

MALAWI VISIT REPORT



SEIBO JAPAN (NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION)
OCTOBER 25TH - NOVEMBER 6TH 2025



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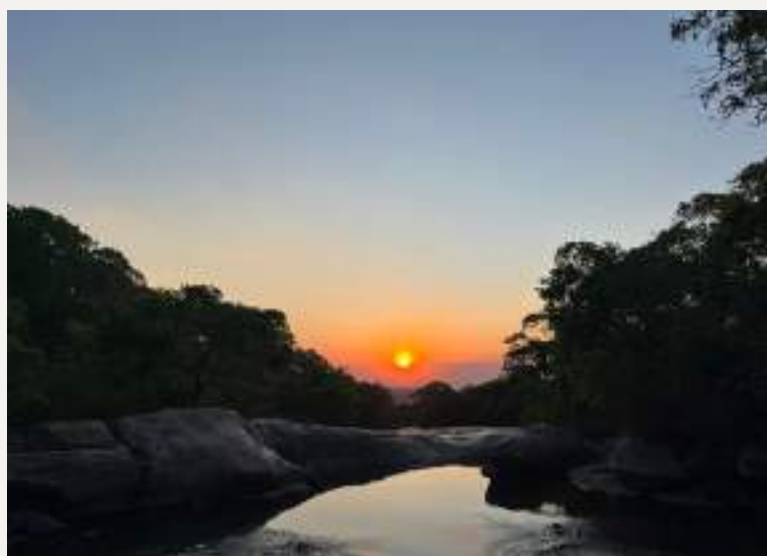
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No donations made to Seibo Japan (NPO) or Seibo (General Incorporated Association) were used for this trip. Logos related to the Krizevac Project contain embedded links.



TRAVEL OVERVIEW

From October 25th to November 6th 2025 we, Kentaro Hirano and Rei Yoshida, student staff members of Seibo Japan, visited Malawi for approximately two weeks. Having been involved in Seibo's activities since high school, this visit fulfilled a long-held desire.

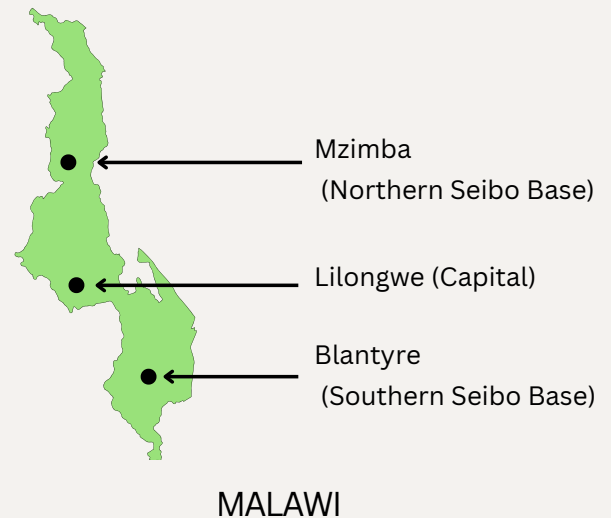
This visit marked the first on-site visit by Seibo Japan student staff and served as an important first step toward establishing a sustainable system for continued staff dispatches in the future.

Seibo operates through two organizations: **Seibo Maria**, which conducts school meal support activities in Malawi, and **Seibo Japan**, which carries out fundraising activities in Japan.

During the trip, we entered Malawi via the capital Lilongwe, travelled the following day to the northern base in Mzimba and then moved south to Blantyre before departing the country.

The trip had two main objectives:

- 1) **To directly observe the school feeding program and its effects.** Until now, Seibo Japan had relied on photos, reports and online information, but many aspects - such as the actual school environment, meal distribution and children's reactions - can only be understood on-site. We aimed to comprehensively assess the impact of school meals, including changes in attendance, learning attitudes and community cooperation.
- 2) **To prepare a system that would allow Japanese staff to travel to Malawi on a regular basis.** We aimed to confirm safety conditions, transportation methods, accommodation environments and collaborate with local staff to establish a foundation for future visits



A herd of cows we saw on the move

CITY OVERVIEW - LILONGWE

The capital city, Lilongwe, while being the country's central city, had not undergone excessive urbanization and had a relaxed atmosphere. On the way from the airport to the city center, we saw pedestrians, pickup trucks that carried multiple passengers and roadside stalls, showing how daily life is closely tied to the roads.

Many bus stops and shops displayed signs of Chinese aid, reflecting the impact of Chinese-funded infrastructure projects.

Overall, Lilongwe, although the capital city, had a calmer atmosphere than the rapidly growing southern city of Blantyre and the rhythm of daily life was visible throughout the city, giving it a unique balance.



Images from Lilongwe

Lilongwe Wildlife Centre



In Lilongwe, we had some time before heading to northern Mzimba so we visited the Lilongwe Wildlife Centre in the city which had been recommended to us by staff at the Japanese Embassy. We hiked for about an hour and a half and saw various wildlife, including monkeys.

VISIT TO THE JAPANESE EMBASSY IN LILONGWE



The day after arriving in Lilongwe, we visited the Japanese Embassy and met the embassy staff. They shared wide-ranging information on Malawi's social and political situation, Japanese aid and initiatives by international organizations and private companies. We also heard about the activities of Japanese personnel involved in school meal support in Lilongwe and the current situation of Japanese companies operating in the country.

In addition, we touched on topics such as the domestic distribution of Malawian coffee and the potential for sales at events related to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). We were informed that there are currently around 80 Japanese residents living in Malawi, many of whom are involved in areas such as the Cooperation of Volunteers and NGOs. This visit to the embassy allowed us to learn about Japan's presence in Malawi from a broad perspective.

Kumbukani Home Visit



During our stay in Lilongwe, we visited Kumbukani, an employee of the Malawian Investment and Trade Centre (MITC), who had been dispatched from Malawi to the Kansai Expo. On the day I arrived, her nephew and niece came to pick me up at the airport, making for a long-awaited reunion.

Her home was in a quiet residential area and we were impressed by the spacious layout, multiple buildings, fruit trees and small vegetable garden, giving a sense of a self-sufficient lifestyle despite the urban environment.



We were treated to a meal and spent time talking to her niece about life in Malawi. Since opportunities to talk to Malawians of our age are rare, it was a valuable experience and left a lasting impression on us.

SEIBO MARIA



About the Organization



Northern Mzimba Office Staff



Southern Blantyre Office Staff

Seibo Maria is a local NGO in Malawi responsible for implementing Seibo's school feeding program. It works closely with schools to ensure daily meal provision. There are three staff members stationed in north (Mzimba) and four in the south (Blantyre).

The teams there handle ingredient procurement, delivery to primary and nursery schools, support for cooking volunteers and monitoring operations.

In Northern Malawi, where schools are larger but fewer, contracted suppliers deliver ingredients directly. In the south, where small schools are scattered in mountainous areas, Seibo Maria staff deliver meals themselves.

Monitoring System



Vehicles used for school meal distribution and monitoring in the southern region



Ledgers for recording inventory and attendance distributed to each school



The program manager checking the viscosity of school meals

Seibo Maria staff visit northern schools daily and southern schools at least once a week to monitor stock levels, cooking methods and hygiene conditions.

Additionally, ledger books for inventory management are distributed to all schools. This ensures effective management and transparency with stock and attendance.

NURSERY AND CBCC

Nursery Schools (nursery school)

- Operated privately with tuition fees
- They run from morning to 3pm
- Seibo children are mainly assigned to nurseries

Community-based Children's Centers (CBCC)

- No tuition for community management
- Free learning with volunteer caregivers
- Only run from morning to 11:00am



School meal ingredients stored at the Southern Office



Staff instructing how to use the provided items (cups, soap, aprons)

SCHOOL VISITS - NORTHERN REGION (MZIMBA)

St. Paul's Primary School



St. Paul's Primary School is a large school with 1,076 students located near the Seibo Mzimba office. We mainly interacted with 8th Grade students, introduced Japan using a map, and took a group photo at the end of the visit.

Kanyerere Primary School

Located 20 minutes up a mountain road, Kanyerere Primary School is a smaller school that has seen attendance and enrolment rise from 200 to 500 students since the introduction of the school meal program. Exam pass rates also improved from 50-60% to around 90%, showing the profound impact Seibo's work is having by encouraging children to school and allowing them to work effectively.



Chabere Primary School

Chabrere Primary School is a small mountain school where school leaders testified to the increase in attendance and enrolment thanks to the meal program, expressing their hopes for its continuation. Upon our visit, the school held a ceremony for the presentation of soap and cups, invaluable equipment for the success of the Seibo's school meal program.



Mzimba LEA Primary School

Mzimba LEA Primary School is a much larger urban school with 1,381 students and 52 teachers. Due to the high number of students, classes are split into morning and afternoon sessions. Meals take 2-3 hours to prepare and are served in about 40 minutes. According to the teacher in charge of School Health Nutrition (SHN), nutrition, attendance and academic performance have all improved thanks to these provisions.



Kazomba Primary School



Kazomba Primary School is about a 15-minute drive from the office, conveniently located on the roadside rather than a mountainous area. Also a large school, it enrolls 900 students and in 2016 became the first school in the northern region to receive the school meals provided by Seibo.

One notable aspect of Kazomba Primary School is the participation of men in cooking, which is rarely seen in other schools. It was impressive to see the school and local community working together to support the school meals.

During the visit, students expressed aspirations to become engineers, nurses, judges and university lecturers and many expressed a particular desire to become teachers.

Mr. Enomoto (pictured left), a JICA volunteer teaching mathematics at the school shared that one day there were notably fewer students and, upon asking his colleague, was told that ‘that’s because there is no school lunch today’. This anecdote highlights the transformative impact school meal provision has had on the local community and reinforces the significance of supporting school meals.

Matewu Primary School

Much smaller, Matewu Primary Schools enrolls just under 300 students and is located a 30-minute walk along a mountain path. Unlike other schools, children at Matewu are required to bring a stick of firewood each for cooking. During our visit, we were able to serve lunch to the children and watch them play in the schoolyard with balls and a netball goal.



Kabuku Primary School



At Kabuku Primary School, all the students gathered and held a welcome event for us. At the event, the teacher in charge of SHN and members of the cooking committee attended and there was a poem recital by the students. These poems included phrases such as “School lunches give us health and strength” and “They help us concentrate on our studies.” There was also a performance of songs and dances where words like “here comes Seibo” and “let’s thank” were repeated in Tumbuka. The committee members spoke about the background of the school lunch program, their excitement about the visit from Seibo Japan and their gratitude. One member even remarked that “I wish I could go back to being a child and eat this school lunch myself.”

According to the principal, although there used to be many absences, the school meals have helped students focus in class, and their academic performance has also improved.

There was a discussion about changes in the school, where children expressed wishes to come into school for lunch even when they are sick. In response, Kentaro said “I am happy that everyone looks forward to the school lunch and I hope you will continue to eat lunch, learn well and play.”

Machelecheta Primary School

Machelecheta Primary School, with just under 500 children, is located on a plain close to the center of Mzimba. During our visit, 8th-grade students performed songs and a play, with the song "Yewo Seibo" (which means 'Thank you, Seibo!' in Tumbuka) and the children expressed how energized they became after eating the school lunch.

The kitchen is situated a little away from the main school buildings and is owned by a nearby church and provides school lunches to the children of the church too. The cooking itself is handled on a rotating basis by parents from several surrounding villages, with the entire community supporting the children’s school lunches.

The students led us to the kitchen whilst singing enthusiastically and we got a chance to speak to the principal (pictured right) who mentioned that the school is in need of a new kitchen, but stressed the importance of the school meal program.



SCHOOL VISITS - SOUTHERN REGION (BLANTYRE)

Mlambe CBCC

Mlambe means ‘baobab tree’ in Chewa and, true to its name, it is located next to a large baobab tree. It is about a 20-minute drive from the office and the building (previously used as an elementary school) has been repurposed as a Community-based Child Care Center (CBCC) following the construction of a new elementary school nearby.

Children arrive at the center around 8:00 am and lunch is served around 10:45 am. Ideally lunch would be served earlier but to avoid children leaving immediately after and missing late arrivals, they have settled on the current schedule.



Currently, Mlambe CBCC has 3 caregivers who look after a total of 67 children gathered from 3 neighboring villages. Meal preparation is handled on a rotating basis by 15 committee members who help to support children throughout the community.

Bwemba CBCC



Bwemba CBCC is a small child care center around a 50-minute drive from the office near the top of a mountain. The building has a thatched roof, making it vulnerable to weather conditions, there is no covered kitchen and attendance fluctuates based on family circumstances and illnesses. There are two caregivers (who also serve on the cooking committee) looking after 42 children. During the visit though, we donated preschool clothing we donated provided by Mobal “Miki House,” which brought great joy to both the children and their parents.

Twirane Nursery School

Twirane Nursery School is a nursery school located on the grounds of a church, attended by about 45 children. Lunch is served around 10 am and firewood is provided by Seibo.

Future Leaders Nursery School

Future Leaders Nursery School, which takes its name from “Moulding of Tomorrow Leaders,” has 42 children enrolled and is divided into two classes: ages 2 to 3.5 and 3.5 to 5. There is an elementary school next door, and when the recess bell rings, the children shout 'porridge time!' and clap when the school lunch is brought to the classroom. It was very fulfilling seeing the joy on young children's faces as they rushed to get school lunch.



Tikwere Nursery School

We visited another nursery school, Tikwere Nursery School, attended by about 30 children who learn about names, shapes, numbers, days of the week, vowels through songs. The kitchen was a simple brick enclosure right outside the n that provided these children with their daily nutrition



TIME SPENT IN THE SOUTH

Mulanje

We visited Mount Mulanje, situated an hour and a half away by car from the center of Blantyre and registered as a World Cultural Heritage site in 2025. Along the way we saw vast tea plantations which made for beautifully vibrant scenery. We hiked to Likhubula Waterfalls and met lots of local people who asked for photos with us, having not seen visitors from Japan before. We experienced a warm welcome and ended the day by watching the sunset at a pond at the foot of the mountain. Surrounded by magnificent nature, the sunset was extraordinary and marked a perfect end to a fulfilling day.



The Way of the Cross

'The Way of the Cross', a pilgrimage route maintained by the British charity 'Krizevac Project' was located on Michiru Mountain in Blantyre and involved a 90 minute hike from the base to the summit. The climb felt laden with deeper significance and as we began climbing, the 'stations' depicting the Passions of Jesus Christ appeared one after another.

We climbed the mountain while reading aloud the relevant passages from the Bible in front of the bronze statues at each station. At the summit, there is a massive 8-meter-tall concrete cross. The view from the top, combined with the sense of accomplishment from reaching it, was breathtaking, offering a panoramic view of the Chiromoni area and the townscape of Brantaya. Our founder, Tony Smith, inspired by the holy site of Medjugorje in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aimed to bring a 'symbol of hope' to impoverished areas, and this feeling resonates with the grandeur of the panorama. Although it was a short stay, it was an intensely rich experience, allowing us to engage with the history of social transformation and hope in the local community.



The Way of the Crossについては、詳しくはウェブサイトをご覧ください



BEEHIVE AND MARY QUEEN OF PEACE



Beehive Centre for Social Enterprise

Beehive is a social enterprise run by the British charity Krizevac Project of which Seibo Maria is a division. We visited some of the social businesses Beehive is developing , including “Beebikes” and “Beetech”. Previously, many departments were located in the same location, but as the scale has grown, each department is scattered in the Chilomoni district and the city of Blantyre. The profits generated by Beehive are used to run the Mary Queen of Peace Catholic Institute, an educational campus.



Beebikes is a business that sells and services bicycles in Malawi, mainly those donated from outside the country, particularly from the UK. The first container carrying 108 bicycles arrived from the UK in 2008, and sales began. We heard from Mike, the person in charge, that "bicycles are in very high demand in Malawi, and especially for children going to school, they can determine whether or not they are able to continue attending school," which made me realize the importance of a model that not only increases the domestic supply of bicycles but also channels profits into supporting school operations.



Beetech is a social business that provides solutions such as data management and software development to clients including banks, insurance companies, and schools. The software for inventory management and attendance monitoring at Seibo Maria is also provided by Beetech. Looking ahead, as digitalization progresses in Malawian companies and schools, this is a division within the organization where growth is expected. We strongly felt its potential as a department that can provide further efficiency, safety, and other benefits to Malawian companies and organizations.

MARY QUEEN OF PEACE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE



Mary Queen of Peace (MQoP) is an educational campus located in the Chilomoni area of Blantyre District, operated by the Krizevac Project. It houses the Mother Teresa Children's Centre for nursery school, St. Kizito Catholic Primary School for elementary education, Carlo Acutis Catholic High School for secondary education, and St. John Paul II Leadership & IT College for vocational training. The southern office of Seibo Maria is also located on the same campus. During this trip, we visited the nursery school, elementary school, and vocational school located on the MQoP campus.



Mother Teresa Children's Centre



At this nursery school, classes were divided according to the children's developmental levels: 0-1, 2-3, and 4-6 years old. The toys, such as blocks and clay, and the facilities, including the television, were very well-equipped.



St. Kizito Catholic Primary School



Like the nursery school, St. Kizito Primary School is well-equipped with facilities such as a computer room and a home economics room, and it follows the British educational standards. Compared to other schools we visited, it felt significantly higher level.



St. John Paul II Leadership & IT College (JP2)



JP2 currently has around 500 students and is a school that emphasizes practical education. The courses offered include IT, electrical work, machinery, solar energy, and administrative studies. Additionally, there is an 'Upper Level Diploma,' which also allows students to aim for admission to universities both in Malawi and abroad.



SEIBO MILLS



On the last day of our stay, we visited the Seibo Mills facility that is currently under construction, located about a 15-minute drive past Chileka International Airport from the city of Blantyre. Seibo Mills is a factory established as a new business under the Krizevac Project, designed to produce "Likuni Phala," the ingredient used in Seibo's school meals, in-house. Once completed and operational, the factory will enable Seibo to produce its school meal ingredients internally while also aiming to generate revenue by selling surplus to other organizations. The site features two large buildings, one for the factory and one for storage, giving a strong impression of the potential for future business expansion.

On-site, we were guided by the factory staff, who provided detailed explanations about the facilities and operational plans. The new factory is expected to have a daily production capacity of 8 tons, with preparations underway as of November for full-scale operation starting in December 2025.

There was also a strong focus on quality control, and the launch of this new site is expected to significantly strengthen the supply system for "Likuni Phala" provided in our school meals. The visit gave us firsthand insight into the promising future of this factory, which will serve as a vital foundation for delivering nutrition to many children through school meals.



ENCOUNTERS IN MALAWI



The Owen Family

During this stay, especially in Blantyre, we were greatly taken care of by Vince, the director of the Krizevac Project, his son Joe, and his nephew James. Vince is the nephew of Tony Smith, the founder who started it all, including Seibo Maria, the Krizevac Project, and Beehive. It all began when Tony visited Vince, who had been volunteering in Malawi in the 1990s. This was our first reunion since our visit to Japan in early 2025. They welcomed us from Japan like family and even took us to Mulanje over the weekend. We were very thankful for the opportunity to meet such a warm family. Through our time with them, we could strongly feel Tony's spirit in many places, even though he sadly passed away in 2025. We also felt strongly that Tony's aspirations are certainly being carried on by his family even today.

Everyone in Japan

During our stay in Malawi, we were able to meet many Japanese people who are active locally. In particular, we received a lot of valuable information and advice from Ms. Nao Kimura, who works as a JICA volunteer in special needs education and has regularly shared important information with Seibo Japan, even before our trip.

In Mzimba, we met Mr. Enomoto, who teaches mathematics at Kazomba Primary School as a JICA volunteer, and Ms. Hagiwara from ISAPH, a Japanese NGO. We were able to hear precious stories about their experiences and the realities on the ground in Malawi.

In Blantyre, Ms. Nao Kimura, Mariko-san, and Tomoki-san, who are also JICA volunteers, visited our accommodation. We had a very enjoyable time together, sharing dinner with Vince and playing games.

We were deeply inspired by everyone continuing their activities in Malawi and captivated by the country. We are sincerely grateful for the connections we made through this visit.

CONCLUSION

I first encountered Seibo in my second year of high school, and this year marks the sixth year since I started participating in its activities. Now, as a fourth-year university student, I was finally able to visit Malawi in person, a long-cherished goal, and gain a milestone experience.

In particular, meeting the Seibo Maria staff, whom I had previously only connected with online, and witnessing their dedication and enthusiasm firsthand, was incredibly inspiring. Additionally, being able to see and experience the schools and daily lives of the children in person allowed me to grasp situations that cannot be fully conveyed through photos or videos.

I hope that our trip this time will serve as an encouragement for many people, especially student staff of Seibo Japan, to consider visiting Malawi in the future.

Kentaro Hirano

Since high school, I have been involved in activities related to Seibo, and I intensified my involvement upon entering university. Since this was my first time traveling abroad, I felt a bit anxious, but through conversations with local staff and volunteers, I was able to personally experience the reality that school meals are the very reason children attend school. I hope to bring back the valuable experiences and insights gained from this trip to my activities in Japan and further expand the circle of support.

Rei Yoshida

Thanks to the cooperation of everyone involved, this trip has been extremely fruitful. We would like to take this opportunity to once again express our gratitude.

- Hirano & Yoshida





A Registered Nonprofit Organization

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Seibo Official Character
'Bo-kun'

