



Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support Monthly Bulletin NOVEMBER 2010 ABE/LINK

MTPDS Workplan Finalized

“At the ministry the child in the classroom is the number one priority” Dr. Simeon Hau.

On 16th November MTPDS met MoEST and Development Partners at Kumbali Lodge to finalize workplans through to Feb. 2012. The meeting was chaired by Raphael Agabu (Deputy Director DIAS). Introductory Remarks were provided by Darles Mbewe (Coordinator DTED). In his opening speech, Dr. Simeon Hau (PS for Basic Education) stressed the importance of teacher development in the MoEST strategy for improving education quality. He committed MoEST staff to play a leading role in MTPDS since its objectives are well integrated with current MoEST policy priorities. In her presentation, Marisol Perez (USAID Education Team Leader) said that she preferred to refer to MTPDS as an ‘activity’ rather than a ‘project’ since it provides flexible technical assistance to MoEST in implementing policy priorities, as an integrated part of the Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). Dr. Steve Harvey (Chief of Party) followed on with a summary of workplans under each of MTPDS’s 6 Result Areas. He stressed that amendments would be necessary to the original scope of work, since education is a dynamic sector in Malawi and much has changed during 2 years since the project was originally designed. In the latter half of the morning participants broke into 3 parallel session to consider different aspect of the plan in detail.



Dr. Hau addresses the meeting.

Susuwele Banda (Director MIE) examined plans for Early Grade Literacy and Numeracy (Result 3) and Enhanced Teaching and Learning Materials (Result 5). Again this group endorsed the plan emphasizing the need to mobilize additional resources for the review of primary textbooks.

Each group presented their findings in plenary during the afternoon. After further discussion a motion was passed to approve the workplan subject to incorporation of certain documented amendments. MTPDS would like to thank all participants for their contributions to this event. We move forward in partnership with MoEST.

- Group 1, chaired by McKnight Kalanda (Director Basic Education), examined plans for Policy Support (Result 1), Complementary Basic Education (Result 4), and New Primary Curriculum M&E (Result 6). This group recommended that MTPDS’s planned intervention in CBE be reduced to avoid duplication of effort with GTZ-funded activities.
- Group 2, chaired by Darles Mbewe, examined plans for Enhancing Teacher Performance (Result 2) and HIV/AIDS. This group endorsed the plan, though noted the need for further discussion of the CPD delivery model. The group also proposed that complementary funding be sought so CPD reaches all primary teachers in all stds.
- Groups 3, Chaired by Dr. William

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CPD Training of Trainers Completed

The CPD component of MTPDS provides technical assistance to the MoEST to develop a national system for CPD delivery. MTPDS will directly fund training of std 1-4 teachers in literacy, numeracy and life skills for head teachers in leadership. The model has the following defining features:

- Head teachers and other senior teachers will be empowered to lead school-based CPD in accordance with principles laid out in the MoEST Technical Manual for CPD.
- Direct training of teachers will take place at cluster level in order to develop local communities of practice and minimize expenses such as transport reimbursement
- The cascade of training will be kept as flat as possible. Master trainers will deliver training directly to all PEAs and Key Teachers nationwide who will then be tasked to train teachers directly at cluster and school level.
- A Key Teacher has been selected in each zone to assist the PEA with the delivery, coaching and monitoring.

The national cadre of 30 Master Trainers was trained at Hippo View in Liwonde during the first week of November. Training focused on preparation to deliver 2 modules. The first is aimed at head teachers and senior teachers and is entitled 'Managing School-Based CPD'. This module lays the foundation for all training to follow. The second module relates to 'Teaching Literacy in English and Chichewa' and reflects the urgent priority that MoEST places on improving literacy in lower primary. In the 3rd week of November further workshops were held in the 6 education divisions nationwide, where all PEAs and Key Teachers were trained to deliver the material. It is now planned that the delivery of this training to all head teachers and standard 1-4 teachers will start during the first week of the coming school holiday.

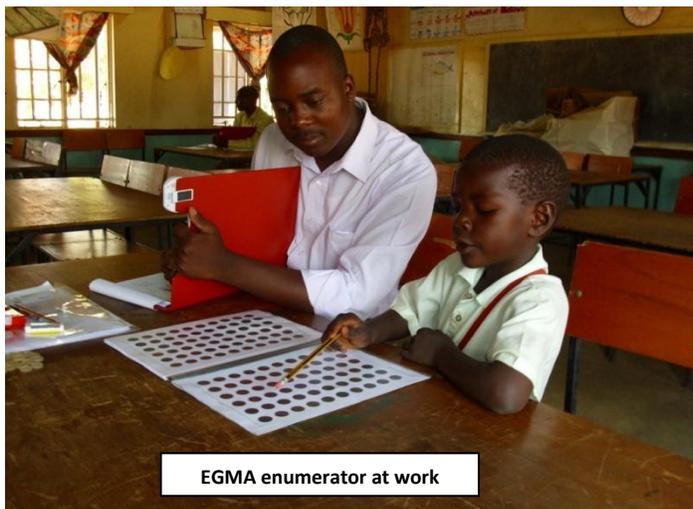


Master Trainers at Liwonde

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EGRA and EGMA Baseline Data Collected Nationwide

During the first two weeks of November 10 teams of data collectors took to the road to sample standard 2 and 4 learners from 98 randomly selected schools selected from every division nationwide. A total of 3588 learners were tested, and 316 teachers and 98 head teachers were interviewed. MoEST support was underlined by the participation of officials from DIAS, MIE and MANEB in monitoring the activity.



EGMA enumerator at work

Logistically this was a challenging operation, as the advent of the rainy season made some roads nearly impassable. Other challenges included the need to administer instruments in a variety of local languages. In one instance learners ran away at first because they mistakenly thought that the team had come to collect blood!

Data entry has followed hot on the heels of data collection, with a team of 10 temporary data-entry clerks appointed and trained with meticulous attention to data quality. As of the end of November data entry is nearly complete, after which analysis and report writing can begin. The data gathered will provide a true and

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representative picture of reading and numeracy skills nationwide, which can inform decision making and future interventions from MoEST, MTPDS and indeed all Development Partners. MTPDS extends sincere thanks to all those who involved so far.

CoP Reflects on MTPDS Baseline Study: Lessons from Lessons

Last week I spent 3 days observing classes as part of the MTPDS baseline. A total of 240 lessons have been observed, in collaboration with DIAS – 4 lessons in each of 60 schools, equally divided between the 6 divisions. ***The lessons which I draw from 4 of the lessons which I observed are highlighted in italic script.***

Lesson 1. Standard 4 Maths – somewhere in Lilongwe Rural East District: Early on 24th November we drove south from Lilongwe, into gathering rainclouds, arriving at the school just in time for first lesson. At this time classes should have been starting, but a chaotic scene of children milling around aimlessly greeted us. The head teacher directed me to a standard 4 maths class. Learners looked surprised and murmured ‘muzungu’ as I entered the class. 70 children were sitting on the dusty floor when the lesson began, but this number swelled to 130 during the course of the lesson, as children drifted in late. The teacher later explained that this was normal on a market day. He began with quick fire questions on multiplication facts and learners did quite well. He then called 8 children to the front and used them as a human teaching aid to demonstrate the idea of a word problem. ‘I have 8 children and each has 10 fingers. How many fingers do they have all together?’ Then he wrote 3 other word problems on the board. Later I praised him for his planning, as the same facts that he had revised at the beginning of the lesson were needed to solve the main activity. The teacher asked for volunteers to read the sentences out, but very few raised their hands. Later he commented to me that ***weak reading skills compromise performance across all subjects.*** Then learners busied themselves, though most spent more time on copying the problems than answering them. It began to rain, and the drumming on the roof rose to a crescendo. Pandemonium broke out outside the classroom as children who normally learnt under the trees ran for shelter. Many gathered noisily under the eaves right outside our classroom window, wet and bedraggled. ***This school could not provide the minimum requirement of shelter to all its pupils, and large amounts of instructional time must be lost for this reason.*** Despite these distractions, one-by-one learners raised their hands to have their books marked. The teacher and ODL student worked hard, but it took over 20 minutes to circulate and still by the end of the lesson not all 130 books had been marked. ***Very large class sizes may limit what we can expect from teachers by way of assessment.***

Lesson 2. Standard 4 English – somewhere in Dedza District: Later that morning, I was shivering in Dedza District in a std. 4 English class on plural nouns. There were 2 teachers and 116 pupils, though the second teacher took no part in the lesson. The teacher began by asking individuals to read sentence strips which she had prepared. A list of singular nouns was then presented on the board. Children were asked to say which, like ‘key’ should take ‘s’ in the plural, and which like ‘church’ should take ‘es’. Learners worked largely by guess work and the teacher did not provide any grammatical rules to apply, along the lines of - “If a word ends in ‘ch’, ‘sh’, ‘s’ or ‘x’ then the plural takes ‘es’”. Some of the noun examples like ‘fox’ were unfamiliar to learners. Then came group work - and the children organized themselves quickly and efficiently. I remarked to myself, with regret, that in this crowded environment, furniture would actually be a hindrance to flexible organization. ***The problem of very large class sizes may need to be solved before the problem of inadequate furniture supply can also be solved.*** Even with 10 groups there were still 12 children per group. There was just one textbook per group and only one child was expected to write on behalf of all. So in each group most children were not actively engaged, most could not see the book, and most had no opportunity to practice writing. The lesson was concluded with learners providing answers, but again no reference was made of the rules that would help the learners make the right plural for unfamiliar nouns in the future. After the lesson, I asked her why, when there were 2 teachers and a spare classroom, they did not split the class. She replied that it was too hard for one teacher to teach all subjects and better to pair up so that one could prepare, or mark or rest. I replied that I thought this was what afternoons are for. As I would observe again elsewhere ***opportunities are often being missed to reduce class size because teachers prefer to work in pairs to lighten their workload.*** Solving this issue requires the intervention of school management.

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'Beckham & Obama' do group-work

Lesson 3: Standard 4 English - somewhere in Salima District: The next day, we had trouble finding the school which was far from the road. In the office, I noted a large pile of unsorted textbooks scattered on a table near a cupboard, in which termites were building a colony. **Care and storage of learning materials remains a widespread problem.** A young, nervous teacher welcomed me into his classroom. His lesson was on prepositions – which he called ‘words which go with a name’. He did a good job of using objects to demonstrate the use of ‘on’, ‘under’, ‘in front’ and ‘behind’. Then he wrote some sentences on the board and asked children to come forward and underline the ‘word

that goes with the name’. The children did their best but few were able to decode a sentence as simple as ‘Tandira was born in 2000’. After this, children organized themselves into 6 groups of 12. The teacher said “Turn to page 48 and discuss the words which go with a name”. Again, like the previous day, there was only one book per group and most could not see, and again only one child was expected to write. So most were stared passively around them with little idea of what was expected of them. **In some classrooms, inadequate supply or management of teaching materials, large group size, and weak classroom management frequently render group work ineffective.** The teacher circulated repeating his explanation of the task. The school was in a poor community, and many children were not in uniform. I was amused to notice that, if I could believe their t-shirts, then David Beckham and Barak Obama were sitting together in one group. After the lesson, the teacher hung on to my every word during my debriefing. It was only then that I realised he was an ODL student. **Throughout the country there is a legion of brave young ODL students struggling to deliver lessons that meet minimum standards, and desperately in need of support.**

Lesson 4: Standard 4 English: Mzimba North Education District:

We then drove 400km north to observe in Mzimba North, but this long journey would prove worthwhile. As we arrived the head teacher greeted us with a sense of urgency. ‘We must hurry, the second lesson is about to begin’, and sure enough, just at that moment the bell rang for change of period. Evidently this man ran a tight ship and **his leadership and high expectations were reflected in performance throughout the school.** In a small mud structure I observed a std. 4 English class with 70 children – again sitting on the floor. The lesson began with a short ‘energizer’ activity. The teacher asked learner to follow a quick-fire commands in English – ‘Put your hands on your head; Clap twice; etc’. This also served to focus the children. Then she simply stated the purpose of the lesson “Today we are going to read and learn about English words that end with ‘nd’”. Examples of such words were provided using flash cards, which learners read together. Where necessary she corrected their pronunciation. Children then formed groups, very efficiently and quickly. Groups were given 5 minutes think of as many examples of words ending in ‘nd’ as they could. In most groups, all children seemed to contribute. At the end of 5 minute the teacher took answers. Each example was



Teaching and learning at Luzi School

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written on the board and the correct pronunciation practiced. Then the teacher asked the children to look one last time at the words before rubbing them off the board. Learners then worked individually to write as many of the words in their books as they could remember. The teacher circulated and marked books adding encouraging comments. There was silence as all children were concentrating. Just before the bell rang, the teacher recapped the lesson content and praised the children. ***The lesson had been simple but effective, its aims had been clear, all pupils had participated, the teacher had radiated purpose, and time had been used effectively.*** After the lesson, I noted that her planning was thorough and that she had records of a regular assessment of each pupil in each subject. Glancing up, I noticed one child had her textbook open to pass the time while her teacher was talking to me. She silently read to herself. Then she closed the book, closed her eyes and her lips quivered as she recited words inside her head. Then she opened the book again and smiled with satisfaction. Here sat hope - a child empowered with materials to be an independent learner. In this case, it is appropriate (with their permission) to name the school, (Luzi) the teacher (Joyce Chawinga) and the head teacher (C.S. Chikoda). ***Professionals like these need to be recognized, celebrated and their talents harnessed for the wider development of education in Malawi.***

Tutor-Marker Orientation for IPTE-ODL Teacher-Learners

DTED organized a busy schedule this month for ODL. You may recall that assignments were already distributed to teacher learners. It was also agreed that the assignments will be due for submission during this residential session starting from 20th December 1, 2010. Considering that marking assignments for ODL is a challenge, DTED organized tutor marker orientations for all TTC lecturers. The last session was held at Lilongwe Teacher Training College where all lecturers participated. MTPDS's ODL Specialist McLloyd Polepole participated and he was encouraged by the passion of the TTC lecturers. The facilitators were drawn from Domasi College of Education (Mr. A. Yambeni and M.N.Y. Munthali) and Malawi College of Distance Education (Mr. Laymaman). They used an interactive methodology, the sessions were enjoyable and participants were kept on their toes. Sessions covered: marking concepts, providing comments and feedback, developing a marking key. One session, in which all participants marked the same script, was particularly instructive – as without an agreed marking key participants marked the same exercise with grades varying from 5 to 27 out of 30!

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Work Continues on M&E Framework for New Primary Curriculum

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is a critical component in implementation of the New Primary Curriculum. An M&E framework was written in 2008, but to this day remains in draft form. MTPDS has begun providing much-needed technical assistance to the MoEST to monitor the resources invested, the activities implemented, services delivered as well as evaluate outcomes achieved and impact realized– employing the following 'results chain' model.

INPUTS → OUTPUTS → OUTCOMES → IMPACT

On 6 and 7 November 2010, MTPDS, in corroboration with DIAS, facilitated a "small team" workshop at Mponela to develop an M&E framework. The "small team" comprised of participants from DIAS, MIE, Basic Education and MTPDS. This task team carried forward the start made at the workshop held at in Lilongwe on 29th September with the following aims:

- To share draft M&E Framework and obtain feedback from the 29th September workshop and share recommendation from Joe DeStefano's trip report
- To reach consensus on a draft M&E Framework, including selection of indicators

As a result of the workshop an agreed list of indicators was developed and work is now beginning on the necessary monitoring tools to go with them. Discussion is also underway to allocate responsibility for the collection of data.

Continuous Assessment Guidelines for Teachers

Teachers across the country are struggling to implement a system of continuous assessment aimed providing regular feedback to both learners and teachers regarding progress, in a manner that can inform responsive lesson planning and improved teaching. Extensive Assessment Guidelines were developed in 2008, but further work is

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necessary to produce a practical manual aimed at assisting classroom teachers in implementation. A workshop was held at DIAS on 17th November with representatives of DIAS, MANEB, MIE and DTED to plan the development of new more user-friendly guidelines in a manner that responds to current concerns of teachers.

Dates to Remember

Project Launch

- Date for project launch event provisionally set for January 28th 2011.