



McConnell
International Foundation

Livingstone Volunteers 2017

Report to the Scottish Government

This report is prepared by the McConnell International Foundation for the Scottish Government, as agreed under their Conditions of Grant.

Aims of the Livingstone Volunteers 2017

Following on from the success of the 2016 scheme, the Livingstone Volunteers 2017 was determined to consolidate positive outcomes and also improve in certain areas that, it was deemed, would contribute to the impact of the scheme.

The first of these was concerned with the reach and scope of the scheme. Although steady progress had been made in promoting the scheme to a broader range of people and places, achieved through an intentional promotion of the scheme to other areas outwith the Glasgow and the West Coast of Scotland, it was made a priority for the 2017 scheme. A particular focus was to be given to reaching potential applicants in the Highlands.

In previous years, the majority of applications have come from young people volunteering in Malawi, so the second target was to increase the number of applications received from potential grant recipients going to the other destination countries. There are strong connections and partnerships between specific schools (e.g. Bannerman High and Springburn High), who organise a volunteering placement to Malawi each year, and consistently put forward deserving applicants to the Livingstone Volunteers. It was therefore decided this kind of partnership should be encouraged between other school groups and/or volunteering opportunities who consistently organised trips to one of the three other destinations countries, Tanzania, South Africa or Zambia.

Following discussions with the Scottish Government about their international development priorities, a particular focus was given to developing a working relationship between MIF and SCOZZA (Scotland Zambia Partnership), in order to encourage Zambian diaspora members to commit to volunteering projects in Zambia and apply for funding for such an opportunity through the Livingstone Volunteers.

The final aim of the Livingstone Volunteers 2017 was to secure donor support prior to the awards ceremony, from both previous donors and potential new donors.

Overview of the Scheme

1. Outreach

As in previous years, supporters of the scheme, including Scotland Malawi Partnership, Young Scot, NIDOS and Youth Link Scotland, were contacted to promote the scheme to their members and on their social media platforms. In addition to these supporters, links were made with new organisations, including Boys Brigade, Young Carers Scotland, Vine Trust and ICS (International Citizens Service). These contacts seemed to prove fruitful, as multiple applications were received from young carers, Vine Trust volunteers, and members in the Boys Bridge.

In order to achieve the first target of the scheme, broadening the scope of applications, newspapers and press outlets with a focus on the Highlands were also contacted. This included the Press and Journal. The news stories published by each succeeded in achieving good publicity for the scheme, and multiple enquiries were received asking about the scheme and how to apply from residents of the Highland area.

2. Applications

Overall, 39 applications were received for the 2017 scheme. This is slightly below the number of application received in the previous year. One reason for this was one of the usual school groups from which we receive and grant numerous applicants, Knightswood High School, was not conducting a volunteering trip abroad for that year. Although it was a lower number of applications received, those submitted were of a high standard, with some in particular being exceptionally well developed. It is suggested that these applications be made anonymous and, with permission, displayed on the Livingstone Volunteers web page as examples for future applicants.

Of these 39 applications, 31 applicants were awarded grants. Thirty were awarded the full £500 grants and one individual was awarded a £250 grant. This was agreed because the successful applicant in question was set to volunteer in Rwanda, and although this is not a current destination country for the scheme, this decision was made as a pilot for building new development partnerships, aligned with Scottish Government priorities.

3. Judging Panel

Once again [redacted] sat as judges on the independent panel. [redacted], who sat on the panel as a youth judge, joined them. The decision to appoint a youth judge proved to be very successful. [redacted] provided clear, insightful comments on each applicant and contributed well to the overall discussion. The position of a youth judge is one that will be carried forward in future years.

4. Awards Ceremony

The awards ceremony was held on Saturday 18th March 2017, in 200 SVS, and was attended by several of the 2017 Livingstone Volunteers along with members of their families. The awards ceremony was, like previous years, a great opportunity for the grant recipients to meet one another and previous Livingstone Volunteer alumni. Additionally, [redacted], former Commonwealth swimming gold-medallist, gave a thought provoking and inspiring speech, which was well received by all those in attendance.

We are very grateful to those who continue to support and donate to the Livingstone Volunteers and were delighted to welcome representation from the Scottish Government.

Donors to the Scheme

Ongoing donors to the scheme include: the Hunter Foundation, [redacted] / MCR Pathways and [redacted]. There is also a general contribution from MIF, resulting from other donations.

A grant proposal was also submitted to the Scottish Government for up to the amount of £12,000. This proposal was successful.

An overview of income and expenditure can be found in Appendix 1.

Points of Success

The first target of the scheme, to widen the scope of applications from areas across Scotland, was achieved. For the first time, the range of applications received stretched from the Highlands and Moray down to Perth, Stirling and Edinburgh; across to Glasgow and onto Girvan.

In addition to this, the 2017 scheme was successful in securing applicants from all four of the destination countries (Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and South Africa). This was a significant improvement on previous years, which tended to have a high number of volunteers heading to Malawi and only a couple of others travelling to one of the three other countries. Such a range in placements helped increase the integrity of the scheme and also allowed for the establishment of new partnerships between new school groups and organisations, such as Elgin High School and Elgin Youth Development Café, and the Livingstone Volunteers. It is hoped that these connections can be consolidated in future years.

The judging panel noted the increasingly high standard of applications being received. One reason for this was the support given to applicants prior to submission, both through advice on the necessity to understand and adhere to the essential criteria and guidance on how to answer each question to the best of the applicant's ability. In terms of discourse, a larger focus was placed on the ability to demonstrate overcoming a 'personal challenge' or 'difficult circumstance' rather than the ability to evidence an existence of 'vulnerability'. This change in wording was decided for it provided a more concrete base from which the applicant could give an example and/or evidence and eliminated any doubt over the definition of 'vulnerable' and/or 'disadvantaged'.

Partnership with SCOZZA

Several positive discussions with representatives of both the Scottish Government and SCOZZA were held in the initial period of the scheme. The opportunity to develop a partnership between the Livingstone Volunteers and SCOZZA did not come to fruition

during the 2017 scheme due to time constraints. However, both organisations are eager and enthusiastic about the possibilities that the Livingstone Volunteers holds for members of the Zambian diaspora. This is set to be a significant partnership for the Livingstone Volunteers and will align with the aim stated previously to ensure that more potential grant recipients are undertaking their placements a range of destination countries. Additionally, it could provide the basis for the establishment of a mentoring scheme, outlined in the successive section.

Future Schemes

The Livingstone Volunteers 2018 will be the fifth consecutive year of the scheme. It is estimated around 100 youngsters across Scotland have been beneficiaries of the grant scheme and solid partnerships have been developed and consolidated with government and non-government organisations through the years.

However, the main aim of the Livingstone Volunteers was to help those most in need, the young people in Scotland who found themselves in circumstances that would usually prevent them from opportunities such as volunteering abroad. Thus the Livingstone Volunteers has always strived to highlight and engage with this group of young people, and has done so to varying degrees of success. For any future schemes, it is recommended that this aim is kept as the priority and any developments or changes to the scheme are done so with the understanding that they will support this aim.

One proposal under consideration is the introduction of a mentoring pilot scheme. A number of mentoring sessions would be held in the run up to the official launch of the Livingstone Volunteers. These sessions would be one on one between a potential volunteer and an expert in the field of volunteering, resources would be supplied by MIF to both parties, and the aim of the sessions would be to help guide the potential applicant through the process of applying and securing a volunteering placement in one of our destination countries. Once secured, the potential applicant would then proceed, with help from the mentor, to apply for a Livingstone Volunteer grant.

Such a mentoring programme would allow for a number of developments within the scheme:

1. Ability to reach out to individuals from areas/backgrounds that have previously been difficult to recruit from.
2. Direct contact with potential volunteers prior to application, which would help to strengthen the Livingstone Volunteer alumni network over future years.
3. Engagement with previously non-involved partners, such as ICS/VSO, who have a relatively low presence within Scottish volunteering networks.
4. A more personal approach to grant giving. Mentors would be independent of the judging panel, but would be able to make recommendations or references.

Summary

Livingstone Volunteers 2017 would not have been possible without the generous support of the Scottish Government. We are grateful for the financial support, but also for the ongoing advice and assistance, which has helped develop the scheme beyond its initial impact.

There is a small surplus in the funding of the 2017 scheme which we propose to use to take forward the concept of mentoring in advance of Livingstone Volunteers applications. We also propose to use some of the surplus to engage further with the Zambian diaspora.

Finally, MIF can confirm that the Scottish Government has been recognised and thanked in all publicity around Livingstone Volunteers 2017, including on the McConnell International Foundation website.

Appendix 1

Income

	Amount (£)
Donations	5,000
Scottish Government	12,000
MIF Contribution	2,000
Total:	19,000

Expenditure

	Amount (£)
Livingstone Volunteers 2017	14,750
Contractors fees and administration	1,650
Catering and promotion	368
Travel costs	212
Total:	16,980

Appendix 2

List of Placement Countries and Organisations:

Organisation	Country of Placement
Adventures LifeSign / Mwayi Trust/ Girvan Academy	Malawi
Bannerman High	Malawi
Bannockburn High	Malawi
Dalkeith High School	South Africa
Elgin High School	Zambia
Elgin Youth Development Group	South Africa
Gairloch High	Malawi
Perth Grammar School	Tanzania
Rosshall Academy (MYLOL)	Malawi
Scripture Union Scotland	Rwanda
Springburn Academy	Malawi
St Matthew's Academy	Malawi
Vine Trust and Culloden Academy	Tanzania