Key barriers to access, participation and completion of education for girls in Malawi:

- Poverty (high opportunity cost of sending girls to school, low value placed on education, disability)
- Socio cultural barriers (place of the girl in society)
- Policy related factors
  - Distance (proximity) to school
  - Poor school infrastructure including washing facilities
- Lack of qualified female teachers
- Lack of girl friendly and safe learning environment
- Effects of HIV and AIDS

Keeping Girls in School (KGIS) is a six-year programme (2012-2018) funded by the UK Government through UK aid. The programme is designed to tackle the multiple barriers that Malawian girls face in staying in school. Recognising these barriers, the KGIS programme involves a range of interventions, delivered as components through different service providers, some of whom are working together within the programme. The range of activities being implemented includes supporting needy girls with either cash transfers or bursaries, improving sanitation and hygiene awareness in secondary schools, encouraging more rural women into teaching, building the capacity of Government structures and teachers to support girls in school, and working with parents and the community to bring about behaviour change in favour of girls’ education. Information and discussions about the KGIS programme activities and achievements, and girls education in Malawi, are available through the Girls Education Malawi GoogleGroup (https://groups.google.com/d/forum/girlsedmalawim), Twitter (https://twitter.com/girlsedmalawi; @girlsedmalawi) and its regular newsletter (KGIS NEWS).

The education system and the girl child:

A girl child starting primary school in Malawi will find an almost equal number of girls and boys in her class, but from Standard 5 onwards, the ratio of girls to boys falls along with girls’ performance on all the key education indicators. Only one in four girls (25%) complete primary school; only 45% of pupils enrolled in secondary school are girls and this falls to 36% at tertiary level. Many girls drop out of school before they grasp the basic literacy and numeracy skills that are so important for their future lives. The negative knock-on effect of this is a continuing cycle of poverty at family and community level. Educated girls grow into educated women, who have healthier babies and are more likely to use maternal health care and antenatal health care services, thus reducing future child mortality rates.

KGIS’s six targets by 2016:

- 100,000 girls supported in primary schools with cash transfers
- 15,000 girls supported in secondary school with bursaries
- Access to improved sanitation facilities at secondary school for 100,000 girls
- 3,000 mother groups trained to provide counselling and support to girls
- 21,500 in service female teachers trained to act as better role models to girls
- Strong evidence base gathered of what works to keep girls in school.

“Let us all move forward and ensure that every school is a good school, (and) has a welcoming environment for both the boy and the girl child; Let us ensure that every teacher is a caring and nurturing educator; let us guarantee that every parent/guardian is a responsible and supportive parent for their children’s education. We should support our girls to learn to overcome challenges, after trying once, twice, three times, or whatever it takes.”

Dr MacPhail Magwira
Secretary for Education, Science and Technology
TAS KGIS Launch, 24 April 2014
KEEPSING GIRLS IN SCHOOL PROGRAMME, MALAWI

KGIS has eight components, with the first starting in 2012. As of June 2015, seven components are active with one currently being planned for implementation later in the year. The implementing partners responsible for each of the components and their associated interventions are presented below:

**Camfed (Nov 2012 – Jul 2016)**
Provision of 15,000 bursaries for needy girls to increase transition and retention in secondary schools.
Website: www.camfed.org

**UNICEF (Mar 2013 – Aug 2015)**
Water and sanitation: Provision of dry pit latrines in 200 Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS); drilling of boreholes and provision of sanitation and hygiene education materials.
Website: www.unicef.org/infobycountry/malawi_contact.html

**Maxwell Stamp PLC & Link Community Development (Jun 2013 – Sep 2015)**
Technical Assistance Support to the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology (or TAS KGIS) in establishing a stronger girls’ education institutional framework and improving its capacity to strengthen the Ministry’s work on girls’ education.
Website: www.maxwellstamp.com
Website: www.lcdinternational.org/country/malawi

**Open University UK & FAWEMA (Dec 2012 – Mar 2016)**
Female Teacher Assistants: 2,000 MSCE completers to receive scholarships to better their grades to gain admission to a Teacher Training College and programmes.
Website: www.open.ac.uk
Website: www.fawe.org

**Development Aid from People to People in Malawi (Jul 2012 – Jul 2014)**
Training of female teachers and expansion of Mzimba Teacher Training College to train more female teachers.
Website: www.dapp-malawi.org

**Save the Children (Two projects in Inception Phase, started in Oct 2014)**
1) Cash transfers to 100,000 girls to complete primary school.
2) Interventions to reduce violence against girls: 3,000 Mother Groups to be trained in counselling and 11,600 female teachers to be trained to be more effective role models to girls in school.
Website: https://malawi.savethechildren.net

**Advocacy component (to be contracted)**
Increase political will to tackle key barriers to girls’ education.