

My name is Sylvia Kaipa 33 years old studying bachelor of nursing and midwifery at Malawi adventist University. I'm the 4th born in my family and the only one who has gone far with school except my younger brother who is also at Malawi University of Science and Technology. I'm a single mother with one child.

From an early age, I harbored a deep-seated desire to become a state-registered nurse. My own experience as a patient and the compassionate care provided by nurses inspired me to pursue a career that would allow me to positively impact the lives of others. Unfortunately, financial difficulties impeded my progress towards realizing this goal. However, in February 2022, I was granted admission into Malawi Adventist University's Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery program; regrettably, due to financial constraints at the time, I was unable to register for the course. Finally, in April 2023 and with partial tuition fees raised through personal efforts and hopeful anticipation of sponsorship from Malawi's government, my academic journey began.

Since commencing my studies at college life has been arduous for me. There were times where I spent entire nights crying over how to secure tuition fees and accommodation; it even reached a point where dropping out seemed like an inevitable option. In August 2023 while browsing on Facebook came across iSTEPup scholarship opportunity which caught my attention. Despite not knowing anyone from Netherlands who could be my buddy during application process, I decided to apply anyway. I approached one of our lecturers seeking assistance finding someone who could be suitable as my buddy. Fortunately enough Dr Milou Cruisjsen working at St Lukes Mission Hospital accepted after conducting further inquiries about myself.

I am deeply grateful for iSTEPup foundation considering my application for their scholarship program. I now firmly believe that with their support along the way towards achieving my career objective of becoming a neonatal care nurse specialist will be made easier than before.

