



THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION



National Report of

Malawi

by

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and
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List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBCC	Community Based Child Care
CBE	Complementary Basic Education
CDSS	Community Day Secondary School
CIDA	Canadian Development Agency
CPDT	Continuous Professional Development Training
CSS	Conventional Secondary School
DAPP	Development Aid from People to People
DEC	Distance Education Centre
DFID	Department for International Development
DSS	Direct Support to Schools
DTED	Department of Teacher Education
DTVT	Department of Technical and Vocational Training
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDMU	Education Management Development Unit
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FPE	Free Primary Education
GNI	Gross Net Index
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICE	International Conference on Education
INSET	In-service Training
IRI	Interactive Radio Instructions
JCE	Junior Certificate Examination
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MCDE	Malawi College of Distance Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEGS	Malawi Economic Growth Strategy
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MIITEP	Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Programme
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
MOYSD	Ministry of Youth Development and Sports
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MWK	Malawi Kwacha
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NLS	National Library Services
NSO	National Statistics Office

ODL	Open and Distance Learning
ORC	Office of Resident Coordinator
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PASS	Primary Assessment Survey
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSLCE	Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination
PSTP	Private Sector Training Programmes
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
TEVETA	Technical Education and Vocational Entrepreneurship Authority
TLM	Teaching and Learning Materials
TRF	Textbook Revolving Fund
TTC	Teacher Training College
TVE	Technical and Vocational Education
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS Secretariat
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIMA	University of Malawi
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing

1. Introduction

This report has been prepared for presentation at the forty-eighth session of the International Conference on Education (ICE) which will be held from 25 – 28 November, 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland. The report contains an overview and assessment of the development of education in Malawi at all levels. More specifically the report presents the reforms that have been carried out and the changes that have been introduced since the presentation of the last report to the 47th session of the ICE held in 2001.

2. Geographical, Economic, Social and Human Development Context

Malawi is found on the southern part of the East African Rift valley lying between latitude 9 and 17 degrees east and longitude 33 and 36 degrees south of the equator. The country has an area of 118,484 km² of which 94,276 km² is land mass. It is land locked, rain dependent, and overwhelmingly rural with high population growth rates and limited arable land.

Malawi's total population was estimated at around 13 million in 2007 based on data from the Population and Housing census conducted in 1998. The recent Population and Housing census was conducted in June, 2008 whose data is expected to be out in December, 2008. The population density based on the 1998 population and housing census projection for 2008 is 105 persons per square kilometre. The population growth rate is 2.2 per cent per annum. The percentage of the under 18 years is 50.5. Malawi's Gross Net Index (GNI) per capita was averaged less than US\$200 over the past decade. According to a household survey done in 2005, 52 per cent of the population in Malawi is classified as poor while 22 per cent are classified as ultra-poor, i.e. living in extreme poverty (NSO 2005). The incidence of poverty is severe in rural areas with an estimated 56 per cent of the rural population classified as poor compared to 24 per cent of the urban population. Infant mortality stands at 76 deaths per 1,000 births, child mortality at 133 deaths per 1,000 live births and maternal mortality at 984 deaths per 1,000 live births (NSO & ORC Macro 2005). Malawi is also one of the countries worst hit by the AIDS epidemic with an estimated 14.1 per cent of the sexually active population (i.e. 15-49 years) infected with the HIV virus (*ibid*). As a consequence of the AIDS epidemic, life expectancy for the average Malawian decreased from 45 years in 1995 to 39 year in 2003. The recent Human Development report puts Malawi's life expectancy at 44.5 years (UNDP 2008). This is attributed to the improved nutritional status due to the bumper harvest of the staple food, maize, that Malawi has experienced from 2006 and improved campaign on the fight against HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS 2008).

Since the implementation of structural adjustment programmes from the early 1980's Malawi's economic performance was erratic averaging 1 per cent between 1980 and 1994. In 1994, Malawi went through a political transition from a one party dictatorship under Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda to a multiparty government headed by Bakili Muluzi. At that time Malawi had an inflation rate of 70 per cent and a budget deficit of 28 per cent of GDP. Good progress was, however, made in the immediate post 1994 years.

Fiscal deficits fell from 28 per cent to 8 per cent in 1997. Inflation fell to 9 per cent in 1997. Growth in GDP averaged over 3 per cent in the period 1992 – 97. However, during Muluzi’s second term of office, between 1999 and 2004, there was a decline in economic performance. Malawi’s official currency, the Kwacha, experienced rapid devaluation from MK68 in December 2000 to MK107 to one United States Dollar in January 2004. This is attributed to, among others: poor fiscal discipline in government which led to withdrawal of external budgetary support from donors and high domestic borrowing by government from the banks leading to high interest rates; and poor rain pattern coupled with poor policy decisions regarding the sale of the strategic grain reserves which affected production of the staple food and led to serious shortage of maize triggering high inflation rates.

The table below shows the leading macroeconomic indicators for Malawi [1997 - 2007]:

Table 1: Some macroeconomic Indicators for Malawi 1997 – 2007

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
GDP at 1994 factor cost	6.6	1.1	3.5	0.8	-4.1	2.1	3.9	5.1	2.2	8.5	2.2
Exchange Rate (MK/US\$)	16.4	31.1	44.1	59.5	72.2	76.7	97.5	109.0	118.4	136.0	140
Inflation	9.2	29.8	44.9	29.3	27.5	14.8	9.6	11.5	15.4	13.9	7.5

Source: Ministry of Economic Planning and Development

In May 2004, a new government led by Dr. Bingu wa Muntharika was ushered in during the third multiparty general elections. Malawi achieved the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) completion point in September 2006. This achievement highlights Government’s success in restoring fiscal discipline, improving economic management, and addressing corruption. The country’s economy is currently growing at 8.5 per cent which is above the SADC average rate of 5.5 per cent and the World’s average of 5.4 per cent. The inflation rate decreased from 17.1 per cent in February, 2006 to 14.9 per cent in July 2006 and to 7.9 per cent in July 2007. The depreciation of the Kwacha has been contained to less than 10 per cent for the past three years. There has been improvement in managing public finances, and domestic debt repayment has improved which has seen interest rates being reduced from 30 per cent in May 2004 to the current 15 per cent. The percentage of people that live below the poverty line has moved down from 60 per cent to 52 per cent.

The government of Malawi emphasizes promotion of economic growth as a means to reduce poverty, aid dependency and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals

(MDGs). The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) which builds on the Malawi Economic Growth Strategy (MEGS), represents a nationally owned, results-oriented, medium term framework for doing this. The MGDS is inspired by Vision 2020, and is informed by the practical lessons learned in the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which expired in 2005.

3. The Education System facing the challenges of the twenty-first century: an overview

Major Reforms and Innovations in the Education Sector

The current vision of the education sector in Malawi, as outlined in the National Education Sector Plan (NESP), 2008-2017 is to be a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and voiceless. Its mission is to provide quality and relevant education to the Malawi nation to enable people acquire relevant knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to perform effectively as citizens, workforce and as leaders of Malawi, thereby reduce poverty amongst the people of Malawi. In implementing the Vision and Mission, Malawi has made the improvement of quality, equity, relevance, access and efficiency in Basic Education as the main Strategic Priority. Complementing this main priority, at secondary level, the focus is to double the enrolment over the plan period while at the same time focussing on upgrading quality and on retention of girls and increasing private sector participation. Access to Technical and Vocational education is to be expanded and the colleges will be rehabilitated. At Higher Education level, enrolment in existing public universities will be doubled with significant increase in efficiency to minimize costs to the budget, complemented by expansion of private tertiary education. Overall, Special Needs Education programmes will feature prominently and HIV&AIDS mitigation and gender equity will be cross cutting interventions at all levels/sub-sectors during the plan period from 2008-2017.

The current prioritisation of the sector's interventions and strategies is premised on the fact that although there has been significant progress in terms of enrolment of school aged children (an increase of 60%) since the introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994, the quality of primary education is acknowledged to be unsatisfactory and completion rates are very low (approximately 41.5%). The secondary and higher education sub-sectors (including technical and vocational training) also face some challenges related to quality, equitable access and relevance, and problems related to resource management.

HIV&AIDS mitigation is considered a cross-cutting intervention at all levels/sub-sectors. The HIV and AIDS pandemic in the country is adversely affecting the education sector performance (although prevalence among 15-49 year-olds has stabilised at around 14.1%). There is a high attrition rate of teachers (across all sub-sectors) and a growing number of children made orphans by the pandemic.

In response to the Dakar Framework for Action and in line with the MDGs the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) developed in 2005 a National Action Plan for EFA in collaboration with its stakeholders and line ministries implementing education programmes that are not under the MOEST. The national EFA plan of action informs the NESP and is anchored on the Vision 2020, the MDGS, and policy statements and strategy documents in the education sector. The EFA National Plan of Action has set forth a number of ambitious policy goals for 2015 and necessary implementation strategies. NESP on the other hand has been developed based on the EFA plan of Action and the education Policy and Investment Framework with the aim of developing a more realistic, sound, and analytical framework for attaining the educational reform agenda up to 2017 within the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Basic Education

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has made very big strides in adopting a more embracing definition of basic education in the NESP as opposed to what was the case before. The Ministry recognises Early Childhood Care and Education (for 0-5 year olds), adult literacy (for 15+ year old adults who missed the opportunity of primary education), out-of-school youth education (for youths who for whatever reason are not in school), in addition to primary education, as comprising basic education. Ideally, basic education should include the lower level of secondary education in terms of inclusion of 15 and 16 year olds although in NESP such an age grouping is under secondary education sub-sector.

MOEST is responsible for the provision of primary, secondary and tertiary education. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MOWCD) is responsible for Early Childhood Development which encompasses pre-primary education, and is also responsible for Adult Literacy. The Ministry of Youth Development and Sports, (MOYDS) is responsible for aspects of non-formal education for out-of-school youths. While government is the main provider of education at all levels, the private sector is currently active in the provision of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education.

i. Early Childhood Care and Education

The World Education Forum in Dakar, 2000 reaffirmed the important role that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) plays in the education of a child. Malawi has decided through the Early Childhood Development (ECD) policy to adopt a more embracing and integrated term of ECD as outlined in the ECD Policy document launched by government in 2004 (revised in 2006) in order to address, in a holistic manner, issues affecting young children in Malawi against a backdrop of numerous children who are malnourished and are affected by the impact of HIV and AIDS. There are some programmes that have been in operation since the early 1990's. For example, the Community Based Child Care (CBCC) programme which targets children with early

learning, nutrition and psychosocial care and support operational mostly in rural areas has been in operation since 1989. This CBCC programme has now evolved and is also used as a safety net programme responding to the growing numbers of children orphaned due to HIV and AIDS.

A national network on Early Childhood Development which was set up in July 1998 and comprises all ECD stakeholders has been instrumental in advancing a common ECD agenda at national level. The network is a strong advocate for ECD issues at national level including child rights, governance issues as well as in the fulfilment of internationally acceptable standards in the implementation of ECD programmes.

Currently, there are 4,005 CBCC centres and 1,940 pre-school centres in Malawi that provide ECD services. A total of 6,240 early learning centres have been opened and are operating across the country. A total of 615,478 children, orphans and other vulnerable children of ages 1 to 6 targeted through either pre-schools or the CBCC programme have been reached representing a national coverage of 26.76% of children below 6 years (MOW&CD 2006). A total of 14,127 caregivers were registered within communities with 5,335 targeted through a two-week basic training in ECD. The concentration trend is now changing, majority of CBCCs are concentrated in rural and peri-urban areas with the aim of providing psychosocial support and care to orphans and vulnerable children.

A wide range of materials have been developed and are now in use to support delivery of early learning at centre level. These include the following:

- The Early Childhood Development Basic Training Manual
- The National Early Childhood Development syllabus
- The Community Based Child Care Centre Caregivers Guide
- A Community Based Child Care Centres Profile (through a survey conducted in 2007)
- A CBCC Parents and Caregivers Manual
- An ECD Operational Guideline

Table 2: Access to Early Childhood Development Centres by Year

YEAR	CENTERS	CHILDREN	PERCENTAGE (%)
1996	649	31, 866	1.20
1997	693	37, 994	1.45
1998	785	38, 166	1.60
1999	871	42, 249	2.11
2000	1, 155	51, 550	2.63
2001	1, 645	72, 760	2.91
2002	2, 602	127, 036	4.88
2003	3, 207	135, 436	5.64
2004	4, 529	229, 823	9.70
2005	5,945	582,407	22.46
2006	6,240	615,478	26.76

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2006

Priorities in ECD

PRIORITY 1 Access and Equity

- Promote stimulation-learning activities at an early life for all children
- Promote early detection, intervention and inclusion for children with special needs, and
- Promote early childhood care for orphans and vulnerable children.

PRIORITY 2 Quality and relevance

- Improve quality ECD services for children in Malawi, and
- Improve training of ECD teachers/educators/trainers.

PRIORITY 3 Governance and management

- Develop ECD data base
- Strengthen the institutional framework for the delivery of ECD services
- Promote the profile of ECD
- Develop an ECD Act
- Improve implementation of the ECD policy, and
- Provide parental education on early childhood.

ii. Primary Education

The fundamental objective of primary education is to instil basic literacy, numeracy and life skills to all school age children. As a strategy towards attainment of universal primary education, government abolished school fees and school uniform costs. Instructional materials are provided free. Schools have been established within reasonable walking distance for every community.

There has been a significant increase in enrolment since the introduction of free primary education (FPE). As shown in table 2 there was an increase of close to one million pupils between 1994 and 1995. Enrolments are continuously increasing as shown in the table. To ensure that every child of school-going age has an equal opportunity to attend school, government's efforts are focused on providing quality education.

Table 3: Primary School Enrolments 1994 to 2007

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1993/4	983,297	912,126	1,895,423
1994/5	1,515,508	1,345,311	2,860,819
2000	1,558,062	1,458,910	3,016,972
2004	1,590,193	1,576,593	3,166,786
2007	1,653,894	1,653,032	3,306,926

Source: MOEST Education Statistics Various years

The primary school completion rate is around 46% for boys and 37% for girls. This is largely due to high drop out and repetition rates which are at 14.22% and 16.37% respectively (MOEST EMIS data 2007). The survival rate to standard 5 is 51.8% whilst survival rate to standard 8 is 30.2%. This is attributed to repetition and drop out rates which are very high. The challenge is for Malawi to reduce the repetition and drop out rates in order to improve on the completion rates.

Between 2004 and 2006 the pupil/classroom ratios were, on average, around 107 pupils to an existing classroom. In 2007 the ratio went down to 104 pupils to a classroom.

Table 4: Pupil/Teacher Ratio and Pupil/Classroom Ratio from 2004 to 2007

Indicator	YEARS			
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Pupil/Qualified Teacher Ratio		83	84	88
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	72	71	76	78
Pupil/Classroom Ratio	107	106	107	104

Source: MOEST Statistics 2004 - 2007

Curriculum and Assessment

Government embarked on Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) process in January 2007 starting with standard 1.

Subjects like Life Skills Education, Social Studies, and General Studies were introduced. Topics such as the United Nations Charter, promotion of human rights and respect of fundamental freedoms are included. These are augmented by efforts from NGOs and human rights institutions that are permitted and encouraged to work in schools with teachers, pupil/students and members of the community on various programmes and activities tackling human rights issues.

Tests and end of year examinations are key mechanisms for assessment at school level in addition to national examinations such as the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) as well as special surveys such as the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) study and Primary Assessment Survey (PASS). The new curriculum has incorporated continuous assessment of pupils to determine levels of achievement as part of teaching and learning approaches.

Table 5: Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination Results (2002-2006)

Year	Entered			Passed			% Pass		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2002	76681	55539	132220	60381	40155	100536	78.74	72.30	76.04
2003	76436	54532	130958	59793	38357	98150	78.23	70.34	74.94
2004	77794	56488	134282	58079	36711	94790	74.66	64.99	70.59
2005	80275	59423	139698	63030	40884	103914	78.52	68.80	74.38
2006	83873	63740	147613	65853	43948	109801	78.52	68.98	74.38

Source: Education Statistics 2007

As can be seen from table above, results for the primary school leaving certificate examinations indicate that the pass rate has been fairly stable and had largely been pegged at around 75%. Comparatively, boys are still doing better than girls in the PSLC examinations. Efforts to reduce this disparity in achievement in the primary sub sector will be dealt with by the government, various strategies as spelt out in the NESP 2008; there will be support to girls in isolated areas for Standards 6, 7 and 8 in terms of monetary incentives starting in 2009/10; there will also be an establishment of mother groups in all schools to support girl education in primary schools by 2017/18.

The poor performance of pupils in literacy and numeracy as revealed by various studies like SACMEQ which place Malawian students amongst the least performing in the SADC region prompted government to introduce a number of reforms which include: the PCAR; the introduction of '1+1 teacher training programme' (i.e. one year of residential training + one year of school based distance training) in all public teacher training colleges; complementary basic education programme; Life Skills Education; and provision of adequate teaching and learning materials as well as supplementary learning materials.

Teaching and Learning materials

In a bid to achieve a textbook/pupil ratio of 1:1 government is continuously supplying teaching and learning materials (TLM) in primary schools. However, there are still some areas that require improvement especially where pupils are still sharing textbooks and where there is limited supply of desks, chalk boards, dusters, pens and pencils. Storage facilities for teaching and learning materials such as textbooks were supplied to almost all primary schools with support from CIDA and DFID. There are, however, a few cases of schools where such facilities are not available. Lack of such storage facilities reduces the life span of text books. Government is therefore committed to ensuring continuous replenishment of textbooks and to ensure procurement of durable text books. About 4.3 million teaching and learning materials were procured in the 2007/2008 fiscal year. Additionally, government is providing US\$200, through the Direct Support to Schools (DSS) programme to each of the 5,500 primary schools which is used by the school management to procure teaching and learning materials based on the needs of the school.

Classrooms

Although most of the primary schools are overcrowded with a classroom/pupil ratio of 1:104 with some schools particularly those in urban areas having a higher ratio of 1:138 and beyond (MOEST - EMIS 2007), government in collaboration with its development cooperating partners is making efforts to increase the number of classrooms and school blocks. About 1000 new additional classrooms were constructed in 2007/2008 fiscal year.

Training and recruitment of teachers

There has been an improvement in teacher training and recruitment since 2000. According to EMIS 2007, the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:78, but the qualified teacher- pupil ratio is 1:88. This is an improvement from the teacher pupil ratio of 1:118 and teacher qualified ratio of 1: 138 in 2000. The country is, however, short of 34, 203 and 60,203 primary school teachers to achieve teacher –pupil ratio of 1-60 and 1-40 respectively by 2015. Annually, the country needs to recruit 5,200 teachers on average and train 5,244 teachers. Government has since 2007 introduced a new teacher training programme (the 1+1 Teacher Training Programme) replacing the previous Malawi In-service Integrated Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) in order to address teacher supply and teacher quality. In terms of gender, the country is short of at least 10,000 female primary school teachers now and needs to recruit around 30, 000 more teachers by 2015 to close the gender gap between male and female teachers who are currently 26, 893 and 16,304 respectively. There is a need to train and recruit between 10,875 and 15, 500 specialist teachers to cater for children with special needs and an expanding special needs sector.

Methods/Advisory services and Inspection of schools

Government has intensified inspection of schools by primary education advisors (PEAs) to document and act on quality related aspects of education. According to the ministry's policy, every school is supposed to be visited by a PEA for at least three times per year for inspection purposes. However, less than 70% of schools are visited by inspectors as per the recommended 3 times a year target. This is largely attributed to shortage of trained PEAs and lack of facilities such as motorcycles and fuel to aid in inspection process. Among the strategies put in place to intensify inspection include training of PEAs, procurement of motorcycles and provision of adequate recurrent allocation.

Quality Issues

The EFA indicator for goal 6 (Education Quality) is "percentage of pupils having reached at least grade 4 of primary schooling who have mastered a set of nationally defined basic learning competences (combined % for mathematics, language and life skills)" (UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008). In Malawi, the target grades for measuring progress towards quality education for all are both standard 5 and standard 8. The current survival rate for standard 5 is 51.8% from which 50.7% is for girls and 53.6% for boys. In standard 8, the survival rate is 30.2% of which 26.1 is for girls and 34.9% for boys. The table below shows the survival trends for the past three years.

Table 6: Survival Rates for Standard 5 and Standard 8

Year	Standard 5			Standard 8		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2004	44.8	50.5	47.4	26.9	22.6	24.6
2005	51.8	47.6	49.8	30.1	22.9	26.1
2006	53.3	52.9	53.0	31.9	27.2	29.6
2007	53.6	50.7	51.8	34.9	26.1	30.2

Source: EMIS 2007

There has been an increase in survival rates for both standard 5 and standard 8 since 2004 as shown in the table. The survival rate for standard 5 has increased from 47.4% in 2004 to 51.8 % in 2007 while for standard 8 the increase has been from 24.6% in 2004 to 30.2% in 2007. However, as can be seen from the figures, the survival rate for girls is lower than for boys. There was a slight drop in survival rates to standard 5 between 2006 and 2007 particularly for girls from 52.9% to 50.7%. Reasons for this drop ought to be established.

Priorities in Primary Education

Government has set up the following priorities for primary education (according to NESP, June 2008):

PRIORITY 1 - Quality and relevance

- i. Improve teaching inputs to facilitate more effective learning and to increase learning achievement, including supply of books and other teaching & learning materials, training of teachers, Interactive Radio Instructions (IRI) and Complementary Basic Education (CBE),
- ii. Reduce class sizes to facilitate more effective learning through progressively recruiting: (a) increased numbers of trained teachers as they become available, and (b) teacher trainees recruited through an accelerated programme, who will work as teachers while studying through distance learning. Particular efforts will be made to reduce class size for standards 1 and 2. For special needs, moving towards the recommended teacher pupils ratio of 1 teacher to 10 pupils in special schools and 1 teacher to 5 pupils in resource centres by the end of the plan period,
- iii. Starting with the Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform programme now under way, enhance the relevance of the primary curriculum and improve delivery by diversifying the modes and methods. Furthermore, develop appropriate tools for special needs such as sign language and Braille,
- iv. Reinforce inspection and supervision system of primary education, and
- v. Introduce appropriate incentives to teachers and supervise their performance, including access to VCT and supporting those positive teachers to mitigate absenteeism and early death.

PRIORITY 2 – Access and equity

- i. Increase net enrolment and completion rates, targeting those disadvantaged by gender, poverty, special needs and geographical location, encouraging all children to complete the eight years of primary education,
- ii. Improve enrolment, particularly female enrolment, in standards 5 to 8,
- iii. Improve, expand and maximise use of educational infrastructure through rapidly expanding programmes to construct classrooms, school facilities and teachers' housing in difficult areas, complemented by grants to communities to provide shelters for classes which are temporarily without classrooms,
- iv. Optimise private sector participation in basic education, and
- v. Strengthen complementary basic educational modalities for learners including IRI, CBE and Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

PRIORITY 3 - Governance and Management

- i. Mobilise communities to participate in 'whole-school development' and management for both normal and special needs pupils,
- ii. Ensure appropriate decentralisation of delivery of education services which incorporates processes of planning, budgeting and financing, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E),
- iii. Introduce policy measures to reduce the size of classes in standards 1 and 2, to reduce repetition, drop-out, and enrolment of over- and under-age children, and to encourage promotion between standards, reinforce HIV&AIDS awareness, girls empowerment, safe schools (child friendly schools), and,

- iv. Monitor performance and strengthen internal efficiency of the sub-sector.

Secondary Education

Secondary education begins after the eight year primary education cycle, and consists of a junior and senior cycle. The junior cycle consists of the first two years of secondary education after which students sit for the JCE. The majority of students who pass this examination continue to senior secondary education, also consisting of two years. Successful completion of the final two years of secondary education qualifies eligible students to sit for the MSCE that opens a variety of opportunities in terms of employment and further training for those who pass it. The school census survey of 2007 indicated that there are 1,049 secondary schools, which enrol 210,325 students (about 17.62% of the age cohort), with girls comprising 43% of the secondary school enrolment (MOEST EMIS data 2007).

The secondary school education is offered mainly through five types of schools, namely: conventional secondary schools (CSSs), community day secondary schools (CDSSs), Open (distance) schools (run by government through Malawi College of Distance Education), grant aided secondary schools (government provides some support, but are run by independent boards), and private secondary schools.

CSSs (boarding and day schools) are government supported schools and are the most privileged with regard to educational infrastructure and quality of teaching staff. There are 96 CSSs enrolling 42,734 students, 41% of whom are girls. The CSSs enrol 20% of the secondary school population.

CDSSs, previously known as Distance Education Centres (DECs), are also government schools established with community assistance and they are the most disadvantaged in terms of resources and quality of teaching staff. There are a total of 575 CDSSs (308 approved and 267 not approved) with an enrolment of 99,172 students, 41% of whom are girls. The CDSSs enrol 47% of the students at the secondary level, which is 67% of the students in the government run schools. The third group of schools are open schools, sometimes known as night schools. These offer secondary school learning opportunities by distance learning to those that for one reason or another could not be enrolled in other types of education. There are currently 44 Open schools enrolling 6,939 learners representing 3% with a 50 – 50 gender ratio. The fourth type are grant-aided schools. These schools are owned by non profit organizations, but are also supported by government and are of similar quality as CSSs, in some cases better. There are 45 grant aided schools enrolling 12,730 students, 51% of whom are girls. The students in the grant aided schools make about 6% of the secondary school enrolment. The fifth category is that of private schools managed by individual entrepreneurs with no subsidy from government. The majority of these private schools are comparable to CDSSs from the point of view of the available teaching/learning resources.

There are 289 registered private secondary schools enrolling 48,750 students, of whom 47% are girls. Students in the registered private schools make up 23% of secondary school enrolment. No accurate statistics are available on the number of students attending unregistered private secondary schools.

Access and equity in secondary education

Expanding access to primary education has traditionally been a primary concern of the government of Malawi since 1994. This emphasis had resulted, however, in a lower attention to secondary education. But the increased enrolment and retention at the primary level inevitably increases demand for the next levels. Accordingly, the government policy gives increased importance to raising the enrolment in secondary education from 17% in 2005 with 43% girls to 30% by 2012, with 50% being girls, as stipulated in the PIF. This would include an increased role for the private sector and community involvement in the provision of secondary education.

Government's policy also makes provision for the promotion and strengthening of secondary education programs involving CDSSs, which provide secondary education to the neediest segment of the secondary school age group. Priority is also given to provision of continuing education for the unqualified teachers who staff these schools. Although the proportion of girls in secondary education has increased in recent years and some policies and actions to promote girl's education in secondary schools have been put in place, there is need to examine more deeply the issues related to further expanding access for girls and improving their retention in the schools.

Quality of secondary education

In addition to the problem of low access, the quality of secondary education being provided especially in CDSSs is poor. Examination results, taken as one of the standard measurements of quality, reveal that the overall students' performance is poor. In 2006 only 29.98% of the students who sat for the MSCE passed the exam (Table 5). This low quality of the secondary education is largely attributed to the inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, insufficient teaching and learning materials, shortage of teaching facilities, and deficient school management and supervision.

Table 7: Pupils' performance at Junior Certificate Level (2002-2006)

Year	Entered			Passed			% Pass		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2002	39858	30321	70179	29317	17299	46616	73.55	57.05	66.42
2003	40078	30276	70354	30596	18047	46643	76.34	59.61	69.14
2004	45884	34175	80059	33507	19806	53313	73.03	57.95	66.59
2005	48456	35899	84355	35918	19884	55802	74.12	55.39	66.15
2006	48143	38123	86266	31434	16952	48386	65.29	44.47	56.09

Source: Education Statistics 2007

As can be seen from table above, the pass rate for JCE results has been stable at about 66% though there is a big difference between girls and boys in terms of performance at this level. Girls are still performing poorly in the JCE. The results for Malawi school Certificate of education (MSCE) have been poor over the last years fluctuating around 40%. This has been largely due to the deteriorating standards of secondary education over the years. There are more unqualified teachers more especially in the CDSSs across the country and also most of the CDSSs do not have proper structures to facilitate learning and this has adversely affected performance in this sub sector.

And as can be seen in the table below, the disparities still exist among girls and boys in terms of learning outcomes as more boys pass the MSCE than girls. The education system loses a significant number of girls with progressive levels of education (i.e. many girls dropout or repeat as they progress through the grades in primary education, thereby low girl intake at secondary level and consequently at higher education level and this explains the low pass rate for girls in the secondary schools. To reduce the disparities in the learning outcomes between girls and boys several interventions have been put in place and viz; (i) Construction of girls boarding facilities in secondary schools so that girl abuse (i.e. overworking in household chores, sexual manipulations from the education communities, and reduced distance to schools) is reduced, (ii) rehabilitation of secondary schools to improve on learning environment (including water and sanitary facilities), (iii) expansion of girls boarding facilities in teacher training institutions so that the number of female teachers is increased specifically targeted for rural area deployment. These teachers apart from teaching are also expected to be role – model for girl pupils and students, (iv) Introduction of equitable selection policy at secondary schools (i.e. girls and boys share 50% of student places) and handicapped entry requirements for girls in higher education institutions

Table 8: Pupils performance at Malawi School Certificate of Education Results (2002-2006)

Year	Entered			Passed			% Pass		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2002	40409	25235	65644	13154	5612	18766	32.55	22.24	28.59
2003	36704	22376	59080	14302	6246	20548	38.97	27.91	34.78
2004	39919	25731	65650	18176	8739	26915	45.53	33.96	41.00
2005	49427	31935	81362	23412	11823	35235	47.37	37.02	43.31
2006	45922	32602	78524	20735	9775	30510	45.15	29.98	38.85

Source: Education Statistics 2007

There are 10,258 teachers (1,958 or 19% female) in the secondary school system. About 67% of these teachers are not qualified for secondary school teaching, adversely affecting the quality of education provided. In most CSSs, the curriculum is delivered by qualified teachers, but in the CDSSs, the great majority (76%) of the teachers are academically and professionally under-qualified. The conversion of distance education centres to CDSS in 1998 increased the need for secondary teachers as students are taught face to face. Some primary teachers have been reassigned to teach at CDSSs. These teachers are considered untrained or unqualified to teach at secondary schools until they complete a secondary teacher training program. The challenge for the Ministry is increasing the number of qualified teachers graduating from secondary teacher programs plus upgrading the qualifications of the under-qualified teachers.

The inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials also negatively impacts on the education provided. In line with government's policy of supplying schools with an initial stock of books, textbooks for Form IV students were provided in 2004 to secondary schools which did not have the books. Textbooks for Form III students were supplied in 2002 to some schools. However, most CDSSs are critically short of or lack textbooks for Forms I, II and III, which make up over 67% of the secondary school enrolment in government-run secondary schools. Once an initial stock of textbooks is provided, availability of textbooks is sustained through the schools Textbook Revolving Fund (TRF). Schools retain MWK 250 of the school fees per student each year towards the TRF which each school maintains to partially finance their school needs.

Similarly, the lack of sufficient number of classrooms, science-teaching facilities and libraries, principally at the CDSSs, undermines the quality of teaching. Generally, the condition of classrooms and science teaching and learning facilities (if at all they exist) in CDSSs does not provide conducive environment for teaching and learning to take place and most schools lack libraries and facilities for teaching science.

Relevance of secondary education

An important indicator of the quality of education is external efficiency. The government's policy, as articulated in the PIF is to increase the number of secondary school students to 300,000 by 2015 from the current level of 210,325. This increase of over 60% of the secondary school enrolment will inevitably lead to increased demand by those completing secondary level for more opportunities in tertiary level of education and on absorption into the labour market.

Priorities in Secondary Education

PRIORITY 1 – Access and Equity

- Increase enrolment and make selection and admission of students more equitable
- Improve, expand and maximize use of educational infrastructure
- Maximize private sector participation in secondary education, and
- Strengthen complementary secondary education modalities such as open and distance learning

PRIORITY 2 – Quality and relevance

- Improve teaching inputs so as to facilitate more effective learning outcomes, recruiting trained teachers and training those who are not qualified, while making efficient use of the scarce resource of trained specialist teachers and ensuring that the total number of teachers remains at a cost-efficient level.
- Introduce appropriate incentives to teachers to motivate them to work a full working week and supervise their performance, and
- Improve the relevance of the secondary curriculum and delivery and enhance HIV&AIDS prevention as part of the course content.

PRIORITY 3 – Governance and management

- Monitor performance and strengthen internal efficiency of the sub-sector
- Offer support to all affected and infected by HIV&AIDS, and
- Enhancing financial prudence and accountability.

Technical and Vocational Education

In the face of serious unemployment and especially rapidly increasing numbers of unemployed youth, the government of Malawi initiated the reformation in 1994 of its technical education and vocational training policies. Emphasis was to be placed on the preparation of the trainees for employment in the informal sector, especially by incorporating entrepreneurship development. The main objective of the new policy was to enhance the level of productivity in both the formal and informal sectors so as to contribute effectively towards poverty reduction. The new training system was to be very broad-based and no longer putting emphasis on formal educational background as a requirement for training.

Table 9: Number of students in technical and vocational colleges 2007

College	Regular Students		Parallel Students		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Soche	94	61	192	88	286	149
Namitete	35	38	50	94	85	132
Lilongwe	425	149	1253	461	1678	610
Livingstonia	113	63	160	12	273	75
Mzuzu	168	68	195	55	363	123
Nasawa	72	32	190	59	262	91
Salima	381	111	139	49	520	160

Source: Education Statistics 2007

Organisational structure for Technical and Vocational Education

As part of these changes, the Technical Education and Vocational Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) was created. TEVETA is an autonomous body that aims to regulate and coordinate the provision of technical education, vocational and entrepreneurship training in Malawi. TEVETA falls under the Department of Technical and Vocational Training (DTVT) in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

Technical Education and Training providers

There are four different kinds of training providers for Technical and Vocational Education (TVE): (i) Technical colleges which fall under DTVT, (ii) community-based training centres, (iii) church-based training centres, (iv) private commercial training providers, and (v) traditional apprenticeship programme.

Technical Education Training Colleges

The DTVT currently operates 7 technical colleges offering formal training in some 22 trades in the fields of building/construction, engineering, horticulture, and printing. Currently, the colleges run two parallel programmes, a two year Craft programme leading to a Grade 2 Trade Test Certificate and a four year TEVETA Apprenticeship programme leading to a Grade 1 Trade Test and a Malawi Crafts Certificate.

A parallel system is a competency-based Trade Testing system. In this parallel system, skills are tested and certified at three different levels, (grades 3, 2, and 1) regardless of

where and how they are acquired. Some 18,000 students are in this system. The current TVE programme reaches less than 3% of those entering the labour market every year.

TEVETA

Government in January, 1999, launched a TEVET policy whose mission is to contribute to human resource development in response to labour market demands upon realizing that the old Apprenticeship and Trade Test system of technical and vocational training was not flexible enough to face the challenge of the dynamic labour market. TEVET under this policy is designed to be demand-driven and takes the form of competency- based modular system with multiple entry and exit points, turning the acquisition of technical, managerial and business skills into a lifelong learning process. TEVET programmes are run by TEVETA.

Apprenticeship Scheme

TEVETA reformed the National Apprenticeship Scheme at the beginning of 2000 to make it more flexible and responsive to the demands of the labour market. The new apprenticeship scheme is implemented as a parallel 4-year programme in the Technical Colleges. Demand for TEVETA Apprenticeship courses far outstrips the absorptive capacity of the colleges involved in the apprenticeship programme. The intake of apprenticeship has been progressing very slowly over the years.

Technical Education in the Private Sector

In a bid to promote skills development at the work place, TEVETA embarked on in-house skills upgrading courses for companies that pay TEVET levy through the Private Sector Training Programmes (PSTP).

Priorities

Priority 1 – Governance and management

- Review TEVET Act, so that emergent issues on vocational training and public private partnership policies and directions are taken on board through a broad consultative process which should ensure that constituencies' views are factored into the TEVETA.
- Promote private sector participation in providing technical and vocational training,
- Reform governance of technical and vocational training institutions and
- Promote internal efficiency of the TEVET system.

Priority 2 – Quality and relevance

- Improve curriculum delivery
- Diversify approaches in delivery
- Strengthen inspection and supervision system
- Rehabilitate infrastructure of public technical colleges

- Strengthen and improve on examination modalities, certification and mode of assessments and services.
- Improve staffing
- Enhance provision and management of relevant equipment, teaching and learning materials.

Priority 3 – Access and Equity

- A new technical college to be constructed
- Vulnerable groups empowered with survival and employer skills,
- Strengthen linkages with general education on career guidance and counselling.

Teacher Education (Primary and Secondary)

Primary school teachers are trained in four public teacher training colleges, i.e. Blantyre, Karonga, Kasungu and Lilongwe teacher training colleges. Some primary school teachers are trained in grant aided and private colleges, i.e. St. Joseph (grant aided), Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), and Emmanuel teachers training colleges. Secondary school teachers are trained in three public institutions which include University of Malawi (Chancellor College), Mzuzu University and Domasi College of Education. Some private universities and colleges have recently been opened up which are also training secondary school teachers such as the University of Livingstonia, African Bible College and the Catholic University. The secondary school teacher training has two levels of qualification: a diploma and degree programme. Total output has remained at less than 3,000 for primary school teachers and about 400 for secondary school teachers annually.

The rapid expansion of primary and secondary education has increased greatly the demand for trained primary and secondary school teachers. Supply of trained primary and secondary school teachers has not been able to respond adequately to demand. Teacher attrition is estimated at 6%. Government intends to increase teacher supply through introduction of distance and parallel modes of training in order to reduce pupil to qualified teacher ratio.

Priorities for Teacher Education

PRIORITY 1 – Access and equity

- i. Introduction of additional programmes in teacher training institutions at all levels of education to increase capacity including special needs education.
- ii. Upgrading under-qualified tutors in primary teacher training institutions to minimum qualification levels so as to enhance lecture/tutorship facilitating skills.
- iii. Expansion of teacher student intake in the training colleges for both normal and special needs with emphasis on increased female intake.

- iv. Construction and refurbishment of new TTCs, In-Service Training (INSET)-centres, additional hostels, classrooms, laboratories, staff houses and demonstration schools (classroom and staff houses), and Introduce Distance Teacher Training for trainee teachers (volunteers with appropriate qualifications) work in primary schools, and upgrade the Distance Training for Secondary Teachers, and
- v. Strengthening INSET system in secondary schools for teacher trainers and unqualified teachers.

These strategies are expected to increase primary TTC output from 2,400 in 2007 to about 4,000 by 2012. In the medium term, distance training will also add, at most four thousand trained teachers per year between 2011 and 2015.

PRIORITY 2 – Quality and relevance

- i. Upgrading of college lecturers and reinforcing their supervision
- ii. Review of course content to reflect reforms in primary and secondary education including gender related issues, special needs and HIV/AIDS
- iii. Expansion of library capacities in teacher education institutions
- iv. Improvement of teaching inputs into vocational training to facilitate more effective learning,
- v. Strengthening inspection and supervision of teacher education, and
- vi. Introduction of teacher training in primary education at bachelors of education level and institutionalize In-Service training (IN-SET)/Continuous Professional Development for Teachers (CPDT) for primary, secondary and teacher training personnel.

PRIORITY 3 – Governance and management

- i. Enhancing professional capacity in planning, monitoring and supervision of managers in teacher education institutions for normal and special needs scenarios,
- ii. Institutionalizing and linking teacher education management information systems with overall Education Management Information System,
- iii. Instilling discipline principles among teacher trainees,
- iv. Mitigating HIV&AIDS through awareness and other related support services to staff and students, and
- v. Providing infrastructure and utilities in teacher education management to promote effective and efficient management of teacher training institutions.

3.1.5 Open Learning and Distance Education

The Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) was born in 1965 under the name of Malawi Correspondence College which in 1987 was changed to MCDE. The idea of establishing MCDE was to meet the increasing social demand for secondary education.

Ever since secondary education was introduced in 1940 only a tiny fraction of primary school leavers have been able to continue with secondary education. With the attainment of independence, there was a great need for education in rural areas where the vast majority of the people live. The shortage of resources, both in manpower and financial terms, caused government to find alternative methods of providing education. MCDE was therefore established to increase accessibility to secondary education through distance education. As described under conventional secondary education, the MCDE centers were turned into CDSSs.

MCDE was also introduced to cater for secondary education needs of those who could not fit in conventional secondary education through its night secondary schools, for example adults who had missed the normal opportunity to complete certain levels of education. Currently, MCDE remains with its night secondary schools, correspondence students without face-to-face tutorial assistance, and teacher upgrading programmes.

3.1.6 Higher Education

There are two public universities in Malawi: University of Malawi (UNIMA) established in October 1964, three months after independence from the British. Unlike some universities in Anglophone Africa, it started without any formal affiliation with a major university in the industrially developed countries. It followed an independent path and admitted initially 90 students in temporary quarters at Chichiri in Blantyre. Years later, a number of constituent colleges emerged and a two-tier system of education was developed, embracing diplomas and degrees in order to provide for middle management level qualifications. The enabling legislation, the University Act of 1974, spells out the structure and the functions of the University of Malawi.

The second public university, Mzuzu University, opened its doors in 1998. Mzuzu University began with a modest in-take of about 300 students.

Currently, there are plans for a third national university which will focus on science and technology.

At both, the University of Malawi and Mzuzu University, admission is based on individual performance in MSCE and university entrance examinations. The later is administered by the universities themselves. Government provides a student loan scheme to all students enrolled through the normal intake (i.e. the secondary school leavers based on their results in the MSCE and university entrance exams). Parallel full fee-paying programmes have been introduced. Students enrolled in these parallel programmes pay

significantly higher fees (MK 70,000 p.a.) than the normal-intake students (MK25,000 at UNIMA and MK 55,000 at Mzuzu).

The need for a policy framework for the development of University education becomes obvious when one considers the factors outlined below.

Human resources constitute the most important element in the development equation. The human resources which are developed and trained in the University are an essential component of the overall human resources development. A comprehensive policy framework for the development of higher education in terms of defining/determining broad parameters, e.g. sectors of priority focus, quantity and quality of principle outputs of higher education (graduates and research) in line with the economy's requirements is yet to be developed.

Furthermore, liaison with industry and other key groups on higher education institutional development has not taken a pivotal role. While it may be acknowledged that the unfavourable economic conditions were responsible for the poor state of higher education, lack of clear awareness of the potential contribution of higher education among key groups in society is also a contributing factor.

It is clear however, that Malawi has under invested in the education sector overall, and more particularly, in tertiary education. The university does not have sufficient capacity to satisfy the needs of a rapidly growing population of students thirsty for a university education. The supply of eligible candidates to enter the university is not an issue. The growth in absolute student enrolment has been quite modest – growing from a student intake of 90 in 1965 to 6,485 in 2007 academic year.

Table 10: University Enrolment by College and Sex (2003-2007)

College	2003			2004			2005			2006			2007		
	Both Sex	Male	Female	Both Sex	Male	Female	Both Sex	Male	Female	Both Sex	Male	Female	Both Sex	Male	Female
Bunda	634	442	192	666	421	245	814	543	271	780	515	265	886	597	289
Chancellor	1710	1214	496	2017	1431	586	2258	1504	754	2252	1556	696	1108	713	395
Kamuzu Nursing	336	60	276	331	71	260	331	71	260	790	71	190	454	89	385
Polytechnic	1496	1171	325	2345	1721	624	2140	1644	496	2252	1556	415	2147	1580	587
Medicine	149	104	45	179	118	61	179	118	61				419	311	108
Mzuzu	371	284	87	475	350	125	1002	772	230	1083	782	301	1444	997	447
Board of Governors	366	275	91	465	342	123	111	78	33						
Total	5062	3550	1512	6478	4454	2024	6835	4730	2105	6346	4489	1857	6458	4287	2171

The pressure on university places will undoubtedly escalate with the impact of free primary education and the expansion of secondary education.

The need for a policy framework for the development of university education in Malawi is therefore obvious. With the creation of additional national universities and the emergence on the scene of private universities, it has become imperative to create a department in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology responsible for Higher Education as recommended at the National Conference on Education held in 2005.

Priorities in Higher Education

PRIORITY 1 – Governance and management

- i. Developing policies designed to encourage private providers of services to be in line with minimum quality requirements set aside at institutional level,
- ii. Prepare and put in place a Higher Education Act that articulates values and goals of Malawi's higher education, creates and defines its governance; and generally, institutionalizes a Council for Higher Education as a regulatory body responsible for accreditation and regulating the system for greater efficiency and effectiveness including ensuring gender balance, and addressing the needs of needy and vulnerable groups and mainstreaming special needs education and HIV/AIDS,
- iii. In collaboration with relevant government departments, institute a semi-autonomous accreditation and quality assurance agency under the supervision of the Council for Higher Education,
- iv. Strengthen governance, management, oversight, transparency, and accountability of higher education institutions, and
- v. Develop and implement other programmes to improve quality and efficiency, funded by the universities themselves from their own resources (including from the recurrent government grant).

PRIORITY 2 – Access and equity

- i. Double enrolment over the next 5 to 10 years focusing on critical academic areas, while increasing efficiency in public universities to keep spending by the state to approximately current levels, and while expanding private universities
- ii. Mainstream special needs education in all programmes, train teachers for special needs education and establish a special needs education unit to monitor related programmes,
- iii. Mainstream mitigation of HIV/AIDS among students and staff, and
- iv. Increase access for females and students with special needs where applicable.

PRIORITY 3 – Quality and relevance

- i. Focus on infrastructure development on science and technology laboratories, workshops and Information and Communication Technology,

- ii. Monitor quality, accreditation standards and advise government on higher education policy,
- iii. Upgrade teaching and learning infrastructure in colleges so that the learning environment and college facilities are conducive to efficiency and effective facilitation of academic instructions, and
- iv. Improve staff qualifications, especially lecturers without PhDs and rationalizing the use of those with PhDs so as to enhance the quality of teaching, learning, research and development without losing sight of gender, special needs and HIV/AIDS related matters.

Legal Framework of Education

The legal framework of education is based on the 1962 Education Act which is currently under review to take into account the current socio-cultural and economic environment. Malawi's constitution defines the nation's educational objectives and regulates the sharing of responsibilities for education among the three key players – the state, religious groups and the private sector. The religious groups control a large proportion of the primary schools, around 60 per cent.

The constitution of the Republic of Malawi recognises the right to education for all persons under chapter IV, Section 25. The constitution protects and enforces the human rights and freedoms by calling upon the executive, legislature and judiciary and all organs of government and its agencies as well as all natural and legal persons in Malawi to ensure promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Institutions such as the courts, the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission were established and are supported to facilitate the promotion, protection and enforcement of the rights and in redress of grievances in respect of these rights.

Education programmes are guided by the National Education Strategic Plan. Gender programmes are guided by the National Gender Policy coordinated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Gender coordination committees and focal points have been established in MOEST at central, division and district levels as well as in education institutions in order to mainstream gender. Gender issues have been incorporated in the school curriculum through the establishment of a gender unit at the Malawi Institute of Education (a curriculum development centre).

The Free Primary Education programme is intended to ensure that education provision does not exclude children on account of poverty and social economic marginalisation. Interventions for the very poor and vulnerable groups who due to other reasons are not able to benefit from the FPE programme are guided by a national policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) coordinated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. A special needs education policy was drafted in order to guide the implementation of special needs education programmes in the sector.

Management of the Education System

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is managed through central, divisional (six) and education district (34) structures. Primary schools are further organised through a Zonal system (315 Zones) with each zone served by a Teachers' Development Centre (TDC). A similar structure known as cluster system, has been developed for the secondary sub-sector, with 74 clusters.

The Ministry of Education Headquarters is responsible for the national policy on education. It is also responsible for provision of advisory and inspectorate services for the maintenance of uniform standards of education nationwide. It collects data for the purpose of educational planning, financing and quality control and ensures co-operation, collaboration and coordination on educational matters at national and international levels. It supervises the following major parastatals in order to carry out its functions: Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB), National Library Services (NLS), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, University of Malawi, Mzuzu University, Teachers Service Commission, Domasi College of Education, University of Science and Technology, Malawi College of Distance Education

To efficiently achieve its mandate as shown in its functions, the Ministry of Education is structured into several departments, namely: Educational Planning which includes the EMIS, M&E, and Research units; Basic Education; Special Education; Secondary Education, Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), Higher Education; Science and Technology Education; Education Methods and Advisory Services; Technical Education and Vocational Training; Education Management Development Unit (EDMU); Supplies Unit; and Finance and Administration.

Devolution of Primary Education Services to Local Assemblies

In 1998 the Malawi Government adopted a Decentralisation Policy with the aim of consolidating democratic governance.

At the heart of this new format of governance is the District/Town/City Assembly. Assemblies are now responsible for providing almost all local services, subject to national policy where appropriate. In keeping with the Guidelines for Sector Devolution released by the Decentralisation Secretariat in July, 2001, the Education Sector has devolved primary schools and Community Day Secondary Schools to local assemblies.

The Ministry of Education has since the year 2000/1 been actively engaged in the process of developing a devolution plan for the education sector. The Ministry retained the functions of: Policy formulation; Policy enforcement; Inspectorate; Establishment of service and performance standards; Training; Curriculum development; International representation, Registration of schools, Licensing of teachers and Registration of teachers

The Assemblies will carry out the following functions: Establishment of schools based on school mapping data; Facilitating applications for Registration of Schools; Processing

and recommending through Divisions following given guidelines the granting of Licenses and Authority to teach by MoEST; Administer Pupils' and Teachers' Discipline; Provision of counselling and guidance services for pupils and teachers; Management of Parent Teachers Association and School Management Committees.

Education Planning

Assemblies carry out some planning in the following areas; Sitting of schools be based on Approved Plans; Updating of school censuses; Coordination of data collection and management; Management of a reliable EMIS and coordination of various operational parts of the system; Development and upgrading of district education plans; Development of district education budgets; Monitoring and evaluation of service delivery and impact assessment in Assemblies.

The Education Division Offices and District Education Offices

The District Education Managers report directly to the Assemblies. This means that Divisional Offices will cease to be supervisors of the Districts Education Managers. There is now a new relationship in which Divisional Offices will continue supporting the Assemblies as extended arms of the MoEST headquarters. The Divisions provide special services to Assemblies such as professional planning services, and the inspectorate.

4. Inclusive Education: *Approaches, Scope and Content*

The constitution of the Republic of Malawi (Chapter IV, Section 20) states that discrimination of persons in any form is prohibited and all persons are under any law guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status. The provision of education in Malawi is based on the same principle of non-discrimination. The vision of the education sector in Malawi as stated in NESP is to be a catalyst for socio-economic development, industrial growth and an instrument for empowering the poor, the weak and the voiceless. This represents how inclusive education is perceived. Government's priority development agenda as stated in the development strategy document, 'the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy 2006-2011' is to liberate people and the state from the pangs of poverty which is the root cause of exclusion in a developing country like Malawi. Poverty was in the past exacerbated by chronic food shortages at national and household level as well as deteriorating health services and, poor infrastructure coupled with high levels of unemployment. Issues of exclusion/inclusion are developmental and are matters to do with human rights, equity, transparency and democratisation. Efforts to tackle exclusion must go hand in hand with strategies to bring about economic growth and sustainable development to nations, communities and individuals. Inclusive education embodies what is stated in the Guidelines for Inclusion¹, i.e. '*Inclusion involves adopting a broad vision of Education for All by addressing the spectrum of needs of all learners, including those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion*'.

¹ UNESCO, *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All*, Paris, 2005, pp. 12–14

Economic growth and sustainable development at national, community, family and individual level is pivotal to the ingredients necessary for an effective inclusive education system. To begin with, learners have to come from supportive families. Learners that come from families that do not value education and are perpetually faced with chronic hunger do not meaningfully take advantage of the opportunities that a free primary education system offers. Food security at household and national level is one of the necessary ingredients to inclusive education. A school feeding programme to address short term hunger of learners whilst at school was introduced and has been expanded.

Learners that live with chronically sick parents/guardians and those that are themselves habitually sick do not take full benefit of the education opportunities offered to them. The health of both learners and parents/guardians is also one of government's top priorities in the face of HIV&AIDS. Programmes such as school health and nutrition, guidance and counselling in addition to special needs education programme have been introduced. Inclusive schooling requires trained and well qualified teachers in reasonable pupil-teacher ratios, adequate teaching and learning materials as well as school infrastructure that meets the diverse needs of learners. The Government of Malawi has intensified efforts to recruit and train more teachers by increasing annual in-take and by constructing additional Teacher Training Colleges, and establishing special needs education units in all teacher training colleges including setting up of a Special Needs Institute.

Specifically, the following are some of the interventions that Malawi has put in place to address inclusiveness in education:

Ensuring gender parity in education

- Introduction of bursary schemes to the girl child and vulnerable children at all levels
- Selection to secondary school on a 50: 50 basis between boys and girls
- Readmission of pregnant girls after delivery
- Provision of food rations to the girl child so that they continue attending school
- Sensitization of girls, teachers and communities on gender issues and violence against girls. This has included the creation of mother groups in communities to encourage girls to go to school.
- Construction of girls boarding facilities by both the government and communities
- Promoting and increasing intake in non-traditional fields for girls in institutions of higher learning
- Creation of a conducive environment for learning (girls friendly facilities such as toilets, desks, e.t.c.
- Providing incentives to lady teachers to go and teach in rural areas so that they can act as role models for the girls
- Training teachers to act as gender/counselling and guidance focal points in schools
- Providing girls with scholarships
- Government has developed a National Gender policy that is guiding the inclusion of women and girls in all aspects of social, economic and political development, which also includes improvement in terms of access, and equity in the education sector.

Parental choice for religious or linguistic reasons

In accordance with the Republican constitution the right of members of minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools as well as the use or teaching in their own language is respected as long as the standards maintained by such schools or institutions are not inferior to official standards in public schools. This ensures that this right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities who largely comprise citizens of foreign origin and refugees/asylum seekers from understanding the culture and languages of the citizens of the nation as a whole and from participating in socio-economic activities. All educational institutions including those of minorities are expected to adhere to the registration requirements as set out by the Ministry of Education. In addition, the Ministry's policy on language is that mother tongue should be used as a medium of instruction in the lower classes in order for learners to understand the content matter with ease.

The Education Act (part vi) provides for the establishment of separate education systems provided they follow the system of classification and nomenclature provided by the Act. Parents do have a choice of sending their children to the school of their liking in line with their linguistic and religious preference.

Equality of educational opportunity, access and treatment

Everyone has a right to education and of being admitted at a school of their choice. The constitution of the Republic of Malawi (Chapter IV, Section 20) states that discrimination of persons in any form is prohibited and all persons are under law guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status. Public educational authorities are mandated by the Education Act to provide assistance to education institutions of any kind. Foreign nationals resident in Malawi also have a right to education of their choice.

Malawi primary education is free but not yet compulsory. A number of strategies and programmes have been planned and some are being implemented to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances, those with disabilities and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free primary education of good quality. These include:

- Inclusive education for children with special needs,
- Bursary schemes for orphans and girls;
- Introduction of school feeding programmes in areas with food shortages
- Recruitment and training of teachers
- Community participation in the management of education
- Construction and rehabilitation of schools especially in rural areas;
- Equipping and improving learning facilities in existing schools (addressing the diverse and special needs of boys and girls)

- Expanding overlapping shift systems in primary and secondary schools so that more people have access to education
- Broadening skills range and diversifying delivery modalities of technical and vocational training by establishing Village Polytechnics, Mobile Training Units and Skills Development Initiatives
- Optimising private sector participation in education by developing systems to register, monitor and support private schools and teachers colleges
- Developing Public-private partnerships

Systems of continuing education

Government has put in place systems of continuing education for people who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary or secondary education. These are vocational training programmes, adult literacy programmes and life skills programmes for out of school youth. These programmes concentrate on literacy, numeracy and technical entrepreneurial skills development to enable these people sustain themselves in their day-to-day activities. Government is doing this in partnership with Non Governmental organizations.

Special Needs Education Policy

The policy focuses on eight major components of special needs education which include: early identification assessment and intervention; advocacy, care and support; management planning and financing; access, quality, equity and relevance. Each of these components has policy statements and strategies to ensure their effective implementation.

Status of special needs education

According to statistics from EMIS (2007) there are 69,943 learners with impairments enrolled in primary schools. These include low vision 18,328, complete blindness 366, partial deafness 17,344, complete deafness 1,636, and physical impairment 7,194. These statistics however do not take into account the number of learners enrolled in mainstream classes with an impairment or learning difficulty such as intellectual disability, emotional and behavioural difficulty, specific learning disability, health impairment, language and communication difficulty. Additionally, these statistics do not reflect the number of children with special educational needs that do not have access to educational opportunities. However, using the world estimate that 10% of any enrolment comprises learners with special needs, the total number of children with special educational needs in Malawi out of the 2,857,643, 0 – 13 year old children (NSO 2007 projections estimates), should be more than 286,000 if the over aged are also taken into account.

At secondary level, access is more constrained. In 2007, only 4,680 pupils with special education learning needs had access. Seventy-one (71) with complete blindness, 77 with complete deaf, 916 with learning difficulties, 781 with partial deaf, and 440 with physical impairment.

This situation clearly demonstrates the need to scale up intervention in order to make education opportunities accessible to all.

Challenges

One major challenge faced by the education sector in the realization of the right to quality education for all is the sector's limited capacity, both technically and resource wise to effectively implement EFA. There are inadequate classrooms, teachers, school equipment such as desks, teaching and learning materials as well limited funds to support the financial requirements needed to adequately train, hire, maintain and support required numbers of education personnel including teachers, planners, managers, inspectors, among others. These challenges form a vicious circle with the challenges experienced at school level such as high dropout and repetition rates, poor levels of achievement in basic competencies, inability of schools to attract and retain the excluded children and children with special educational needs, among others. The HIV&AIDS pandemic has made matters worse by impacting negatively on teacher supply, and by turning many children into orphans. There are 454,921 orphans in primary schools (MOEST EMIS 2007).

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