



**SPECIAL REPORT ON MALAWI PARA GAMES HELD ON
27TH JULY 2023 AT BINGU NATIONAL STADIUM, LILONGWE**

Introduction

The Malawi Paralympic Committee (MPC) hosted the first ever Malawi National Paralympic on 27th July, under the theme “Developing Elite Para Sport at national Level”. The First Malawi Para Games took place at the magnificent Bingu National Stadium (BNS) in Lilongwe, the Capital City.

The games were further held in order to help promote inclusion of people with disability in all sporting activities. The Malawi Para Games are a symbol of unity and inclusivity. The games are an embodiment of Malawi nations commitment to breaking barriers and creating society where everyone can participate and thrive.

Malawi Paralympic Committee contributes to the overall development and growth of Para Sports in Malawi, as well as recreation sport, as such the purpose of the Para Games is creating opportunities for disabled individuals to excel in their chosen sports disciplines.

The games created a lot of excitement to MPC as well as several stakeholders. Being the first ever games, MPC was cautiously nervous. The games created a chance for MPC to practice holding its first ever important national event, where athletes and managers would all be given a chance to showcase their abilities.

MPC created a working committee that comprised members from the following stakeholders;

1. Malawi Paralympic Committee
2. Malawi National Council of Sports
3. Athletics Association of Malawi
4. Weightlifting Association of Malawi
5. Ministry of Education – Special Needs Department
6. Malawi Schools Sports Association
7. MPCs Resource Mobilization and Awareness Consultant.

Prior to the games, planning meetings took place both physically and virtually. Promotion materials were developed that were massively distributed electronically and physically.

All the above stakeholders also graced the launch event, as well as the games on 27th July 2023

Para Games had the following sports disciplines;

1. Goalball
2. Sitting volleyball
3. Para Athletics
4. Powerlifting

5. Chess for the visually impaired

The Malawi Para Games attracted 127 athletes from the following sport codes

PRESS CONFERENCE

The MPC held the Malawi Para Games (MPG Press launch) on 18th July, at the Bingu National Stadium, the goal was to bring the games awareness to the Malawi populace, and to engage stakeholders who otherwise may not have been aware.

Prior to the launch, a communication plan was drawn, that detailed out how awareness was to be made to the masses.

The Press launch also provided an opportunity for MPC to unveil K 2 Transformers, a local company that MPC has entered an agreement for support.

The Malawi Games Logo, was unveiled at the Press launch.

A detailed pathway to the games was as well explained at the launch.

All major media outlets carried news of the launch as well as reaching out to the public through social media.

GAMES ORGANISING COMMITTEE:

In order to manage the games, the MPC constituted a Games Working Committee, the LOC, which was responsible for planning, organizing financing and delivering the Malawi Para Games. The following were responsibilities for each stakeholder

1. LOC Leadership

The MPC President chaired proceedings of the LOC

2. James Chiutsi and Ezaius Mkandawire, the MPC Consultant were responsible for managing the media

3. Resource Mobilization

James Chiutsi ,Memory Baluwa and Ezaius were responsible for stakeholder management

4. Technical Issues

MPC Regional heads were responsible for team selection at regional level, assisted by the MPC Vice President who is the defacto head of MPC Technical Committee

5. Medical and Welfare Team

Mabvuto Chawinga, MPCs Doctor, and the MPC Treasurer, who assumed role of Village Manager were responsible for athletes welfare and medical support for all participants.

6. Services confirmation

This was provided with support from MASSA (Malawi school sports Association) Ministry of Education

7. Technical support

A team from the following mainstream sports assisted us in the technical management of the games

-Athletics Association of Malawi

-Volleyball Association of Malawi

-Weightlifting Association of Malawi

8. Protocol

MPCs Vice and General Secretaries were responsible for venue management

9. General budget coordination

The MPC Executive Committee was responsible for budget management and execution.

10. Equipment and Awards

An award committee headed by members from Athletics Association of Malawi managed the award process, as well as categorization of events.

11. Volunteers

Ministry of Education, MASSA and MPC Executive Committee in the district's committees representatives were responsible for volunteer management

12. General Support and counselling this was provided by Malawi National council of sports

Launch Event and Press Briefing

The launch event and press briefing took place on the 18th of July at the Bingu NationalL Stadium .The launch was to inform and remind Malawians on the First edition of the Malawi Para Games which was to take place on the 27th of July 2023 .



Figure 1: MPC, K 2 Transformer and Sports Council, unveiling the Malawi para Games Logo.

In a significant show of dedication to promoting para-athletics in Malawi, K2 Transformers has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the development of adaptive sports in the country. The announcement was made by the manager of K2 Transformers, Tae-Young Kim, during the Malawi Para games held at the Bingu National Stadium. Speaking passionately about the cause, Kim emphasized his profound desire to uplift the lives of para-athletes in the nation. K2TRANSFORMERS supported the games with banners T-shirts and Golf shirts for the event which costed them MK1,463,000

In addition to financial support, K2 Transformers is dedicated to raising awareness about Para Sports and advocating for the rights of para-athletes. By leveraging its influence and resources, the

organization seeks to change societal perceptions about disability and challenge stereotypes, fostering a culture of acceptance and appreciation for diversity.

The Games

The games attracted athletes and support personnel as follows;

- In total, 127 athletes participated
- A total of 30 technical officials
- A total of 20 officials in different sectors
- A total of 5 classifiers
- Over 80 parents and teachers escorted athletes
- 11 media houses directly attended
- 27 schools provided athletes
- Other athletes were without schools
- Athlete age ranged from 11 years to 30 years
- External medical service was sought, they provided 3 medical personnel to be present at the event.

Para Athletics hosted the following events:

MEN

NO	NO OF ATHLETES ENTERED	NAME OF THE EVENT	SPORT CLASS	MEDALS
1	5	100M	T45/46/47	3
2	4	200M	T45/46/47	3
3	5	100M	T35/36/37	3
4	3	200M	T35/36/37	3
5	3	100M	T11	3
6	5	200M	T11	3
7	6	100M	T12	3
8	8	200M	T12	3
9	8	400M	T12	3
10	10	100M	T13	3
11	10	200M	T13	3
12	8	1500M	T/11/12/13	3

In total a number of 41 men participated in the Para Athletics events. A total of 36 medals were won

WOMEN

NO	NO OF ATHLETES ENTERED	NAME OF THE EVENT	SPORT CLASS	MEDALS
1	5	100M	T45/46/47	3
2		200M	T45/46/47	3
3	5	100M	T35/36/37	3
4		200M	T35/36/37	3
5	5	100M	T11	3
6		200M	T11	3
7	10	100M	T12	3
8		200M	T12	3
9	10	400M	T12	3
10		100M	T13	3
11	10	200M	T13	3
	45			

A total number of 45 women participated in the Para athletics events and a total of 33 medals were won

PARA ATHLETICS

The games had a total of twenty five people

PARA POWERLIFTING

The sport had a total number of 24 athletes

Men

NO	NO OF ATHLETES ENTERED	NAME OF THE EVENT	SPORT CLASS	MEDALS
1	3	45-65kgs	PO	3
2	5	66-75kgs	PO	3
3	5	75-85kgs	PO	3
4	4	85-88kgs	PO	3

5	3	88-120kgs	PO	3
---	---	-----------	----	---

A total of 20 athletes were entered and 15 medals were won

Women

NO	NO OF ATHLETES ENTERED	NAME OF THE EVENT	SPORT CLASS	MEDALS
1	4	45-65kgs	PO	3

SITTING VOLLEYBALL

MIXED TEAMS

NO	NO OF ATHLETES ENTERED	NAME OF THE EVENT	SPORT CLASS	MEDALS
1	15	Sitting volleyball	SV	2

GOAL BALL

MIXED TEAMS

NO	NO OF ATHLETES ENTERED	NAME OF THE EVENT	SPORT CLASS	MEDALS
1	10	Goal ball		1

CHESS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

NO	NO OF ATHLETES ENTERED	NAME OF THE EVENT	SPORT CLASS	MEDALS
1	2	CHESS FOR THE VI		2

TECHNICAL TEAM

CHESS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

NO	NO OF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS	SUPPORT STAFF	VOLUNTEERS AND GUIDES	MEDICAL
1	1	1	3	1

GOAL BALL

NO	NO OF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS	SUPPORT STAFF	VOLUNTEERS AND GUIDES	MEDICAL
1	3	1	5	1

SITTING VOLLEY BALL

NO	NO OF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS	SUPPORT STAFF	VOLUNTEERS/Parents AND GUIDES	MEDICAL
1	5	3	10	2

PARA POWERLIFTING

NO	NO OF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS	SUPPORT STAFF	VOLUNTEERS AND GUIDES /Parents	MEDICAL
1	10	10	5	2

PARA ATHLETICS

NO	NO OF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS	SUPPORT STAFF	VOLUNTEERS AND GUIDES/Parents	MEDICAL
1	15	6	25	2

The games had a class of 15 students who were doing athletics technical training and had their chance to volunteer at the Malawi para games.

MEDICAL SUPPORT STAFF

There were a total of 8 medical personnel and an ambulance from Kamuzu central hospital

In total the games had the following 105 Technical staff and volunteers

All events

NO	NO OF TECHNICAL OFFICIALS	SUPPORT STAFF	VOLUNTEERS AND GUIDES /Parents	MEDICAL +classifiers
6 events	24	21	48	12

Infrastructure and Facilities:

The Malawi Para Games took place at the Bingu National Stadium (BNS).

Athletes and officials were accommodated at the Lilongwe Technical College at a modest fee. Arrangement for accommodation was done with our stakeholder the Malawi Schools Sports Association. The athlete villages provided adapted accommodation, low level beds, ramps, good signage were all provided. MPC ensured that a Senior officer was present with the athletes and other officials at all time.

Medical personnel and services were also available at the athlete villages.

MPC provided catering from outside services.

Athletes and other staff were being transported to and from in hired buses.

MEDIA COVERAGE

- Follow the link to get media updates on the games <https://fb.watch/nI6mhM1qDc/?mibextid=Nif5oz>
- According to the Facebook page on the day, the games reached up to 3000 plus readers with Zodiak online covering the event, Malawi Paralympic Facebook page and Malawi Paralympic twitter account and Instagram account
- On the day of the event the following media houses were present
 - i. Mibawa Television
 - ii. Malawi Broadcasting corporation
 - iii. Zodiak Television
 - iv. Maravi online
 - v. Odala communications

- vi. University of Malawi
- vii. Nation Newspapers
- viii. Community Radios
- ix. Times Television
- x. A number of online publications

CHALLENGES FACED

1. Less preparation time
2. Lack of Regional qualifiers
3. Limited time on the allocation of events
4. Inflation rate changes due to economic instability
5. Scarcity of fuel resulted in the increase in price of transport costs

SUCCESS STORIES

- **FIRST GAMES RAISED MPCs STATUS**

The increase of the PSAS budget to Malawi helped achieve excellent delivery of the games. MPC managed to allocate funds for the games, as well as identify more volunteers for the games. MPC managed to strengthen its volunteer base at the remote levels, as well as conducting orientation and technical trainings. All these activities helped finally in all efforts that led to the success of the games.

MPC successfully managed to host the first ever games, despite some quarters doubting. For years, MPC has reached out to the government to support the games, but year upon year, the funds have not been provided, the government using budget constraints as a reason.

Such apex games have certainly raised MPCs sport management status, cementing its place as an organization capable of managing sports for people with disabilities, nationally.

- **DIVERSE SPORT CATEGORIES**

MPC managed to bring together athletes from 5 sporting codes, in itself a major feat. MPC has traditionally been known for concentrating on Visually Impaired athletes, giving the wrong impression that it does not cater for other sport codes.

The national games once more reminded and gave confidence to the Malawi citizenry that MPC provides sporting opportunities to people with diverse needs.

- **WIDE PARTICIPATION ACROSS MALAWI**

The reach was wide, with athletes and officials coming from over half of Malawi Administrative Districts.

MPCs District Committees, a creature of PSAS, became lead points in the districts, helping out in athlete selection, volunteer management, as well as being MPCs reference points for several sport related issues, e.g. counselling and safeguarding issues.

- **HIGH LEVEL SPONSORSHIP**

MPC managed to involve the High Office of the Vice President of the country, who made a donation of about Euro 1000 towards the games.

The amount may have been small, but the spirit behind the donation is huge, possibly opening up doors to other benefactors.

Malawi National Sports Council and the Ministry of Sports were both represented at highest level, and MPC had the chance to converse with these organs at decision making levels, which was a unique opportunity

- **DIVERSE GAMES SPECTATORS**

Spectators constituted people from different walks of life, i.e. parents, school authorities, sponsors and others.

Being the first ever games, there's hope that next edition of the games should certainly attract more and wider audiences

- **MPC AND PUBLIC CONTINUAL ENGAGEMENT**

After the games, the MPC is receiving numerous enquiries from people who want to be part of this success. Never thought of at first, the games became real, to the amazement of the nation.

Athletes or volunteer recruitment has become easier since the games happened, as selling MPC has become a bit easier.

- **MPC COMMITTEES ENGAGEMENT**

Over the last few months, MPC established District Committees, that have perfectly complemented the work of the Regional Committees. The District Committees have perfectly filled in a management gap that existed for years in the management structures of the MPC.

The presence of District Committees and Regional Committees served as administrative points in the planning and prepare athletes for the games

The district committees coordinated well with the regional committee in making sure all selected athletes are available for the games

- **K2 TRANSFORMER ENGAGEMENT**

The MPCs sponsorship agreement with the new sponsor was put to a test. MPC had a chance to work with the new sponsor, as each party had a perfect opportunity to prove its worth through the games.

The games convinced the Sponsor that MPC is capable of bringing together stakeholders and pull off a big event.

The relationship with K 2 Transformers was largely cemented through the games, and so other local companies have faith in MPC capacity to manage sponsorship agreements.

Impact and Legacy:

The impact of the Malawi Para School Games extends far most beyond sports it has created a safe place for persons with disabilities. The games have become a catalyst for social change, promoting inclusivity and encouraging a broader understanding of the capabilities and potential of individuals with disabilities.

The games provided opportunities and challenging societal norms this has set a precedent for future endeavors aimed at promoting inclusivity and empowering Para Athletes

Malawi Paralympic committee is planning to have the games as one of the regional competitions in the SADC region and also intend to sanction the games there by being declared as a national competition. The potential legacy is to make a regional and invitational sanctioned event

Acknowledgments:

Malawi Paralympic would like to acknowledge the support from the International Paralympic Committee, Loughborough University London, University of Malawi, Global Disability Innovation Hub, Foreign Commonwealth Development Office as well as all parties supporting the PSAS project for their support towards the realization of hosting the first inaugural Malawi Para Games

A special mention to the Office of the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi for their support towards the games and K2 TRANSFORMER for being the official sponsor of the first edition of the Malawi Para games.

K2 Transformers' commitment to the development of Para sports in Malawi is a commendable step towards creating a more inclusive and empowered society. By investing in athletes' dreams and aspirations, fostering inclusivity, and promoting awareness, the organization is setting a

positive example for corporate social responsibility in sports. With the continued support of K2 Transformers, para-athletes in Malawi can look forward to a brighter future, where their talents and abilities are celebrated and cherished by the entire nation.

A special thank you to MASSA, Ministry of Education Special Needs Department, Parents of Disabled Children in Malawi (PODCAM) and Malawi Council for the handicapped, (MACOHA) Athletics Association of Malawi, (AAM) and technical personnel, support staff, guides and parents as well as classifiers and the medical team from Kamuzu Central Hospital for making the games a success.

The support from the many volunteers from MPC members is greatly appreciated.

Special mention goes to several media houses that continuously publicize the numerous activities that the MPC is engaged in.

Recommendations:

1. Introduce regional qualifiers
Unlike the first edition, it is proposed that subsequent edition of the games should start from qualification at regional level. This will ensure that the games become competitive starting from the district level. Publicity will also be ratcheted up as it will start way before the actual period of the national games
2. Increased time at the games
The athletes should be given a day for classification and acclimatization before the games, unlike in the first edition, when they arrived in the night, and had to compete the next day. They were tired and exhausted, which made them fail to compete at their best at the games
3. Make the games sanctioned by IFs
MPC would want to sanction the games, at least some category of the games. This will allow MPC to invite other NPCs to participate in the games, as they may as well become qualifiers for international games
4. Exchange visit with other organizing NPCs
MPC requests that MPC organizers of the games be accorded and opportunity to go and participate or witness how other NPCs do manage their games, to gain a hands on experience, to better the Malawi Para games eventually.
5. Increased funding for the games
Finally, all the recommendations will require more resources, so funding sources need **to** be multiplied.

Conclusion:

The 1st ever Malawi Para Games met MPCs expectation.

They were treated cautiously, but meticulously, being the first big national event for the MPC, but all went well, set backs were easily surmounted.

The biggest learnings are that with good planning, the games will always get better in resource allocation and athletes and stakeholder participation. Also, the start looked like climbing a mountain, but having implemented the games, MPC has the confidence to deliver the games perfectly each and every year, at even bigger scales.

Discussions with the Malawi National Council of Sports point to the direction that eventually, the Malawi Government will support them, just like is the case with the annual Malawi Youth Games.

Finally, the games should be here to stay. The games provided a visual reality. NGOS etc. do crisscross Malawi preaching and civic educating people about inclusion, but the Malawi Para Games did provide a practical lesson. Its impact reaches far, as people were capable of seeing inclusion in action.

The adage “look at my ability, not my disability” was very well pronounced.

The games will help dispel local myths on people with disability, like belief that people with disabilities are cursed, or bewitched, or are themselves witches etc.

The games finally provide the real meaning of Para Sport Against Stigm

Appendix:

See below additional materials

<https://fb.watch/nI6mhM1qDc/?mibextid=Nif5oz>

The collage consists of two main parts. On the left is a newspaper clipping from 'LOCAL SPORT' with the headline 'Paralympics to hold national championship'. The article, written by INGABAZI KAMWENDO, reports on a meeting of the Malawi Paralympic Committee (MPC) on Wednesday. It mentions that the MPC is preparing for the 2023 Para Games and aims to have more representation in Para sports. A photo shows several people in a meeting room. On the right is a promotional poster for the 'MALAWI PARA GAMES 2023'. The poster features the Malawi national flag colors and the Malawi Paralympic Committee logo. It lists the sports: Para athletics, Powerlifting, Blind chess, and Sitting volleyball. A central image shows a male athlete in a red and green singlet with 'KAMWENDO' on his bib, running. Below him, it says 'Thursday 27 July 2023 8:00AM'. The slogan 'Developing elite para sport at national level' is also present. Logos for various sponsors like K2, AT2030, and others are at the bottom.





Figure 2: Malawi paralympic President presenting Gold medal to Athlete Frank Elias a winner in T47