

Case Study: Growing a Para Sport Ecosystem in Malawi

Throughout the project, a Para sport ecosystem developed in Malawi. Shifting stigma through coordinated strategies in media, community engagement, and sport development is beginning to influence national systems and policies.

What is a Para sport ecosystem?

In relation to Para sport, an ecosystem refers to the interconnected network of organisations, individuals, and resources that collectively support the development, participation, and promotion of sports for people with disabilities.

How did it grow in Malawi as result of the project?

The project made stigma reduction and social change a priority for the Malawi Paralympic Committee (MPC), alongside developing Para sport. By adopting a holistic approach to Para sport and community engagement, MPC raised its profile and focused on local activities and achievements, implementing:

- Local Para sport action plans
- In school programmes
- Local media and community engagement strategies
- National competition structures
- Collaboration with research and policy advocacy

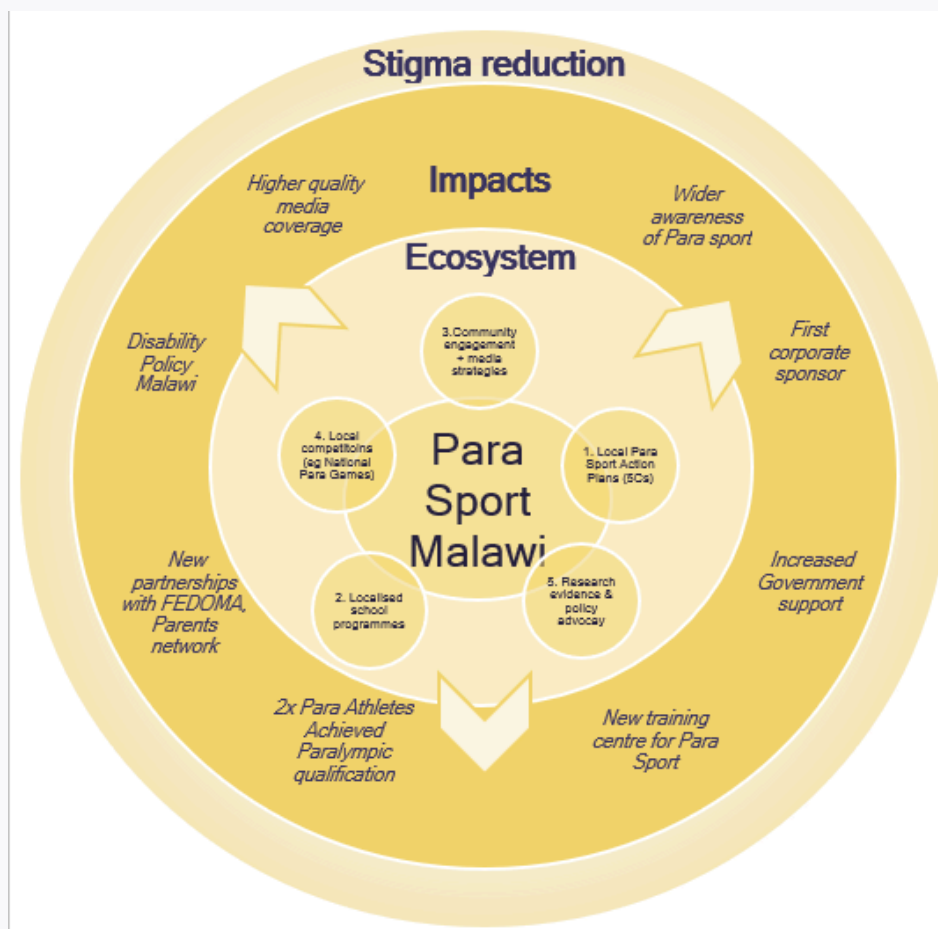


'What is pleasing is that many people have learned, and are continuing to learn, that a person with disability is able. Most times when we say, mostly on the radio, that people with disability should be given opportunities, people think that we say it just for the sake of saying it, or just to pamper people with disabilities. Don't you believe now?...Having seen this?!'
Broadcast viewer, 2021 (translated)

What was the impact?

The strategy enhanced MPC's relationships and visibility, leading to corporate sponsorship, increased support from the Malawi Sports Council, and greater community awareness through collaborations. Malawian athletes' local achievements, including qualifications for the Paris Paralympics, helped MPC advocate for policy inclusion nationally and regionally.

Impacts of Malawi Para Sport Ecosystem



Why is it important?

- It demonstrates how a holistic approach to developing Para sport can break down societal barriers, increase visibility, and garner support for athletes with disabilities.
- The resulting ecosystem not only promotes athletic participation but also drives policy changes and community acceptance, fostering a more inclusive society in Malawi.

How can it continue to grow?

Continued investment from national governments, national and international organizations, and private sponsors is essential for the ongoing development of Para sport nationally, regionally, and internationally.

The relationship between stigma reduction and increasing Para sport participation is virtuous. These two strategies must continue to work together to fight inequalities and promote an inclusion for the 1 billion people living with disabilities globally.