

Agenda Item 3.6

Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	16 September 2025
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	International Development Unit
-	Annual Report
Presented By	T/ACC Lynn Ratcliff,
-	Professionalism and Assurance
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Appendix A: Officer Post
	Deployment Report – Ruth Elder

PURPOSE

The purpose of this paper is to bring members up to date on the progress of the International Academy (IA) work since the last update provided in March 2024.

Members are asked to discuss the content of this paper and provide any comments or observations regarding the work of the IA.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Police Scotland International Development Strategy details three strategic outcomes, they remain as:
 - Enhanced global opportunities to positively contribute to and deliver police training, development and support for benefits of communities in Scotland and internationally, aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
 - Effective and productive partnership networks, working collaboratively with those who reflect Police Scotland's values and ethics and enabling innovation and learning to explore new ways of working.
 - Increased skills, knowledge and understanding of international communities within our workforce, positively influencing and sharing best practice, which is reflected in our approach.
- 1.2. Police Scotland's reputation globally remains held in high regard and as mentioned in last year's update, many enquiries we receive are still through positive word of mouth, however, the team this year have proactively sought out wider collaborations for existing programmes whilst also developing a new bespoke programme. Demand is still high and provides clear pathways for Police Scotland to continue to enhance and extend our international footprint, cooperation and influence, whilst seeking opportunities for learning and personal development for officers and staff in the organisation.

2 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1. Scottish Government Funded Malawi & Zambia Programme

This programme continues to be the most significant commitment for the International Academy (IA). As updated last year, Scottish Government agreed to three years of grant funding rather than one year and this has supported the development of a longer-term training delivery strategy covering 2025 - 2028.

The focus of the programme remains on Gender Based Violence (GBV), Sexual Crime and Child Protection and prior to 2025, the priority for Police Scotland training delivery was targeting frontline responders to upskill them through our Sexual Offences and Child Protection for First Responders (SOCP) Course. There was also a Train the Trainer (TTT) programme which would ensure Malawi and

Zambia Police Officers could cascade train their own officers in the SOCP course.

In response to the review undertaken in January 2024, the plan for training delivery in year 2025-2026 was amended to ensure training delivery in more remote areas of both countries where it is recognised vulnerable persons are at heightened risk of abuse. In addition, decision to postpone the TTT programme, maintain the SOCP courses and introduce three new, more specialist training:

- Sexual Offences Liaison Officer (SOLO)
- Child Interview Training
- Advanced Investigator

These courses are based on the Police Scotland versions with adjustments for in-country legislative, practical, procedural and cultural variations. The content heavily focuses on trauma informed approaches to victims. The IA was keen to ensure the course took a partnership focus and sought support from key stakeholders for delivery.

They were successfully piloted in both countries and whilst some revision is required to ensure maximum benefit, the feedback has been that all Victim Support Unit officers would benefit from attending the SOLO and Child Interview courses. Of note, the inclusion of inputs from in-country subject matter experts such as a Magistrate and a Forensic Medical Examiner were seen as hugely beneficial both in terms of sharing knowledge but also building relations. Partner agencies were allowed to attend parts of the course – again feedback provided was that this was seen as a significant step forward in building partnership working towards combatting GBV.

The Advance Investigator Course involved 12 middle managers from both police services travelling to Scotland and residing at the Scottish Police College. The officers selected hold roles as Senior Investigating officers or Deputies in their equivalent of Public Protection Units and it was felt upskilling these officers would complement the upskilling brought about by the SOLO and Child Interview training, we had developed.

This course focused on investigative techniques for GBV, rape and sexual crime and child protection, understanding the impact of trauma on victims, how to provide support to the victims and methods of improving partnership working. It further covered topics

such as Human Trafficking, Cybercrimes, forensic considerations and general management of complex cases.

The feedback from the attending officers was overwhelmingly positive with indications of returning to Malawi and Zambia with a view to cascade train officers.

2.2. **Benefits to Police Scotland:** The Malawi/Zambia programme continues to provide development opportunities for Police Scotland officers and staff. A total of 37 officers and 2 members of police staff have been deployed in 2024-2025 to Africa. In addition, the creation of the new courses mentioned above were supported by officers in Scotland – providing a challenge to consider cultural variances and appropriate use of language and working examples in the course content. (Please read appendix – Officer Deployment Report – Ruth Elder)

Finally, the Advanced Investigator Course content was delivered by Police Scotland subject matter experts which not only boosts confidence in presentation skills but also exposed the officers to cultural variances through the conversations and debates that took place in the margins.

The IA was supported throughout the two weeks visit by officers who had previously been deployed to Malawi or Zambia. These visitors came from two of the poorest nations in the world and so assisting during their stay in terms of advice, guidance, general hospitality was appreciated. This was all done on their rest days and weekends, an acknowledgement that they were "paying it back" in terms of their own unique opportunities.

Further to the training delivery mentioned, the IA also supported the roll-out of a nationwide Public Awareness campaign (still ongoing at time of writing) to reach many thousands of people in effort to educate them of the law and their rights when it comes to GBV. The focus is to share the message that this behaviour is unacceptable, encouraging communities to unite against it and that perpetrators need to be identified and reported to the Police.

Funding was also provided by Scottish Government through Police Scotland for One Stop Centres – similar to SARCs and Bairns Hoose. The significant funding was used to target five centres for major improvements, making them more victim-centred, child friendly and hopefully improving the likelihood of survivors attending for support.

2.3. Global Police Innovation Exchange Leadership Programme (GPXLP)

Police Scotland have led, in collaboration with the Australian Federal Police (AFP), to create and deliver this 12-month programme which saw the participants (superintendent rank) operate in syndicates with allocated themes to work on and deliver options and approaches to tackling global policing challenges (GPC). The 4 themes this year were Vulnerability & Law Enforcement, Crime & Migration, Mis & Dis Information and finally Wellbeing & Resilience

The programme consisted of multi module learning including sessions via a shared Moodle site, in person residential (Australia April 2024 and Scotland February 2025), a study tour (Singapore October 2024) and online learning and input session from GPX countries. The programme concluded with each syndicate presenting their GPC to the GPX Board at the Scotland residential in February 2025 in addition to submitting a syndicate 5000-word essay in support.

This year's programme was the second pilot and evaluated very positively again (as per pilot 1). Discussions are currently ongoing with the AFP with regards to running the course on a permanent basis. A key focus is identifying areas where cost can be reduced without impacting the integrity and success of the pilot programme content.

2.4. **Benefit to Scotland:** The GPXLP was designed to create a global network of police leaders equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding to adapt and respond to emerging issues affecting policing and society.

The GPXLP brings together high potential police representatives to develop their leadership capacity, with a focus on vertical, rather than traditional horizontal leadership development. Participants are given the opportunity to build professional networks while discussing and developing strategies to prepare their organisations for the challenges ahead in themes that resonate with the policing community around the world.

2.5. Preparing for Major Football Events Programme

Early in 2025, the IA received several enquiries from American agencies around how Police Scotland polices football matches. With the next World Cup being held in North America (and Mexico), it was recognised that football (or soccer to use their terminology) is not an event that policing in North America tend to have experience

in. The IA therefore seized the opportunity to design and deliver a bespoke Policing Football programme.

Engagement and collaboration with partners including the Scottish Football Association, Celtic and Rangers Football Club; Glasgow City Council and numerous internal colleagues linked to Events Planning and managing football games, saw the IA create a 5-day programme. Utilising well established contacts through other IA work, the programme was shared across American and Canadian law enforcement agencies.

Between11-16 March 2025, the first 'Preparing for Major Football Events' programme was delivered at Tulliallan. Twenty-three participants attended from various policing and non-policing agencies from both the United States and Canada. The programme was progressive, culminating in attendance at the globally recognised and challenging major sporting event, Celtic v Rangers.

Internally, Gold and Silver Commanders provided their insights as well as Operational Support Division who demonstrated various tactical options.

The initial feedback has been excellent with a clear appetite for more courses. A second iteration of the course is currently being delivered (at time of writing) to coincide with another Old Firm fixture and whilst not finished yet, early feedback has been excellent.

In addition, through contacts made in the GPX programme, early discussions are ongoing to bring a couple of senior officers from the Netherlands to participate in the next programme. This is to support their understanding of the differences in how we police football in Scotland compared to the Netherlands and for them to share their experiences from a European football perspective.

2.6. <u>Benefits to Scotland:</u> This course has highlighted Police Scotland in a very positive and professional light in terms of major events planning. It strengthened the partnerships within Scotland and created new links to law enforcement agencies across North America. Future courses will expand this with the likelihood of further links to the Netherlands Police. The course is fully cost recovered.

2.7. <u>Twinning Relationship with the Royal Falkland Islands Police</u> (RFIP)

Through the Home Office, Police Scotland is twinned with RFIP. This relationship has seen a mutual benefit to both organisations with several long-term secondments to the Falkland Islands by Police Scotland constables. RFIP have had significant challenges in terms of recruitment and their current cadre of officer lack operational policing experience. The seconded Police Scotland officers have both bolstered their frontline resource whilst taking on a mentoring/tutoring role. They have experienced working in one of the most remote areas of the world and had to tackle all the challenges this brings. The feedback from RFIP and the seconded officers has been overwhelmingly positive.

Police Scotland currently has two Sergeants (one uniform and one detective) on a 3-month secondment. Their role has been to mentor the RFPI Sgts in several skills, including complex case management; management of sex offenders; community policing, risk management in custody to name a few.

There had previously been a request to send an Inspector for 6 weeks, however, on review of the request, it was felt there was insufficient benefit to Police Scotland and the officer and this was not supported.

All secondments to RFIP are fully cost recovered to Police Scotland.

2.8 **Benefit to Scotland:** The officers seconded to RFIP see both a personal development opportunity in terms of their mentoring and tutoring skills. They are also exposed to extreme remote policing and development of their problem solving, communication and leadership skills. They represent Police Scotland in a positive light in terms of their professionalism and the relationship we have with this British Overseas Territory is held as an exemplar by the Home Office IPAS team, recently presented to other UK forces as the desired standard to achieve with their twinned partners.

3. LINKS TO ACADEMIA

3.1 University of Chicago Police Leadership Programme

An opportunity for development of officers at Chief Inspecting/Inspecting Ranks was received into the International Academy from the University of Chicago. The Police Leadership Academy offers a leadership course delivered over 5 months which requires participants to be in Chicago for one week every month.

Following discussion at the International Development Board a decision was taken to offer the placement to the Accelerated Leadership Programme (ALP). Given the abstraction from daily business, it was agreed the successful applicant would then be seconded to the IA to serve their next rotation providing an opportunity to expose the officer to international policing and allow them to undertake a research project with an international focus but linked to policing challenges in Scotland.

The proposal for the selected officer is to examine the potential link in increased knife crime in Scotland and the review of Stop and Search policy.

This programme is fully funded by the University of Chicago.

3.2 **FBI National Academy Leadership Programme**

A development opportunity has been received from The Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy (FBINA). The FBINA have offered an opportunity for officers to join a ten-week programme at their training academy in Quantico, Virginia, USA. This comprehensive programme places particular emphasis on leadership development and is aimed at Chief Inspecting ranks.

This is a welcomed opportunity for Police Scotland to participate given the recent withdrawal of funding for the FBI's flagship training programme, the National Executive Institute, and ensures the strategic relationship with the FBI continues while broadening the ranks at which PS officers can apply to experience an international development opportunity. DCI Caroline Wilson was successful in her interview with the FBI attaché in London earlier in the year and will participate in the course later in the year.

This programme is partially funded by the FBI.

3.3 **University of the Arctic (UArctic)**

Borne out of Norwegian Police Mentoring programme, there has been various discussions around funding and sharing of information throughout the Nordic region and beyond. After various meetings and enquiries, it was established the University of the Arctic (UArctic) would be an ideal match for wider development of the mentoring programme and provide a multitude of benefits for the whole of Police Scotland.

UArctic is a network of universities, colleges, research institutes, and other organisations concerned with education and research in

and about the North. It primarily includes institutions from the eight Arctic countries: Canada, Denmark (including Greenland and the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia (currently suspended), Sweden and the United States.

However, UArctic also includes non-Arctic members from countries such as Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Japan and the UK. These non-Arctic members often have a strong interest in Arctic research, education, and policy.

In February 2005, the IA applied to become a member of UArctic and have now been accepted to this network after Insp James Sinclair presented to the General Committee at their annual conference in Inari, Finland in June 2025.

3.4 **Benefits to Scotland:** These academic opportunities have ensured that the International Academy now has a golden thread of international development programmes running at each rank across the organisation. They provide clear personal development opportunities for our officers and hopefully will present future opportunities to work with wider police academic organisations.

3.5 **Inbound Study Tours**

The IA continue to host inbound study tours to various law enforcement agencies, mainly from across Europe but also some further afield. Where possible, these provide opportunities for Police Scotland subject matter experts to be involved in the presentations which allows a "compare and contrast" opportunity for them as well as being able to showcase Police Scotland in a positive, professional light.

October 2025 will see our first truly international inbound tour with 30 police officers from 6 different countries come together and participate in one of our programmes.

These inbound tours are fully cost recovered and the money reinvested into the development of Police Scotland officers to participate in many of the programmes listed above. This ensures the work of the International Academy is delivered at no financial cost to the taxpayer.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

5 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

7 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

8 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no social implications in this report.

9 COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 There are no community implications in this report.

10 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

11 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to discuss the content of this paper.

Ruth Elder: Malawi November/December 2024

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."

The words of Dr Seuss's Lorax painted on the wall of Majete National Reserve visitor centre summed up my motivation to be a member of Police Scotland's Malawi/Zambia cadre very fittingly. Only months earlier I had poured over, scrutinised and rewritten my application to the cadre many times in the hope of success in respect of being able to contribute my training, practical experience and knowledge of child protection and the investigation of sexual offences to international colleagues. My police career to date has afforded me many humbling experiences, unique opportunities and has tested my resilience on numerous occasions but I am confident that little else will come close to my time in Malawi in November/December 2024.



Photo: curious Malawian children in the foothills of the imposing Mount Mulanje.

Touching down in Chileka Airport, Blantyre, the lengthy journey of planes, trains and automobiles behind me could not dampen my enthusiasm to be in Malawi as I was met with a wall of scorching heat and blinding sunshine. If I was in need of any reminder that I'd left a Scottish winter far behind then that was it. Calum and I joined the bustling queues of passengers in the arrivals hall and were soon on the other side of the immigration desk, awaiting our luggage in order that we might get started.

Unfortunately, this was to be my first challenge. None of my luggage had arrived. I felt somewhat panicked to be so far from home with none of my personal possessions, disappointed to be without my uniform for the opening ceremony of the course and felt responsible for depriving my students of all the resources to aid their learning that I'd brought from Scotland. I had two choices: I could either wallow and allow this to set the tone of what should be an incredible experience, or I could get on with it and make the best of my situation. The latter was the obvious choice, and upon reflection, this attitude would come to be essential for the duration of the deployment.

The drive from Chileka to the city of Blantyre opened my eyes to Malawi and I will admit to being very much taken aback by my observations of a completely different way of life. It was from those early moments that I realised that as much as I believed I had to offer the Malawian students, this was to be just as significant a learning experience for me. I quickly accepted that any frame of reference I thought I had as someone who had worked in some of the most deprived communities in the west of Scotland was to be tucked to the back of my mind for now, as life here was very different. Whilst we sped along scantily surfaced roads of sub-Saharan Africa, lined with hordes of people selling anything from vast piles of second-hand clothing to live animals whilst what appeared to be miles of tin roofed villages haphazardly wound their way into the hills in the distance beyond, the only familiar sensation was our driver's compilation of Westlife music (which would become the unfaltering soundtrack to all journeys throughout the trip).

Our accommodation, Protea Ryalls Hotel in the heart of Malawi's financial capital Blantyre, was extremely comfortable. Indeed, as our deployment progressed, I began to feel somewhat embarrassed that we had been afforded such comparable luxury when I came to learn of the accommodation our students had been provided with. Nonetheless, I was grateful for air conditioning and an unheated swimming pool at the end of very long, blisteringly hot days underneath the tin roofs of the classrooms at Kanjedza Police Training School.





Photos: Our office for two weeks - views of Kanjedza Police Training School grounds

Supported by four Malawian Police facilitators, DS Robbie Gilmour, PS Calum Spence, PC Heather Feeney and I would deliver training to 80 Malawian Police Service participants. Students were from a range of backgrounds, roles, ranks and length of service and represented many of the different geographical areas of Malawi. It was incredibly fitting that day one of the course coincided with day one of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence.

Almost immediately, and thereafter on somewhat of a rolling basis, further challenges were to reveal themselves. I quickly learned to speak much slower than I would ordinarily do; a difficult task when you are delivering subject matter you are passionate about. By about day three, however, things appeared to have settled, and Malawian ears had become familiar with my hybrid accent. Regular power cuts in the area and sometimes a lack of fuel in the generator meant that the electricity supply - and therefore our power point presentations - could not be relied upon. It was at times such as these that I was grateful to have years of practical experience of the subject matter behind me and the uncanny ability to think on my feet that anyone embarking on a career in policing must quickly master. I endeavoured to bring my own experiences and case studies as a way of bringing the theory to life, encourage debate and spark conversations about issues that my Malawian colleagues hadn't considered or encountered. Although students had handbooks containing the content of the power point slides, I produced handwritten posters for each lesson which I fixed to the walls of the classroom. I was pleased to learn that the students were sharing the photos that they took of these daily with colleagues who had not yet benefitted from the course in order to share their learning.



Photo: 'homework' each evening was poster creation



Photo above: Bringing the PRICE model to life: rapport during suspect interview

Photo below: DS Gilmour providing guidance during group work





Photo: one of the ever-popular 'energisers. I loved these!

Now with time to reflect on my experience in Malawi, I can see clearly how I have benefitted from the opportunities presented to me. I applied to the cadre, quietly confident that I had much to offer because of my operational policing experience. Standing in front of 40 students daily really reinforced this for me and as someone who has a tendency to be very self-critical, it was a welcome boost to my confidence in respect of the knowledge and skills that I possess.

Throughout the deployment, my tact and diplomacy skills were challenged on a daily basis by Malawian officers who struggled to make sense of Scottish attitudes towards rape in marriage, homosexuality and human rights. Despite the fact that there were often polarised views towards these matters, it was important to me that I listened to the differing attitudes and opinions so I could better understand and respond professionally and effectively.

Towards the end of our trip, I volunteered to speak on behalf of Police Scotland at the course closing ceremony. With the knowledge that the course was running throughout the 16 days of Action campaign never far from my mind, I felt it was meaningful and significant for a female officer to speak on behalf of our group in front of the students, high ranking Malawian officers and the guest of honour, Malawi Police Service Inspector General, Merlyne Yolamu. Much to the delight and surprise of the students, the officer who they had struggled greatly to understand at first, opened her speech in Chichewa - which was met with rapturous applause and an interruption to express her delight by Mrs Yolamu. I greatly enjoyed speaking on behalf of Police Scotland and

although a televised interview by state media outlet Malawi Broadcasting Corporation was sprung on me immediately afterwards, I took this in my stride despite it being a brand-new challenge.

I was fortunate to share my time in Malawi with like-minded colleagues who were keen to embrace our new experience as a group and to learn, see and do as much as possible. We made visits to operational Police Stations in Malawi – Blantyre Police Station and Chickwawa Police Station – both of which had Victim Support Units that we were keen to see. Whilst we were made aware that Blantyre Police Station was a temporary compound due to a new police station being in progress, I will admit to being taken aback by the conditions. We were shown around several of the offices where the roofs were collapsing, walls were coated entirely in mould, broken furniture was in use and next to no computers were available. Handwritten ledgers and papers documented reports and contained evidence.

We were shown to the Victim Support Unit which was the 'grandest' structure by a long way. A mural painted on its exterior walls credited its build to a church. Sleeping on chairs shaded by trees immediately outside this building were at least four heavily armed police officers in militarised uniform and it concerned me that it had not been considered that this might be a fear inducing sight for the vulnerable witnesses this building was designed to house during their time with the Police in this location. It was at this police station that we had an eye-opening and truly testing conversation with a Senior Officer who wished to discuss with us at length our views on physical chastisement of children and armed response towards those who ran from the Police.

Whilst I was encouraged, and at times was deeply impressed by, the open mindedness and forward thinking demonstrated by the students on our course, my interactions and observations at Blantyre Police Office taught me that there is a long way to go yet – particularly in respect of trauma informed policing and upholding human rights. It might be worthwhile to consider courses such as the one we were delivering for Senior Management, to encourage understanding, buy-in and positive change from top down in the wider policing context.

In preparation for my deployment to Malawi, I was warned to expect to be treated differently in comparison to my male colleagues. My experience overall was that I did not find this to be the case. Both within the classroom and whilst meeting with Malawi Police Service representatives out with, I felt respected, seen and heard. I admired many of the female students who portrayed themselves as strong, knowledgeable and confident women who didn't shy from sharing their opinions or experiences in the learning environment and I noted that many of them were progressing through the rank structure.

In meeting the Inspector General, I observed an extremely warm, charismatic yet authoritative female at the head of the organisation. That said, I did observe many apparently minor issues that might be considered reflective of gender inequality. For example, an ongoing reference to the Inspector General as 'Mrs' Yolamu: constantly

reinforcing that her marital status was significant in respect of her position. In other circumstances, within the bathroom facilities for the sole use of senior officers at the training school, which we were kindly instructed to make use of, sat on open display and apparently for anyone to make use of a box marked as containing 144 condoms. Whilst I understand that Malawi continues to face an HIV epidemic and has one of the highest global HIV rates, there were no condoms within the general ladies' lavatories at the training school – or indeed in any other bathroom I experienced in my time in Malawi. I was also acutely aware of approaches being made solely to my male colleague, DS Gilmour, by curious and incredulous male officers who appealed to him to reassure them that in Scotland we did not, in fact, take reports from females who reported sexual abuse by their male partners. Such discussions were not sought with me as a female.

I left Malawi feeling as I do now: incredibly richer for the experience and grateful for such a unique and wonderful opportunity, as a police officer and a human being. I also left with a newfound appreciation for the facilities we have working in Scotland: both within our physical estates, the technology and expertise we have at our disposal and the values and rights that we have. I will wholeheartedly encourage anyone to embrace this exciting challenge if it becomes available to them.

In recent weeks, I deployed as a SOLO to a Nigerian female who had disclosed to uniformed colleagues, sexual abuse perpetrated by her husband. After an initial meeting with her, I contacted the SIO to flag to him that I had identified considerable risks to her because of Honour Based Abuse. These had not been recognised by those who had interacted with her previously.

As a direct result of my experiences and learning in Malawi, I was able to speak with her confidently about the legal position in Scotland regarding sexual offences, whilst simultaneously being understanding of and able to relate to culturally specific differences such as conjugal rights. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the culturally sensitive service I was able to provide to this survivor came about as a direct result of my learning and experiences in Malawi. I was able to work with her over the course of an extended period of time and with appropriate partner agencies to arrive at a position where she could be assured of our commitment to the safety of herself and her children. She eventually felt confident to provide a statement regarding serious sexual abuse and prolonged domestic abuse.

Being able to provide an excellent level of service to survivors is something that is very important to me. To be able to make a difference to this female and her family in respect of culturally sensitive matters means that a truly meaningful difference was made because of the professional learning opportunities I have benefitted from as a result of my time in Malawi.







