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Foreword

Dear readers,
Dear friends of Malawi,

After the general meeting comes the (next) general meeting.

No, don't worry – it's not an extraordinary one, but there will be another general meeting in 2027! And now – whilst our impressions are still fresh – or from afar with your suggestions: Are there any ideas, topics or formats for the event that we could include in our plans? Please do get in touch!

The newsletter includes a report on our events in Berlin, as well as an account from someone who visited Africa and Malawi for the very first time. An experience that lies some time in the past for many of us, and which might just broaden our 'expert perspective' a little!

The new Ambassador of Malawi is (hopefully) due to arrive in Berlin shortly. Perhaps we'll be able to report on this in the next newsletter.

Enjoy reading!

Yours sincerely,

Christiane Bertels-Heering



Public event and general meeting on 5 September

On 5 September in Berlin, our Chair, Christiane Bertels-Heering, welcomed some 30 people to the public event ‘Culture and Economy – Malawi has a lot to offer’, including the current Ambassador of Malawi, Derek Lakudzala, the German Ambassador to Lilongwe, Ute König, and the new country officer at the Federal Foreign Office, Martina Böckmann. The acting ambassador was presented with a congratulatory message from the DMAg to the ‘Scorches’, the Malawian women’s national football team, for their recent international success, with a request that it be passed on.

First, the now internationally award-winning 45-minute documentary ‘Tumaini’ by our DMAg board member Dr Rupert Pöschl was screened – in person only, for copyright reasons. Pöschl is a doctor and ethologist who spent several years documenting this cultural festival in the Dzaleka refugee camp in Malawi, capturing it in a highly professional and compelling manner. He did not shy away from addressing the problems arising from the forced resettlement of residents. This was followed by a few questions for the filmmaker.

Our board member Heinz Stengel then chaired – now also online – a discussion on the topic ‘Opportunities and Challenges for SME Investments in Malawi’. Martin Schäfer, a German investor already active in the country, described his experiences, both positive and some of the difficulties he had encountered. The new Honorary Consul in Hesse, Daniel Imhäuser, spoke about his plans to introduce prospective investors to Malawi through a business delegation. Billy Brae joined us via video link from Malawi; he runs the GEMS Innovation Hub in Blantyre and explained how he supports small and medium-sized enterprises. The Secretary for Industrialisation, Business, Trade and Tourism, Hon. Wiskes Nkombezi, who highlighted, amongst other things, upcoming trade fairs and cultural events. Derek Lakudzala added some information on the recent election and further government plans. Finally, Ambassador König offered a rather sober assessment of investment projects in light of certain bottlenecks in the country. A number of questions from the audience rounded off the discussion. Overall, the event was well received by the audience.



In the afternoon, the DMAg’s regular general meeting took place, attended by 16 members entitled to vote (in person and online). As part of the necessary formalities, the Chair presented the 2025/26 activity report; the 2025 financial report, together with the audit report, was presented; and the Executive Committee was unanimously discharged without further questions. The auditor was re-elected. The minutes will follow shortly.



Personal details

Malawi has a new Honorary Consul for Hesse: **Daniel Imhäuser**. He is a partner and managing director of the Blasius Schuster Group in Offenbach and is involved in a foundation in Malawi. He has already spoken about his plans at our event in Berlin.

The Federal Foreign Office has a new country officer for Malawi: **Martina Böckmann**. She also attended our event in Berlin. Dr Thomas Henzschel has been head of the department since August. We are already in contact with him as well.

Profile: Faith Kumwenda

1. Upbringing and education

I was raised in Malawi in an environment where education was viewed as a pathway to opportunity and independence. From an early stage, I developed a strong sense of responsibility and ambition, which shaped my interest in building practical, impact-driven skills. My parents played a huge role in making sure I grow to become more.

2. Why I chose agriculture

I chose agriculture because of its central role in Malawi's economy and its potential for scalable business opportunities. I wanted a career that could open global opportunities. I was particularly drawn to livestock production, especially pig farming, due to its efficiency and strong market demand.

3. Decision to come to Germany

I decided to come to Germany to gain hands-on experience in advanced agricultural systems, there was an opportunity for skilled agriculture workers so I took it. My goal was to learn structured farm management, modern production techniques, and high biosecurity standards that I can later apply in Malawi.

4. Experience in Germany (professional and personal)

Professionally, I have worked with approximately 100 pigs per production cycle, and during my internship I gained experience managing up to 450 pigs. My responsibilities include facilitating farrowing, piglet processing (including castration), and administering treatments to sows and piglets.





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In addition, I support communication on the farm by translating from German to English for African colleagues, improving coordination and teamwork.

On a personal level, adapting to a new culture and language has strengthened my resilience, independence, and ability to work in diverse environments.

5. Volunteer work in Malawi

In 2023, we met in Blantyre together with Sarah Khudze. During that time, I was volunteering with Reach Out to Girls, an initiative focused on empowering young girls in schools.

I joined the organisation because of the impact it brought to me. In 2016 I was guided on career paths by the same organisation so I thought of doing the same and more to those coming behind me

Through this work, I contributed to training approximately 200 girls in Lilongwe and Blantyre in basic computer skills and career development, helping to build confidence and expose them to new opportunities.

6. Importance of international experience

International exposure is essential for young academics, especially women, as it builds confidence, expands perspective, and provides access to advanced systems and knowledge. It enables individuals to return home with practical skills and a global mindset.

7. Obstacles

Key challenges include limited access to funding, visa restrictions, lack of information about opportunities, and social expectations that may discourage women from pursuing international careers.

8. Future plans

My long-term goal is to develop a large-scale pig production enterprise in Salima, Malawi, on land I have already secured.

The operation will be built in phases, starting with a cash-flow-driven model where I purchase 2-month-old piglets and raise them to market weight over approximately 4 months. This allows for early revenue generation and operational stability.

As the business grows, I will expand into breeding through the introduction of farrowing units, enabling internal piglet production while also creating an additional revenue stream through piglet sales. Feed production will also be integrated to improve cost control and efficiency.

Alongside the commercial operation, I am developing a structured agricultural training initiative funded through a fixed percentage of the farm's profits. This program will support a selected number of underprivileged young people by combining educational support with hands-on farm training, creating a pathway into skilled agricultural work.

In the long term, the business will expand into processed pork products for local and regional markets, with potential for export.



Recommended reading: Inside the collapse of Malawi's humanitarian safety net

As 'climate whiplash' collides with a shrinking humanitarian wallet, Malawians are feeling the consequences.

<https://dialogue.earth/en/climate/we-still-need-people-to-hold-our-hands-inside-the-collapse-of-malawis-humanitarian-safety-net/>

What I learnt about happiness in Malawi

By Thomas Brehm

Before I came to Malawi, my image of Africa consisted almost entirely of what I'd seen on television: conflict, chaos, instability. With this image in mind, I travelled alone to Malawi as a 20-year-old student and spent six weeks in Lilongwe from May to July 2026: during the week as an intern at a charity, and at the weekends as a volunteer with the Archdiocese of Lilongwe, where I lived in the Archbishop's residence and often accompanied the Archbishop to villages in the region.

The first few weeks were, above all, one thing: alien. I was the only white person in the house, often the only white person the people in the villages had ever seen. Six weeks without my friends, without my family, without people my own age, were at times lonely, even though I spent a lot of time with the people at the Archdiocese. The image of Africa I'd brought with me didn't quite match what I saw, but it hadn't yet been replaced by anything new or of my own making. Only gradually, the more time I spent with the people there, did the loneliness give way to a genuine sense of connection, and I began to understand why the Malawians so often seemed happy to me, despite their harsh living conditions.

My view of Malawi and Africa began to change through small observations. The craftsman building furniture by the roadside. The motorcyclist who drove me to work every day and told me he was saving up for his own motorbike. A colleague who invited me to the wedding of a relative I'd never met before, simply because it was second nature to her to take me along. None of these scenes had anything to do with war or chaos, and none of them glossed over the poverty that is very real in Malawi. These were people who, alongside and in spite of this poverty, were working towards something; who welcomed one another into their families and celebrations; who visibly found joy where I had initially seen only deprivation.





Deutsch-Malawische Gesellschaft

German Malawi Association



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This became most clear to me on a confirmation day in a village near Kasungu. Almost 400 children were confirmed there – a normal number for Malawi, but almost unimaginable for me as a European. The service itself was nothing like what I was used to in German churches: women trilled with joy, and children performed rehearsed dance routines. A vibrancy that differs greatly from our church services. It was only on that day that I also understood the cost to people of this sense of community: whole families walk two or three hours to church and just as long back again. Attending the church service is therefore not just one item on the agenda alongside others, but practically the main activity of the day.

On the way back, shortly after dusk had fallen, I saw exactly what that meant. The road lay black before us in the headlights, and two children were walking along the side of the road, on foot, in the middle of nowhere. For a moment, I was simply confused. What were they doing here, so far away from everything? Then I recognised the fabric of their clothes: the same pattern as in the congregation we'd just visited. They were simply on their way home. When they spotted the car and saw that the bishop was sitting inside, they jumped up and waved cheerfully after us. I'm German. I get annoyed when the train is twenty minutes late. These children walked home for hours in the dark that evening, happily waving at a passing car, because their faith and their community made the journey worthwhile for them.

At that moment, everything that I'd only glimpsed in fragments over the previous weeks came together for me: the craftsman by the roadside, the motorcyclist with his dream of owning his own motorbike, the families who undertake hours-long journeys for the sake of their community. Time and again, people told me they wanted to show me the real Malawi. What I take away with me is the realisation that the people there find happiness where we often see only deprivation.



Until then, my impression of Malawi had been based solely on what I'd seen in the media. It was only through my own experience that I realised how incomplete that impression was, and that if we want to do justice to countries like Malawi, we have to form our own impression.

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