

# Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support Monthly Bulletin                      JANUARY 2011                      ABE/LINK

## Continuing Professional Development Launched in Style!

A good time was had by all when the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) launched its national Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program in style on 28<sup>th</sup> January at Kamwendo Teacher Development Centre (TDC) in Mchinji District. The event highlighted the central importance that MoEST places on CPD in its strategy to improve the quality and relevance of primary education and to ensure the proper implementation of the New Primary Curriculum. This nationwide CPD program will be supported by MTPDS with funding from USAID to train all primary teachers in literacy numeracy and life-skills, and all head teachers in leadership skills.

DTED chose Kamwendo Teacher Development Centre in Mchinji district to be the venue of the launch as one way of recognizing TDCs with exceptional performance. To quote the DTED's Training Manager, Patrick Themu, who was Master of Ceremonies, – 'Kamwendo is a TDC that truly worthy of the name'. This TDC is exemplary in its management practices, community involvement, stimulating displays and well kept appearance. But most important of all, it is a 'beehive' of teacher development activity.

The Guest of Honour at the launch was the Deputy Minister for Education, Science and Technology responsible for Higher Education, Mrs Otria Moyo-Jere (MP). The occasion was also graced by the Minister responsible for Gender and Child Development, Mrs Theresa Gloria Mwale, who thanked MoEST for choosing to launch the CPD program in her constituency. She also thanked USAID for funding the project that would without a doubt sharpen teacher's skills.



*(right to left) Deputy Minister Otria Moyo-Jere, Minister Theresa Mwale and USAID Representative Joanne Hale viewing displays in the TDC hall.*



*DTED Coordinator Mrs. Darles Mbewe speaking at the launch*

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In her speech, the General Programs Development Specialist for USAID, Joanne Hale: informed the Ministry that United States Government through USAID will continue supporting its efforts to improve the quality of education in Malawi. The MTPDS program is expected to improve learning outcomes of over 2 million primary school pupils in standards 1-4 and provide CPD to over 30,000 teachers and school more than 10,000 head teachers and other senior teachers.

The Director of Basic Education, Mr. McKnight Kalanda said that while some TDCs have become 'beehives' of activities, others hardly host any such activities. One major reason was the lack of well coordinated CPD program. To address the problem MoEST developed the National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development (NSTED) in 2008. MoEST in collaboration with the MIE developed a CPD model for primary school teachers based on the use of TDCs, school clusters and schools themselves as centers for CPD delivery. Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), head teachers and selected key teachers will be facilitating the activities.



*Teachers and learners from Kamwendo zone providing some entertainment at the launch.*

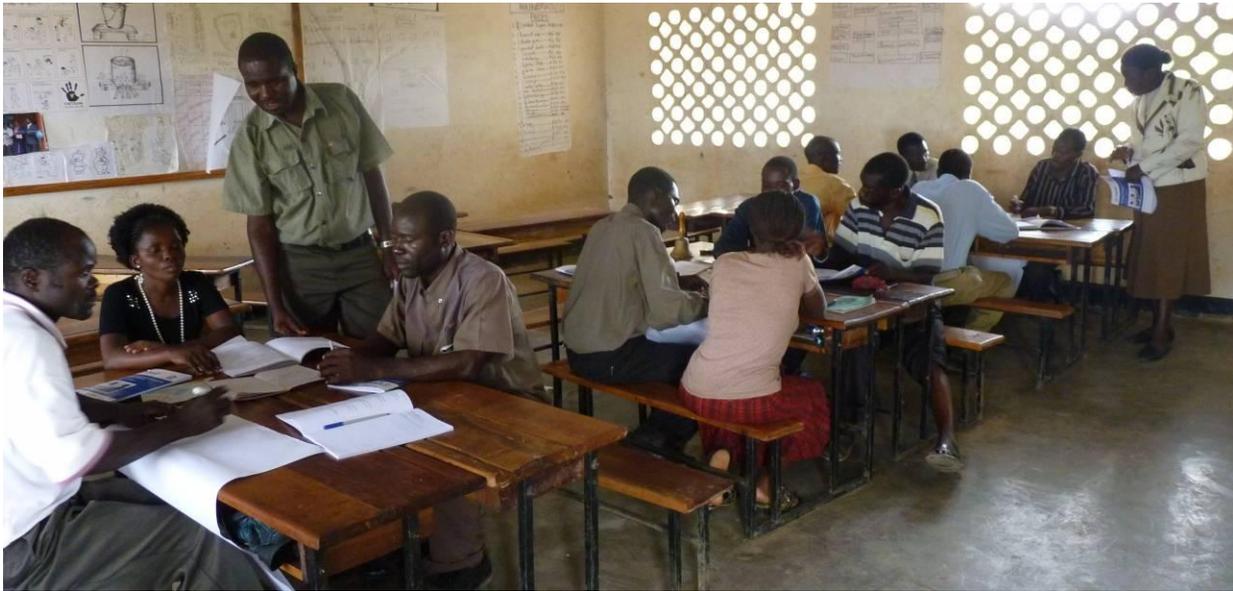
In her speech, the Honorable Deputy Minister stressed the importance of continually updating teacher's skills and knowledge for them to remain effective and implement the new primary school curriculum. She added that the ministry will strive to ensure that the program covers all teachers in all classes and all subjects. She further appealed to teachers in Malawi to recognize the importance of the program and to take its activities seriously instead of focusing on financial benefits obtained from such a program. The Deputy Minister also thanked USAID for their continued support in improving basic education in the country.

## CPD Literacy Cluster Trainings Take Place Nationwide

Coinciding with the CPD launch, the month of January has seen intense activity in cluster centers across the country, where all of the 30,000 teachers in standards 1-4 nationwide are receiving 2 days of training on how to teach literacy skills. By bringing schools together in clusters of 3 or 4 schools CPD is being brought close to the teacher and at minimum cost. The Literacy module comprises Chichewa and English, each of which has four units. The units address topics that were identified as posing particular problems to teachers especially when teaching learners how to read and write. The topics include how to teach pre-reading and pre-writing, reading and writing vowels, consonant and vowel combinations, reading and writing a sentence, creating a print-rich environment, and letters of the alphabet, among others.

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In order to minimize disruption to pupils' instructional time, the cluster trainings are being conducted by PEAs and Key Teachers on Saturdays and Sundays, one cluster per weekend. On average the zone of any TDC contains between 3 and 5 clusters. Zones that have fewer clusters were able to finish the training in January, while zones with more clusters, including some who were not able to use all of their January weekends, will finish the trainings in February. Monitoring reports indicated that most training proceeded smoothly, save for a few problems. Some centers reported not receiving enough materials such as manuals, pens and registration forms, while in other centers a few participants were unable to come due to personal and domestic reasons. The distances between clusters and zones in large districts such as Mzimba were also noted as a concern. A teacher interviewed in Chikangawa Zone in Mzimba reported having walked five kilometers through a dense, dark forest to get to a cluster. Other teachers elsewhere had walked longer distances.



*Teachers engaged in group-work at Bewu Cluster*

Some teachers have been interviewed to express their views on how the trainings were going. Stella Milanzi, a teacher at Nthungwa Primary School in Mzimba North said the literacy workshops were helping her rethink how she teaches literacy. "At the moment, many learners are having difficulty learning how to read. After this workshop, I have the hope that in certain respects, things will change." This sentiment was shared by Charles Bismarck Chiumia, headteacher at Chinkhwengwe Primary School also in Mzimba North, who said it had been a "very wonderful workshop." He continued to say the training had equipped teachers with new skills in the teaching of reading and writing. A trainer at Bewu Cluster Centre, OLK Chirambo, said by suggesting a syllabic approach to the teaching of letters of the alphabet and letter combinations, teachers had added to their skills bag a more flexible technique, which would offer learners proper grounding in letter recognition. As the literacy cluster trainings wind up, the CPD cycle will now move to Numeracy for the remainder of the second term.

## MTPDS Website Up and Running

In its quest for improved communication with its beneficiaries, development partners and other stakeholders MTPDS has developed a website. The website will provide information about MTPDS and its activities. It will also act as a resource bank for materials in the public domain, such as CPD modules developed through the project. Please follow this link to find out more about what MTPDS is all about.

: <http://www.mtpds.org/>

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## Update on the Development of Continuous Assessment Guidelines

MTPDS continues to provide technical assistance to the MoEST in the development of continuous assessment guidelines for primary teachers. From 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2011, MTPDS facilitated a meeting with MANEB, DIAS and MIE counterparts, to discuss the draft research Instruments on continuous assessment which was prepared by MANEB. The purpose of these instruments is to understand the current status of continuous assessment in schools and the challenges that teachers are experiencing in its implementation.

The meeting took place at MANEB in Zomba. During the meeting it was agreed that DIAS would lead the process and MANEB would be the secretariat. The instrument was revised and pretested in two schools within Zomba. Chikala Primary School represented a rural setting while Chikamveka Primary School represented urban setting.

After pretesting, the data was analyzed by MANEB and based on the findings a final instrument was drafted. It was later agreed that MANEB and MIE would collect data using the revised instrument from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2011. MANEB will lead in drafting the report with assistance from MTPDS, DAIS and MIE. It is hoped that the draft report will be ready by second week of February, 2011. Once finalized, DIAS will organize a stakeholder's workshop where the report will be presented before work of drafting the guideline starts.



The Director of Administration,  
MANEB addressing the team



MANEB Official collecting data at  
Chikamveka Primary School