

**EMERGING
PUBLIC
LEADERS**

M A L A W I



PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY - MARCH 2025

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MALAWI



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Foreword

The January to March 2025 management report of the Emerging Public Leaders of Malawi highlights key programme interventions carried out, exciting innovations developed. The report also documents the challenges faced and mitigation measures undertaken and provides a summary of prioritised interventions to be implemented in the second quarter.

With its focus of creating pathways for young, talented university graduates to develop into ethical and accountable public service professionals through the Public Service Fellowship, the programme focussed on deepening the fellows understanding of the public service, its career path, its culture, as well as career growth opportunities in the public service through the delivery of a week-long responsive training whose content and facilitators were carefully selected to fit this purpose.

Further, the programme engaged different Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to formally introduce the Public Service Fellowship Programme and explore functional partnerships for fellow's mentorship and joint resource mobilisation efforts through consortiums.

In order to assess the programmes effectiveness thus to ascertain the extent to which the programme achieves its intended objectives and outcomes, Emerging Public Leaders of Malawi in collaboration with the placement committee, facilitated a joint monitoring exercise, targeting all the fellows and mentors in all the Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The findings of this monitoring exercise were quite reassuring and informative, and provided very important lessons to use in improving processes in the delivery of key programme components such as meritocratic and inclusive recruitment and selection for next cohorts.

Responding to the call to action from the 2025 International Women's Day (IWD) Commemoration theme **"Accelerate Action for Gender Equality"**, the Public Service Fellows, used their expertise to mentor, coach, motivate and offer diverse support services to young people and mostly girls in different Community Day Secondary Schools in the Lilongwe rural as part of their IWD commemoration. The fellows, using their own stories, shared how they navigated secondary and university education and how their success enabled them to be selected for the Public Service Fellowship. Further, they encouraged learners on goal setting, understanding individual learning style and developing successful study habits to achieve their career ambitions.

The Emerging Public Leaders of Malawi celebrates the efficacious efforts of the cohort 1 Public Service Fellows in procreating the Impact Series, a fellow led platform designed to give the Fellows a space to engage in candid, thought-provoking conversations on governance, leadership, and national development and most importantly for signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Timveni Radio, enabling fellows to host live radio conversations reaching a wide audience across Malawi.

To increase its online presence, the Emerging Public Leaders of Malawi is currently developing a website, to compliment the two current online platforms of Facebook and LinkedIn.



LINDA HARAWA
COUNTRY DIRECTOR - EPL MALAWI

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1.0 Introduction

This quarterly report highlights the key programmatic interventions undertaken in quarter 1 (January - March 2025) under the Public Service Fellowship Programme (PSFP). In the reporting period, the programme focused on strengthening fellowship implementation, enhancing stakeholder collaboration, and facilitation of responsive training for the fellows.

Key activities included the PSFP Placement Committee review meeting which was done to assess the progress of the programme and plan for the quarter, joint monitoring visits to fellows across various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to monitor their engagement and contribution, and a review meeting with supervisors and mentors to share progress and develop solutions to the identified issues during the monitoring visits.

The program also delivered a responsive training session for the fellows which was jointly facilitated by the Malawi School of Government. Fellows also participated in several national events and community service projects fostering good governance and civic responsibility.

1.1 Vision and Mission Statements



VISION

A prosperous and equitable Africa, fostered by good governance.



MISSION

To partner with governments, local organizations, and communities to rigorously identify motivated university graduates public service professionals who are committed to practicing and promoting good governance in Africa.



VALUES

- Excellency
- Integrity
- Partnership
- Accountability
- Citizen-Centric Leadership

2.0 Summary of key Achievements

During the reporting period, the Public Service Fellowship Programme (PSFP) made significant progress towards achieving key outcomes of the Programme. Key activities implemented included joint monitoring visits of the fellows in their MDAs, Civil Society Organization (CSO) network meeting to introduce the PSFP, hosted the curriculum development consultant, Fellow's participation in high level meetings, Cohort 1 fellows responsive training, and community service projects.



Prof. Chiwoza Bandawe, facilitating a session on mental health in the workplace during the responsive training.



Prof. Chiwoza Bandawe, Medhealth staff, EPL staff, and the fellows during responsive training

2.1

Performance Management

- 2.1.1. Conducted a Public Service Fellowship Programme (PSFP) Placement Committee Review Meeting.



PSFP Placement Committee during the Quarter 1 review meeting

The Programme conducted a briefing meeting with the PSFP Placement Committee to appraise them on the 2024 achievements, challenges faced and mitigation measures, 2025 action plans and plan for the joint monitoring exercise. The achievements included development of the PSFP provisional curriculum, initial training for the fellows, and facilitation of the meet the leader sessions.

2.2 Joint Monitoring of the Fellows in their Ministries Departments Agencies (MDAs)



PSFP Placement Committee and a fellow during the joint monitoring visits

The Programme conducted joint monitoring visits of the fellows in their respective Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). The monitoring assessed fellow's involvement in the MDAs operations, fellow's performance and contribution to the MDAs goals, integration and challenges that the fellows are facing and solving while placed in their MDAs. 28 (11m & 16f) fellows were assessed during the activity, representing 84%

The monitoring found that, overall, 96% of the fellows are being actively engaged, which has helped them integrate into the MDA structures. These fellows indicated that they are assigned various tasks, and they participate in high level meetings. 4% reported that the assigned MDAs do not align with their academic backgrounds, skills and career goals making it difficult to be actively involved.

54% and 37% of fellows rated their performance as good, and excellent respectively, demonstrating a solid understanding and ability to perform their tasks with minimal supervision. The rating was based on the supervisor's trust, feedback and nature of the allocated tasks to them. While 12% rated their performance as need improvement and satisfactory attributing it to mismatch of the placement.

78% of the fellows are actively searching for employment opportunities (applying). These fellows recommended PSFP, that it has provided them with a competitive advantage in terms of knowledge, skills, and exposure that they can leverage in their job search ventures. The monitoring also found that 22% of the fellows have not submitted any job application since the start of the fellowship programme. These fellows reported that they would like to pursue further education or entrepreneurship after the fellowship .

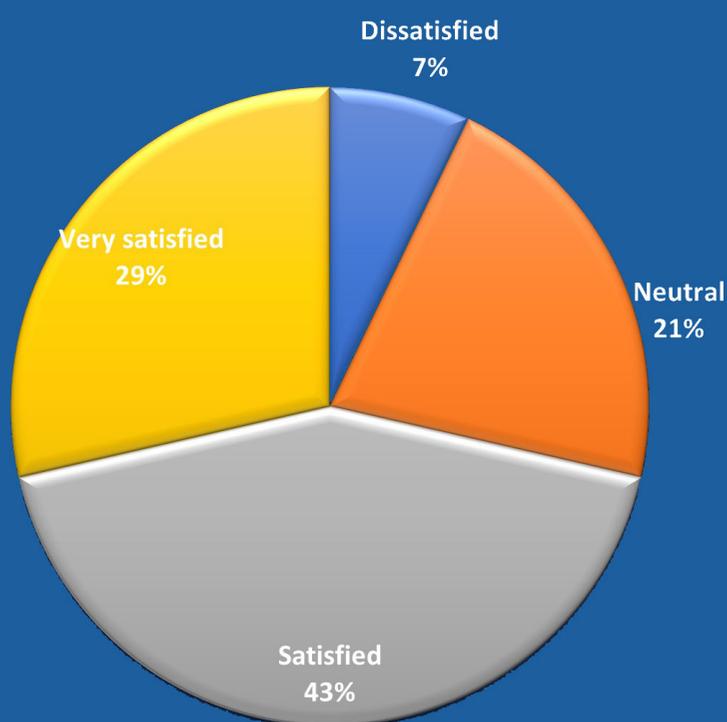
2.3 Conducted Mentors Review Meeting



PSFP Placement Committee and mentors during the mentors' review meeting

The Programme conducted a mentors engagement meeting to brief them on the findings of the joint monitoring. During the briefing a representative of the Placement Committee presented the feedback from the joint monitoring visits which were along the parameters of fellow's participation, fellow's contribution, fellow's performance and fellow's job search pursuit. Mentors also participated in the identification of measures to address key challenges that fellows encounter in various MDAs.

Fellows Job Satisfaction Chart



In collaboration with the Malawi School of Government (MSG), the Programme conducted a four-day Responsive Training for the Cohort 1- fellows to respond to the technical and operational challenges encountered by the fellows during the quarter. Facilitators for the training were identified from both private and public sectors depending on their expertise. Topics covered included teamwork and collaboration, conflict resolution, supervisor-employee relations, career development, reflective storytelling, data protection and cybersecurity, post-fellowship preparedness, entrepreneurship, mental health and wellness, personal financial management, gender and development, and understanding the legal obligations of public servants. These sessions enhanced the fellow's ability to work collaboratively, manage stress, uphold ethical standards, and prepare for life after the fellowship.

The training was officially opened by Commissioner Arthur Chibwana, Board Chairperson for EPL Malawi. Other key dignitaries included Mr. Ian Chingwalu, Principal Secretary for Human Resource Management, Mr. Denis Msakwiza, Director of Professional Development at the Malawi School of Government, and Mr. Dickens Thunde, Board Member for EPL Malawi. The training concluded with a panel discussion by the fellows on the role of young people in ensuring good governance and credible elections. This provided the fellows with a rear forum to discuss issues of national interest affecting the youths and an opportunity to sharpen their public speaking skills.



EPL Board Members and fellows during Quarter 1 responsive training

2.5 Supported the Curriculum Development Consultant

The Programme supported the curriculum development consultant from Miale Public Affairs. Throughout the process the consultant was accompanied by a representative from Malawi School of Government (MSG), a Programme implementing partner on quality training.

The consultant had a courtesy call with the Board Members of EPL Malawi, and the Secretary for Human Resource Management and Development, before having Key Informant Interviews with representatives from National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM), EPL Malawi, Ministry of Youth, Office of the President and Cabinet (OPC) and Ministry of foreign Affairs. The consultant also had FGDs with 10 Fellows and 10 mentors. The insights gained from these meetings and other documents will inform the development of the adapted Malawi curriculum.



Miale Public Affairs consultants with the fellows conducting FGD, **(bottom left)** with EPL Board Members, **(bottom right)** with some EPL staff



2.6

Mentorship And Professional Development Support

2.6.1. Conducted Civil Society Organizations (Csos) Networks Engagement Meeting:



Members of the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Network during the CSO engagement meeting

The Programme conducted an engagement meeting with the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) network aimed at introducing the EPL Malawi and the Public Service Fellowship Programme to the network. The meeting also provided a forum for discussing the planned activities, the role of the CSOs network in the Programme and partnership mapping.

The meeting fostered collaborative partnerships between EPL Malawi and the CSOs network by defining the network's role in supporting the PSFP implementation through mentorship, networking, and capacity building of the fellows. The meeting also allowed EPL Malawi to gather valuable insights and recommendations from the CSOs representatives that will help improve Programme delivery and impact. The engagement promoted stakeholder ownership, active participation in mentorship and provided a potential platform for joint resource mobilization efforts, on complimentary Programmes in the sector.

2.7 Fellow's Participation in National Events

2 (1m & 1f) Fellows participated in the high-level Ministerial Pre-Budget Consultations. Prior to the 2025/26 National budget presentation, the Minister of Finance, Honorable Simplex Chithyola Banda in partnership with the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM). The engagement was a consultation platform, enabling the youth to inform the priorities in the national budget to align with key youth development programmes. In this meeting, the youth called for a clear implementation framework, accountability mechanisms, and greater involvement of youth, especially in rural areas, in budget monitoring and evaluation processes. The two fellows used the EPL Malawi – Impact Series initiative to gather ideas from the other fellows for a comprehensive input into the consultation meeting.

In line with the Malawi 2063 vision, which emphasizes youth participation in national development, 1 Fellow participated in the Presidential Youth Engagement (SONA for the Youth) at Sanjika Palace hosted by President Dr. Lazarus Chakwera. He was among the 150 young people who were invited to reflect on the State of National Address (SONA) from the youth development lens. Among other things the meeting discussed the formation of the Youth Innovation Hubs and Digital Clubs, NEEF Loan Policy Reforms, Support for the Creative Industry, Infrastructure and Employment



Fellows Interacting with the Finance Minister Hon. Simplex Chithyola Banda during the high-level Ministerial Pre-Budget Consultations at BICC



Fellows Interacting with learners on International Women Day as part of community service project, (insert) fellows at ZOE foundation and helping with chores

In commemoration of the 2025 International Women's Day (IWD), the fellows implemented community service projects in rural Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). This was aimed at drumming support on the efforts to empower girls as guided by the commemorations theme of Accelerate Action for Gender Equality. The fellows were organised in teams and each team developed project concepts in relation to the IWD concept and theme. The fellows partnered with the Ministry of Education, Kusewera community center and other community structures to engage/interact with learners in 5 CDSS.

Fellows used participatory approach tools and games such as focus group discussions, career talks, commitment/pledge board, role plays, resource maps, short videos, arts and poetry to mentor the learners, motivating them and understanding the key issues affecting girl's education in rural areas. Following the implementation of the community service projects, action plans were developed to follow up on the commitments made by the community leaders during the activities.

3.0 Challenges and Risks

High cost of living; Since September 2024, the inflation rate in Malawi is at 34.3% which is higher than the governments projected rate of 27.1% and this leads to high cost of living as prices of basic commodities keep increasing every day making the fellows struggle to survive on a stipend they get.

4.0 Emerging Public Leaders Malawi Media Outlook

Times 360 Malawi's Post

Times 360 Malawi
April 1 · 🌐

#Times360Malawi

Principal Secretary (PS) responsible for Human Resource Management in the department of human resource management and development, Ian Chingwalu says government recognizes the critical role of young people in the achievement of the 2063 agenda.

Chingwalu made these sentiments during the opening of a 3 day first cohort of Public Service Fellowship Programme responsive Training session held in Mponela Dowa district.

He said the Public Service Fellowship Programme ensures that the Malawi government cultivates a new generation of ethical and results oriented leaders who will help to move Malawi towards progress.

"The youth, as key drivers of change, bring fresh perspectives, energy and innovations that are essential in Transforming the public sector," said Chingwalu.

On her part, Linda Harawa, Country Director for the Emerging Public Leaders (EPL) Malaw Linda Harawa said their organization expects to see fellows who can easily handle government business in the way it is supposed to be handled and able to make positive contributions.

Reported by Mphatso M'bang'ombe

The Daily Time THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025

Youths are drivers of change—PS

by Mphatso M'bang'ombe

Principal Secretary responsible for Human Resource Management in the Department of Human Resource Management and Development, Ian Chingwalu, has said the government recognises the role of young people in the attainment of Malawi 2063 goals.

Chingwalu said this during the opening of the three-day Public Service Fellowship Programme in Mponela, Dowa District.

He said the Public Service Fellowship Programme ensures that the Malawi Government cultivates a new generation of ethical and results-oriented leaders.

"The youth, as key drivers of change, bring fresh perspectives, energy and innovations that are essential in Transforming the public sector," Chingwalu said.

On her part, Linda Harawa, Country Director for Emerging Public Leaders (EPL) Malawi, said their organisation expected to see fellows who could easily handle government business in the way it is supposed to be handled, thereby making a positive contribution to society.

"This first cohort will be equipped with various skills during the three-day orientation sessions," Harawa said.

EPL is conducting the training with support from Mastercard Foundation and partners from the Civil Service Commission, Department of the Human Resources Management and the Malawi School of Government.



CHINGWALU—The youth bring fresh perspectives—Picture by Mphatso M'bang'ombe

5.0 Partnership

Emerging Public Leaders (EPL) Malawi maintained strong collaborations with key stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation and sustainability of the Public Service Fellowship Programme (PSFP). These partnerships have been critical in supporting various components of the Programme, including curriculum development, fellow training, and enabling fellows to contribute meaningfully to national events and government priorities

5.1 Master Curriculum Development:

The Programme worked with the Department of Human Resource Management and Development (DHRMD) and the Malawi School of Government (MSG) to support Miale Public Affairs consultants in conducting consultative meetings with various stakeholders to gather insights as part of the EPL Global curriculum development process. DHRMD provided administrative support, ensuring maximum engagement and participation from all relevant government departments, while MSG provided technical support throughout the process in Malawi, ensuring that the curriculum is tailored to the needs of Malawi's public service.

5.2 Responsive Training of the Fellows:

The Programme conducted the first-ever Fellow's Responsive Training to address the gaps faced by fellows during service delivery in their respective MDAs. The Programme, in collaboration with MSG, developed a training schedule and assigned trainers to facilitate various topics. The trainers were sourced from both the public service and the private sector.

5.3 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Timveni Radio

During the reporting quarter, the Programme, through its Impact Series initiative, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Timveni Radio Station. This strategic partnership provides EPL Malawi with a dedicated 60-minute weekly radio segment titled Nzeru za Mtsogoleri, which airs every Friday from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM. The platform will be used to share leadership insights, amplify the voices of fellows, and promote public service values.

As part of the agreement, Timveni Radio will also provide coverage of community service activities implemented by the fellows across various districts. The partnership will also allow the fellows to participate in community outreach initiatives organized by Timveni, this collaboration is expected to enhance the visibility of the fellowship Programme.



Daniel Chibwe a fellow sharing his permeculture project on Timveni radio

6.0 Next Quarter's Outlook

1 Launch of Public Service Fellowship Programme

2 Recruitment of Cohort 2 Public Service Fellows

3 Recruitment of MEAL and Communications Officers

4 Facilitation of Board of Directors Onboarding workshop

7.0 Fellows Spotlight

7.1 Ellie Ng'oma – Amplifying Youth Voices.

Ellie Ng'oma, a proud member of Cohort 1 of the EPL Public Service Fellowship, is placed under the Department of E-Government where she contributes to Malawi's digital transformation efforts. But Ellie's impact goes far beyond her placement.

Recognizing the urgent need for greater youth participation in governance and the noticeable gap in youth representation in public discourse, Ellie took bold steps to create change. With a clear vision and deep sense of purpose, she became one of the founding members and organizing leads behind Impact Series, a platform designed to give Fellows a space to engage in candid, thought-provoking conversations on governance, leadership, and national development.

Driven by her belief that young people should not only be seen but also heard, Ellie helped grow Impact Series from a small internal initiative into a national-level platform. Her leadership was instrumental in securing a groundbreaking Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Timveni Radio, enabling Fellows to host live on-air conversations. Through this partnership, Impact Series now amplifies the voices of young professionals across Malawi, shaping dialogue and inspiring action on key issues affecting the nation.

Ellie's story is a powerful example of what happens when youth are given space to lead, and when they take that responsibility seriously. Her commitment to inclusion, representation, and meaningful engagement has helped transform a simple idea into a national voice for emerging leaders.

As she continues her Fellowship journey, Ellie Ng'oma stands out as a changemaker, an advocate for youth-driven governance and a true embodiment of the leadership values that EPL seeks to nurture.



7.2 Violet Pondakwawo – Championing Social Change Through Literature

Violet Pondakwawo, a Cohort 1 Fellow of the EPL Public Service Fellowship, is currently placed under the Department of Economic Planning and Development. Beyond her role in the public sector, Violet is making waves in a different arena as a published author and advocate for girls' empowerment through storytelling.

As a passionate writer, Violet has long believed in the power of literature as a catalyst for social change. Her recently published book, *From a Girl to a Lady*, is a compelling expression of that belief. The book explores themes of identity, self-worth, and resilience, offering a voice of strength and hope to young girls navigating societal expectations.

Thanks to the Impact Series, an initiative by Fellows for Fellows to foster candid and transformative conversations, Violet was given the platform to share her story live on Timveni Radio. In her interview, she spoke about the inspiration behind her book, the challenges faced by young women in Malawi, and how literature can empower the next generation to dream, speak out, and lead.

Violet's journey as both a public servant and published author reflects the multidimensional leadership that the EPL Fellowship encourages. She embodies the idea that service to the nation goes beyond government offices, it includes shaping narratives, inspiring youth, and building movements through creative expression. As Violet continues her Fellowship, her commitment to merging public service with storytelling stands as a bold reminder: change can be written, spoken, and lived.





The Executive Director of Timveni Radio and the Fellows Signing the MOU

EPL – Malawi Impact Series is an innovative fellow-led initiative that empowers Public Service Fellows and youth to lead meaningful discussions on critical national issues. Through candid conversations and community service, the series fosters ethical leadership, cultivates informed citizen engagement and drives positive change within communities.

Impact Series is dedicated to transforming communities through citizen engagement. One key approach involves empowering Public Service Fellows by creating opportunities for fellows to lead conversations, showcase their expertise and amplify the importance of the public service program.

The initiative also fosters citizen engagement through dynamic discussions where citizens can discuss national issues, share perspectives and contribute to shaping solutions.

Building on these conversations, Impact Series also focuses on developing actionable interventions by leveraging insights from



Violet Pondakwao a fellow sharing about her book *from a girl to a lady* on Timveni radio

discussions to develop strategies that address challenges in governance and socioeconomic development.

The initiative provides a structured and inclusive space for emerging leaders to refine their skills, challenge ideas and co-create solutions that drive national development.



8.0 Conclusion

In the first quarter of 2025, the PSFP made strong progress in supporting the growth and impact of its fellows. Key activities focused on performance monitoring, responsive training, mentorship support, stakeholder engagement, and community service.

A major highlight was the responsive training conducted in partnership with the Malawi School of Government. This four-day session helped fellows improve their skills in teamwork, communication, financial management, mental health, and ethical leadership. The training also prepared them for life after the fellowship and concluded with a youth-led discussion on governance and elections.

During the quarter, the Programme also conducted joint monitoring visits to various government MDAs to assess fellow performance, integration, and challenges. Most fellows are actively contributing and performing well, though a few faced difficulties due to mismatched placements.

The Programme also made progress in developing a context-specific training curriculum, using insights gathered from stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions with fellows and mentors the process which was led by the Miale Public Affairs consultants.

Fellows also participated in several national platforms such as the Pre-Budget Consultations and the Presidential Youth Engagement, where they represented youth voices on key development issues. Through the Impact Series radio programme, they encouraged public dialogue. Community service projects in rural schools promoted girls' education, highlighting Fellows' commitment to social change.





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