

Strengthening Inclusive Education in Malawi: A Scottish Government Visit to See Inclusive Education in Action



Link Community Development Malawi (LCDM) recently welcomed James McNulty, Inclusive Education Lead at the Scottish Government official, for a visit focused on the Realising Inclusive and Safe Education (RISE), a project aimed at strengthening government support for children with disabilities, especially girls, to help ensure they can access safe and quality education. The visit provided an opportunity to highlight both the project's impact in schools and communities and the systems that support effective delivery, accountability, and learning.

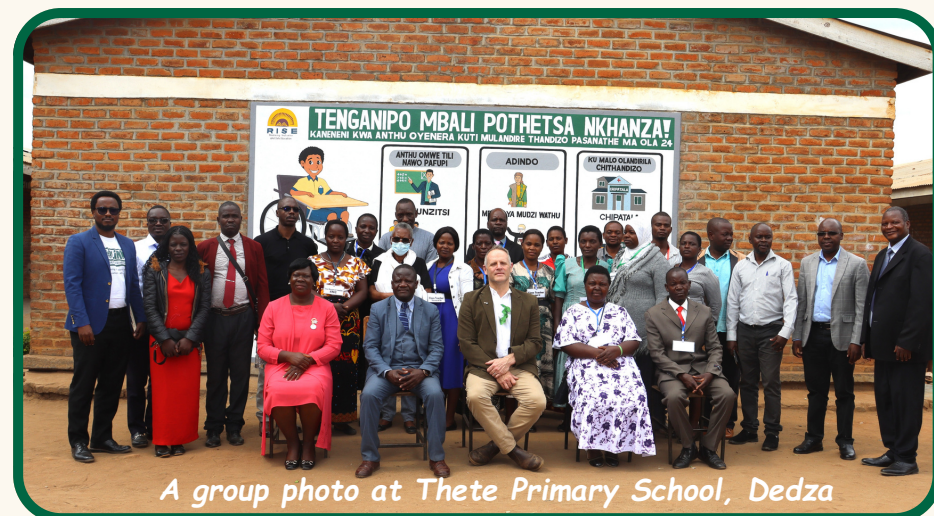
Learning The System: A Look at How LCDM Works

On Monday, 1st June 2026, the visit began at LCDM's offices in Lilongwe, where James was introduced to the range of functions that support implementation of the RISE project, including Programmes, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), Safeguarding, Communications, and Finance. Discussions explored how these teams work together, from planning and implementation to reporting, safeguarding, risk management, and financial stewardship, to support effective and inclusive programming. LCDM also shared how RISE interventions are beginning to influence decision-making at school and community level through engagement with community members, school governing bodies, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

"It is important to share and learn from different organisations in the field of inclusive education. It strengthens and supports effective interventions in the country." James McNulty.

Field Visit to Thete Local Education Authority (LEA) Primary School in Dedza District

On Tuesday, 2nd June 2026, joined by Mrs Lucy Magagula, Deputy Director of Inclusive Education (DDIE) in the Directorate of Inclusive Education and School Health and Nutrition (DIESHN) and LCDM team the group travelled to Thete Primary School in Dedza District, one of the schools where RISE is being implemented. The school was selected because it is full and long-established primary, and it offers a strong example of ongoing inclusive education development. During the visit, school and community members shared how the project is helping create a more supportive learning environment for all children through screening, assessment, assistive devices, the special education needs (SEN) resource room, stronger community safeguarding, and teacher professional development. Ministry officials also reflected on the progress made and the importance of building systems that respond to every learner's needs.



A group photo at Thete Primary School, Dedza

"The project has helped to transform people's mindset and attitude towards children with disabilities. Parents are sending their children to school and their performance is gradually improving. We thank the Scottish Government for the support." Lucy Magagula, Deputy Director of Inclusive Education

Located in Thete Zone at Thete Trading Centre, Thete LEA Primary School was established in 1968 by the Local Education Authority and serves learners from Standard 1-8, operating mainly as a double-stream school, except for Standards 1 – 3, which each have three streams. The school has a total enrolment of 2,348 learners (1,230 girls and 1,118 boys), including 31 learners with visible disabilities, while 11 learners currently access support through the resource room. Its notable facilities include 20 permanent classrooms, two semi-permanent classrooms, 19 permanent toilets, and specialized government initiatives such as Building Education Foundations through Innovations and Technology (BEFIT) classroom, National Maths Curriculum Reform Programme (NMCRP), and a preparatory class / P-Class.

The visit highlighted that inclusive education is built through strong partnerships, effective systems, and a shared commitment to learning and reflection. By linking office-based planning with field-level realities, the two-day visit reinforced a shared determination to ensure that children in Malawi can access education that is inclusive, responsive, and equitable.

LCDM is deeply grateful to the communities, schools, and government partners whose continued collaboration makes this work possible, and to the Scottish Government for its sustained investment in that vision.