-2024.

Of these students, 8 have continued from the previous year. As explained above, three students sadly dropped out, one transferred to a new school, three unfortunately did not pass their junior exams, and nine successfully graduated, meaning we are in the process of recruiting 17 new students to the scheme. Those students whose criteria is currently 'pending' are still going through the final stages of the recruitment process, but are likely to be those selected.

School	Category	%	N
Community Day Secondary Schools	Female	58%	14
	Male	42%	10
	Form 1	32%	8
	Form 2	32%	8
	Form 3	20%	5
	Form 4	16%	4
	<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>