



**MTPDS Program Monthly Newsletter**

**Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support (MTPDS) program is a 3-year USAID-funded project supporting the professional development of teachers in Malawi and implementation of the National Primary Curriculum. MTPDS is being implemented by Creative Associates International, RTI International and Seward, Inc, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology**

**US Ambassador impressed by MTPDS' work in Ntchisi**

The US Ambassador was clearly impressed during her visit to Mpherere School in Ntchisi District on 25<sup>th</sup> January. Ambassador Jeanine Jackson and USAID Mission Director Doug Arbuckle had come to witness the impact of the MTPDS literacy intervention in an ordinary rural school. They were greeted at the school by the team of MTPDS staff and Ntchisi District officials who have been responsible for delivering the reading intervention, referred to in Chichewa as 'Maziko a Kuwerenga' - which translates as 'Foundations of Reading'.

After a short briefing on the program by District Education Manager, Oscar Maganga, and EGRA Manager, Odala Banda, Ambassador Jackson proceeded to a Standard 1 classroom where she found a lesson already in progress.

The lesson was being delivered by Mrs. Alice Kamzoolo who was introducing the letter 'z' applying methods and using learning materials provided by the MTPDS program. The children ably demonstrated the reading and writing skills they had acquired after less than half a year of schooling.



**US Ambassador to Malawi Jeanine Jackson observing a Std 1 class in Ntchisi**

After the lesson, selected Standard 2 children, as young as 7 years old, demonstrated their ability to read passages from texts designed for use by pupils in classes as high as Standard 8. The demonstration was clearly unrehearsed, as the passages were randomly selected and the look of concentration on each learners face was authentic. The Ambassador sincerely thanked Mrs. Kamzoolo and her colleagues for their excellent work.

The Ambassador then proceeded to the Teacher Development Centre, to meet and interact with the School Management Committee (SMC), local leaders, parents and teachers from Mpherere School and neighboring schools. Community members such as SMC chairperson Mangani Kadzamura and local head woman Veronica Makalichi told how the community appreciated the program and were willing to invest their efforts in supporting it.

Ambassador Jackson's regard for the teaching profession was demonstrated in her statement that education is the 'noblest profession'. She then proudly revealed her own qualifications in the field of education. She called early literacy 'the key to development in Malawi' and declared the intention of the US Government to continue to support early literacy in the future. She thanked the District Literacy Coordinator, PEAs and all those responsible for delivery of the program.

The Ambassador's joy at the occasion (and love of music) were apparent when, before leaving the school, she departed from the scheduled program by dancing with the women of the local community!



**Ambassador Jackson greets community members of the School Management Committee at Mpherere, Ntchisi**

**Inside this issue:**

**US Ambassador impressed by MTPDS' work in Ntchisi** 1

**CPD Update: Literacy Module in the offing** 2

**Voices from the field: MTPDS consults stakeholders on national teacher strategy** 3

**MTPDS supports training of M&E officials** 4

**Introducing new MTPDS staff members** 4

**MTPDS adds five new districts to EGRA intervention**

**Events Calendar for January 2012** 4

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## Continuous Professional Development Update: Literacy Module 2 in the offing



**Head teachers and CPD mentors do group work during Leadership Module 3 zonal trainings**

There were two dominant activities in January 2012 involving CPD. Schools across the country were busy conducting CPD cluster trainings for Leadership Module 3, while the CPD team was revising Literacy Module 2. Cluster trainings followed training of facilitators workshops that were conducted in December 2011.

Back at the office, the development of Literacy Module 2 continued. The CPD team revised a draft of the module and added new material. Much of the new material added to the module comes from what the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) intervention has been using in the two pilot districts of Ntchisi and Salima. Field visits to schools in these districts have shown promising results, with some children able to

read after one term in Standard 1. As reported in the December newsletter, some teachers attribute this success to techniques that begin with teaching children letter sound identification and segmentation before teaching them letter names and syllable combinations. Children are also allowed to take their books home so they can continue learning how to read at home, while getting help from parents, guardians and other adults.

Also in the month of January, the CPD team received two Short Term Technical Advisors, from the United States, Vicky Frank, President of Seward Inc, and David Porcaro, Seward's Senior Instructional Designer. Both Ms Frank and Dr Porcaro went out to observe cluster trainings in Dowa district.

During the month, the CPD team also invited literacy specialists from the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) and from the Directorate of Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS), who joined in the revision of the Literacy Module 2. From MIE came Mr Foster Gama, Literacy Curriculum Specialist, while from DIAS came Mrs Mayamiko Chiwaya and Mr Jeremiah Kamkuza, Language Specialists.

In February, CPD activities will focus on finishing the editing of Literacy Module 2 and then taking it for printing, in readiness for another series of training of trainers, trainings of facilitators, and trainings of Standard 1-4 teachers in cluster centers. Literacy Module trainings will take place in the month of March, 2012.



**Participants busy digesting contents of Leadership Module 3 at Senga TDC, Dowa**

**Voices from the field: MTPDS consults stakeholders on national teacher strategy**

MTPDS in January 2012 held a series of meetings to consult stakeholders on the implementation of the National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development (NSTED), the policy guidance document for teacher development and management in Malawi. The meetings took place in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu involving Education Division Managers (EDMs), District Education Managers (DEMs), Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), and Domasi College of Education. The meetings succeeded in reaching 28 of the 34 education districts in the country, all six divisions and four TTCs. The main purpose of the meetings was to share the NSTED implementation strategy guidelines and to obtain feedback from relevant stakeholders.



*EDM for NED (centre), DEMs and other stakeholders at an NSTED consultative meeting in Mzuzu*

The consultative meetings were conducted in a three-part format where MTPDS: (1) presented the NSTED to the participants, many of whom were not aware of its existence, then (2) presented the framework, and (3) elicited feedback from participants. The NSTED framework covers thirteen recommendations which were made by MoEST and have not yet been implemented. With the support of MTPDS, MoEST has prioritized six of these recommendations for implementation. MTPDS is playing an important role in helping MoEST to disseminate information about the NSTED to stakeholders throughout Malawi.

The meetings were well received and produced a great amount of feedback. Participants wondered why NSTED had not been disseminated earlier while others felt there had not been wide enough consultation in the development of the policy. One feature of the NSTED which attracted great attention in all three meetings was the recommendation for modular CPD to be tied to academic credit for higher education. A three-step process has been outlined, starting with needs assessment, engaging training institutions to design diploma and degree programs, and, finally, selecting teachers to enroll for the courses on a yearly basis. The NSTED review process recommended that all three steps be led by the Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), supported by the Directorate of Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS) and other relevant stakeholders. In all the three meetings, participants felt that the last step, the selection of teachers to enroll for the courses, should be led by DEMs. The argument was that Ministry departments were too distanced from schools,

whereas DEMs were in close contact with schools and teachers.

Participants expressed their wishes to have these kinds of interactions more often. They said there were not many such opportunities to discuss issues affecting the teaching profession.



*EDM for Southwest Education Division (centre), DEMs and other stakeholders at an NSTED consultative meeting in Blantyre*

### MTPDS supports training of M&E officials

In January, MTPDS continued its support to the Directorate of Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS) of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) by embarking on a major effort to improve its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities supporting the implementation of the National Primary Curriculum (NPC) in schools throughout Malawi. This is being done through the training of 100 Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) throughout the country in conducting M&E school visits and classroom observation assessments.

The first training workshop was held in Mponela from January 30<sup>th</sup> to February 1<sup>st</sup> with 50 PEAs from the Northern, Central West, and Central East Education Divisions. It was jointly facilitated by DIAS officials, Mr. Andrew Chipanga, Mr. John Mswayo, and Mr. Jennings Kayira and the MTPDS team, Dr. Elizabeth Randolph, Mr. Demis Kunje, and Mr. Sydonio Matope. The 3-day workshop was very engaging with all of the PEAs making significant contributions to the refinement and further development of the M&E instruments. During the workshop the PEAs had the opportunity to observe and assess two videos of classroom sessions in order to practice their observation skills and refine their inter-rater reliability. They then followed up by conducting actual classroom observations in pairs at nearby schools to apply their skills and compare their assessment scores.

The Director of DIAS, Mr. Raphael Agabu, spoke to the PEAs at the workshop emphasizing their role as key M&E officers for the Ministry. He noted that this is a Ministry initiative which has been made possible through the support of MTPDS but stressed that the M&E efforts being launched at the workshop will continue well beyond the life of the MTPDS project. This is an effort that should bear fruits for years to come.



PEAs attending an M&E training workshop

### Introducing new MTPDS staff members



Zex Chikwiya

Zex Chikwiya has joined MTPDS as a Communications Specialist. Zex is a media and communications specialist with experience in public and media relations. Previously he worked for Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation (CRECCOM), and before that he was a secondary school English Language teacher. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from the University of Malawi Polytechnic.

Leslie Ndovi joins MTPDS as a Literacy Specialist. Having worked for the Tikwere Interactive Radio Initiative as scriptwriter, he has a background in interactive radio instruction, literacy and continuous professional development. Leslie has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and a post-graduate University Certificate in Education. He joins the EGRA intervention.



Leslie Ndovi

### MTPDS adds five new districts to EGRA Intervention

MTPDS has added five more districts to its EGRA Literacy Intervention. In addition to Ntchisi and Salima, EGRA will now include the following five districts: Mzimba North, Ntcheu, Zomba Rural, Blantyre Rural and Thyolo. The new districts will be under the Division Teacher Training Coordinators, who will add new roles as District Literacy Coordinators.

### Events Calendar for January 2012

#### Planned Events

##### Teacher Education Policy Support

Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>. Dissemination on roles and responsibilities of departments and institutions of the MoEST involved in initial teacher education and management of primary teachers.

##### Early Grade Reading Assessment

February 7: EGRA Coordinating Committee workshop, Liwonde  
 February 10: EGRA 2010 Baseline Survey report dissemination to districts  
 February 13-15: TOT for Literacy Intervention for five additional districts  
 February 20-21: Training of PEAs on Literacy intervention in five districts  
 February 25-26: Training of Standard 1-4 teachers in the zones in the five new districts

##### Textbook Review Workshop

February 13-25: Std. 3 textbook revision workshop, MIE

##### NPC M&E Training Workshop

February 6-8: M&E Training session for remaining 50 PEAs, Blantyre

**Editor's Corner:** The MTPDS newsletter intends to provide insights on activities, achievements, and success stories from the field. We are inviting readers to send their comments, contributions and questions or tips for teacher professional development.

Please send your contributions to: The Editor, MTPDS Program, Area 10/612, Tsoka Road, Private Bag B481, Lilongwe. Tel: +265 1 794 977, Email:

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