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REPORT FOR STUDY ON STUDENT REPETITION AND ATTRITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

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This Study on Student Repetition and Attrition in Malawi Primary Education was commissioned by the United States Agency for International Development/Malawi (USAID) to establish factors that cause high rates of student repetition and attrition in primary education. This was with a view to inform decision-making among policymakers.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CfBT	Centre for British Teachers
COR	Contracting Officers Representative
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Civil society organization
DADO	District Agricultural Officer
DEC	District Executive Committee
DEM	District Education Managers
DHO	District Health Officers
DIAS	Department of Inspection and Advisory Services
DP	Development Partners
DRCS	Dickens Robert Consulting Services
DTED	Department of Teacher Education and Development
EFA	Education for all Goals
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Activity
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESPR	Education Sector Performance Report
ESWAP	Education Sector Wide Approach
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GVH	Group Village Headman
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IPTE	Initial Primary Teacher Education
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDF	Local Development Fund
MASTEP	Malawi Special Education Program
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MG	Mother Group
MITEP	Malawi In-service Teacher Education Program
MOEST	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MOGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare
NEP	National Education Policy
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODL	Open Distance Learning
OVCS	Orphans and Vulnerable Children

PEA	Primary Education Advisors
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
RA	Research Assistants
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Equality
SADC	Southern Africa Community
SFP	Schools Feeding Program
SMC	School Management Committee
SOW	Statement of Work
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TA	Traditional Authority
TALULA	Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources
TeaPS	Teachers' Performance Appraisal System
T'LIPO	Teachers Living Positively
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Universal Primary Enrollment
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VH	Village Head
WASH	Water and Sanitation Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This is a report for a study on Student Repetition and Attrition in Primary Education in Malawi. The study was commissioned by USAID/Malawi and carried out by D R Consulting Services of Malawi. This study sought to unearth lead factors contributing to high repetition and dropout rates that are persistently seen in the Malawian primary education sector. Primarily, the rationale for the study was to aid Government of Malawi (GoM) and her Development Partners to understand these driving factors and inform decision-making for the primary education sector.

The design and implementation of this study was informed by the following development hypotheses: (i) Improved student learning outcomes leads to reduced student class repetition and attrition, (ii) Increased participation of community in the learning of students contributes significantly to the learning outcomes of the students and reduces student repetition and attrition. In exploring these hypotheses, the study answers the following key questions: (i) Who makes decisions on student repetition and attrition from primary schools in Malawi? (ii) What factors keep students in schools and culture a demand for more learning gains by the students? and (iii) What is the perception and expectations of households on the student learning gains benchmarks per standard (grade) of primary education?

These hypotheses and key questions informed the data collection protocols. Results from the data collected were analysed. The findings from the analysis led to the conclusions and recommendations for the stakeholders to consider in a bid to reduce student repetition and attrition rates in primary schools.

Methodological Approach

The study design within the context of the methodological approach was tuned to effectively test the hypothesis and respond to the study objectives. In this regard the research design followed a mixed methods paradigm. This is where a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to design data collection instruments that complemented each other and allowed for triangulation of the questions raised in the study. The study used surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews (KIIs), and secondary data sources to collect data. Key respondents included head teachers and teachers, Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), District Education Managers (DEMs), Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), representatives of Development Partners (DPs), Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), among others.

Findings

The major study findings on factors contributing to student repetition and attrition were categorized into community level factors, school level factors, and household based factors.

Community Level Factors

This study revealed diverse community level factors that are contributing to student repetition and attrition. Communities lack measures and mechanisms to regulate the conduct of some cultural practices which subject school going children to substantial periods of school absenteeism. This reduces class attendance. Interaction with teachers and instructional time from teachers is also reduced in the process. Consequently, students do not adequately learn and fail to achieve expected learning outcomes. It was also noted that at the community level, school-going children are at times married off due to pre-marriage arrangements. This not only contributes to high dropout rates but also infringes on the rights of students. Communities and the government alike have not instituted strategic safety measures for students, especially for girls. The study established incidence of violence against

girls on the way to and from school. This compels girls to stay away from school; thereby further reducing contact time with teachers hence the time on task needed for learning is reduced.

Household Based Factors

The study revealed that parents enrol both under-age and over-age students in schools. This affects both students in their socialisation processes. In class they operate at disparate cognitive levels. Students considered too old for their class are also peer-stigmatized, which increases their likelihood to repeat a class and/or drop out of school. In addition, households' inability to provide for school supplements such as school uniforms, textbooks, and education support leads to student absenting themselves from schools or engaging in truancy. This reduces their instruction-contact hours, and eventually their learning achievement deteriorates, leading to increases in repetition and dropout rates.

School Level Factors

Teachers' inadequate capacity to inspire learners, manage classrooms and effectively deliver lessons leads to students' inability to understand lesson content. This leads to little or no learning for students. Therefore, with limited understanding of classroom content, students fail to master lessons and repeat classes. Persistent repetition leads to disinterest in schooling and eventually results in attrition from schools. In addition, school instructional leadership is inadequate. This leads to students inconsistently attending lessons and teachers subsequently losing contact hours with them due to engagement in personal business other than classroom instruction. Another school-based factor that was established by the study is teachers' inadequate skills in handling students with special education needs. This affects the extent to which these students receive the special support needed for them to effectively attain grade level learning outcomes. Consequently, such students repeat classes and eventually drop out of school.

Conclusions

Evidence from the study suggests that there is little learning taking place in schools. This results in failure by students to attain important grade level competencies and learning outcomes. Consequently, students repeat classes and if persistent, students eventually drop out of school. Further to this, evidence from the study suggests that communities are not proactive in managing students learning at home and school. This perpetrates high repetition and dropout rates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the study recommends the following for the consideration of the identified parties:

National

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) should continue upgrading teachers and provide head teachers with clear guidelines on teacher allocation to improve efficiencies at the school.
- The Department of Teacher Education (DTED) in collaboration with the Department of Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS) should institute a Teacher Performance Appraisal System (TeaPS). The principles behind the system should be integrated into the teacher training curriculum so as to equip teachers with skills on how to develop business plans. The TeaPS should outline annual work objectives agreeable to their sectional heads and or immediate supervisors. The supervisors should be equipped with skills to conduct teacher performance appraisals based on objectives and performance areas laid down in the TeaPS. Teaching incentives (e.g. salary increments, institutional housing allocations, promotions, etc.) accrued should be based on the teachers' attainment of their work objectives. The TeaPS should have checks and balances to ensure its success. PEAs may be introduced to provide the checks and balances where

there are subordinate-supervisor disagreements. This has to be replicated across the chain of command in the education sector on instructional management.

- Personal emoluments processing and disbursements be decentralized to the District Councils to ensure timely payments. Teachers take time off in order to check for their salaries, which is persistently delayed due to centralized salary processing. This lessens student-teacher contact time as instructional hours are reduced and students learn less, hence affecting learning outcomes, which encourages repetition and eventual drop-out.
- Procurement of books should be decentralised to the district level where the District Councils should be empowered to undertake procurement of books for their districts. This will lead to manageable procurement thresholds that will enable speedy procurement of textbooks, to be made available in schools in a timely manner. Availability of textbooks in schools will enable usage hence improve opportunity for students to learn. Improved learning outcomes will mean promotion between classes and less repetition and/or dropouts. Effecting this recommendation will require capacity building in risk management, strategic procurement planning and adherence to the Public Procurement Act, and Public Financial Management Act of 2003.
- Provide the District Councils with adequate financing for PEAs operational budget. The DIAS should strengthen provision of technical capacity to PEAs so that they are able to supervise and enforce instructional leadership at school level.
- The MoEST should encourage government departments and ministries working on drought resilience, safety nets and improved livelihoods to include educational factors in the selection criteria used to identify benefactors of such initiatives. This will ensure that vulnerable households' livelihood is improved and that they are able to increase household expenditures on education related items. This will directly improve the ability of households to provide for basic educational needs of their children. The implementers of such initiatives may also base their criteria on overall household education performance to identify benefactors or scale-up. This will incentivise households to prioritize education of their children and promote learning. The benefits from learning have a larger effect on the performance of these interventions and its sustenance, and are therefore an ideal basis for developmental partnership.
- The MoEST should reinforce formative assessments where applicable and provide effective strategies including refresher courses for implementing formative assessments in large classes.
- Additional resources should be allocated to complimentary basic education (CBE). CBE should be widely scaled up in all districts and in sufficient areas of the country since student drop out is a country-wide challenge.
- The MoEST should increase efforts to reduce the pupil classroom ratio (PCR). Besides increasing efforts in pre-service teacher training programmes, it should increase in the number of schools on double shifts as a temporary measure. However, the MoEST should explore the feasibility and possibility of universalizing double shifting. For instance Standards 5 – 8 could start classes at 12:00 noon, creating enough space and availability of facilities for junior classes so as to improve the learning environment. Meanwhile the MoEST could invest resources meant for construction of new schools on improving the classroom environment (additional texts, book corners, desks, good lighting, etc.). Universalization of double shifting would immediately reduce the PCR to 1:64. However, viable strategies on managing teachers' workloads and teacher task management on a daily basis should be devised. This is where conditions and incentives for teachers would be required.

District

- District Councils in collaboration with MoEST should formulate guidelines that communities must use to facilitate after-school student learning. This will facilitate

rapport between teachers and community members. This rapport will allow for joint collaboration in facilitating student teaching methodologies that community members may use to provide home learning support and complement teachers' school-based efforts.

- District Councils should help communities establish by-laws that do not allow students loitering in communities during school days and instruction time. School going children should not be allowed to participate in public entertainment events or market days during the time they are expected to be in classrooms and learning. This will improve classroom attendance and potentially learning by students, leading to better learning achievements and reduced repetition.
- District Councils should accelerate construction of girl friendly facilities in schools through various available windows such as the Local Development Fund (LDF).
- District Councils and local community leaders should sensitize parents on ensuring early enrolment in line with school enrolment age in Malawi, which is age six. This will reduce the proportion of overage students in early grades, and consequently reduce dropout due to overage.
- District education offices with the support of sub-education structures should encourage and support School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) and Mothers' Groups (MGs) to mount robust community sensitization on gender equality. Households should be encouraged to prioritize the education of girls as much as their boy counterparts. Rights-based approaches should be encouraged in the education sector to ensure that rights of children are equitably upheld by communities.

Community

- Community school management structures should be empowered to work hand-in-hand with GoM departments such as Social Welfare in ensuring that parents are made to adequately care and provide for children. Other GoM departments such as Community Policing should be involved in enforcing existing laws on child care.
- Community leaders in collaboration with District Councils and other non state actors should increase efforts in establishing Community Based Child Care Centers to avert unnecessary student absenteeism. This will help to reduce cases of students' absenteeism due to minding of younger siblings whilst their parents are engaged in income generating activities.
- Community leaders in collaboration with school leadership structures should develop mechanisms for reporting perpetrators of sexual relationships with girl students to avert sexual abuse of girls in schools

School Level

- Continuous student assessment as a way of ascertaining child promotion should be emphasised and utilized in annual assessments of student achievement. Schools are still using terminal examinations to assess abilities acquired through the term. This cuts out students that deserve to be promoted. Consequently, it increases the number of class repetitions, especially in early grades.
- Head teachers should ensure that oversubscribed classes are allocated more qualified teachers. Where qualified teachers are inadequate, school management should liaise with communities to find and employ teaching assistants in line with MoEST guidelines.
- Head teachers should work with class teachers and class prefects to ensure that schools are bullying free. This should include clear anonymous reporting mechanisms between

schools and communities to ensure that students are not bullied on their way to and from schools.

- Head teachers with support from PEAs should ensure that schools have well developed programs for providing instructional mentorship and training for unqualified and assistant teachers utilizing senior and qualified teachers at the school level.
- Head teachers with support from PEAs should ensure teachers have knowledge, and monitor adherence to school related policies that are central to eradicating corporal punishment and use of abusive language as this is a recipe to absenteeism among students.

I INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is grappling with ways of improving internal efficiency of primary education. Policy discussion in this regard is to reduce repetition rates, dropout rates, and increase promotion rates of students enrolled in primary schools in Malawi. The policy agenda in the education sector includes plans to tackle student attrition, repetition, and promotion of learning gains in primary schools in Malawi. However, factors attributed to student attrition, repetition, and low promotion rates are largely based on education supply factors, and less on factors closely associated with learning gains and intrinsic demand by students to be in school, learn, and progress through the school system. Therefore, USAID in collaboration with the MoEST's Department of Education Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Section sought to understand, through evidence, the driving factors that lead to high repetition and dropout rates persistently seen in the Malawian primary education sector. In addition, MoEST and USAID sought evidence and data to inform decision-making in relation to appropriate efforts for addressing high repetition and dropout rates.

This report provides an analysis on who makes decisions on student attrition and repetition from primary schools in Malawi. Within this context, the report also explores a wide range of causal interactive factors that contribute to decisions related to the attrition and repetition of students from primary schools. Additionally, this report makes an in-depth analysis of factors that keep students in schools and nurture a demand for more learning gains by the students. Furthermore, the report establishes the perception and expectations of households on the student learning gains benchmarks per standard (grade) of primary education. The report also analyses wider community and parental actions relating to student repetition and attrition. Based on the various push and pull factors in relation to student repetition and attrition, the study explores how teaching practices promote learning and/or reduce student attrition.

This report makes recommendations based on a specific set of findings. The recommendations are action-oriented, practical and specific, with defined responsibility for the action. This allows stakeholders to integrate such recommendations in the on-going interventions that the education sector is implementing to promote internal efficiency. The recommendations are based on the findings with attention to feasibility of change and innovation as well as the economic and political context in which the stakeholders in the education sector will be working.

1.2 Background

The primary education sector in Malawi has internal inefficiencies. It takes an average of 22 years for pupils enrolled to complete an eight-year education cycle¹ with a primary education survival rate of 49%². This implies high repetition and dropout rates, which significantly affect the proportion of a cohort of pupils reaching each successive standard (from the first year of school, 51% of each cohort is lost by the time the cohort reaches the final year of primary). Furthermore, assessments have identified that 67% of Standard 6 students are still at the pre-literate level; of the 49% of children that make into the final year of primary, only 74.8% of boys and 61.7% of girls pass the Primary School Leaving Exam. This inefficiency creates significant waste, as educational resources are dedicated to children that are perpetually not learning, and reflects considerable gender gaps in learning outcomes for boys and girls. These inefficiencies also result in crowded classrooms, particularly in the

¹World Bank (2009), the Education System in Malawi. Working Paper No. 182, http://www.poledakar.org/IMG/pdf/RESEN_malawi_2010.pdf

²Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2011). Education Statistics

lower grades, denying opportunity for new entrants in the successive classes, increased workload and burnout of primary school teachers, and fostering a latent acceptance of non-learning and dropping out for primary school pupils.

In a bid to promote efficiencies in the education sector, the MoEST has embarked on a classroom size reduction exercise via a 2011 circular. This has entailed the introduction of double shifting in selected schools, automatic promotions for selected classes, and enhanced classroom construction in existing primary schools as well as construction of new schools. The MoEST has attempted to increase the number of primary school teachers via Open and Distance Learning (ODL) for new teachers in addition to the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) 1+1 program.

In spite of the interventions above, class repetition is high, averaging 24.5% (25% for boys and 24% for girls) for all standards in primary education and an average repetition of 20% for Standards 1 – 4 (Education Sector Progress Report 2013). Dropout of pupils is also high at 10.5% (10.5% for girls and 8.6% for boys, Education Sector Progress Report 2013). 8% of these comprise dropouts between Standards 1 and 2. Geographically, the Shire highlands, Central East and West education divisions have the highest prevalence rates of pupil dropout than any other region. The qualified teacher student ratio is also high at 1:76 at the national level; 1:77 and 1:74 are the ratios for rural and urban areas respectively. For Standards 1 – 4, the student to qualified teacher ratio reaches 1:200 in some classrooms, usually operated under a tree or on the school's open grounds³. The average student teacher ratio is outlined in Table 1⁴.

Table 1: Average Student Teacher Ratio in Malawi

Year	Student-Teacher Ratio	Student-Trained Teacher Ratio
2009	81	92
2010	80	91
2011	76	92
2012	74	95
2013	69	76

The education sector conducts annual school census, which provides information reported by school heads on the reasons behind student attrition. The major reasons identified by school heads in the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) 2013 school census for student dropout includes family responsibilities of students (32%), long walking distances covered by the students from home to school (9%), early marriages (6%) and reasons categorized as other (37%)⁵. Reasons behind the high student repetition rates include low levels of student abilities in basic reading and numeracy ability which are far below grade level standards and requirements.

Most of the factors behind student attrition appear to be beyond the management control of the school as they relate to household socio-economic status of the students and traditional behaviours in their respective homes. This student attrition and repetition study has been

³EGRA/EGMA 2010 Report

⁴2013 Education Management Information System (EMIS) Education Statistics 2013. The methodology used to generate these figures using EMIS data is: 1. Determine how many Standards each teacher taught, 2. for teachers teaching more than 1 Standards, count a fraction of a teacher for each standard. For example, a teacher who is listed as teaching Standards 1 and 2 is counted as .5 of a teacher for each Standard. This ensures the total number of teachers system wide is not overstated, since counting him as a full teacher for Standard 1 as well as Standard 2 is inaccurate. 3. Using enrolment by Standard and school, calculate the pupil teacher ratio. Standards with no teachers or with no students or with neither are excluded from calculating the average pupil-teacher ratio

⁵MoEST. (2011). Basic Education Indicators pp.42

conducted to validate the reporting by school heads or identify whether the drivers identified by school heads are accurate or to unpack the significant 36% identified as “other”. There also appear to be key junctures where dropouts occur most frequently, for instance in the early grades of primary education (standards 1-4) and senior primary education (standards 5-8), in particular for girls.

Examining this interplay allows school management to triangulate strategies through which teaching instruction could be complemented through home based support structures that eases pressure on the ability of students to achieve within the expected grade level standards. This examination need to take factor of the interventions highlighted below. These interventions have been implemented in order to mitigate impacts related to student repetition and attrition. However, results from the implementation have neither managed to reverse the trend nor improve leaning outcomes.

1.3 Study Hypothesis

USAID hypothesizes that improved student learning outcomes leads to reduced student repetition and attrition. In addition, increased participation of community in the learning of students contributes significantly to the learning outcomes of the students and reduces student repetition and attrition.

1.4 Study Objectives

In order to address and verify the hypothesis, the study sought to understand the following objectives:

1. Who makes decisions on pupil attrition from Malawi primary Schools?
2. Major factors keeping pupils in school.
3. Household perception and expectations of benchmarks that pupils are expected to reach at each standard.
4. Community and parental actions relating to pupil attrition and repetition in primary schools in Malawi.
5. How teaching practices promote learning and/or reduce pupil attrition.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is organized into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 provides the background and context of the study and its aims and objectives. Chapter 2 presents the methodological approach to the study in which elaborations on the study design, sampling techniques and the sample size have been provided. Chapter 3 provides the key findings, discussion and interpretation based on primary and secondary data from all levels of data sources. Chapter 4 provides conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study. Chapter 5 catalogues annexes of the report including data collection instruments, and people and groups that were interviewed.

2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.1 Research Design

The research design is based on the study hypothesis. The study hypothesis indicates that improved student learning outcomes lead to reduced student repetition and attrition. The hypothesis further argues that increased community participation in the learning of students contributes significantly to improved learning outcomes and reduces grade repetition and attrition. To effectively test this hypothesis and answer study objectives as outlined in Section 1.3, the research design followed a mixed methods paradigm. This is where a combination of quantitative and qualitative approach was used to design data collection instruments that complemented each other and allowed for triangulation of the questions raised in the study. Through this design, the study has unearthed a rich and wide fact base of tangible factors that contribute to the student repetition, attrition and promotion rates.

2.2 Sampling Process

The sampling process for this study ensured that a representative sample of study subjects from various elements was drawn. This was done to ensure comprehensiveness in the data capture. The study used multi-stage sampling technique, which included simple, stratified, purposive, and cluster sampling. The rationale for adopting the multi-stage sampling was due to the need to solicit information from each of the respondent category and ensure statistical representativeness in the data sought. In addition, the study also benefitted from the geo-spatial differences and performance of the districts, schools, and administration offices on the key internal efficiency indicators such as repetition, dropout, and promotion rates.

In conducting the multi-stage sampling process, the first consideration was to select districts from where data was collected. The education division with high prevalence rate of repetition and attrition made the list. Education Divisions selected included Shire Highlands and the Central Eastern Education Divisions. Further to this, South Eastern Education Division was included in the sample on the basis that it has low repetition rates. Northern Education Division was selected on the basis of high promotion rates. In each of the chosen divisions we sampled a district based on high rates of student repetition and attrition as presented in table 2 below.

Based on this criterion, the classification of the sampled districts is presented in the table below:

Table 2: Distribution of Sampled Districts in the Divisions

Division	District
Northern	Mzimba North
Central Eastern	Ntchisi
South Eastern	Balaka
Shire Highlands	Thyolo

In each district, 15 primary schools were selected. In order to have spread and representation, these schools were classified into high performing schools, high repetition, and high dropout schools. Five schools were picked from high performing classification and ten schools were picked from high repetition and high dropout classifications. The selection of these schools was based on the class of school zones in the education districts that were equivalently classified (Table 3).

Table 3: Sampled Study Schools

District	List of Sampled Schools	
	Schools with High Repetition and High Attrition Rates	Schools with Low Repetition and Low Attrition Rates
Balaka	Namalomba	Makanjira
	Namingalala	Kabango
	Mbavi	Maliphango
	Namanolo	Masenjere
	Dziwe	Mbvimbang'oma
	Nsunuzi	
	Mwaye	
	Matola	
	Kavunguti	
	Nanthomba	
Mzimba North	Luwewe	Chasengo
	Kamanda	Mzambazi
	Kabungwe	Kapiri
	Vyeyo	Eswazini
	Emanyaleni	Embombeni
	Kalopa	
	Mtundura	
	Kapyolambavi	
	Lukwelukwe	
	Katokoli	
Thyolo	Nkhwali	Namitete
	Molere	
	Kalimero	Chimvu
	Chisawani	Nampira
	Nansato	Chamasowa
	Mapanga	Motheriwa
	Puteni	
	Mbendera	
	Mitengo	
	Mbawera	
Ntchisi	Kalira I	Chimbalu
	Pondani	Mpalo
	Kawaza	Kaulatsitsi
	Mankhaka	Katunthama
	Gobede	Mpheza
	Kawindika	
	Mikanga	
	Chadaka	
	Chanzim'bobo	
Kaombe		

From each school, five students from the categories of repeaters, non-repeaters and dropouts were selected for the sample, whilst ensuring gender representation. Standard I to 4 teachers of these schools were selected for the key informant interviews (KII). Parents and School Management Committees (SMC) of these schools were interviewed through focus group discussions (FGD). Parents and Guardians of the students sampled were included in the sample and interviewed through the household surveys conducted under this study. Head teachers of each of the selected schools were drafted into the study for KIIs. Mother

groups and Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) from each of the schools drawn into the sample were also selected for KII.

A catalogue of sampled study subjects that participated in the study is as follows:

- Students (repeaters)
- Students (non-repeaters)
- Students (drop outs)
- Patents/guardians (repeaters)
- Parents/guardians (drop outs)
- Community school management structures
- Head teachers
- Teachers
- Primary Education Advisors
- National and district level education stakeholders

Table 4: Sample Sizes of Different Sources of Data for the Study

District	Number of School	Students (In school & Out of School)			Parents/Family Sample (15/School)	Head teacher	Teachers	School Leadership Structures (FGD) (SMCs/PTA/MG)
		Repeaters	Non Repeaters	Drop Outs				
Mzmba north	15	72	59	32	73	15	56	13
Ntchisi	15	76	75	75	147	15	55	15
Balaka	15	75	75	68	137	15	59	15
Thyolo	15	77	55	62	151	15	60	15
Total	60	300	269	237	508	60	230	58

2.3 Data Collection Methods

As discussed in Section 2.2, qualitative and quantitative methods in collecting data were used in this study. There was a diversity of sources of data, and several different data collection methods were utilized during the study. Such data collection methods included the following:

- Students survey
- Parents/guardians survey
- FGD with community school leadership structures
- KII with stakeholders that included head teachers, teachers, PEAs, DEMs, CSO/NGO representatives, Development Partners (DPs) and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) directors among others.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

Ten different types of instruments were developed to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the sources that were identified (Annex 5.7). These instruments included the students and parents survey questionnaires. The entire list of study instruments included the following:

2.4.1 Students Questionnaires

The study used three (3) students' questionnaires targeting each class. These instruments collected data from repeaters, non-repeaters and school dropouts. Research assistants were responsible for the administration of the students' questionnaires.

2.4.2 Parents Questionnaire

Two kinds of parents/guardian questionnaires were developed. These were administered to parents for repeaters and parents for dropouts.

2.4.3 Head Teacher Interview Guide

The interview guide to head teachers was administered to head teachers from all sampled school. The head teachers' interview guide addressed key questions for all study objectives.

2.4.4 Teacher Interview Guide

Teachers from Standards 1 to 4 in the 15 sampled schools from each of the sampled districts were engaged in this study using the teacher interview guide. The teacher interview guide sought to address all objectives of the study.

2.4.5 Community FGD Guide

The community FGD guide was developed and administered among school community leadership structure members. DRCS conducted FGDs whose participants were drawn from PTAs, SMCs and MGs.

2.4.6 Key Informant Interview Guide

The education sector has many other stakeholders that are in one way or the other involved in the sector. These stakeholders are either involved in financing of education programs (DPs), implementation of education programs in selected impact areas (CSOs/NGOs), advocacy and lobbying programs (CSO/NGOs). DRCS therefore developed an interview guide for this grouping of stakeholders. DRCS used KII guide to obtain potential recommendations that may be considered in the drive to reduce pupil repetition and attrition.

2.4.7 A School Climate Checklist

The school climate checklist was used to assess factors such as cleanliness of the school and classrooms. Through the school climate checklist, DRCS sought to determine whether there

are latrines and how clean they are, as well as assess other items related to the physical condition of the school.

2.5 Training of Supervisors and Research Assistants

Research Assistants (RAs), data entry clerks, and supervisors were recruited and trained on research ethics, the statement of work (SOW), interview techniques and creation of rapport during research. The study districts were subdivided into two zones of two districts in each zone. In each zone there was a research team of 12 people who were tasked to obtain defined data based on the SOW for the study.

During the training a pre-testing process of the study instruments was conducted in two education zones of Njewa Zone and Nathenje Zone in Lilongwe district. The team conducted the pre-testing in Mphereni and Sankhani Schools and Nathenje and Chilembwe Schools in Njewa and Nathenje zones respectively. The pre-test also entailed visiting surrounding communities of the four schools where the FGD instrument was tested. Thereafter, the research team conducted a pre-test reflection process where any noted challenges were corrected. This also entailed fine-tuning questions in the instruments that were deemed irrelevant and/or inappropriate.

2.6 Quality Assurance

Data quality was achieved through several mechanisms. First, the diversification of data sources and development of customised data collection instruments were all part of the quality assurance strategy. Diversification ensured that, for instance, in collecting data for establishing factors that contribute to the retention of students in schools, several sources should provide such data so that triangulation is done during analysis and report writing. Second, supervisors were tasked with on-the-spot checking of completed questionnaires by the RAs so that any deviations from the expected were identified and corrected before the RAs left the field. Third, the research teams held daily reflection meetings facilitated by key consultants with the help of supervisors. The daily reflection meetings were fundamental for getting feedback from RAs, sharing experiences, and correcting any errors.

2.7 Data Management and Analysis

The data manager/statistician was responsible for ensuring that all data especially the quantitative were being well managed. Once the questionnaires were filled, they were sent to a dedicated computer room for data capture. Data entry proceeded concurrently with data collection during the second week of field work. Data entry screens, mirrors of the questionnaires, were developed in CPro 4.1 to facilitate data entry. The data entry screens allowed for both single response and multiple response type of questions. Data entry delimiters were constructed to minimize errors. After data were entered in CPro 4.1, they were exported to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to derive both descriptive and analytical statistics and cross-tabulations.

The qualitative data from focus group discussions and key informant's interviews were analysed using content analysis. In this regard, concepts and themes of analysis were identified.

Further to this, the relationships of students improved learning outcomes and student repetition and attrition, and community participation and students improved learning outcomes were assessed using a Chi-square statistical test. We specifically tested the following Null hypotheses.

- a. H_0 : Improved student learning outcomes do not lead to reduced student repetition and attrition.

H₁: Improved student learning outcomes do lead to reduced student repetition and attrition

- b. H₀: Increased participation of community in the learning of students does not contribute significantly to the learning outcomes of the students and does not reduce student repetition and attrition

H₁: Increased participation of community in the learning of students contributes significantly to the learning outcomes of the students and reduces student repetition and attrition

3 STUDY FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

3.1 Factors that Contribute to Student Repetition

Repetition, or retention as it is often referred to in the literature for developed countries, is the practice of making children who have not mastered the curriculum and thus do not reach certain academic standards repeat the year while their peers are promoted to the next year. By contrast, social or automatic promotion is the act of allowing these same children to continue to the next year of study with the rest of their peer group despite not having met the minimum required standards. The average repetition rate in Malawi has moved from 15.7% in 2009 to 24.5% in 2014 (Education Sector Progress Report 2012). This is above the African average repetition rate of 15%. This study looked at several of the contributing factors including household, community, school, and student related.

Household Based Factors

This study was designed to ascertain, among other things, whether there is a relationship between school absenteeism and class repetition. Absenteeism, based on the findings of this study, is caused by factors at all levels of a student's environment, to include the household, community, and school, although household factors outweigh the other two. GoM reports that Malawi experiences absenteeism rates averaging more than 25% of the student population in the lower standard levels⁶. Absenteeism deprives a student of the necessary interface with teachers and fellow students and culminates into lack of adequate learning. On the other hand, lack of adequate learning results in lower achievement of learning outcomes and student inability to obtain the necessary grade score requirement to progress into the next level of class. Consequently, students repeat classes.

In order to establish the extent of absenteeism among students, all study subjects (i.e. students' repeating students, drop outs, non-repeaters, school teachers, and parents) were requested to indicate whether students frequently absented themselves from school and why was that so. The study established that student school attendance is irregular among repeaters. Across all the four study districts, the majority (61.3%) of student repeaters indicated that they were ever absent from school. The pattern does not demonstrate variation between Mzimba north (66.7%) and Balaka (61.3%). Significant variations were however noted in Ntchisi (28.9%) and Thyolo (88.3%) where lowest and highest proportions of student repeaters absenteeism were noted respectively (Table 4). This significant variation correlates with repetition rates in Ntchisi (28.9%) compared to Thyolo (88.3%) as well as the insignificant variation between Mzimba (66.7%) and Balaka (61.3%). While this does not imply causation, the positive relation noted here provides a basis for further examination.

The study established that students pretend that they are going to school but decide instead to play within the school premises or go to other places such as markets. They only go back to their homes at the time that their friends are returning from school. This is a common practice among students who repeat classes. Interviews with student repeaters revealed that among repeaters across the study districts, a reasonable proportion (17.7%) of students do this. When asked the reasons for their truancy, the highest proportion of student repeaters (45.1%) indicated that they were encouraged by their fellow students not to attend classes but rather to engage in playing different games. On the other hand, a substantial proportion (34.6%) of student repeaters indicated that they were afraid of their teachers. FGDs with community school leaders revealed that some teachers are cruel, harsh, and use foul language towards students. Consequently, students resort to staying away from classes to avoid such teachers. These results in high rates of absenteeism, after which students do not adequately learn and fail to attain satisfying learning outcomes, hence repeat classes. The study also revealed that in places where this is common, there are no by-laws regulating attendance or presence of students at markets, video show rooms, and other public places and or events during school hours. Therefore, students are encouraged to be truant.

⁶ Final EGRA Baseline Report 2013

Table 5: Student Levels of Absenteeism, Truancy and Reasons for Truancy

District	Sample size	Ever been Absent from School	Ever Played Truancy	Reasons for Playing Truancy			
				Peer Pressure	Bulling	Afraid of Teachers	Other
Mzimba North	72	66.7	26.4	84.2	15.8	10.5	5.3
Ntchisi	76	28.9	3.9	66.7	66.7		
Balaka	75	61.3	20	28.6		57.1	14.3
Thyolo	77	88.3	20.8	6.7		50	18.8
ALL	300	61.3	17.7	45.1	9.6	34.6	11.5

The situation on grade repetition was not different among students who had dropped out of school. Interviews with dropouts demonstrated that across the districts the majority (62.1%) of dropouts were ever absent from school at some point. With an exception of Mzimba north, student responses from the rest of the study districts demonstrated a similar pattern in terms of school absenteeism by dropout students. This pattern underscores the relationship between school absenteeism, repetition and drop out. As observed from these findings, achievement of learning outcomes is usually in jeopardy where absenteeism is high, leading to lack of class progression among students.

In terms of household level factors that contribute to class repetition among students, the study established myriad factors across a wide range of issues. Many parents, teachers, community members, and the different categories of students expressed the view that the circumstances of subsistence living often make it difficult for children to attend school regularly. Children are not only needed to assist with household chores, they are also often wage-earners. Further to this, the study established that the nature of subsistence living compels parents to engage in piecework through which they derive some income for their household livelihood. School going children in lower classes who were being investigated in this study are made to stay away from classes so that they can take care of younger siblings (babysitting) while the parents are providing some labour. This compounds the problems of student class attendance, which exacerbates the lack of adequate learning among students. Thus, students fail to attain expected learning outcomes, resulting in students' class repetition.

Parents and community groups that were engaged during the study also observed that there is a custom in many of the areas of the study districts where market centres have specific days for trading of commodities. People from all walks of life visit these centres to buy or sell their wide range of merchandise. It was revealed that parents and guardians alike use their school going children either to sell or buy commodities during the market days. Consequently, school going children either miss classes or, if it's on regular basis, completely drop out of school, thereby perpetuating the high rates of repetition and attrition in Malawi primary education.

This study also revealed that most parents whose children repeat classes have low levels of educational attainment. For instance, 52.9% of parents of student repeaters across all study districts have less than primary education with no significant variations between districts, except for Balaka district where only 39% did not achieve primary education. On the other hand only 17.6% of the parents achieved full primary education (Table 6).

Table 6: Highest Level of Education Attended by Parent for Student Repeaters

Highest level of Education Attended by Parents among Parents (%)	District				Total
	Mzimba North	Ntchisi	Balaka	Thyolo	
None	2.1	11.4	21.1	12.1	12.5
Less Than Primary	62.5	60.0	39.4	53.0	52.9
Primary Level	12.5	18.6	25.4	12.1	17.6
Less Than Secondary	12.5	5.7	9.9	15.2	10.6
Secondary	4.2	2.9	2.8	6.1	3.9
Vocational Training	2.1	1.4			.8
University Undergraduate	2.1		1.4	1.5	1.2
Other	2.1				.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

It was observed through interviews with teachers, parents, and communities that illiterate parents do not academically, materially, and morally support students in their educational endeavours. For instance 24% of the 300 student repeaters who were interviewed during the study indicated that they do not receive any support on their homework from their parents, Compared with 264 non-repeater students interviewed; only 12.9% indicated that they do not get help with homework. The majority (57%) of them observed that parents, fellow siblings, or relations take a major role in assisting the students with homework.

Similarly, parents for repeater students conceded that their participation in the educational issues of their children (such as supporting them to do their homework) was rare. 30.5% of the parents do not support their children's school work after school; 37.6% of the parents indicated that they occasionally (up to twice a week) support their children. Therefore, 30-67% of students receive little or no homework support from parents and lack the support that students require from their guardians, especially in the infant classes that were studied. Consequently, students do not adequately attain learning outcomes which culminates into repetition and eventual drop out of students from schools.

3.1.1 Community Level Factors

The community level forms a critical component of the environment in which a student operates. The community is the social structure which either provides the conducive environment in which a student will thrive educationally or an environment in which a student will be negatively affected. Practices at the community level can either perpetrate student class repetition and dropout or encourage students to progress. This study therefore identified a wide range of factors within the community that contribute to repetition.

Through interviews with individuals in community school leadership structures, the study established that most communities do not have strong community based by-laws to regulate the staging of social and traditional practices of culture. School going children participate in these cultural practices some of which have negative effects on the education of children. The study revealed that in most areas in which the study was conducted and indeed, across the country, certain cultural practices still exert negative or harmful influences on school going children. One such cultural practice is the initiation ceremony (rite of passage) for both boys and girls. For instance, in Balaka district, school going boys are kept in initiation camps where they are circumcised and counseled in traditional and cultural issues. Often, they are not released from these camps in time for commencement of new school terms (semester). In some instances, the ceremony lasts two to three weeks into a new school term. Due to this prolonged stay at the initiation camps, students miss classes and lessons. The result is that due to lack of adequate learning

and contact with teachers, these students fail to attain grade level requirements and then need to repeat classes.

It was also established, through qualitative data collection processes, that in most communities some affluent business people have opened community video centers in which films are shown. It was reported that some children patronize these video centers during school hours without the knowledge of parents at home and/or teachers in schools. The act of truancy among students comes into play in this context: unsuspecting parents think that their children are learning in class when they have actually sneaked into a video show. The students only come out at the end of the school day, when they know that their fellow students are leaving school. Once again, it was noted that while the introduction of film centers demonstrate progress towards urbanization of rural areas, communities lack by-laws and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that these film centers are not accessed by students during school hours. The distraction of the video centers contributes to the problem of reduced contact time between teachers and students, thereby affecting the overall learning process of students.

Through interviews with education stakeholders at the community level, the survey established that the safety of students especially girls is not fully guaranteed. Respondents cited several cases of reported sexual abuse, including rape. Girls have also been bullied by boys on their way to school. When these incidents occur, some girls tend to absent themselves from school in fear of undergoing similar experiences. Because of this, girls erratically attend classes and fail to adequately learn. The result is a failure to satisfactorily attain learning outcomes. This is corroborated by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) in an Education Achievement Sector Analysis (2009) study where it was observed that the safety of primary school students was linked to distance from home to school. Lack of safety was a major barrier to attendance and attainment of education outcomes, especially among girls, as some of them were abused on their way to or from school. This situation can also be attributed to lack of mechanisms by the community and the state alike to create an environment in which girls can freely attend school without being abused during their commute.

3.1.2 School Level Factors

This study investigates a wide range of issues within the school environment and their relationship to student class repetition. The study examined factors that have bearing on student repetition related to systems, processes, attitudes, infrastructure, and supplies. These key factors at the school level included the following:

a) Lack of Adequate Learning

The majority of student repeaters (74.7%) across all the study districts who participated in the study felt that they did not learn much in class in accordance with their expectation. Further to this, 19% of the students indicated that they learned nothing at all, meaning that they were not impressed with the level of learning that takes place in their class (Table 9). In cumulative perspective, this means that a staggering 75%-95% of students learn little or nothing from school. This has fundamental implications on the extent of student achievement of learning. Since this study was considering students from Standards 1-4, these findings corroborate those of EGRA baseline report of 2012, which established that only 5-10% of students achieved reading fluency benchmarks, one of the learning outcomes that are expected within Standards 1-4. These data point to lack of adequate learning as a key factor to the high rates of repetition in Malawi primary schools, despite the demand by the 2011 MoEST circular which stipulated that repetition levels should be a maximum of 5% at all times.

Lack of adequate learning is multidimensional in the sense that the study has established a number of different factors that contribute to the problem. Some of the factors have roots in the household, as discussed under the section on household level factors, as well as self (student) perpetrated factors that contribute to repetition. Further investigations among students revealed that there are high levels of teacher absenteeism, resulting in reduced instruction time. Interviews with DEMs and PEAs revealed

that some teachers only manage 35 hours of instruction time of the expected 85 hrs per school term. Educational authorities at the central level attributed this to lack of commitment, laziness, misunderstood employment rights, and poor management practices among head teachers who do not enforce discipline among teachers. This implies that due to teachers' absenteeism in Malawi, students lose up to 60% of instruction time per term. On the other hand, students in early grades are subjected to 2-3 hrs/day of instruction time, which on average only amount to between 78 and 108 hrs/term. This is despicably low; in fact, this is the least hours of instruction in the world, which is probably one of the major reasons Malawi is the worst performing country on literacy and numeracy in Africa (SACMEQ).

A District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) who was interviewed in one of the study districts gave the following remarks: "My daughter was coming back from school so much earlier than scheduled, just after two hours of leaving the home and three hours earlier than the scheduled time for three consecutive days. When I asked her the reason for her early return from school, she indicated that the class teacher was not coming to class and they were just playing within the school premises so she decided to return home." FGD interviews with SMCs revealed another form of teacher absenteeism: some teachers would come to school but not actually go into the class to teach. Such teachers would be seen merely loitering within the school or playing games with colleagues and the head teachers would not even bother to question such teachers. All these contribute to inadequate learning among students, which results in repetition.

b) High Student-Teacher Ratio

The standard student-teacher ratio for Malawi as provided by the MoEST is 1:60. This is deemed appropriate for teachers to effectively instruct, deliver, and support individual students. The 2013 EMIS indicates that the current average student-teacher ratio in Malawi primary education stands at 1:69 across all classes, whereas the student-trained teacher ratio is at 1:76. The high student-teacher ratio has amounted to net effective capacity of education system in Malawi as it has not grown commensurately with some strides achieved within the education sector which include increase in access and enrolment. Even where teachers exist, high absenteeism rates mean that net effective teaching capacity remains too low for the number of children that a teacher has to attend to. First generation learners, who are entering education from zero literacy backgrounds at home, are particularly badly hit by this combination of factors, with consequent high repetition rates and eventual dropout rates within the early grades. This was also observed in responses in which student repeaters indicated that they feel they do not learn much. The high student-teacher ratio is therefore one of the key reasons why they fail to attain learning outcomes which results in their class repetition.

c) Ineffective Teaching

Ineffective learning is a consequence of a combination of factors which contributes to inability by students to acquire the desired grade level competencies to be eligible for class promotion. The combination of factors includes lack of requisite skills among teachers with regard to lesson planning, delivery, and creativity to encourage students to absorb the lessons. In order to determine effectiveness in teaching, the study asked teachers whether they thought that teachers themselves could be one of the factors that contribute to student class repetition. While the largest proportion (45.7%) of the teachers indicated that parents were the main contributors to the repetition of students, a significant proportion of the teachers (37.0%) indicated that teachers were also responsible for the student class repetition. This proportion of teachers is in no way negligible and it also corresponds with FGD and KII participants' observations that teachers are a fundamental component of the repetition problem in primary education in the country. In addition ineffective teaching is also attributed to poor skills by some teachers. This among other things is demonstrated by teachers' levels of translation of recommended delivery methodology such as the use of Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources (**TALULAR**), planning and general student management. This means that ineffective teaching does not

afford students the opportunity to adequately learn and obtain the necessary grade skills and competencies for them to achieve expected learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the study established that a significant proportion of student repeaters (42.7%) indicated that they did not understand lessons in class and claimed this as a major reason they did not attain grade level competencies to enable them to progress to the next level (Table 9). The other reasons that were mentioned in this context included taking care of siblings, taking care of ill parents/guardians, and supporting the family in income generating activities. However, failure by students to understand lessons could be attributed to teaching ineffectiveness as well, which could be due to various factors such as a lack of proper skills among teachers.

All these factors contribute to inability by students to attain learning outcomes such as acceptable levels of reading fluency and numeracy, resulting in class repetition and eventual dropping out of school, hence the high rates of these issues in Malawi primary education.

Table 7: Students Perception of Reasons why they repeat a Class

District	Sam ple size	I didn't understa nd the lessons	I didn't have textboo ks	It was hard to pay attention	I was ill for most of the times	had to sit on the floor - no desk	Missed Classes	Could not read	Other
Mzimba North	72	62.5	2.8	1.4	18.1		9.7	5.6	9.7
Ntchisi	76	61.8	9.2	3.9	21.1	1.3	5.3	2.6	10.5
Balaka	75	21.3	13.3	17.3	28	4	25.3	6.7	33.3
Thyolo	77	26	1.3	3.9	13		3.9	3.9	28.6
ALL	300	42.7	6.7	6.7	20	1.3	11	4.7	20.7

d) Poor School Access

While Malawi has made tremendous effort in improving access to school through the construction of new schools, new school blocks, and renovation of dilapidated classroom blocks in existing schools, reasonable numbers of students still lack access to school. The country has yet to achieve the GoM recommended 5km distance between schools, a situation that has evidenced exclusion of some students from the school process. When parents were asked on the reasons for the repetition of their wards they named, among other things, long distances to school, which led to periodic absenteeism. They also indicated that the situation becomes even more difficult for early grade students who do not make it to school during rainy seasons or cold seasons. Erratic school attendance by such students amount to reduced periods of contact between the students and teachers. These students then fail to attain the learning outcomes necessary to facilitate progression to the next grade.

e) Lack of Adequate Infrastructure and School Supplies

While physical infrastructure has received significant financial assistance through increased school-building, its adequacy varies across regions, districts, and zones in Malawi, resulting in low quality of education. The EMIS 2013 indicates that Malawi has a total number of 34, 360 permanent classrooms, compared to an enrolment of 4, 441, 907 students in public schools. This gives a permanent classroom-

student ratio of 1:129. While the school double shifting initiative⁷ has been embraced in some schools in an effort to enable students to learn in permanent classrooms, other schools have not done so, mainly due to lack of willingness and motivation among teachers who engage in extracurricular job ventures such as small-scale businesses to supplement their income. Consequently, schools resort to staging classes under trees or in dilapidated temporary structures. Such structures present high risk to students and teachers: in the recent past, temporary structures have collapsed and resulted in fatalities. Learning under a tree and in temporary dangerous structures was cited by teachers, community members, parents, and students alike as one of the causes of repetition among students in Malawi primary education, as it does not provide the desired environment for learning. Often, during classes that are held in such poor infrastructure, both teachers and students get periodically distracted from the lessons due to things that take place within the school environment. Moreover, in rainy season and in cold weather conditions, it was reported that reasonable proportions of students do not go to school and miss classes. This contributes to inadequate learning and acts as catalyst for lack of achievement of educational outcomes among students.

In addition to the lack of adequate classrooms, the study also established that primary schools do not have adequate desks. Students who were interviewed during the study (13%) indicated that one of the things that they don't like about going to school is the fact that they sit on a heap of stones or on dust when taking classes under a tree (as seen in Figure 2 below). Even when they have access to a proper classroom, most of them do not have desks and are forced to sit on uncomfortable floor. This not only hurts the students physically, but it also contributes to an environment which is not conducive for effective learning. Lack of positive environment affects the student learning process and results in negative attitude about school; hence, students either absent themselves from school or fail to attain proper learning outcomes. Consequently, they repeat classes and others completely drop out of school.

The gender dimension of the inadequate school infrastructure becomes noticeable especially where there are inadequate toilets at school, which is the situation in most of the schools that were visited during the study. Lower primary classes have many overage girls due to delayed enrolment in school, and lack of water and sanitation hygiene (WASH) facilities presents obstacles for adequate personal hygiene during menstruation. Many girls therefore choose to stay away from schools during their menstruation period. Consequently, high rates of absenteeism become evident when girls reach puberty, contributing to inadequate learning among girls who eventually fail to attain learning outcomes leading to high levels of repetition.

Figure 1: A class being conducted under a tree

⁷ Staging of certain classes in the morning while other take classes in the afternoons



Source: EMIS 2013

f) Poor Teacher Classroom Behavior and Attitudes

The study through FGDs with community school leadership structures established that some teachers' classroom behavior and attitudes towards the very students that they assist was also contributory to students' class repetition. FGDs with SMCs as well as KIs with DEMs and other district level stakeholders revealed that some teachers' negative attitudes about students especially students who are slow learners, repeaters and over-aged girls does not motivate students to work hard and/or to remain in school. It was cited during the interviews that teachers mock repeaters and overage girls, who are told to leave school and get married. The interviews further revealed that some teachers enter into sexual relationships with overage girls, risking early pregnancies and other sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS. Often when such cases are reported, head teachers and education officials only transfer the offending teachers to other schools, while the victimized girls drop out of school. This is often met with business-as-usual attitudes among teachers. Some teachers even go to the extent of saying that even if they don't teach, they will still get their salaries and even get promotions especially promotions that are announced on political platforms (rallies) by politicians. This unfortunate situation is compounded by lack of mechanisms for performance assessment of teachers which could be used to determine whether a teacher should receive a salary increment, let alone a promotion.

The improper behaviors and attitudes of teachers demoralize, frustrate, and discourage students who end up irregularly attending classes and losing concentration on their studies, thereby failing to attain desirable grade and academic outcomes and consequently repeating classes.

g) Weak and Ineffective School Monitoring and Supervision Process

The MoEST instituted the Department of inspection and advisory services (DIAS) to spearhead inspection and advisory services as one of the mechanisms for ensuring that quality and standards are met in the education system in Malawi. In 2012, an inspection policy framework was produced as a quality assurance mechanism with a corresponding revised inspection handbook. PEAs are in place at the grassroots level in educational zones to lead inspections and advisory services in primary school. The study established that while this mechanism was indeed put in place, the system is weak and ineffective. It was further noted that inadequate funding and technical support to the PEAs results in erratic inspection, supervision, and monitoring processes. Therefore, head teachers and teachers do not get the necessary support to provide proper supervision required to enforce the implementation of new teaching methods. PEAs indicated that they do not undertake the required school inspection and

monitoring that they are supposed to conduct in an academic year due to lack of fuel for their motorbikes. Still others indicated that they do not have the motorbikes at all, which is the most appropriate means of mobility for PEAs to cover all schools in their zones of jurisdiction and fulfil their mandates.

In addition, the study established that while PEAs constitute the education management system at a district level, most of them had not received any job induction since their promotion to the position of a PEA. Consequently, they perform their duties based on experience and assumptions of what they are required to perform in their positions as PEAs. It was gratifying to note, however, that GoM had started orienting PEAs through the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) by periodically conducting workshops during which PEAs are taken through school management modules in order to increase their effectiveness. Effective functioning of PEAs would improve teaching effectiveness and implementation of teaching standards by teachers as there would be increased interface between teaching personnel and the PEA during which advisory and coaching services would be provided.

3.1.3 Decisions on Student Repetition in Malawi Primary Schools

The decisions on student repetition in Malawi primary schools are largely arbitrary, based on students' results of the final terminal exams at each of the grades that were being investigated during this study. This is in sharp contrast to standard requirements as provided by MoEST that continuous student assessment be the basis for the decision to promote or repeat a student. The GoM through MoEST in the recently developed National Education Policy (NEP) has re-emphasized continuous assessment for students in primary schools. The NEP plainly states that continuous assessment of students should be observed in all Standards except for Standard 8, where all students are required to write the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE).

In this regard, the study established that more than 75% of the 230 teachers who were interviewed during the study indicated they recommend student class repetition at the end of every school year after the assessment of students based on the final year class examinations. The teachers further indicated that while some students request to be allowed to be promoted to the next class, the majority of those who are classified to have failed the exams repeat classes. A small proportion of the teachers indicated that they conduct continuous assessment of the students; students repeat grades if they fail to obtain above Grade 2 in the assessments. However, in some isolated cases teachers indicated that parents may request that their children repeat classes. Such requests by parents are based on perceived low level performance by students or, in some instances, are made when parents feel their children are still too young for a higher class.

Based on the above findings, there are two main approaches to the determination of a students' progress in the Malawi primary education system. Some schools and teachers still use the summative approach to determine a students' academic progress. Final examinations are administered and a determination is made on whether the student should progress to the next class or repeat, depending on the students' performance. Teachers are solely responsible for this determination.

On the other hand, other teachers indicated that they use what can be described as a 'formative' approach to student progress determination. This is known as continuous assessment, and it looks more at how an individual student is responding to new educational ideas and ensuring that the student is growing in knowledge relative to his or her initial starting point, regardless of whether the student has reached the standard that another student has reached.

The summative approach to academic progress determination is subjective and perceives students that fail to pass the test as struggling and in need of class repetition. On the other hand, the formative approach is the most effective in building the skills of a student and making an objective determination on the students' academic progress. In addition, the formative/continuous assessment enables teachers to focus on how each individual student is progressing year by year, providing additional support where

a student may need it. This is in contrast to the summative approach, in which teachers set certain standards through exams each year that have to be reached/passed by each student to avoid failing. Thus, there is an individual dimension to learning under the formative/continuous approach and the outcome is one in which each student receives positive feedback about at least some of their capabilities, rather than sensing they are a failure (Dechman, 2003, p. 14).

In summary, the decision for student repetition at school is premised on student performance during the final exams. Students who fail the exam are requested to repeat classes by their teachers. However, other teachers indicated that they use the continuous assessment based on the child's performance in class work and end of year exams.

The study revealed that the continuous use of student performance in the final grade examinations may not be the most appropriate way of determining a student class progression. The decisions about grade repetition are usually made based on school-level perceptions or personal subjectivity rather than on justifiable national criteria (SACMEQ III Project: 5). Such a process leads to a situation where students who are made to repeat a grade in a high-achieving school are likely to pass if they were to take a test administered in a low-achieving school. This kind of inconsistency is worrisome, since there don't seem to be any national standards or criteria to determine repetition in general. This implies that some pupils are made to repeat a grade unfairly, and this only increases the repetition rates that are prevalent within the primary school education system in Malawi.

3.2 Factors that Contribute to Student Attrition

Dropout of pupils is high at an average 10.5% (10.5% for girls and 8.6% for boys) for all standards (EMIS 2013). The average dropout rate for Standards 1 and 2 is 8%. Geographically, the Shire Highlands, Central East, and West education divisions have the highest prevalence rates of pupil dropouts in schools than any other region. The following is a discussion of the contributing factors to attrition identified in this study.

3.2.1 Household Based Factors

A) Age

From both the qualitative and quantitative results of the study, it was clear that parents delayed to send their children to school. The delay was largely a result of two other factors. The first was the distance covered to school. Schools were found to be located far apart, making it very challenging for students, particularly young ones, to walk for a very long distance. Instead, parents kept the children at home until they reached the age when it was thought they could easily handle a long commute.

In addition, the study found that over 50% of parents in the sample districts held on to their children of school going age so they could look after their younger siblings as the parents did piecemeal, thereby delaying the starting of school of the potential students. Naturally, it was difficult for such children to develop early interest for schooling.

Interviews with teachers indicated that it was a common practice among rural parents that they did not feel intrinsically compelled to send their children to school when the children reached the mandatory age for schooling (6 years). The result of this delay was that children who should have been in school were left at home. Consequently, such children would be aged 9, 10 or 11 by the time they got to school. To have a 10 year old student with a 6 year old in the same class looks awkward since the two age groups are different physically, mentally, and even socially. Below are some of the implications of having overage students:

- The overage students do not survive the school system because:

- 1) They are laughed at by their younger counterparts who think that they look huge or too big for their class. The older students feel too shy to associate with younger students and are likely to drop out from school. It was these overage students who dropped out in order to work, do business, or get married.
- 2) They withdraw emotionally and/or physically to avoid further humiliation. Their withdrawal results in the lack of concentration in class activities.
- 3) They leave classes, play truancy, or stop schooling completely. Because of their age, they feel out of place in the classroom. It becomes very easy for such students to not participate fully in the class or school activities. Instead, they opt to miss class. Sometimes, they would get to school but decide not to attend classes but play outside or go and watch movies.

- **Early Pregnancies**

Again because of the apparent over-age of some students, cases of early pregnancies are common. Data from some District Health Offices (DHO) revealed that some girls became pregnant at as young as 13. This is considered a serious health hazard because some of the girls attempted to have unsafe abortions. Some of those that accepted the pregnancy developed complications when giving birth. Specifically, Thyolo District was cited as one of those districts in Malawi with high maternal mortality rates due to early pregnancies. The finding here falls within the national findings by World Bank (2010),

“...pregnancy is also the reason that 4 percent of all girls drop out, starting with 2 percent in Standard 4 and reaching 21 percent in Standard 8 “(p. 28)

Early pregnancy indeed has a negative effect on the health of the young mothers besides being a contributing factor to student attrition.

B). Social Economic Status

Poverty was found to be also a major factor contributing factor to pupil attrition. Parents who are poor may live on piecemeal or work in tea or tobacco estates across the country. These parents cannot find food to last the whole year. The table on household assets in Annex 5.2 (Table 5.2.1) shows that the majority (213, representing 42%) have mud houses with grass thatch, yet very few own cows (5.3%), and ox carts (1.8%). The fact that only a few households own these important and productive assets supports the claim that the majority of them are poor. The poor parents would keep their children home so that the older ones can look after the younger siblings while the parents look for work. Secondly, because of their low social economic status, some parents get jobs in estates. They become tenants or, in the case of tea estates, they move to housing on the estate where they are provided for. This implies that these households do not focus on cultivating their own gardens but their bosses’.

In one FGD, it was revealed that the children of tenants move along with their parents on and off tea-picking and tobacco harvesting seasons. When the off-season arrives, they move together with their families with no consideration of children’s schooling needs. This, too, encourages repetition and eventually, dropouts.

C) Lack of Clothes/uniform

The study findings revealed that lack of school uniform or clothes in general is one of the most important factors contributing towards dropping out. 17% of student dropouts named lack of clothes/school uniform as one of the factors that forced them out of school. This hinges on the high levels of poverty of households in the rural areas of the country. From the perspective of students, it is mere lack of a resource. However, from the perspective of parents or guardians, this problem is related to poverty. Their inability to provide the basic necessities to the learners affects learners’ education. Although it was not the primary focus, the study revealed clearly that there is abject poverty in rural parts of Malawi.

D) Work

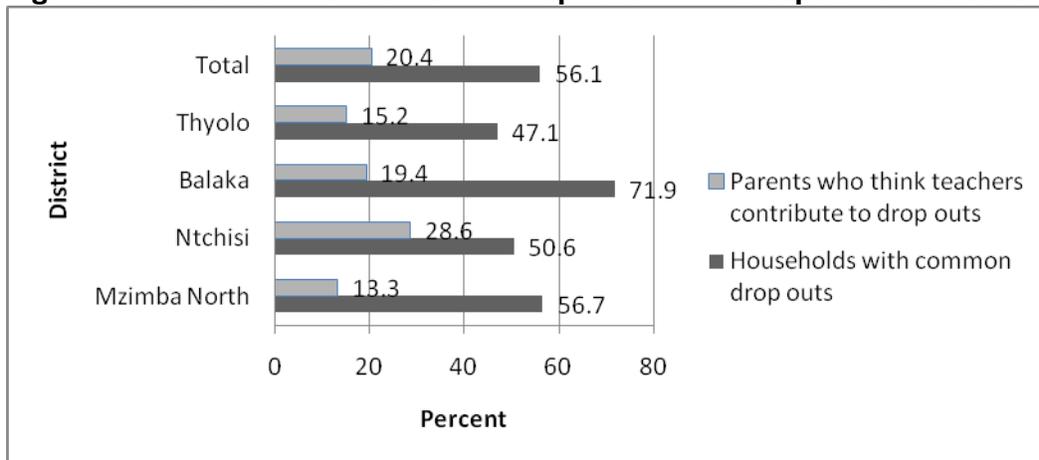
Work is another risk factor that contributed to the dropout rate. Students dropped out of school in order to fend for themselves through work. On the data collection trips, one of the research teams found students in uniform picking macadamia nuts in Thyolo. A passer-by commented that the students usually pick the nuts in exchange for some form of remuneration. It is still a common scenario in Thyolo and indeed in most of the study districts to see school age students sell macadamia nuts and other products on school days, indicating that they are either absent from school or they are dropouts. The study also found that some students who dropped out worked to help their families.

3.2.2 Community Level Factors (Supply)

The study showed a great community influence on learner attrition. The factors at community level include poverty, lack of parental interest in and support for the learning of their children or wards, overburdening children with household chores, and general mobility that is detrimental to children's education.

However, the study also established that 20% of parents of dropout students felt that teachers contributed to their children's dropout status. The decision to drop out was due to teacher treatment of students, especially repeaters and those that are slow learners (Figure 3). Not willing to suffer such negative attitudes in the classroom, these students resorted to dropping out. This is why many parents attributed the decision to drop out to teachers.

Figure 2: Household Trend on Child Dropout & HH Perception on Reasons



Child labour also contributes to low educational achievement. Many children are forced to work to support their households. These children have difficulties planning for the future, since they already live in their 'future'. Families also make labour demands. In some cases, children are forced to work before going to school. Since they wake up so early in the morning and do fairly hard work, they are already tired when they get to school. This inevitably affects their performance.

Household land ownership is a serious problem in Thyolo because of the tea estates that cover so much land. An entire family in Thyolo might own 0.2 hectares, or .5 acres on average. Others are worse off, so children supplement the household income. In order to work, the children skip school and therefore cannot perform at the desired level, leading them into persistent absenteeism and eventually leading them to drop out from school altogether.

3.2.3 School Level Factors

A). Grade Repetition

It is clear that repetition is a key factor contributing to student attrition. It is also closely linked to absenteeism. Failure to perform or attain the expected outcomes results in failure to perform to the next educational levels. Multiple repetitions resulting from failures may discourage the young students or even humiliate him/her.

B) Failure to Understand Lessons

The data on reasons for student repetition and student attrition show that students do not understand lessons. Failure to understand lessons contributes to the dropout rate. While there were no exact reasons outlined that caused the failure to understand lessons, it is clear that this was another key factor contributing towards learner attrition. It could signal to the teacher's failure to use of language and strategies that are conducive to learning.

C) Sexual Advances from Teachers

Some girl students fall prey to teachers' sexual advances or abusive language. The study revealed that some teachers made sexual advances to students because the students looked old. This corroborates with the 2013 Malawi Violence Against Children Survey Results which revealed that 23% of females that participated in the survey, aged 13-17 had experienced sexual violence in 12 months preceding the survey. Alternatively, some teachers used abusive language such as "*Wakula iwe, pita ukakwatiwe*" (literally translated, "you are old enough, go and get married.") Such remarks made towards students because of their performance and age demoralized the students. These statements from the professionals who should have been their role models were a great discouragement and may have inspired thoughts of school dropout.

3.3 Decisions on Student Attrition in Malawi Primary Schools

The study found that attrition was rarely a simple and single decision. It followed a process, and was often influenced by a variety of factors. The decision is made at personal, school, household level, and community levels.

At the personal level, students themselves were found to make the decision to drop out from school due to lack of interest in schools, strenuous conditions such as walking long distances to school, lack of basic school necessities, and the influence of fellow truant students (such as going to watch videos instead of attending classes). Absenteeism due to personal laziness and lack of interest in school also contributed to the students' decision to drop out.

At the school level, teachers who did not teach well or make an effort to attract students made students lose interest in schooling and drop out. Sometimes, the teachers' remarks about the age of a student contributed to the student's decision. Some teachers made indecent or sexual proposals to girls; if the girl felt it wasn't proper, she chose to drop out than face the teacher. Some girls found it easier to drop out rather than say no to their teacher; dropping out was a way to sort of save themselves from the uncomfortable and inappropriate situation.

At household level, some parents deliberately told the students to drop out so that girls could get married or boys could be engaged in economic activity to supplement family income or lessen the parents' burden of looking after them. In Mzimba North, for instance, the study (through FGDs with school leadership structures) revealed that parents would marry off girls in order to obtain a dowry. It was further revealed that fathers especially tend to encourage young marriages: they did not wish to wait until their daughter completed school because they were not sure if they would still be alive by that time and they prefer to receive the dowry early. It was also found that many parents show no interest at

all whether the children attended school that day or not, or whether they learned anything at school or not.

The community, too, promotes dropping out by encouraging cultural practices that contribute negatively towards children's schooling. Such practices included encouraging young girls to be initiated. The teachings that are undertaken during the initiation ceremony compel girls to experiment them by engaging in sexual activities which contributes to early pregnancy. Communities also lack norms to protect girls from older men who entice them with wealth or money in order to initiate sexual relationships. Poverty in communities also led to dropping out since the community did not support the students enough. In some cases, the students' lack of resilience to withstand hard conditions of life within the community and the community's inability to support the students resulted in dropout cases.

3.4 Perception on Student Repetition, Attrition and Automatic Promotion

The survey sought to find out teachers', students', parents' and communities' perceptions on student repetition, attrition, and teachers' automatic promotion. Teachers', students' and parents' perceptions were sought through use of questionnaires, while community perceptions were captured through a questionnaire with parents, key informant interviews with stakeholders and focus group discussions with representatives of the school management committee and parent-teacher association. The following is a presentation and discussion of the findings.

3.4.1 Perception on Student Repetition

Specifically, respondents in the survey were asked about whom they perceive as responsible for repetition and how repetition relates to gender, level of education, student class attendance, and disability. In addition, the survey sought to explore perceptions of teachers' capacity to handle repeaters.

46% of the teachers identified parents as agents of student repetition. Only 37% of the teachers thought that teachers were responsible for students' repetition. And 23% of the teachers in the survey felt that students themselves were responsible. On the other hand, about 28% of the teachers felt that teachers, parents, and students are all responsible for students' repetition. Overall, the study concludes that parents are responsible for student repetition although teachers constitute a fundamental proportion of the causative agents of student repetition.

Although all the teachers in the study said that they felt sad when some of their students underachieved, it is clear from the above findings that teachers do not see students' inability to learn as a failure in their teaching; however, results from this study indicate that about 95% of the repeating students do not understand the lessons, resulting in underachieving and eventual repetition.

On the other hand, parents were asked if teachers contribute to students' repetition. 33% of the parents identified teachers as responsible for their child's repetition. In other words, 67% of the parents did not consider teachers responsible for their child's repetition. About 37% of parents said that parents were responsible for students' repetition. This implies a mismatch in the understanding of the parents and their children. It is important to note that while students indicate that they repeat because they do not understand the lesson, most parents think that their children repeat because of other factors. This indicates that parents do not follow up and inquire from their children reasons behind their under-performance and repetition of grades. With this in mind, parents are unable to demand from the school management that their children understand the lessons being offered. Nor are they in a position to demand information regarding how parents can best help their children learn their lessons, since they do not think their children's failure to learn is a result of their children failing to understand the lessons.

Most students underestimated their level of competence. About 43% of the students, for example, identified 'inability to understand the lessons' as their reason for repeating a class. This triangulates with their responses on how much they learned at school and who they felt was responsible for their repetition. About 20% indicated that they were learning nothing, and 75% indicated that they were not

learning much. Only 5% of the students indicated that they were learning a lot. 62% of the students identified themselves as being responsible for their own repetition.

Teachers were also asked about the type of support repeaters required to improve their academic performance. Most of the teachers (63%) said that the students' required academic support, while 40% indicated that students' required moral support and 26% indicated that they required material support.

It can be observed from the above findings that parents, teachers and students themselves rarely question teachers' competence with regard to students' repetition. Most of them did not feel that teachers were responsible for repetition. Although teachers did not identify themselves as responsible for students' repetition, most of the teachers (69%) acknowledged that teaching strategies can contribute towards repetition. In addition, 50% of the teachers acknowledged that assessment strategies can contribute towards repetition.

This concurs with previous findings in which it was discovered that most families did not question the competence of teachers and decisions of schools in relation to repetition, believing these decisions to be in the best interest of their children (Troncin, 2004 as cited in Ndaruhutse, 2008). This is a problem if the education sector is to address issues to do with repetition. It should be noted that the decision to ask a student to repeat a class is based on their level of achievement in relation to learning outcomes at a particular level of education. In other words, there must be evidence that the student has learned.

When asked about the category of students that were more likely to repeat a class, respondents identified girls to be more likely to repeat a class than boys. Respondents explained that this is the case because girls are more likely to miss classes due to their involvement in household chores, parents' low priority for sending girl children to school, and lack of friendly sanitation facilities at school.

In terms of level of education, Standard 1 and 4 students were identified as more likely to repeat than the other Standards. Standard 1 students were identified as the victims of long walking distances. They do not yet understand schooling, and they are more likely to stay home if they are hungry. On the other hand, Standard 4 students are responsible for many household chores, domestic child labour, household income generation, and farm activities.

Further, respondents perceive more cases of repetition among students with special educational needs than among those without special educational needs. Reasons included inadequate number of teachers with adequate special needs skills in the mainstream schools to handle students with special educational needs, and limited or lack of resources to assist in the teaching and learning of students with special educational needs. Large classes and high workloads among teachers in the mainstream schools were also identified as reasons that contribute towards students with special educational needs inability to master outcomes and achieve promotion to the next Standard.

3.4.2 Perception on Student Attrition

Student attrition is not only a problem for the school but also the community. In order to reduce cases of student attrition, it is crucial to understand perceptions of people who comprise the community. Precisely, the respondents were asked about who they perceive as answerable for student attrition; and how student attrition relates to repetition, gender, level of education, and disability. In addition, the survey sought to explore the capacity of schools in Malawi to integrate dropouts.

On attrition, only 22% of the teachers in the survey indicated that teachers were responsible for students' attrition. 72% of the teachers indicated that parents were responsible for students' attrition. Some teachers (22%) still identified students themselves as responsible for their attrition. About 14% of the teachers felt that parents, teachers, and students all contribute towards students' attrition. Most of the teachers (70%) thought that the decision to drop out of school is left with the students themselves, while some felt that the decision is made by the parent.

Again, most of the teachers thought that students that have dropped out of school require moral support and academic support, as well as material support.

On the relationship between teaching strategies and students' attrition, and assessment strategies and students' attrition, 48% and 34% of the teachers noted that teaching and assessment strategies respectively contributed towards students' attrition. The high repetition and dropout rates recorded, therefore, indicates the failure of existing training to provide teachers with the skills they need.

All the representatives of the SMC and PTA in the survey considered student attrition a problem in their communities. The representatives believed that Standard 4 students were more likely to drop out of school than other learners in the lower primary education. They explained that Standard 4 students, especially girls, were more likely to be responsible for household chores and domestic child labour, and more likely to be burdened with early marriages and early pregnancies. They also said that Standard 4 students were more likely to lose interest in schooling due to frequent repetition. This will be such a case because the study has established overwhelming over-age scenarios among students in all the standards that were being investigated. Consequently by the time they get to Standard 4 students girls especially are over-age and are at high risk for repetition.

Again, all the respondents agreed that frequent repetition could lead to dropping out from school. This is supported by a UNESCO study (2006) that found that grade repetition is associated with low achievement and early dropping out. The respondents explained that frequent repetition was likely to lead to over-age children in lower classes. Over-age children were more likely to drop out because they feel embarrassed at being older than their classmates. In addition, frequent repetition discouraged students and inspired them to drop out altogether.

Similarly, parents, teachers, and students themselves were in this student repetition and attrition study identified as responsible for students' attrition. Most of the students said that they were responsible for their dropping out of school. Stakeholders also observed that Standard 4 students, girls, and students with special educational needs were more likely to drop out of school than other students. The reasons given were not different from those given under repetition. Respondents, for instance, said that these are the categories of students that are likely to fall victims of the above mentioned reasons for dropping out of school.

Stakeholders were asked whether primary schools in Malawi were adequately equipped to reintegrate and maintain dropouts. The respondents acknowledged the need to reintegrate dropouts into the education system, but were also quick to point out that the schools in Malawi were not well-resourced and reintegration may create more problems for teachers. It was observed, for example, that teachers required counselling skills if the students dropped due to pregnancy, early marriage, or demands of heading a household.

3.4.3 Perception on Automatic Promotion

Class repetition is still a highly contested issue. Research evidence strongly indicates that repeating a class does not lead to successful outcomes for students. Elsewhere, policymakers have proposed implementation of automatic promotion or social promotion. According to Koppensteiner (2011), automatic promotion is the practice in which students' progress automatically to the next class at the end of the school year. Head teachers' and teachers' perceptions on automatic promotion were gathered through in-depth interviews and semi-structured interviews respectively. All the head teachers indicated some knowledge about automatic promotion, while only 66% of the teachers indicated knowledge about it.

The survey revealed that most (60%) of the head teachers and teachers did not consider automatic promotion an effective educational practice. They thought that automatic promotion would promote laziness and lack of hard work among students since even those that have not achieved and/or mastered learning outcomes are promoted to the next class. Some also observed that if promoted, students that

have not achieved learning outcomes are likely to find it difficult to achieve learning outcomes in the higher class. Repetition was therefore seen as a way of providing remedial support to weaker students. In other words, repetition would give the weaker students a second chance to master content, and help to maintain higher standards within school systems. This supports previous studies that have concluded that educators are supportive of the practice of class repetition (Byrnes, 1989 as cited in Hagborg, 1993). Overall, it was indicated that automatic promotion was likely to affect the quality of education since competition and motivation for students and teachers was eliminated. These findings are in agreement with findings by Chohan and Qadir (2011), and Ndaruhutse (2008).

On the other hand, most of the teachers, for example, perceived that most of repeaters had improved and were likely to make it to the next class in the next academic year. Most students (90%) were also confident that they were likely to be promoted to the next class. This is consistent with findings by Hagborg (1993) that grade repeating students were found to report more favourable perceptions of the academic benefits resulting from retention. However, those against repetition note that repetition reports short-term positive effects on performance that are shown to diminish with time (Holmes, 1989; and Alexandar et al, 1994 as cited in Ndaruhutse, 2008). Hagborg (1993) noted that teachers in the lower classes may be less aware of those retained students' progress in later years, when those early benefits may have disappeared.

Based on this study's analysis and observation of the issues on automatic promotion, it is the considered view of the consultant that where students are falling behind and do not have the expected knowledge of their peers and the necessary knowledge to be promoted to the next cycle, they will benefit from going over the material another time to bring them up to the necessary level,

However, repetition has the following impacts on a student:

- It affects student's self-esteem and motivation and can give them the perspective that they are failures or bad students.
- Students repeat the same materials that they have already studied, usually with the same teacher, which can decrease motivation.
- Repetition does not address the reasons behind low performance and may not significantly improve the performance of children.

Other teachers observed that automatic promotion can be practiced with students with special educational needs to avoid negative effects of length of time in school. This is in agreement with previous finding that some teachers think that making weak children repeat exactly the same curriculum seems wasteful (Crahay, 2003 as cited in Ndaruhutse, 2008). However, some other teachers felt that automatic promotion would best be implemented if and only if both teacher and student absenteeism is dealt with effectively. Indeed, according to UNESCO (2001), pupils who miss school for more than one month in a term are usually forced to repeat a class.

3.5 Factors that Keep Students in School

Bearing in mind the moral, social, and economic reasons for schools to reduce repetition and dropout rates, the survey also sought to identify factors that keep students in school. The factors were gathered through focus group discussion with representatives of SMCs and PTAs that took part in the study. The factors have been categorised as household, community, and school level factors.

3.5.1 Household Based Factors

Participants in the FGDs agreed that household socio-economic status, parental involvement in school activities and children's interest in schooling are the household factors that keep students in school. The participants explained that children from families with a relatively better socio-economic status are likely to stay in school as their learning is rarely disturbed. For example, children from households with a

relatively better socio-economic status are less likely to be involved in household income generating activities during school time, and can afford hidden costs of education. They are therefore less likely to miss lessons. This is consistent with earlier findings on Early Grade Reading Activity Impact Evaluation Baseline Report that socio-economic status had a negative correlation with repetition (USAID/Malawi, 2013). Kasirye (2009) also noted that households with higher socioeconomic status are in a position to finance the acquisition of key education inputs.

On the other hand, parental involvement in school activities was seen as a sign of parents' interest in their children's schooling. The participants said that such parents are likely to encourage their children to go to school and respond positively to schooling requirements.

Last but not least, the respondents said that child's interest in schooling was important for both schooling and learning to take place. It was alleged that students who have interest in schooling will stay longer in school than those that do not have interest.

3.5.2 Community Level Factors (Supply)

At the community level, the FGD participants said that availability of role models in the community and community participation in school activities were key aspects to keeping students in school. The participants explained that role models in the community help foster students' interest in schooling. Through these role models, students learn to appreciate the benefits of schooling.

Just like parental involvement in school activities, participants in FGDs said that community involvement was a sign of community's interest in children's schooling.

3.5.3 School Level Factors (Demand)

Further, through the focus group discussions with the members of the SMCs and PTAs, the following school level factors were mentioned as vital to keeping students in school: better school infrastructure and facilities, availability of teaching and learning materials, availability of school feeding programs, short distance to school, and affordable hidden costs of education, extracurricular activities, and high selection rate.

The participants perceived that better school infrastructure, facilities, and resources such as toilets, classrooms, desks, and teaching and learning materials provide a welcoming environment to students and help to keep students in school. Specifically, they pointed out that schools with poor sanitation facilities do not make a child-friendly environment. Such schools are likely to experience poor attendance and high dropout rates, especially among adolescent girls.

Further, participants observed that school feeding programs reduces absenteeism cases that might be due to hunger in their households. They perceived that schools with feeding programs are more likely to enrol and retain more students than those that do not.

In addition, distance to school was mentioned as one of the factors that can keep students in school. This was especially true for students in lower classes. The FGDs also revealed that previous students' performance in national examinations at a school can help to keep students in school. Students want to attend schools in which its students get selected to secondary school.

Participants also noted that behaviours and attitudes of head teachers and teachers alike were critical to keeping children in school. As mentioned earlier, one of the factors that led to absenteeism was attitudes of teachers on students who were repeaters, slow learners, and over-aged. If teachers refrained from mocking these students or showing a negative attitude toward them, students feel welcomed and compelled to work hard in order to progress in their studies.

3.6 Household Perception on Student Achievement of Benchmarks

In order to establish parental expectations of students' achievement by the time they reach Standard 4, representatives of the SMC and PTA were asked what they expect students in Standards 1 to 4 to display as learning outcomes. The members' expectations were gathered through a group discussion. Specifically, they were asked an open-ended question on what they expect Standards 1 to 4 students to achieve.

The parental expectations were generally cognitive in nature. They expected their children to acquire some literacy skills in both Chichewa and English, as well as basic numeracy skills by the end of Standard 4. Members of the SMC and PTA, for example, said that they expected students to display speaking, reading, and writing skills and advance as they go up the education ladder. Standard 1 students were expected to identify letters of the alphabet, recite the alphabet, write letters of the alphabet, and read simple words in both Chichewa and English. In numeracy, they said that students should be able to identify and count numbers up to 10.

The members expected Standard 2 learners to display more advanced speaking, reading and writing skills than Standard 1 students in both Chichewa and English. For example, they said that Standard 2 students should be able to speak simple English, and write and read simple words in Chichewa as well as English. They also said that Standard 2 learners should be able to spell English and Chichewa words. In terms of numeracy, the members expected Standard 2 students to identify and add numbers up to 100.

Their expectations for Standard 3 students were as follows: make words in both English and Chichewa, read sentences independently, read with speed, read a short story, and write a short story. They also expected Standard 3 students to work with numbers up to 500. Finally, the participants in the group discussions said that Standard 4 students should be able to read and write English and Chichewa fluently, speak English fluently, display study skills and critical thinking skills. They also said that Standard 4 students should be able to perform basic arithmetic operations. They should be able to solve arithmetic problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

These expectations are in agreement with what the education system expects students to achieve at these different levels of education. In fact, the expectations sound "possible" academically for children at different stages of their development. However, as indicated in the section above this study has endeavoured to explore on a wide range of interactive factors that are contributing to the failure by children to adequately learn and these have been provided in the previous sections on student repetition and attrition.

3.7 Parents and Community Actions in Reduction of Student Repetition and Attrition in Primary Schools in Malawi

This section considers actions, efforts and strategies that parents and wider communities alike can enact to contribute to the reduction of student repetition and attrition in primary school in Malawi. The assessment of parent and community contribution has taken an in-depth analysis of the extent to which parents and communities contribute to the education of students. This section has further analyzed the extent of interface between parents, communities, and teachers in promoting the education of the students in a bid to reduce repetition and drop outs and highlighted issues that constrain the effectiveness of such an interface.

3.7.1 Parents and Community Actions on Student Repetition

This study sought to establish the type and nature of support that parents and wider communities provide to students as a way of participating in the education of children in the bid to promote student education as well as avert repetition and attrition. In the section under factors that contribute to student class repetition, it was observed that parents for children who usually repeat classes do not only have low levels of education but are also usually very food insecure, lack other valuable assets, and are

generally characterized by high levels of poverty. Such parents do not actively participate in the education of their children. However, when the study asked these parents as to how they feel when their children have been requested to repeat classes the majority (83.1%) of the 268 parents across all the 4 study districts indicated that they feel sad about the repetition of their children. When they were asked as to what they do in order to ensure that their children do not repeat again, the first and second largest proportions of the parents (63.8% and 25.0% respectively) indicated that they provide counselling to the children and facilitate their participation in remedial education as a way of ensuring that they do not repeat classes once more.

The sad feeling by parents when their children repeat classes which the study has established is enforced by the desire by parents to see their children progress classes. Parents for student repeaters in this study named other (10.4%) actions that should be undertaken in order to avert further repetition of their children and these included engaging in piecework to raise income for the purchase of school supplies including books, pens/pencils and other school necessities. Those that can afford to do so help their children work on school assignments where possible and many parents pray that God will open their children's intellectual capabilities so that they start understanding lessons. The mentioning of praying as one of the actions that they will take in order to change the repetition situation of their children is that students complained that they do not understand lessons. The lack of understanding as already alluded to is due to teachers in effective teaching and inability of students to grasp lessons and so praying to God may change the situation as probably students will understand lessons and eventually excel in their education. In addition the lack of understanding is perceived as frustrating for parents as it contributes to inadequate learning and attainment of learning outcomes which result in student class repetition.

It was however noted from parents' responses that about 10% of the parents do nothing about the repetition of their children. This is in agreement with observation by teachers as well community school leaders who were engaged through FGDs that some parents do not pay attention to the education of their children. Recall that this study has established that about 68% of parents of student repeaters either do not help their children with homework and other school assignments or only occasionally do so (although the aspect of occasional support should not be relied upon as some parents were probably not honest with their level of support to their children). Such parents, especially fathers, engage in irresponsible consumption of alcohol, multiple concurrent partnerships, and polygamy. Due to these practices, parents do not invest the little resources they have in the education of their children. These irresponsible behaviors by some fathers are compounded by the lack of proper community level mechanisms to force parents to adequately care for their children despite the existence of an appropriate piece of legislation (the Child Care Act).

The study also confirmed the existence of community school leadership groups that were established to act as vehicles through which communities can participate in the management and affairs of primary schools. Such groups include SMCs, PTAs, and mother groups. All schools that were visited during the study have these structures in place. However, interviews with parents for all the categories of children who were being studied in this exercise revealed that while other parents knew of the existence of these groups, others (35%) do not know. This is consistent with findings by many studies (including observations by numerous stakeholders) about the functionality and effectiveness of community school management structures. Those that indicated that they know about the existence of school management and support structures observed that some of the structures are dormant. They no longer convene meetings with communities, visit schools, or mobilize communities for school project activities.

Lack of engagement by some groups notwithstanding, the study established that school leadership structures that are proactively functioning are advocating for the establishment of community by-laws that clearly articulate mechanisms to address pupil repetition and attrition. Such by-laws are also being earmarked to carry specifications on punishment for parents who influence the absenteeism of their

children, which is a recipe for student repetition and attrition. In addition, these community structures through local chiefs such as Traditional Authorities (TAs), group village heads (GVHs), and village heads (VHs) mobilize communities in school environment improvement projects. The study has established that a poor school environment is one of the reasons that children absent themselves from schools, which in turn results in repetition and eventual attrition. Interviews with parents and teachers revealed that where mother groups are functioning well, they are effectively counseling and encouraging girls to remain in school and to work hard in their studies. This study found that MGs have been significant in facilitating the re-integration of children who dropped out of school through either child labor or lack of school provisions such as uniforms in line with MoEST's recent re-integration policy. It must be noted, however, that school reintegration has been successfully and easily achieved among students who are not over-age and those that did not leave school due to early marriage.

However, the dormancy and ineffectiveness of SMCs and PTAs in promoting child education through effective primary school management in Malawi has been an issue of discourse and debate within education circles. It has been argued that SMCs and PTAs lack space and appropriate environment in which to freely and effectively operate. These structures are formulated but do not receive the requisite training to impart them with the necessary skills to effectively execute their mandates. In addition, these structures are not provided with the necessary resources, such as bicycles that give them mobility to attend outreach community meetings and follow-ups with students. Furthermore, the structures are disempowered by some school heads who question their ability to monitor the activities of teaching staff. Simply put, some teaching staff do not enjoy hearing from community school leadership structures and do not wish to implement recommendations on how teaching staff should conduct themselves in line with community expectations. For instance, the study established (through FGDs with these structures) that the periodical school monitoring processes which these structures conduct reveal that many teachers absent themselves from classes and do not adequately teach. When these issues are raised with school heads, they behave indifferently and protect the teachers rather than addressing the issues. In addition the school heads and the teachers question the role of the structures and consequently demoralize them and in so doing effectively disempowering the school community leadership structures.

Consequently, the much-sought community participation in the management of primary schools is not cultivated and obtained. This starves schools of community-based checks and balances for teachers. In addition, local solutions to school problems are not found. These solutions are important to increase learning and attainment of school outcomes necessary for the reduction of repetition and attrition in Malawi primary education.

3.8 How Teaching Practices Promote Learning and/or Reduce Student Attrition

3.8.1 Teachers' capacity

The role of teachers is more than simply to be in the classroom, teaching. They are expected to inspire and guide the students. However, it is evident in the research that there are several factors with regard to teaching practices that promote learning and or reduce student attrition. These include teacher preparedness and support, attendance irregularity and punctuality, student support, professional ethics, motivation among teachers, class sizes, and availability of teaching and learning resources, teacher training, and handling learners with special needs.

3.8.2 Preparedness and Support

The study found that there were teachers who were considered hard workers because they took time to prepare their lessons and remained in school until the official end of the school day. They used their knowledge and skills to help students. Such teachers were friendly to students, gave students the chance to practice new skills, made their teaching more interesting by changing their teaching techniques often, provided student support, and focused their efforts on children.

3.8.3 Connecting with Students through attendance and punctuality

It was noted in the FDGs that, teachers who arrived on time to schools and taught their lessons with minimal supervision, irrespective of the lack of teaching and learning resources, won the hearts of their students. Often, such teachers connected very well with the students. In turn, students looked forward to going to school and to meeting such influential mentors.

3.8.4 Student Support

Student support was seen as a key factor in encouraging students' school attendance. Some teachers were very supportive to students who struggled in class and had varied learning needs. They were creative in making teaching and learning a joyful experience for students. They raised expectations for student performance. In turn, the students taught by these teachers performed very well in school.

3.8.5 Professional Ethics

The teachers who acted with a great sense of responsibility showed great concern and commitment to their profession. Those teachers were very concerned with issues of repetition or dropout and worked hand-in-hand with communities, specifically the school management committees, to make sure that students were offered the best support available.

The above indicated factors contribute immensely to creating an atmosphere of learning for children. When children are encouraged, supported, advised, and loved, they value coming to school – they hate to remain at home for no serious reasons at all.

3.8.6 Motivation among Teachers

Almost all the levels of qualitative data indicated that there was low motivation among the teachers. Most interesting was that even the stakeholders in other sectors such as agriculture, health or social welfare alluded to and sympathized with teachers' conditions of service. The living and working conditions of teachers are too challenging to allow the teacher to perform optimally. Important among the de-motivating factors mentioned were low salaries which often were received by the teachers sometimes as late as the next month-end. Besides salaries, the study also found that there was no recognition at all for well-deserving teachers – teachers who persevered in hard conditions and maintained their professionalism. Because of the lack of this recognition, communities did not seem to value the teaching profession at all. It was said in FGD that cases in which teachers were scolded by parents for an apparent teacher's fault were on the increase in various schools. All these leave the teacher devastated and unmotivated. Improving the living and working conditions of teachers would reverse this trend. In the end, the teacher who is motivated will find it much easier to motivate students, the end result of which is to decrease students' attrition rates.

3.8.7 Managing class sizes

Large classes made it difficult for the teacher to give attention to all students. The Student who does not receive the necessary attention from the teacher feels isolated. At the same time, the teacher cannot give feedback to all students if the class is very big. About 90% of teachers and PEAs in the study cited large class sizes as a key factor in either promoting attrition or improving it. Overcrowding came about because there were few teachers in rural primary schools such that, in some cases, schools had more than two classes (from Standard 1 up to Standard 5) but were still managed by only two teachers. How two teachers could possibly teach all five classes is incomprehensible, but it is the reality on the ground. Because there is very little interpersonal contact and support between the teacher and students, the student who absents him/herself goes unnoticed by the teachers. Even if the teacher notices, he or she may not have sufficient time for follow-ups. Again, because of over-crowded classrooms, the teacher finds it hard to offer individual support to students. The lack of individual feedback on individual work results in the students' discouragement and loss of interest in school. This irregularity of interaction with students and the lack of connection between teacher and student result in a lack of clear progress

in student output. The teacher eventually loses a sense of personal commitment to the student and, ultimately, feels discouraged and unmotivated.

3.8.8 Management of Teaching and Learning Resources

When there are sufficient teaching and learning resources, students are encouraged to come to school. They know that the school will provide them with the basic necessities for learning such as books, notebooks, and pencils. In one of the student interviews, a 9 year old student said that he did not like his teacher because the teacher was partial. After further probing, the student indicated that the teacher always gave one notebook to a child who was a relation of his. This partial treatment discouraged other students. Lack of this school supplies discourages students from school attendance, encouraging absenteeism and eventually attrition.

3.8.9 Teacher Training

In the FGD, it was noted that some teacher training programmes are operated on a “crash course” basis. The “crash” teacher training programme as opposed to the Standard one- or two-year training does not give the future teacher the opportunity to assimilate new teaching strategies. The new teaching strategies gained in teacher education programmes are needed to make teaching and learning more enjoyable, and to attract learners and promote school attendance.

3.8.10 Handling Students with Special Needs

Most teachers are oriented in how to handle students during their college studies but very few teachers put their skills into practice. Teachers need to be trained in special needs education. In Ntchisi for instance, there are 142 schools but there are only 3 teachers with special needs training in the whole district. In some cases, the teachers are skilled and interested but lack the necessary equipment to support learners effectively.

3.9 Hypotheses Testing

It is difficult to define precisely what is referred to as improved learning outcomes, especially when the term is used without qualification, specific examples, or additional explanation. In this study, however, improved learning outcomes has been defined by the factors that facilitate achievement of learning objectives that schools or teachers expect students to achieve. Answers to questions such as ‘What do you call improved learning?’ ‘How do you improve learning?’ are therefore key to explaining the term: In the previous sections, the study has revealed that school as well as household and community factors are key to learning. Specifically, it has been perceived that quality of teachers and availability of learning resources including students’ inability to learn are some of the school related factors that affect students’ learning.

Similarly, description of the term community participation requires a detailed analysis. Otherwise, the understanding of the term “community participation” remains vague. In this study community participation has been characterized by household and community factors that are perceived to have impact on achievement of learning outcomes. This study has revealed that lack of parental interest in their children’s schooling, lack of help with homework, and poor cultural practices are some of the household and community factors that are affecting students’ learning.

Although this is the case, it has not been established whether there is any association between improved student learning outcomes and student repetition and attrition, and improved community participation and student repetition and attrition. In order to find out the existing association, Chi-square tests were conducted. The results are shown in Tables 8 to 17.

Table 8: Not understanding lessons: Student Status Cross Tabulation

			status		Total
			Pupil repeater	Pupil Dropout	
Reasons for repeating	Understanding lessons	Count	172	112	284
		Expected Count	171.8	112.2	284.0
		% within status	57.3%	57.1%	57.3%
	Not understanding lessons	Count	128	84	212
		Expected Count	128.2	83.8	212.0
		% within status	42.7%	42.9%	42.7%
Total		Count	300	196	496
		Expected Count	300.0	196.0	496.0
		% within status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.002 ^a	1	.967		
Continuity Correction ^s	0.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.002	1	.967		
Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.520
Linear-by-Linear Association	.002	1	.967		
N of Valid Cases	496				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 83.77.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

42.7% of repeater and 42.9 percent of dropouts believe that the lack of understanding of lessons contributed to their repetition and eventual drop out.

Since the p-value is larger than .05, we can conclude that the result is not significant. This means that the proportion of repeaters that repeated a class because they did not understand the lessons is not significantly different from the proportion of dropouts that repeated a class because they did not understand the lessons.

Table 10: Responsibility for repetition: student status cross tabulation

			Status		Total
			Pupil repeater	Pupil Dropout	
Responsibility repetition	Not Self	Count	114	68	182
		Expected Count	110.5	71.5	182.0
		% within status	38.0%	35.1%	36.8%
	Self	Count	186	126	312
		Expected Count	189.5	122.5	312.0
		% within status	62.0%	64.9%	63.2%
Total		Count	300	194	494
		Expected Count	300.0	194.0	494.0
		% within status	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.440 ^a	1	.507		
Continuity Correction ^b	.323	1	.570		
Likelihood Ratio	.441	1	.506		
Fisher's Exact Test				.567	.285
Linear-by-Linear Association	.439	1	.507		
N of Valid Cases	494				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 71.47.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Since the p-value is larger than .05, we can conclude that the result is not significant. This means that the proportion of repeaters that repeated a class because they could not learn is not significantly different from the proportion of dropouts that repeated a class because of the same reason.

Table 12: Cases of dropout- Parent category cross tabulation

			Parents Category		Total
			Parents Drop-out	Parents Repeater	
Cases of dropout	Not common	Count	105	104	209
		Expected Count	98.5	110.5	209.0

		% within Parents Category	43.9%	38.8%	41.2%
	Common	Count	134	164	298
		Expected Count	140.5	157.5	298.0
		% within Parents Category	56.1%	61.2%	58.8%
Total		Count	239	268	507
		Expected Count	239.0	268.0	507.0
		% within Parents Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 13: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.371 ^a	1	.242		
Continuity Correction	1.167	1	.280		
Likelihood Ratio	1.370	1	.242		
Fisher's Exact Test				.278	.140
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.368	1	.242		
N of Valid Cases	507				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 98.52.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Since the p-value is larger than .05, we can conclude that the result is not significant. This means that the proportion of parents of repeaters who indicated that it is common for children in their family to dropout is not significantly different from the proportion of parents of dropouts who indicated the same.

Table 14: Responsibility for dropout * Parent category cross tabulation

		Parents Category		Total	
		Parents Drop-out	Parents Repeater		
Responsibility for dropping out of school	Not Parents	Count	140	168	308
		Expected Count	142.9	165.1	308.0
		% within Parents Category	60.6%	62.9%	61.8%
	Parents	Count	91	99	190
		Expected Count	88.1	101.9	190.0
		% within Parents Category	39.4%	37.1%	38.2%
Total	Count	231	267	498	

	Expected Count	231.0	267.0	498.0
	% within Parents Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 15: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.281 ^a	1	.596		
Continuity Correction ^b	.192	1	.661		
Likelihood Ratio	.281	1	.596		
Fisher's Exact Test				.644	.331
Linear-by-Linear Association	.281	1	.596		
N of Valid Cases	498				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 88.13.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Since the p-value is larger than .05, we can conclude that the result is not significant. This means that the proportion of parents of repeaters who think they are responsible for their children's dropout is not significantly different from the proportion of parents of dropouts who indicated the same.

Table 16: Inadequacy of school resources-Parent category cross tabulation

			Parents Category		Total
			Parents Drop-out	Parents Repeater	
Inadequacy of school resources	No	Count	160	187	347
		Expected Count	162.8	184.2	347.0
		% within Parents Category	67.5%	69.8%	68.7%
	Yes	Count	77	81	158
		Expected Count	74.2	83.8	158.0
		% within Parents Category	32.5%	30.2%	31.3%
Total		Count	237	268	505
		Expected Count	237.0	268.0	505.0
		% within Parents Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 17 Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.300 ^a	1	.584		
Continuity Correction ^b	.204	1	.651		
Likelihood Ratio	.300	1	.584		
Fisher's Exact Test				.631	.326
Linear-by-Linear Association	.300	1	.584		
N of Valid Cases	505				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 74.15.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Since the p-value is larger than .05, we can conclude that the result is not significant. This means that the proportion of parents of repeaters who think there are inadequate resources at the school where their children attend is not significantly different from the proportion of parents of dropouts who indicated the same.

It can be observed from Tables 8 to 17 that the chi square test results show that there is a perceived association between improved student learning outcomes and student repetition and attrition, and improved community participation and student repetition and attrition. We can therefore reject the null hypotheses that:

- a. Improved student learning outcomes do not lead to reduced student repetition and attrition
- b. Increased participation of community in the learning of students does not contribute significantly to the learning outcomes of the students and does not reduce student repetition and attrition

And accept the research hypotheses which state that:

- a. H1: Improved student learning outcomes do lead to reduced student repetition and attrition
- b. H1: Increased community participation in the learning of students does contribute significantly to the learning outcomes of the students and reduces student repetition and attrition

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

It is evident that repetition and attrition still remain a big problem in most schools in Malawi. However, teachers do not consider themselves responsible for student repetition. The revelation by students about what they think they learned in school provides evidence that there is little learning taking place in primary schools. Nonetheless, the study revealed that teachers feel that some students cannot learn and feel inadequate in terms of skills to support underachieving students. The survey has also reported feelings of distress among students themselves, teachers, and parents about students' repetition and attrition. The study has also revealed that, while the decision to ask a student to repeat a class rests mainly in the hands of the teacher, the decision to drop out of school is mainly made by the student and sometimes the parent, despite the fact that teachers can catalyse attrition with their actions.

Reducing school drop-out rates is therefore not only a question of in-school factors, but a question of holistic factors. Therefore, instead of focusing only on school factors, it is important to address other social and economic factors identified in the study. It must be noted that these factors do involve policy and decision makers from other sectors, necessitating collaboration, networking, and development of partnerships to help MoEST find solutions to the drivers of repetition and attrition. In this regard, it is important to provide households incentives (for example, conditional cash transfers) to make their children attend school instead of children being forced to spend their time on household income generating activities.

Along the same lines, the SACMEQ III Project, talking about the challenge of grade repetition says: "In developing countries, grade repetition is often considered to be a remedy for low-achieving pupils, based on the assumption that automatic promotion would disadvantage them. However, educational research has shown that (a) 'neither automatic promotion nor grade repetition addresses the problems of low achievers satisfactorily,' and (b) 'potential solutions lie in providing these pupils with more and better learning opportunities' (Brophy, 2006). These solutions include early intervention for at-risk pupils through supplementary instruction, and closer collaboration with parents to ensure that the pupils are supported and encouraged at home."

This study indicates that the major contributors to student repetition and dropout are parents, followed by teachers, and thirdly, the student himself/herself coupled with the lack of an attractive, efficient and effective learning environment. However, it is important to emphasize that the teacher, in our view, is the main actor, in the sense that if the teacher is effective and assumes his/her professional responsibility with dedication and passion, the strategies used should improve learning outcomes and deter student attrition from schools. The teacher ideally links the school and the parents or the community; brings awareness to and unites parents, guardians and community leaders; and supports parents so that they can exercise their responsibilities of educating their children. Teachers' and communities' efforts should be accompanied by direct resourcing of schools in order to improve the learning environment.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this study the following recommendations are being advanced for consideration by identified parties at the various levels of the education system in Malawi.

4.2.1 National Level

- The MoEST should continue upgrading teachers and provide head teachers with clear guidelines on teacher allocation to improve efficiencies at the school.
- The Department of Teacher Education (DTED) in collaboration with the Department of Inspection and Advisory Services (DIAS) should institute a Teacher Performance Appraisal System (TeaPS). The principles behind the system should be integrated into the teacher training curriculum so as to equip

teachers with skills on how to develop business plans. The TeaPS should outline annual work objectives agreeable to their sectional heads and or immediate supervisors. The supervisors should be equipped with skills to conduct teacher performance appraisals based on objectives and performance areas laid down in the TeaPS. Teaching incentives (e.g. salary increments, institutional housing allocations, promotions, etc.) accrued should be based on the teachers' attainment of their work objectives. The TeaPS should have checks and balances to ensure its success. PEAs may be introduced to provide the checks and balances where there are subordinate-supervisor disagreements. This has to be replicated across the chain of command in the education sector on instructional management.

- Personal emoluments processing and disbursements be decentralized to the District Councils to ensure timely payments. Teachers take time off in order to check for their salaries, which is persistently delayed due to centralized salary processing. This lessens student-teacher contact time. Instructional hours are reduced and students learn less, thus affecting the learning outcomes, encouraging repetition and eventual drop-out.
- Procurement of books should be decentralised to the district level where the District Councils should be empowered to undertake procurement of books for their districts. This will lead to manageable procurement thresholds that will enable speedy procurement of textbooks, to be made available in schools in a timelier manner. Availability of the textbooks in schools will enable usage and improve opportunity for the students to learn. Improved learning outcomes will mean promotion between classes and lesser repetition and/ or dropouts. Effecting this recommendation will require capacity building in risk management, strategic procurement planning and adherence to the Public Procurement Act, and Public Financial Management Act of 2003.
- Provide the District Councils with adequate financing for PEAs operational budget. DIAS should strengthen provision of technical capacity to PEAS so that they are able to supervise and enforce instructional leadership at school level.
- The MoEST should encourage government departments and ministries working on drought resilience, safety nets and improved livelihoods to include educational factors in the selection criteria used to identify benefactors of such initiatives. This will ensure that vulnerable households' livelihood is improved and that they are able to increase household expenditures on education related items. This will directly improve the ability of households to provide for basic educational needs of students. The implementers of such initiatives may also base their criterion on overall household education performance to identify benefactors or scale-up. This will incentivise households to prioritize education of their children and promote learning. The benefits from learning have a larger effect on the performance of these interventions and its sustenance, and are therefore an ideal basis for developmental partnership.
- The MoEST should reinforce formative assessments where applicable and provide effective strategies including refresher courses for implementing formative assessments in large classes.
- Additional resources should be allocated to complimentary basic education (CBE) so that it is widely scaled up in all districts and sufficient areas in the country since student drop out is a country-wide challenge.
- The MoEST should increase efforts to reduce the pupil classroom ratio (PCR). Besides increasing efforts in pre-service teacher training programmes, it should increase in the number of schools on double shifts as a temporary measure. However, the MoEST should explore the feasibility and possibility of universalizing double shifting. For instance Standards 5 – 8 could start classes at 12:00 noon, creating enough space and availability of facilities for junior classes so as to improve the learning environment. Meanwhile the MoEST could invest resources meant for construction of new

schools on improving the classroom environment (additional texts, book corners, desks, good lighting, etc.). Universalization of double shifting would immediately reduce the PCR to 1:64. However, viable strategies on managing teachers' workloads and teacher task management on a daily basis should be devised. This is where conditions and incentives for teachers would be required.

4.2.2 District Level

- District Councils in collaboration with MoEST should formulate guidelines that communities must use to facilitate after-school students learning. This will facilitate the rapport between teachers and community members. The rapport will create an environment that will allow for a joint collaboration in facilitating student teaching methodologies that community members may use to provide home learning support and complement teachers' school-based efforts
- District Councils should help communities establish by-laws that do not allow students loitering in communities during school days and instruction time. School going children should not be allowed to participate in public entertainment events or market days during the time they are expected to be in classrooms and learning. This will improve classroom attendance and potentially learning by the students, leading to better learning achievements and reduced repetition.
- District Councils should accelerate construction of girl friendly facilities in schools through various available windows such as the Local Development Fund (LDF)
- District Councils and local community leaders should sensitise parents on ensuring early enrolment in line with school enrolment age in Malawi. This will reduce the proportion of overage students in early grades, and consequently reduce dropout due to overage.
- District education offices with the support of sub-education structures should encourage and support SMCs, PTAs and MGs to mount robust community sensitization on gender equality. Households should be encouraged to prioritize the education of girls as much as their boy counterparts. Rights-based approaches should be encouraged in the education sector to ensure that rights of children are equitably upheld by communities.

4.2.3 Community and Household Level

- Community school management structures should be empowered to work hand-in-hand with GoM departments such as Social Welfare in ensuring that parents are made to adequately care and provide for children. Other GoM departments such as Community Policing should be involved in enforcing existing laws on child care.
- Community leaders in collaboration with District Councils and other non state actors should increase efforts in establishing Community Based Child Care Centers to avert unnecessary student absenteeism. This will help to reduce cases of students' absenteeism due to minding of younger siblings whilst their parents are engaged in income generating activities.
- Community leaders in collaboration with school leadership structures should develop mechanisms for reporting perpetrators of sexual relationships with girl students to avert sexual abuse of girls in schools.

4.2.4 School Level

- Continuous student assessment as a way of ascertaining child promotion should be emphasised and utilized in annual assessment of students achievements. Schools are still using terminal examinations

to assess abilities acquired through the term. This puts students that deserve promotion out of the cut-off point. Consequently, it increases the number of class repetitions, especially in early grades.

- Head teachers should work with class teachers and class prefects to ensure that schools are bullying free. This should include clear anonymous reporting mechanisms between schools and communities to ensure that students are not bullied on their way to and from schools.
- Head teachers should ensure that oversubscribed classes are allocated with more qualified teachers. Where qualified teachers are inadequate, school management should liaise with communities to find and employ teaching assistants in line with guidelines as provided by the ESIP.
- Head teachers with support from PEAs should ensure that schools have well developed programs for providing instructional mentorship and training for unqualified and assistant teachers utilizing senior and qualified teachers at the school level.
- Head teachers with support from PEAs should ensure teachers knowledge and monitor adherence to school related policies which is central to eradicating corporal punishment and use of abusive language as this is a recipe absenteeism among students.

5 ANNEX

5.1 References

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5.2 Tables of Findings

5.2.1 Household Ownership of Assets

Type of asset	Mzimba North		Ntchisi		Balaka		Thyolo		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Brick house with grass thatch	36	49.3	20	13.6	80	58.8	52	34.4	188	37.1
Brick house with iron sheets	22	30.1	22	15.0	26	19.1	55	36.4	125	24.7
Mud house with grass thatch	19	26.0	105	71.4	38	27.9	51	33.8	213	42.0
Mud house with iron sheets	0	0.0	3	2.0	0	0.0	7	4.6	10	2.0
Radio	29	39.7	57	38.8	33	24.3	45	29.8	164	32.3
Refrigerator	1	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.3	3	0.6
Cows	10	13.7	5	3.4	3	2.2	9	6.0	27	5.3
Goats	22	30.1	68	46.3	53	39.0	22	14.6	165	32.5
Sheep	3	4.1	1	0.7	1	0.7	3	2.0	8	1.6
Chickens/ducks	39	53.4	77	52.4	51	37.5	66	43.7	233	46.0
Land (in acres)	59	80.8	124	84.4	132	97.1	143	94.7	458	90.3
Plough/Ridger	5	6.8	1	0.7	2	1.5	8	5.3	16	3.2
Hoe	62	84.9	122	83.0	125	91.9	135	89.4	444	87.6
Bicycle	25	34.2	50	34.0	65	47.8	40	26.5	180	35.5
Wheel barrow	5	6.8	3	2.0	4	2.9	3	2.0	15	3.0
Television	4	5.5	2	1.4	3	2.2	4	2.6	13	2.6
Cell phone	33	45.2	35	23.8	38	27.9	49	32.5	155	30.6
Ox cart	2	2.7	2	1.4	0	0.0	5	3.3	9	1.8
Sofa sets	5	6.8	2	1.4	5	3.7	2	1.3	14	2.8
Table chairs	29	39.7	18	12.2	12	8.8	48	31.8	107	21.1
Others	12	16.4	12	8.2	6	4.4	14	9.3	44	8.7

5.3 List of People and Institutions Interviewed

Name	Designation	Organization/Location
Mr Christopher. Ziwa	Education Division Manager	Shire Highlands Education Division, Mulanje
Kenneth Dumbula	PEA	Luchenza Zone-Tholo
Felix M.L.F. Beyamu	PEA	Khonjeni Zone-Thyolo
Lewis C. Kalunga	PEA	Konzalendo Zone-Thyolo
Donald J. Khama Banda	PEA	Thyolo -Folopensi Zone
Mercy P. Matope	PEA	Thyolo -Goliati Zone
Baston W. Saphwani	PEA	Thyolo -Thunga Zone
Bright E. Kaleso	PEA	Thyolo -Molere
Batumeyo W. Phiri	PEA	Thyolo -Masambanjati
Biston Gama	PEA	Thyolo -Nansato
Fellie Chakukuma	PEA	Thyolo -Mpinji
	Director of Planning and Development	Thyolo District Assembly
Miss Elizabeth Mlatho	District Social Welfare Officer	Thyolo District Assembly
Mr Namangale	District Education Manager & Deputy District Education Manager	Thyolo District Education Manager's Office
Dr Murowa	District Health Officer	Thyolo District Hospital
Dr M.C. Luwanda	District Agricultural Development Officer	Thyolo District Agricultural Office
Mr January	District School Feeding Coordinator	Thyolo District Education Office
Mr Mc Donald Kuse	Senior Education Planning Officer & Inspector and Advisor for Primary Schools	South Eastern Education Division
Mrs Fatuma Bima Naliwa	Inspector & Advisor for Primary Schools	South Eastern Education Division
Mrs Hycinth Jere	DADO	Ntchisi RDP
Mrs Tiwonge Mpando	Basic Education Officer	MoEST Hq.

Mrs D.Z. Mbewe	Deputy Director	DTED
Ms. Pemphero Chiwayula	District Membership Development Officer (DMDO)	Civil Society Education Coalition (CSEC)
Emma	Education Advisor	DFID
Eva Charles	Education Advisor	UNICEF-EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Mr. Willie Kalumula	Operations Director	World Vision Malawi
Mr. William Bwanaope	Effectiveness and Quality Coordinator	Actionaid Malawi
Mr Julious Kanjira	PEA	Balaka-Utale Zone
Mr. Luke Chimombo	PEA	Balaka-Ulongwe Zone
Mrs. Eunice Botomani	PEA	Balaka-Mmanga Zone
Mrs. Ronely Thazi	PEA	Balaka-Chiyendausiku Zone
Mr. MacPeters Lumbani	PEA	Balaka-Phalula Zone
Mrs. Chikosa Mwafulirwa Magori	PEA	Balaka-Mponda Zone
Mr. Ernest Matope	PEA	Balaka-Chembera Zone
Mr. W.J Kafwapa	PEA	Ntchisi District
Ms R. M Gadi	PEA	Ntchisi District
Mr. E.S.H Chimombo	PEA	Ntchisi District
Mr. E Makina	PEA	Ntchisi District
Mr. V.E Banda	PEA	Ntchisi District
Mr. L.LKalitawo	PEA	Ntchisi District
Ms. C.J Msothi	PEA	Ntchisi District
Mr. D.H Sikwese	District Social Welfare Officer	Ntchisi District
Ms. J.H Mwansambo	District Youth Officer	Ntchisi District
Mr. Enea Nkhoma	Education Programme Officer	Ntchisi District

5.4 Statement of Work

Description/Specifications/Statement of Work for Study on Pupil Attrition and Repetition in Primary Education in Malawi

Introduction

USAID seeks to understand through evidence-based study the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates that are persistently seen in the Malawian primary education sector. USAID seeks evidence and data to inform decision-making in regards to appropriate efforts to address the persistent repetition and dropout rates in an effort to understand what will keep children in school.

USAID hypothesizes that improved student learning outcomes leads to reduced pupil attrition and class repetition. In addition, increased participation of community in the learning of pupils contributes significantly to the learning outcomes of the pupils and reduces pupil attrition and repetition.

The primary audiences for the study are: USAID/Malawi, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), Development Partners (DPs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in the Malawi education sector. The study recommendations will be used to inform future programming by

education stakeholders and form part of a learning process to better understand more efficient and effective means on improving learning outcomes in primary education in Malawi.

Background

The primary education sector in Malawi is riddled with internal inefficiencies. It takes an average of 22 years for pupils enrolled to complete an eight year education cycle⁸ with a primary education survival rate of 49%⁹. This implies high repetition and dropout rates, which significantly affect the proportion of a cohort of pupils reaching each successive standard (From the first year of school 51% of each cohort is lost by the time the cohort reaches the final year of primary). Furthermore, assessments have identified that 67% of Standard 6 students are still at the pre-literate level and of the 49% of children that make it to the final year of primary only 74.8% of boys and 61.7% of girls pass the Primary School Leaving Exam. This inefficiency creates significant wastage as educational resources on children that are perpetually not learning, and reflects considerable gender gaps in educational learning outcomes for boys and girls. These inefficiencies related to high repetition and drop out result in crowded classrooms, particularly in the lower grades denying opportunity for new entrants in the successive classes, increased workload and burnout of primary school teachers, and a latent acceptance of non learning and dropout for primary school pupils.

In a bid to promote efficiencies in the education sector, the MoEST has embarked on a classroom size reduction exercise via a 2011 circular. This has entailed the introduction of double shifting in selected schools, automatic promotions for selected classes and enhanced classroom construction in existing primary schools as well as construction of new schools. The MoEST has attempted to increase the number of primary school teachers via Open and Distance Learning for new teachers in addition to the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) 1+1 program. The concept of automatic promotion as outlined in the 2011 circular has an indirect consequence of pushing learners that do not attain grade level competencies to progress to senior classes.

In spite of the interventions above, class repetition is high, averaging 16% for all standards in primary education and an average repetition of 20% for Standards 1 – 4. Dropout of pupils is also high at 10% on average for all standards; 13% of which comprise dropouts between Standards 1 and 2. Geographically, the shire highlands, central east and west education divisions have the highest prevalence rates of pupil dropout in schools than any other region. The teacher pupil qualified ratio is also high at 1:92 at the national level; 1:96 and 1:70 being the ratio for rural and urban areas respectively. For Standards 1 – 4, the pupil qualified teacher ratio reaches 1:200 in some classrooms usually operated under a tree or on the school's open grounds¹⁰. The average pupil teacher ratio per standard is outlined in Table 1¹¹.

Year	Average PTR'							
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⁸ World Bank (2009), The Education System in Malawi. Working Paper No. 182, http://www.poledakar.org/IMG/pdf/RESEN_malawi_2010.pdf

⁹ Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2011). Education Statistics

¹⁰ EGRA/EGMA 2010 Report

¹¹ 2011 Education Management Information System (EMIS) Basic Education Indicators. The methodology used to generate these figures using EMIS data is: 1. Determine how many Standards each teacher taught; 2. For teachers who were indicated to teach more than 1 Standards, count a fraction of a teacher for each standard. For example, a teacher who is listed as teaching Standards 1 and 2 is counted as .5 of a teacher for each Standard. This ensures the total number of teachers system wide is not overstated, since counting him as a full teacher for Standard 1 as well as Standard 2 is inaccurate. 3. Using enrolment by Standard and school, calculate the pupil teacher ratio. Standards with no teachers or with no students or with neither are excluded from calculating the average pupil-teacher ratio

	PTR' Std 1	Std 2	Std 3	Std 4	Std 5	Std 6	Std 7	Std 8
2010	180	133	112	90	76	64	53	38
2011	172	124	100	81	74	62	51	38
2012	153	114	89	76	72	62	53	42

The education sector conducts an annual school census which among other things provides information reported by school heads on the reasons behind pupil attrition. The major reasons identified by school heads in the Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) school census for pupil dropout includes family responsibilities of pupils (33%), long walking distances covered by the pupils from home to school, early marriages (6%) and reasons categorized as other (36%)¹². Reasons determined to be behind the high student repetition rates are from low levels of learner abilities in basic reading and numeracy ability far below grade level standards and requirements.

Most of the factors behind pupil attrition appear to be beyond the management control of the school as they relate to household socioeconomic status of the pupils and traditional behaviors in their respective homes. However, as of yet, no actual studies have been conducted to validate the reporting by school heads or identify whether the drivers identified by school heads is accurate or to unpack the significant 36% identified as other. There also appear to be key junctures where dropouts occur most frequently, for instance in the early grades of primary education (standards 1-4) and senior primary education (standards 5-8), in particular for girls.

Therefore examining this interplay allows school management to triangulate strategies through which teaching instruction could be complemented through home based support structures that eases such pressure on the ability of learners to achieve within the expected grade level standards. This examination need to take factor of the interventions highlighted below. These interventions have been implemented in order to mitigate impacts related to pupil attrition and repetition. However, results from the implementation have not managed to reverse the trend nor improve leaning outcomes. The intervention thus implemented so far is highlighted below:

- i. **Classroom Construction:** The education sector is constructing additional classrooms in existing schools aimed at reducing the pupil classroom ratio to improve the learning environment of pupils enrolled in schools. These classrooms are being constructed nationwide based on the needs identified by the local governments at the district level. In addition, the education sector is constructing new schools aimed at reducing the home to school distance so that dropout of pupils in the infant sections of primary school is reduced.
- ii. **Support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC):** With support from various non – governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, the sector is accessing several safety nets such as cash transfers, pupil scholarships, nutrition support and food supplementation aimed at helping OVC access basic needs and enables them to attend schools within their vicinity.
- iii. **Support to Girls' Education:** The education sector is supporting the formation of mother groups to help support girls' education through interventions of water, Sanitation and school health, especially for teenage girls. In addition, mother groups help the sector enforce policies such as the readmission policy for girls who have given birth. They also work directly with education officials at school level where they provide counseling services to girls at risk as well as track girl dropouts in the communities where they operate.
- iv. **Child Friendly and Whole School Development Approach:** The MoEST is implementing a whole school development approach, whose primary aim is to ensure that school developments

¹² MoEST. (2011). Basic Education Indicators pp.42

- are child friendly and improve the school learning environment. Areas that are targeted include but are not limited to water, sanitation and health facilities.
- v. **School Feeding Programs:** The sector is implementing school feeding programs aimed at providing nutritious--fortified food to help with growth and stimulation of pupils during the learning process. The feeding program also ensures that children from food insecure households are provided with take home rations to supplement their uptake of nutritious food at household level.
 - vi. **Classroom Size Reduction Policy/ Guidelines:** The education sector is implementing guidelines to reduce classroom sizes to allow teachers to handle classes with reasonable enrolment, facilitate learning and help create demand for learning in pupils enrolled in primary schools. Areas targeted under this policy include automatic promotion of pupils in the infant sections of the primary education, rationalized allocation of teachers at school level to allow primary schools' administration to focus on early grade enrolments as a factor in teacher allocation decisions and implementation of double shifting where appropriate.
 - vii. **Community Participation in the Management of Schools:** The education sector is empowering communities with management skills that are transforming school communities to informed and active managers of schools in their communities. Focus areas include school improvement planning and development using school based data, basic skills in financial management, procurement and other school managerial related issues. This empowerment is aimed at enabling the community to account for the learning of their children in schools and ensure that out of school youth enroll and access basic education services.
 - viii. **Rural Teachers' Allowances for Teachers Teaching in Rural Areas:** The rural – urban variance in qualified teachers cements inequality in the education system. In order to bridge this gap the sector is providing hardship allowances to teachers in the rural areas as an incentive to woo more teachers to rural areas and allow for equitable universal access to primary education across all regions in Malawi.
 - ix. **Construction of Teachers Houses in Rural Areas:** One of the most significant issues that contribute to inadequate retention of teachers in rural areas is poor conditions of teacher housing, especially in remote areas. Based on the need for more qualified teachers in the rural areas, the sector is constructing teacher houses in the rural areas to accommodate teachers placed in these areas and help facilitate teacher retention in schools and allow pupils in these areas to access quality education services.
 - x. **Continuous Professional Development for Teachers:** As an incentive for teachers, the sector has developed continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers aimed at improving their pedagogical skills and improves their competencies. CPD helps teachers get updated skills to enhance their teaching. CPD also takes away stress otherwise experienced in dealing with modalities and methodologies of modernity and changes in curricula, thus retaining energy and interest in their work and their ability and desire to remain in the teaching profession.
 - xi. **Formation and Institutionalization of Teacher Support Groups:** The sector has adapted the concept of teacher support groups; especially for those teachers living positively with Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDs). This has led to the formation and institutionalization of the Teachers Living Positively (T'LIPO) support group. This group works with teachers affected and infected by HIV/AIDs in the provision of moral and counseling support, nutrition and work place support aimed at prolonging the life of teachers infected and affected by HIV/AIDs, as well as reducing the workload of these teachers in schools.

Scope

The contractor must analyze and identify key drivers that attribute to the high repetition and dropout rates among Malawian primary school students and recommend solutions that mitigate the drivers of repetition and dropout.

The contractor must at least collect data from 150 primary schools and school communities in the school catchment area, education district offices, a minimum of five DPs offices and MoEST headquarters in Lilongwe and other relevant ministries with functions that contribute to learning outcomes of pupils such as the Ministry of Gender, Women and Child Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Irrigation Services and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture. At each school or schooling community, the contractor shall involve at least 10 respondents or key informers.

The contractor must propose efficient means of addressing the key objectives in section C through the use of both relevant primary and secondary data sources. Where the contractor plans to use individual or group interviews, and focus groups as primary data sources, the contractor must involve the following stakeholders:

- a) Head teachers and Standard 1-4 teachers,
- b) Out of school youth or children
- c) School staff, parents and school management committee/parent teacher association (SMC/PTA) officials.
- d) Mother Groups
- e) Social welfare officers
- f) Government of Malawi officials (such as MoEST focusing on Directorates-such as Department of Inspectorate and Advisory Services (DIAS), Department of Teacher Education and Development (DTED), Department of Basic Education, among others-, District Education Managers (DEMs), Divisional Education Managers, and Primary Education Advisors (PEAs)),
- g) Education Sector DM.2.4Ps
- h) Parents of dropouts and repeaters

The study must also involve children as study subjects; therefore the contractor must have the study instruments and protocols reviewed by the Institutional Review Board or alternative research review boards at regional or country level to ensure protection of children and related research ethics in the conduct of the study.

Limitations to the study must be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the study methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparison groups, etc.). Sufficient information shall be provided so that a reader can make an informed judgment as to the reliability, validity and generalizability of the findings.

Equity

The contractor must ensure that study and resulting findings, conclusions, and recommendations shall address any observable discrepancies between the sexes, learners with special education needs, including OVCs and disabled children, and or any specific geographical spread or variances seen in the results on students' attrition and repetition. Recommendations shall clearly identify if there are any groups that are specifically impacted by specific causes of attrition and repetition, and where feasible, highlight how factors impact groups differently and to what extent different types of students are able to benefit to the same degree.

Findings: Empirical facts collected during the study

Study findings must be presented as analyzed facts, evidence and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay or the compilation of people's opinions. Study findings must assess outcomes and impact on males and females. Findings must be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative

evidence. The findings must be linked to the study questions. Sources of information need to be properly identified and listed in an annex.

Conclusions: Interpretations and judgments based on the findings

Conclusions must be presented for each finding based on the evidence collected. Conclusions must logically follow from the gathered data and findings. Because conclusions involve interpretation of collected data, they must be explicitly justified. If and when necessary, the contractor must state his/her assumptions, judgments and value premises so that readers can better understand and assess them.

Recommendations: Proposed actions for management.

Recommendations must be supported by a specific set of findings. Recommendations must be action-oriented, practical and specific, with defined responsibility for the action. Researchers in the study team must take into consideration the economic and political context of the study, available resources, and the feasibility of change and innovation while framing recommendations.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to understand:

- i. Who makes decisions on pupil attrition from Malawi primary schools?
- ii. Major factors keeping pupil in school.
- iii. Household perception and expectations of benchmarks that pupils are expected to reach at each standard
- iv. Community and parents actions relating to pupil attrition and repetition in primary schools in Malawi
- v. How teaching practices promote learning and/or reduce pupil attrition.

Results

Final Study Report

Illustrative tasks needed to achieve the result:

- vi. Scoping the study design
- vii. Designing Survey instruments
- viii. Determining a statistically representative sample
- ix. Piloting the survey instrument
- x. Administering the survey instruments
- xi. Conducting Data Analysis
- xii. Report Writing
- xiii. Conducting Debriefing and Feedback Session(s) with Study Stakeholders
- xiv. Finalizing report and submission.

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE

The contractor must conduct the study in Malawi. Districts covered must include but not limited to the following: Mzimba North, Lilongwe, Salima, Ntchisi, Ntcheu, Balaka, Machinga, Blantyre Rural, Thyolo and Mulanje.

Coordination with Host Country Counterparts and Other Implementers

Two Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officers from the Planning Directorate of the MoEST will accompany the study team as complements. The contract cost must cover transportation and per diem expenses related to the MoEST staff participation

5.5 Data Collection Instruments



STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE - REPEATER

Good morning. My name is _____, and I live in _____. I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family? [Wait for response; if student is reluctant, ask “What do you like to do when you are not in school?”] However, if he/she seems comfortable continue to verbal consent.

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates. You were picked by chance, like in a raffle or lottery. We would like your help in this. But you do not have to take part if you do not want to.

I will ask you questions about schooling and your family, like what things your family has. While I will write down your name, I will not report what you tell me directly to your teacher, parents, or anyone else. If you would rather not answer a question, that’s all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Date: _____	Interviewer’s Name: _____	ID: _____
Time Started: _____		
Supervisor’s Name: _____	ID _____	Signature _____

Instructions to interviewer: Read the questions to the learner as is. You can also read the response choices (unless the question specifies that learners should not be prompted). Additionally, most questions should have only one response, which should be circled (you should circle the letter corresponding with the answer choice). In some cases, a question will specify that multiple responses are allowed. In those cases, you should circle the letters corresponding with all response options that apply. All regular texts can be read to the respondents, and all italic texts include instructions to the interviewer.

SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
101	Name of division	NED..... 1 CEED..... 2 SEED..... 4 SHED..... 6	
102	Name of District	MZIMBA NORTH. 4 NTCHISI 12 BALAKA..... 21 THYOLO 31	
103	Name of Zone	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
104	Name of School	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
105	Name of pupil	(Surname) _____ ID: (first name) _____	<input type="text"/>
106	Sex of pupil	Boy..... 1 Girl..... 2	
107	Age of pupil in complete years	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
108	Name of Parent/Guardian	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
109	Village of Pupil	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>

SECTION 2: PUPIL INFORMATION

201	Who do you stay with? Kodi kunyumba kwanu umakhala ndi yani?	parents..... 1 grandparents..... 2 uncle/aunt..... 3 brother/sister 4 other, specify..... 5	
202	In what Standard are you? Uli kalasi yanji?	Standard 1 1 Standard 2..... 2 Standard 3 3 Standard 4..... 4	

203	Do you have any special educational need? Uli ndi vuto/chilima china chili chose?	No.....0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	204
204	What special educational need do you have? NOTE please test the pupil using the provided instruments? (multiple responses possible) Kodi uli vuto/chilema chanji?	Visual impairment..... 1 Hearing impairment..... 2 Learning difficulties. 3 Other, specify _____ 4	
205	Have you ever repeated any class? Unayamba wabwelezako kalasi ina ili yose?	No.....0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	
206	How many times have you repeated each of the following classes? Wabweleza kangati makalasi awa?	Standard 1 <input type="text"/> Standard 2 <input type="text"/> Standard 3 <input type="text"/> Standard 4 <input type="text"/>	
207	Why did you repeat? Nchifukwa chani unabweleza?	I didn't understand the lessons..... 1 I didn't have textbooks..... 2 I didn't have exercise books..... 3 I didn't feel well. 4 I had to sit on the floor – no desk..5 Other, please specify _____ . 6 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	
208	Who do you think is responsible for your repetition? Anatengapo mbali kuti ubweleze ndi ndani?	Self..... 1 Teacher.....2 Parents/Guardian..... 3 Cultural practices..... 4 Other, Specify _____ 5 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	

209	<p>Point at the picture that describes how you feel about repeating <i>Hint: 1 – Happy; 2 – Neutral; 3 – Sad</i> Pazithuzi izi ndi chiti chomwe chikusonyeza mmene umamvela ukamabweleza?</p>	 <p>1 2</p> <p>3</p>	
210	<p>With your current performance, what is the likelihood of you being promoted to the next class? Ndi mmene ukukhonzera panopa, ukuona kuti nkotheke kupita kalasi ina yapatsogolo?</p>	<p>Strongly likely..... 1 Likely. 2 Unlikely..... 3 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
211	<p>What are you doing to make sure that you are promoted to the next class? (<i>multiple responses possible</i>) Ukuchitapo chani kuti usabwelezeso?</p>	<p>Paying attention in class..... 1 Avoid missing classes..... 2 Taught by siblings. 3 Studying at home..... 4 Other, specify..... 5 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
212	<p>What will you do if you are asked to repeat once more in the next academic year? Kodi ungachitepo chani utauzidwa kuti ubwelenzenso?</p>	<p>Accept Repetition..... 1 Transfer to another school. 2 Will ask for automatic promotion.. 3 Dropout. 4 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
213	<p>Have you ever been absent from school? Unayamba wajombako ku sukulu?</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 No 0</p>	
214	<p>Have you ever played truant? Unayambako wabwela ku sukulu koma osalowa nkalasi?</p>	<p>No..... 0 Yes..... 1</p>	216
215	<p>If yes, what are the reasons? Ndi zifukwa ziti zimakupangitsa kuti usalowe nkalasi?</p>	<p>Peer pressure..... 1 Bulling..... 2 Afraid of teachers..... 3 Other, specify..... 4</p>	
216	<p>How often do you miss classes? Umajomba mowilikiza bwanji nkalasi?</p>	<p>Rarely..... 1 A lot 2 Don't know/Refuse to answer 99</p>	

217	<p>What do you like about coming to school? <i>Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i></p> <p>kodi ndichani chimene chimakusangalatsa ku sukulu?</p>	<p>Seeing/making friends..... 1 Learning 2 Meeting my teacher 3 School meals..... 4 I like everything. 5 Other (Specify) _____ 6 I don't like anything 7 Don't know/Refuse to answer 99</p>	
218	<p>What do you not like about coming to school? <i>(Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i></p> <p>Nanga ndichiyani chimene sichimakusangalatsa pa sukulu pano?</p>	<p>Other children are cruel..... 1 School is boring..... 2 I don't understand the lessons..... 3 The teacher is cruel..... 4 There's no latrine or it's too dirty.. 5 I have to sit on the floor – no desk. 6 I can't see the textbooks or don't have textbooks..... 7 I'm too tired..... 8 I'm hungry..... 9 It's hard to pay attention..... 10 I don't feel well..... 11 Insufficient classrooms..... 12 Hidden costs..... 13 Other, please specify _____ 14 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
219	<p>How much do you think you learn at school? Mmene umawonera iweyo umaphunzira kwambiri kapena pan'gono?</p>	<p>Nothing..... 0 Not much..... 1 A lot..... 2 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
220	<p>Have you ever been bullied at school because of repeating? Kodi unapagidwako chipongwe/nkhanza ina ili yonse chifukwa choti ukubweleza?</p>	<p>No..... 0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	223
221	<p>Who bullied you? Anakupanga nkhalaz/chipongwe ndi ndani?</p>	<p>Friends 1 Teacher..... 2 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	

222	Does the bullying affect your learning? Kodi chipongwe/nkhanza chimene amakupangiracho chimakusokoneza maphunziro ako?	No..... 0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	223
223	How does the bullying affect your learning? Kodi nkhanzozo/chipongwe zimasokoneza bwanji pamaphunziro ako?	I miss classes..... 1 Affect my performance negatively. .2 Affects me psychologically. 3 Other, please specify..... 4 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	
224	What extra-curricular activities are you involved in at home? Ndi zinthu zina ziti kupatula za sukulu zomwe umapanga kunyumba?	Household chores..... 1 Farm work. 2 Fetching firewood. 3 Taking care of siblings. 4 Herding livestock. 5 Selling items at the market. 6 Piecework/ganyu for income generation. 7 Other, please specify..... 8 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	
225	Which of the following do you have? (List the options for the student) Kodi kunyumba kwanu kuli zinthu izi?	Books. 1 Magazines. 2 Newspapers..... 3 Other reading materials, specify..... 4 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	
226	Does your teacher provide you with homework? Aphunzitsi amakupatsani homework?	No..... 0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	END
227	Who helps you at home with your homework? Kodi kunyumba kwanu amakuthandiza ndani homework?	Parent/guardian..... 1 Sibling. 2 Friend..... 3 Relative (e.g., uncle, aunt) 4 None. 5 Other, Specify6 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	

Interviewer's observation: _____

Time Ended: _____

Thank you for your participation



STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE –DROPOUT

Good morning. My name is _____, and I live in _____. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family? [Wait for response; if student is reluctant, ask “What do you like to do when you are not in school?” However, if he/she seems comfortable continue to verbal consent.

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates in Primary Education in Malawi. You were picked by chance, like in a raffle or lottery. We would like your help in this. But you do not have to take part if you do not want to.

I will ask you questions about schooling and your family, like what things your family has. While I will write down your name, I will not report what you tell me directly to your teacher, parents, or anyone else. If you would rather not answer a question, that’s all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Date: _____	Interviewer’s Name: _____	ID: _____
Time Started: _____		
Supervisor’s Name: _____	ID _____	Signature _____

Instructions to interviewer: Read each of the questions to the learner as is. You can also read the response choices (unless the question specifies that learners should not be prompted). Additionally, most questions should have only one response, which should be circled (you should circle the number corresponding with the answer choice). In some cases, a question will specify that multiple responses are allowed. In those cases, you should circle the numbers corresponding with all response options that apply. All regular texts can be read to the respondents, and all italic texts include instructions to the interviewer.

SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
110	Name of division	NED..... 1 CEED..... 2 SEED..... 4 SHED..... 6	
111	Name of District	MZIMBA NORTH..... 4 NTCHISI 12 BALAKA..... 21 THYOLO 31	
112	Name of Zone	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
113	Name of School	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
114	Name of pupil	(Surname) _____ ID: <input type="text"/> (First name) _____	<input type="text"/>
115	Sex of pupil	Boy..... 1 Girl..... 2	
116	Age of pupil in complete years	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
117	Name of Parent/Guardian	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
118	Village of Pupil	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SECTION 2: PUPIL INFORMATION

228	In what Standard did you drop out of school? <i>Kodi sukulu unasiyira kalasi iti?</i>	Standard 1..... 1 Standard 2..... 2 Standard 3 3 Standard 4..... 4	
229	When did you drop out of school? <i>Kodi sukulu unasiya liti?</i>	_____	
230	Do you have any special educational need? <i>Uli ndi vuto/chilema china chili chose?</i>	Yes..... 1 No..... 0	205

231	<p>What special educational need do you have? NOTE please test the pupil using the provided instruments? (multiple responses possible) <i>Kodi uli ndi vuto/chilema chanji?</i></p>	<p>Visual impairment..... 1 Hearing impairment..... 2 Learning difficulties. 3 Other, specify _____ 4</p>	
232	<p>Did you ever repeat any class? <i>Unayamba wabwelezako kalasi ina ili yose?</i></p>	<p>Yes..... 1 No..... 0</p>	209
233	<p>How many times did you repeat each of the following classes? Unabwelezapo kangati makalasi awa?</p>	<p>Standard 1 <input type="text"/> Standard 2 <input type="text"/> Standard 3 <input type="text"/> Standard 4 <input type="text"/></p>	
234	<p>Why did you repeat? Nchifukwa chani unabweleza?</p>	<p>I didn't understand the lessons..... 1 I didn't have textbooks..... 2 I did not have exercise books..... 3 It was hard to pay attention. 4 I didn't feel well. 5 I had to sit on the floor – no desk.. 6 Other, please specify..... 7 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
235	<p>Who do you think was responsible for your repetition? Anatengapo mbali kuti ubweleze ndi ndani?</p>	<p>Self..... 1 Teacher..... 2 Parents/Guardian..... 3 Cultural practices..... 4 Other, Specify..... 5 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	

236	<p>Why did you drop out of school? Chifukwa chani unasiyira sukulu panjira?</p>	<p>I didn't understand the lessons..... 1 I didn't have textbooks..... 2 3 I was a perpetual repeater..... 4 I didn't feel well. 5 I had to sit on the floor – no desk..6 School environment was unsafe. 7 Other, please specify..... 8 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
237	<p>Who do you think was responsible for your dropout? Anatengapo mbali kuti usiyile sukulu pajinjira ndi ndani?</p>	<p>Self..... 1 Teacher..... 2 Parents/Guardian..... 3 Cultural practices..... 4 Other, Specify..... 5 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
238	<p>Point at the picture that describes how you feel about dropping out. Hint: 1 – Happy; 2 – Neutral; 3 – Sad Pazithuzi izi ndi chiti chomwe chikusonyeza mmene umamvela za kusiyira sukulu panjira?</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	
239	<p>Did you ever miss classes? Kodi unayamba wajombako m'kalasi?</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 No..... 0</p>	
240	<p>How often did you miss classes? Unkajomba mowirikiza bwanji m'kalasi?</p>	<hr/>	
241	<p>What did you like about going to school? <i>Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i> Kodi ndi Chiyani chimene Chinkakusangalatsa panthawi imene unkapita kusukulu?</p>	<p>Seeing/making friends..... 1 Learning 2 Meeting my teacher 3 School meals..... 4 I liked everything..... 5 Other (Specify) 6 I don't like anything 7 Don't know/Refuse to answer 99</p>	216

242	<p>What did you not like about going to school? (<i>Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i></p> <p>Nanga ndi Chiyani chimene sichimakusangalatsa panthawi imene unkapita kusukulu?</p>	<p>Other children were cruel..... 1 School was boring..... 2 I didn't understand the lessons..... 3 The teacher was cruel. 4 There was no latrine or it was too dirty. 5 I had to sit on the floor – no desk..6 I couldn't see the textbooks or didn't have textbooks. 7 I was too tired. 8 I was hungry. 9 It was hard to pay attention. 10 I didn't feel well. 11 Other children fought too much... 12 Hidden costs. 13 Other, please specify..... 14 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
243	<p>How much do you think you learned at school? Mmene umawonera iweyo unkaphunzira pang'ono kapena kwambiri?</p>	<p>Nothing..... 0 Not much..... 1 A lot. 2 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
244	<p>What extra-curricular activities were you involved in during your school days? Ndi zinthu zina ziti kupertula za sukulu zomwe unkapanga masiku opita kusukulu?</p>	<p>Household chores..... 1 Farm work. 2 Fetching firewood. 3 Taking care of siblings. 4 Herding livestock. 5 Selling items at the market. 6 Piecework/ganyu for income generation. 7 Other, please specify..... 8 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
245	<p>Which of the following did you have at your home? (List the options for the student) Kodi kunyumba kwanu kunali zinthu izi?</p>	<p>Books. 1 Magazines. 2 Newspapers..... 3 Other reading materials, specify..... 4 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	

246	Did your teacher provide you with homework? Aphunzitsi amakupatsani homework?	No..... 0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	211
247	Who helped, if any, with your homework? Ankakuthandiza homework ndi ndani?	Parent/guardian..... 1 Sibling..... 2 Friend..... 3 Relative (e.g., uncle, aunt) 4 None..... 5 Other, Specify6 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99	
248	Do you have plans to go back to school? Uli ndi maganizo obwelelanso kusukulu?	Yes..... 1 No..... 0	
249	Who motivate you to go back to school? Akukulimbikitsa ndi ndani kuti upitenso kusukulu?	Friends..... 1 Parents/guardians..... 2 Teachers..... 3 Other, Specify4	

Interviewer's Observation _____

Time Ended: _____

Thank you for your participation



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE – NON REPEATER

Good morning. My name is _____, and I live in _____. I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family? [Wait for response; if student is reluctant, ask “What do you like to do when you are not in school?”] However, if he/she seems comfortable continue to verbal consent.

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates. You were picked by chance, like in a raffle or lottery. We would like your help in this. But you do not have to take part if you do not want to.

I will ask you questions about schooling and your family, like what things your family has. While I will write down your name, I will not report what you tell me directly to your teacher, parents, or anyone else. If you would rather not answer a question, that’s all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Date: _____	Interviewer’s Name: _____	ID: _____
Time Started: _____		
Supervisor’s Name: _____	ID _____	Signature _____

Instructions to interviewer: Read each of the questions to the learner as is. You can also read the response choices (unless the question specifies that learners should not be prompted). Additionally, most questions should have only one response, which should be circled (you should circle the letter corresponding with the answer choice). In some cases, a question will specify that multiple responses are allowed. In those cases, you should circle the letters corresponding with all response options that apply. All regular texts can be read to the respondents, and all italic texts include instructions to the interviewer.

SECTION I: PUPIL BACKGROUND

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
101	Name of division	NED..... 1 CEED..... 2 SEED..... 4 SHED..... 6	
102	Name of District	MZIMBA NORTH. 1 NTCHISI 12 BALAKA..... 21 THYOLO 31	
103	Name of Zone	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	
104	Name of School	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	
105	Name of Pupil	(Surname) _____ ID: <input type="text"/> (Firstname) _____	
106	Sex of Pupil	Boy 1 Girl 2	
107	Age of Pupil in complete years	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
108	Name of Parent/Guardian	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	
109	Village of Pupil	_____ ID: <input type="text"/>	
110	In what Standard are you? Kodi uli kalasi yanji?	Standard 1..... 1 Standard 2..... 2 Standard 3 3 Standard 4..... 4	
111	Do you have any special educational need? Kodi uli ndi vuto/chilema china chili chose?	Yes..... 1 No..... 0	113
112	What special educational need do you have? (multiple responses possible) Kodi uli ndi vuto/chilema chanji? NOTE please test the pupil using the provided instruments?	Visual impairment..... 1 Hearing impairment..... 2 Learning difficulties. 3 Other, specify _____ 4	

113	<p>What do you think are the factors behind your better performance in school? Kodi ndizifukwa ziti zimene zimakupangitsa kuti uzichita bwino pa maphuziro ako? (Kodi umatani kuti uzikhoza)?</p>	<p>Paying attention in class..... 1 Avoid missing classes..... 2 Support from siblings. 3 Support from parents/guardians..... 3 Studying at home..... 4 Other, specify _____.. 5 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
114	<p>What are your plans to maintain the better performance even in the higher classes? Kodi ukuchitapo Chiyani kuti upitilizebe kuchita bwino pa makalasi apatsogolo?</p>	<p>Continue paying attention in class. . 1 Avoid missing classes..... 2 Getting support from siblings..... 3 Studying at home..... 4 Other, specify _____.. 5 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
115	<p>Have you ever missed classes? Ukodi uayamba wajombako nkalasi?</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 No..... 0</p>	117
116	<p>How often do you miss classes? Umajomba kangati nkalasi?</p>	_____	
117	<p>What do you like about coming to school? <i>Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i> Kodi ndichiyani chimene chimakusangalatsa kusukulu kuno?</p>	<p>Seeing/making friends. 1 Learning 2 Meeting my teacher 3 School meals..... 4 I like everything. 5 Other (Specify) _____ 6 I don't like anything 7 Don't know/Refuse to answer 99</p>	120

118	<p>What do you not like about coming to school? <i>(Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i></p> <p>Kodi ndichani chomwe sichimakusangalatsa kuno kusukulu kuno?</p>	<p>Other children are cruel..... 1 School is boring. 2 I don't understand the lessons..... 3 The teacher is cruel..... 4 There's no latrine or it's too dirty.. 5 I have to sit on the floor – no desk. 6 I can't see the textbooks or don't have textbooks..... 7 I'm too tired. 8 I'm hungry. 9 It's hard to pay attention..... 10 I don't feel well. 11 Other children fight too much..... 12 Hidden costs 13 Other, please specify _____ 14 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
119	<p>How much do you think you learn at school? Mmene umawonera iweyo umaphunzira pang'ono kapena kwambiri</p>	<p>Nothing..... 0 Not much..... 1 A lot. 2 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
120	<p>What extra-curricular activities are you involved in at home? Ndi zinthu zina ziti kupatula za sukulu zomwe umapanga kunyumba?</p>	<p>Household chores..... 1 Farm work. 2 Fetching firewood. 3 Taking care of siblings..... 4 Herding livestock. 5 Selling items at the market. 6 Piecework/ganyu for income generation. 7 Other, please specify _____ . 8 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	

121	Which of the following do you have at home? (List the options for the student) Kodi kunyumba kwanu kuli zinthu izi?	Books..... 1 Magazines..... 2 Newspapers..... 3 Other reading materials, specify _____ ... 4 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99	
122	Does your teacher provide you with homework? Kodi aphunzitsi amakupatsani homework?	No..... 0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99	END
123	Who helps you at home with your homework? Kodi kunyumba kwanu amakuthandiza ndani homework?	Parent/guardian..... 1 Sibling..... 2 Friend..... 3 Relative (e.g., uncle, aunt) 4 None..... 5 Other, Specify _____ 6 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99	

Interviewer's observation:

Time

Ended: _____

Thank you for your participation!



STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE –DROPOUT

Good morning. My name is _____, and I live in _____. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family? [Wait for response; if student is reluctant, ask “What do you like to do when you are not in school?” However, if he/she seems comfortable continue to verbal consent.

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates in Primary Education in Malawi. You were picked by chance, like in a raffle or lottery. We would like your help in this. But you do not have to take part if you do not want to.

I will ask you questions about schooling and your family, like what things your family has. While I will write down your name, I will not report what you tell me directly to your teacher, parents, or anyone else. If you would rather not answer a question, that's all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Date: _____	Interviewer's Name: _____	ID: _____
Time Started: _____		
Supervisor's Name: _____	ID _____	Signature _____

Instructions to interviewer: Read each of the questions to the learner as is. You can also read the response choices (unless the question specifies that learners should not be prompted). Additionally, most questions should have only one response, which should be circled (you should circle the number corresponding with the answer choice). In some cases, a question will specify that multiple responses are allowed. In those cases, you should circle the numbers corresponding with all response options that apply. All regular texts can be read to the respondents, and all italic texts include instructions to the interviewer.

SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
119	Name of division	NED..... 1 CEED..... 2 SEED..... 4 SHED..... 6	
120	Name of District	MZIMBA NORTH. 4 NTCHISI 12 BALAKA..... 21 THYOLO 31	
121	Name of Zone	_____ ID: <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>
122	Name of School	_____ ID: <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/>

123	Name of pupil	(Surname) _____ ID: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> (First name) _____
124	Sex of pupil	Boy..... 1 Girl..... 2
125	Age of pupil in complete years	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
126	Name of Parent/Guardian	_____ ID: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
127	Village of Pupil	_____ ID: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

SECTION 2: PUPIL INFORMATION

250	In what Standard did you drop out of school? Kodi sukulu unasiyira kalasi iti?	Standard 1..... 1 Standard 2..... 2 Standard 3 3 Standard 4..... 4	
251	When did you drop out of school? Kodi sukulu unasiya liti?	_____	
252	Do you have any special educational need? Uli ndi vuto/chilema china chili chose?	Yes..... 1 No..... 0	205
253	What special educational need do you have? NOTE please test the pupil using the provided instruments? (multiple responses possible) Kodi uli ndi vuto/chilema chanji?	Visual impairment..... 1 Hearing impairment..... 2 Learning difficulties..... 3 Other, specify _____ 4	
254	Did you ever repeat any class? Unayamba wabwelezako kalasi ina ili yose?	Yes..... 1 No..... 0	209
255	How many times did you repeat each of the following classes? Unabwelezapo kangati makalasi awa?	Standard 1 <input type="text"/> Standard 2 <input type="text"/> Standard 3 <input type="text"/> Standard 4 <input type="text"/>	

256	<p>Why did you repeat? Nchifukwa chani unabweleza?</p>	<p>I didn't understand the lessons..... 1 I didn't have textbooks..... 2 I did not have exercise books.....3 It was hard to pay attention. 4 I didn't feel well. 5 I had to sit on the floor – no desk..6 Other, please specify.....7 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	
257	<p>Who do you think was responsible for your repetition? Anatengapo mbali kuti ubweleze ndi ndani?</p>	<p>Self. 1 Teacher..... 2 Parents/Guardian..... 3 Cultural practices..... 4 Other, Specify.....5 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	
258	<p>Why did you drop out of school? Chifukwa chani unasiyira sukulu panjira?</p>	<p>I didn't understand the lessons..... 1 I didn't have textbooks..... 2 3 I was a perpetual repeater..... 4 I didn't feel well. 5 I had to sit on the floor – no desk..6 School environment was unsafe. 7 Other, please specify.....8 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	
259	<p>Who do you think was responsible for your dropout? Anatengapo mbali kuti usiyile sukulu pajinjira ndi ndani?</p>	<p>Self. 1 Teacher..... 2 Parents/Guardian..... 3 Cultural practices..... 4 Other, Specify.....5 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	
260	<p>Point at the picture that describes how you feel about dropping out. Hint: 1 – Happy; 2 – Neutral; 3 – Sad Pazithuzi izi ndi chiti chomwe chikusonyeza mmene umamvela za kusiyira sukulu panjira?</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p>	
261	<p>Did you ever miss classes? Kodi unayamba wajombako m'kalasi?</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 No..... 0</p>	

262	<p>How often did you miss classes? Unkajomba mowirikiza bwanji m'kalasi?</p>		
263	<p>What did you like about going to school? <i>Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i> Kodi ndi Chiyani chimene Chinkakusangalatsa panthawi imene unkapita kusukulu?</p>	<p>Seeing/making friends..... 1 Learning 2 Meeting my teacher 3 School meals..... 4 I liked everything..... 5 Other (Specify) 6 I don't like anything 7 Don't know/Refuse to answer 99</p>	216
264	<p>What did you not like about going to school? <i>(Don't read these options to the learner. If the learner is slow to respond, wait up to 8 seconds before asking "Are there things you like about coming to school? If so, what are they?" (The learner may not give these exact responses, but circle all those that are close to what he/she indicate. Select all that apply; multiple responses possible):</i> Nanga ndi Chiyani chimene sichimakusangalatsa panthawi imene unkapita kusukulu?</p>	<p>Other children were cruel..... 1 School was boring..... 2 I didn't understand the lessons..... 3 The teacher was cruel. 4 There was no latrine or it was too dirty. 5 I had to sit on the floor – no desk.. 6 I couldn't see the textbooks or didn't have textbooks. 7 I was too tired. 8 I was hungry. 9 It was hard to pay attention. 10 I didn't feel well. 11 Other children fought too much... 12 Hidden costs. 13 Other, please specify..... 14 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	
265	<p>How much do you think you learned at school? Mmene umawonera iweyo unkapanzira pang'ono kapena kwambiri?</p>	<p>Nothing..... 0 Not much..... 1 A lot. 2 Don't know/Refuse to answer..... 99</p>	

266	<p>What extra-curricular activities were you involved in during your school days? Ndi zinthu zina ziti kupatula za sukulu zomwe unkapanga masiku opita kusukulu?</p>	<p>Household chores..... 1 Farm work.2 Fetching firewood.3 Taking care of siblings.4 Herding livestock.5 Selling items at the market.6 Piecework/ganyu for income generation.7 Other, please specify.....8 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	
267	<p>Which of the following did you have at your home? (List the options for the student) Kodi kunyumba kwanu kunali zinthu izi?</p>	<p>Books. 1 Magazines.2 Newspapers.....3 Other reading materials, specify.....4 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	
268	<p>Did your teacher provide you with homework? Aphunzitsi amakupatsani homework?</p>	<p>No..... 0 Yes..... 1 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	211
269	<p>Who helped, if any, with your homework? Ankakuthandiza homework ndi ndani?</p>	<p>Parent/guardian..... 1 Sibling.2 Friend.....3 Relative (e.g., uncle, aunt)4 None.5 Other, Specify6 Don't know/Refuse to answer.....99</p>	
270	<p>Do you have plans to go back to school? Uli ndi maganizo obwelelanso kusukulu?</p>	<p>Yes..... 1 No.....0</p>	
271	<p>Who motivate you to go back to school? Akukulimbikitsa ndi ndani kuti upitenso kusukulu?</p>	<p>Friends. 1 Parents/guardians.2 Teachers.....3 Other, Specify.....4</p>	

Interviewer's Observation _____

Time Ended: _____

Thank you for your participation



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE –REPEATERS

Good morning/afternoon. My name is _____, and I live in _____. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family?

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates. You were picked by chance, like in a raffle or lottery. We would like your help in this. But you do not have to take part if you do not want to.

I will ask you questions about your child (**Name**), the school to which your child goes and other educational issues. While I will write down your name, I will not disclose what you tell me directly to teaching staff at the school, community leaders or anyone else. If you would rather not answer a question, that's all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Date: _____ Interviewer's Name: _____ ID: _____

Time Started: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ ID _____ Signature _____

SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
128	Name of division	NED 1 CEED 2 SEED 4 SHED 6	
129	Name of District	MZIMBA NORTH..... 4 NTCHISI.....12 BALAKA.....21 THYOLO..... 31	
130	Name of Zone	_____ ID:	<input data-bbox="1305 647 1385 730" type="text"/> <input data-bbox="1385 647 1479 730" type="text"/>
131	Name of School	_____ ID:	<input data-bbox="1305 730 1385 813" type="text"/> <input data-bbox="1385 730 1479 813" type="text"/>
132	Name of Parent/Guardian	(surname) _____ ID: (first name) _____	<input data-bbox="1305 813 1385 920" type="text"/> <input data-bbox="1385 813 1479 920" type="text"/>
133	Village of Pupil	_____ ID:	<input data-bbox="1305 920 1385 1003" type="text"/> <input data-bbox="1385 920 1479 1003" type="text"/>
134	Name of pupil (Reference Child)	(surname) _____ ID: (first name) _____	<input data-bbox="1305 1003 1385 1111" type="text"/> <input data-bbox="1385 1003 1479 1111" type="text"/>
135	Sex of pupil	Boy 1 Girl 2	
136	Class of pupil	Standard 1..... 1 Standard 2..... 2 Standard 3 3 Standard 4..... 4	

SECTION 2: RESPONDENT'S HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE

Person's serial number in household	Would you please provide full names of all persons who are part of this household, beginning with the Head of the Household? Tandiwuzani maina anthu amene amakhala pakhomu pano?	What is [NAME'S] sex? 1 - female 2 - Male Kodi (dzina) ndi wamwamuna/wamkazi?	What is [NAME'S] relationship to the head of household? Kodi pali ubale wanji pakati pa wankulu wa khomolino ndi (dzina)?	How old is [NAME]? Kodi (dzina) ali ndi zaka zingati?	What was/is the highest level of education completed by [NAME]? Kodi (dzina) anafika pati ndi sukulu yake?	Did [NAME] attend school this year? Kodi (dzina) amapita ku sukulu? 0- no (skip to 211) 1- yes	What level of school did he or she complete this year? Kodi (dzina) anali kalasi iti chaka chatha?	Did he or she repeat this year? 0 - no 1 - yes	Can this person read? 0 - no 1 - yes Kodi (dzina) wabwel ezako kalasi chaka chino?	For persons 10 years or above What is [NAME]'s source of income? Kodi (dzina) amatani kuti apeze ndalama?
200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210
01										
02										
03										
04										
05										

06										
07										
08										
09										
10										
11										
12										

203 CODES FOR RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD
1=HEAD
2=SPOUSE OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
3=CHILD OF HEAD
4=GRANDCHILD OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
5=NIECE/NEPHEW OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
6=PARENT OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
7=SIBLING OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
8=SON/DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF HEAD
9=BROTHER/SISTER-IN-LAW OF HEAD

10=GRANDFATHER/GRD.MOTHER OF HEAD
11=FATHER/MATHER-IN-LAW OF HEAD
12=OTHER RELATIVE
13=NON-RELATIVE

205 CODES FOR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION
1=NONE
2=LESS THAN PRIMARY
3=PRIMARY LEVEL
4=LESS THAN SECONDARY
5=SECONDARY
6=VOCATIONAL TRAINING
7=UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE
8=UNIVERSITY POST-GRADUATE
9=OTHER

207 CODES FOR LEVEL OF SCHOOL ATTENDED THIS YEAR
1 = STANDARD 1
2 = STANDARD 2
3 = STANDARD 3
4 = STANDARD 4
5 = STANDARD 5
6 = STANDARD 6
7 = STANDARD 7
8 = STANDARD 8
9 = JUNIOR FORM 1
10 = JUNIOR FORM 2
11 = SENIOR FORM 3
12 = SENIOR FORM 4
13 =VOCATIONAL TRAINING
14 =UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE
15 =UNIVERSITY POST-GRADUATE
16 =OTHER

1 = FARMING
2 = ARTISAN
3 = BUSINESS
4 = GANYU/LABOURER
5 = SALARIED EMPLOYEMENT
6 = SCHOOLING
7 = UNEMPLOYED
8 = OTHER SPECIFY

SECTION 3: OWNERSHIP OF ASSETS

301. Which of the following assets does the household own? [multiple answers are allowed]				
Type of Asset	Quantity	Duration of ownership 1= Less than six months 2=From six to twelve months 3= One to two years 4= More than two years	Who Controls or owns the asset? 1=Husband 2=Wife 3= both 4=Other (specify)	Means of acquiring asset (Use these codes): 1=bought (acquired) through PWP cash transfer money, 2=Use of remittances, 3=Inherited (given) from parents, 4=given by a relative, 5=bought by children, 6=acquired through HH own generated income 7=Dowry, 8=other(specify)
Brick house with grass thatch				
Brick house with iron sheets				

Mud house with grass thatch				
Mud house with iron sheets				
Radio				
Refrigerator				
Cows				
Goats				
Sheep				
Chickens/ducks				
Land (Please covert to Hectares)				
Plough/Ridger				
Hoe				
Bicycle				
Wheel barrow				
Television				
Cell phone				
Ox cart				
Sofa sets				
Table chairs				
Others (specify)				

SECTION 4: PUPIL REPETITION

<p>40 1</p>	<p>Is it common for children in your family to repeat classes?</p> <p>Kodi ana a m’banja mwanu muno amabwelezabweleza?</p>	<p>No.....0 Yes.....1 Don’t know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	
<p>40 2</p>	<p>Why do you think (NAME) repeated a class?</p> <p>Mukuganiza kuti nchifukwa Chiyani (dzina) akubweleza?</p>		
<p>40 3</p>	<p>Do you think teachers contribute to pupil repetition?</p> <p>Kodi mukuganiza kuti aphunzitsi amachititsa kapena kutengapo mbali kuti ophunzira abweleze kalasi?</p>	<p>No.....0 Yes.....1 Don’t know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	<p>405</p>
<p>40 4</p>	<p>If yes, please explain how?</p> <p>Amatenga mbali bwanji?</p>		
<p>40 5</p>	<p>Who else do you think is responsible for pupil repetition?</p> <p>Kodi ndi anthu kapena magulu ena ati amene amatengaponso mbali kuti ophunzira abwereze kalasi?</p>	<p>Parents/guardians.....1 SMC/PTA members2 Mother groups3 Community leaders.....4 CSOs5 Other (specify)......6</p>	
<p>40 6</p>	<p>Please explain any of the above</p> <p>Amatenga mbali bwanji?</p>		

407	<p>How did (NAME) feel when he/she was told to repeat a class? Kodi (dzina) anamva bwanji pamene anauzidwa zoti abweleze?</p>	<p>Sad.....1 Good2 Indifferent3 Don't know.....4</p>	
408	<p>How did you feel when you heard about (NAME's) repetition case? Nanga inuyo munamva bwanji pamene (dzina) anauzidwa zoti abweleze?</p>	<p>Sad.....1 Good2 Indifferent3 Don't know.....4</p>	
409	<p>What are you doing now to help (NAME) succeed in school? Panopa mukuchitapo chani kuti (dzina) asabwelezenso?</p>	<p>Nothing.....1 Counselling.....2 Providing complementary basic education3 Other (Specify).....4 Don't know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	
410	<p>How often do you spend helping (Name) do his/her homework/ reading/writing exercises each week? Kodi (dzina) mumamuthandiza mochuluka bwanji pa ntchito zakusukulu?</p>	<p>Always1 Occasionally2 Never3</p>	

<p>41 1</p>	<p>At the school where your child goes, what are the important factors that contribute to pupils' repetition?</p> <p>Kodi ku sukulu komwe (dzina) amapita, ndi zinthu ziti zomwe zimapangitsa kuti ana azibwelezabweleza makalasi?</p>	<p>Classes too large..... 1 No learners textbooks.....2 There's not enough time in the school day3 Learners don't understand the language of instruction4 There are too many subjects in the curriculum for the time available.....5 Teachers don't have access to the teaching materials they need6 There are too many languages for learners to learn at one time.....7 Learners shouldn't have to learn English so early.....8 Learners don't attend school regularly 9 Teachers don't have enough training 10 Teachers don't understand English enough to be able to teach it..... 11 Learners do not have enough to eat 12 Learners are taking care of younger siblings or helping with work..... 13 Lack of school resources..... 14 Other, (Specify)..... 15 Don't know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	
<p>41 2</p>	<p>What has the SMC/PTA done to help reduce class repetition?</p> <p>Kodi a SMC/PTA akuchitapo chani pothandiza kuti ophunzira asamabwelezebweleze makalasi?</p>		
<p>41 3</p>	<p>What activities do mother groups do to help reduce repetition?</p> <p>Kodi a mother group amachitapo chani pothandiza kuti ophunzira asamabweleze makalasi?</p>		
<p>41 4</p>	<p>In your opinion, how can government reduce pupils' repetition in schools?</p> <p>Mukuganiza kuti boma lingachitepo chani pochepetsa kubwelezabweleza kwa ophunzira makalasi?</p>		

STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE - ATTRITION

Good morning. My name is _____, and I live in _____. I Can you tell me a little about yourself and your family?

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates. You were picked by chance, like in a raffle or lottery. We would like your help in this. But you do not have to take part if you do not want to.

I will ask you questions about your child (**Name**), the school to which your child goes and other educational issues. While I will write down your name, I will not disclose what you tell me directly to teaching staff at the school, community leaders or anyone else. If you would rather not answer a question, that is all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Date: _____ Interviewer's Name: _____ ID: _____

Time Started: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ ID _____ Signature _____

SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
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137	Name of division	NED 1 CEED 2 SEED 4 SHED 6	
138	Name of District	MZIMBA NORTH..... 4 NTCHISI 12 BALAKA..... 21 THYOLO..... 31	
139	Name of Zone	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
140	Name of School	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
141	Name of Parent/Guardian	(surname) _____ ID: (first name) _____ -	<input type="text"/>
142	Village of Pupil	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
143	Name of pupil (Reference Child)	(Surname) _____ ID: (first name) _____	<input type="text"/>
144	Sex of pupil	Boy 1 Girl 2	
145	Class of pupil	Standard 1 1 Standard 2..... 2 Standard 3 3 Standard 4..... 4	

SECTION 2: RESPONDENT'S HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE

Person's serial number in household	Would you please provide full names of all persons who are part of this household, beginning with the Head of the Household? Tandiwuzani maina a anthu amene amakhala pakhomopano?	What is [NAME'S] sex? 01 - female 02 - male Kodi (dzina) ndi wa mwamuna/wa mkazi?	What is [NAME's] relationship to the head of household? Kodi pali ubale wanji pakati pa wankulu wa nkhomolino ndi (dzina)?	How old is [NAME]? Kodi (dzina) ali ndi zaka zingati?	What was/is the highest level of education completed by [NAME]? Kodi (dzina) anafika pati ndi sukulu yake?	Did [NAME] attend school this year? Kodi (dzina) amapita ku sukulu?	What level of school did he or she complete last year? Kodi (dzina) anali kalasi iti chaka chatha?	Did he or she repeat this year? Kodi (dzina) wabwel ezako kalasi chaka chino?	Can this person read? Kodi (dzina) amadzi wa kuweringa?	For persons 10 years or above What is [NAME]'s source of income? Kodi (dzina) amata ni kuti apeze ndalam a?
200	201	202	203	204	205	206	207	208	209	210
01		_ _	_	_ _	_	_	_ _	_	_	_
02		_ _	_	_ _	_	_	_ _	_	_	_
03		_ _	_	_ _	_	_	_ _	_	_	_
04		_ _	_	_ _	_	_	_ _	_	_	_
05		_ _	_	_ _	_	_	_ _	_	_	_

06										
07										
08										
09										
10										
11										
12										

203 CODES FOR RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD
1=HEAD
2=SPOUSE OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
3=CHILD OF HEAD
4=GRANDCHILD OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
5=NIECE/NEPHEW OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
6=PARENT OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
7=SIBLING OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
8=SON/DAUGHTER-IN-LAW OF HEAD

9=BROTHER/SISTER-IN-LAW OF HEAD
10=GRANDFATHER/GRD.MOTHER OF HEAD
11=FATHER/MATHER-IN-LAW OF HEAD
12=OTHER RELATIVE
13=NON-RELATIVE

205 CODES FOR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION	
1=NONE	
2=LESS THAN PRIMARY	
3=PRIMARY LEVEL	
4=LESS THAN SECONDARY	
5=SECONDARY	
6=VOCATIONAL TRAINING	
7=UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE	
8=UNIVERSITY POST-GRADUATE	

207 CODES FOR LEVEL OF SCHOOL ATTENDED THIS YEAR	
1 = STANDARD 1	
2 = STANDARD 2	
3 = STANDARD 3	
4 = STANDARD 4	
5 = STANDARD 5	
6 = STANDARD 6	
7 = STANDARD 7	
8 = STANDARD 8	
9 = JUNIOR FORM 1	
10 = JUNIOR FORM 2	
11 = SENIOR FORM 3	
12 = SENIOR FORM 4	
13 =VOCATIONAL TRAINING	
14 =UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE	
15 =UNIVERSITY POST-GRADUATE	
16 =OTHER	

210 SOURCE OF INCOME CODES	
1= OTHER	
2 = ARTISAN	
3 = BUSINESS	
4 = GANYU/LABOURER	
5 = SALARIED EMPLOYEMENT	
6 = SCHOOLING	
7 = UNEMPLOYED	
8 = OTHER SPECIFY	

SECTION 3: OWNERSHIP OF ASSETS

301. Which of the following assets does the household own? [multiple answers are allowed]				
Type of Asset	Quantity	Duration of ownership 1= Less than six months 2=From six to twelve months 3= One to two years 4= More than two years	Who Controls or owns the asset? 1=Husband 2=Wife 3= both 4=Other (specify)	Means of acquiring asset (Use these codes): 1=bought (acquired) through PWP cash transfer money, 2=Use of remittances, 3=Inherited (given) from parents, 4=given by a relative, 5=bought by children, 6=acquired through HH own generated income 7=Dowry, 8=Other (specify)
Brick house with grass thatch				
Brick house with iron sheets				
Mud house with grass thatch				
Mud house with iron sheets				
Radio				
Refrigerator				
Cows				
Goats				
Sheep				
Chickens/ducks				
Land (Please covert to Hectares)				
Plough/Ridger				
Hoe				
Bicycle				
Wheel barrow				
Television				
Cell phone				
Ox cart				
Sofa sets				
Table chairs				
Others (specify)				

SECTION 4: PUPIL ATTRITION

401	<p>Is it common for children in your family to drop out of school? Kodi ana a m’banja mwanu muno amakonda kusiyira sukulu panjira?</p>	<p>No.....0 Yes.....1 Don’t know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	
402	<p>Why do you think (NAME) dropped out of class? N’chifukwa chani (dzina) adaleka sukulu?</p>		
403	<p>Do you think teachers contribute to drop out of school? Kodi mukuganiza kuti aphunzitsi amatengapo mbali/amachititsa ophunzira asiye sukulu?</p>	<p>No.0 Yes.....1 Don’t know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	405
404	<p>If yes, please explain how? Amatenga mbali bwanji?</p>		
405	<p>Who else is responsible for dropping out of school of children? (multiple responses possible) Kodi ndi anthu/magulu ati omwe anatengaponso mbali kuti ophunzira asiye sukulu?</p>	<p>Parents/guardians.....1 SMC/PTA members2 Mother groups3 Community leaders.....4 CSOs5 Other (specify).....6</p>	
406	<p>Please explain any of the above Amatenga mbali bwanji?</p>		
407	<p>How did you feel when you heard about (NAME’s) dropping out of school? Mudamva bwanji muntimamo pamene munamva kuti (dzina) wasiya/akusiya sukulu?</p>	<p>Sad.....1 Good2 Indifferent3 Don’t know.....4</p>	
408	<p>What are you doing now to help (NAME) to go back to school? Panopa mukuchitapo Chiyani kuti (dzina) abwelelenso kusukulu?</p>	<p>Nothing.....1 Counselling.....2 Providing complementary basic education3 Preparing for readmission4 Don’t know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	

<p>40 9</p>	<p>At the school where your child was attending, what are the factors that contribute to pupils' dropout?</p> <p>(multiple responses possible)</p> <p>Poyang'anila sukulu yomwe (dzina) ankaphunzira, ndi ziti zomwe mukuganiza kuti zimachititsa kuti ophunzira asiye sukulu?</p>	<p>Classes too large..... 1 No learners textbooks.....2 There's not enough time in the school day3 Learners don't understand the language of instruction4 There are too many subjects in the curriculum for the time available.....5 Teachers don't have access to the teaching materials they need6 There are too many languages for learners to learn at one time.....7 Learners shouldn't have to learn English so early.....8 Learners don't attend school regularly 9 Teachers don't have enough training10 Teachers don't understand English enough to be able to teach it..... 11 Learners do not have enough to eat(SFP) 12 Learners are taking care of younger siblings or helping with work..... 13 Lack of school resources..... 14 Other, (Specify)..... 15 Don't know/Refuse to answer. 99</p>	
<p>41 0</p>	<p>What has the SMC/PTA done to help pupils stay in school?</p> <p>Kodi a SMC/PTA akuchitapo chani kuti ophunzira asasiyire sukulu panjira?</p>		
<p>411</p>	<p>What activities do mother groups do to help pupils stay in school?</p> <p>Kodi a mother group akuchitapo chani kuti ophunzira asasiyire sukulu panjira?</p>		

**STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN MALAWI**

HEAD TEACHER IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

Good morning. My name is _____, and I am working for D R Consulting Services.

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates in Primary Education in Malawi.

I will ask you questions about school, your work and your students. While I will write down your name, I will not report what you tell me directly to your supervisor or officials from USAID or MoEST. If you would rather not answer a question, that is all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Name of Head teacher-----SEX:

Duration at School.....

Date: _____	Interviewer's Name: _____	ID: _____
Time Started: _____	Supervisor's Name: _____	Signature _____
_____	ID _____	_____

Note: Ask the teacher to have attendance and progress record books with him/her for this interview

SECTION A: PUPIL REPETITION

1. What is the average repetition rate in lower classes (Standards 1 -4) at this school?
Mukuganiza kuti pafupifupi ndi ana angati amene amabweleza kalasi la 1 mpaka 4 pasukulu pano?

2. What do you think is the rationale for repetition?
Kodi mukuganiza kuti ndi chifukwa chani chimapangitsa kwenikweni kuti ana azibweleza?

- i. *Probe if inability to learn due to poor attendance, poor quality and relevance of teaching are reasons for pupil repetition.*
 - ii. *Probe reasons behind poor attendance, the quality and relevance of teaching*
3. How do you determine whether the students must repeat or not?
Kodi ganizo loti mwana uyu abweze kapena ayi limabwela bwanji?
4. Suggest ways of overcoming repetition in lower classes at this school.
Ndi njira ziti zomwe mukuganiza kuti zingathetse kubwelezabweleza kwa ophunzira amakalasi 1-4 pasukulu pano?
5. What should be done to reduce repetition in lower classes (Standards 1 -4) in Malawi?
Kodi ngati dziko tingatani kuti tichepetse kubwelezabweleza kwa ophunzira amu standard 1-4?
6. What learning outcomes should a:
Kodi ndi zizindikiro ziti zomwe ophunzira wa:
 - a. Standard 1 learner is able to display to be promoted to Standard 2?
 - b. Standard 2 learner be able to display to be promoted to Standard 3?
 - c. Standard 3 learner be able to display to be promoted to Standard 4?
 - d. Standard 4 learner be able to display to be promoted to Standard 5?

SECTION B: PUPIL DROPOUT

7. What is the average dropout rate in lower classes (Standards 1 -4) at this school?
Ndi pafupifupi ophunzira angati amene amasiya sukulu pajira m'sitandade 1-4?
8. What do you think are the reasons for students' dropping-out of school? (*Probe if repetition is an issue, and how?*)
Mukuganiza kuti kwenikweni ndi zifukwa ziti zimapangitsa kuti ophunzira azisiyira sukulu panjira?
9. Who do you think makes decisions on pupil attrition?
Mukuganiza kuti ndi ndani amene amapanga chiganizo choti ophunzira asiyire sukulu panjira?
10. What should be done to reduce dropout in lower classes at this school?
Tingatani kuti tichepetse kusiyira sukulu panjira kwa ophunzira mmakalasi ang'ono ang'ono (standard 1-4)?
11. What should be done to reduce dropout in lower classes in Malawi?
Ngati dziko mukuona kuti tingatani kuti tichepetse kusiyira sukulu panjira kwa ophunzira?
12. Which classes are pupils more likely to drop out of school? Explain.
Ndi makalasi ati omwe ophunzira amakonda kusiyira sukulu panjira? Nenani zifukwa zake?

Time Ended: _____

Thank you for your participation!



Study on Pupil Attrition and Repetition in Primary Education in Malawi

Teacher Interview Questionnaire

Good morning. My name is _____, and I am working with D R Consulting Services on this study on Pupil Attrition and Repetition in Primary Education in Malawi.

Verbal Consent:

Let me tell you why I am here today. USAID in support of the Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is conducting a study to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates.

I will ask you questions about school, your work and your students. While I will write down your name, I will not report what you tell me directly to your head teacher or officials from USAID or MoEST. If you would rather not answer a question, that's all right. Do you have any questions? Are you ready to get started?

Check box for verbal consent:

Date: _____ Interviewer's Name: _____ ID: _____

Time Started: _____ Time Ended: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____ ID _____
Signature _____

Time Started: _____ Time Ended: _____

Note: Ask the teacher to have attendance and progress record books with him/her for this interview.

Instructions to interviewer: *Read each of the questions to the teacher as is. You can also read the response choices (unless the question specifies that teachers should not be prompted). Additionally, most questions should have only one response, which should be circled (you should circle the letter corresponding with the answer choice). In some cases, a question will specify that multiple responses are allowed. In those cases, you should circle the letters corresponding with all response options that apply. All regular texts can be read to the respondents, and all italic texts include instructions to the interviewer.*

SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION

NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
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NO.	QUESTIONS AND SORTERS	CODING CATEGORIES	SKIP TO
146	Date of Interview:		
147	Name of Interviewer	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
148	Name of division	NED1 CEED2 SEED4 SHED6	
149	Name of District	MZIMBA NORTH.....4 NTCHISI.....12 BALAKA.....21 THYOLO.....31	
150	Name of Zone	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
151	Name of School	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
152	Name of Teacher	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
153	Sex of Teacher	Male1 Female2	
154	Age of Teacher in complete years	<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
155	Name of Supervisor	_____ ID:	<input type="text"/>
156	Signature of Supervisor and Date		

SECTION 2: TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

272	What is your highest academic qualification?	JCE.....1 MSCE.....2 Diploma3 Other (Specify).....4 Don't know/Refused to answer ... 99	
273	How many years have you been teaching? (Don't know/Refuse to answer = 99)	_____	
274	Teaching Class?	Standard 11 Standard 22 Standard 33 Standard 44	

275	How many years have you been teaching in this class school?	_____	
276	How many years have you been teaching in this school? (Don't know/Refuse to answer = 99)	_____	
277	Are you a trained teacher?	Yes.....1 No.....0	115
278	How many years have you been teaching as a trained teacher? (Don't know/Refuse to answer = 99)	_____	
279	If you are not a trained teacher, what is your teaching status?	Voluntary teacher.....1 Student teacher.....2 Teaching assistant.....3 Other (specify).....4 Don't know/Refused to answer ... 99	
280	How much do you think you learned at school?	Nothing.....0 Not much.....1 A lot.....2 Don't know/Refuse to answer. 99	

SECTION 3: CLASSROOM BACKGROUND INFORMATION

301	How many pupils are enrolled in your class?	Boys: _____ Girls: _____ Total: _____			
302	How many pupils have special educational needs in your class?	Boys: _____ Girls: _____ Total: _____			
303	Is the teacher regularly maintaining an attendance register? (Check attendance register and record your observations).	Yes.....1 No.....0	305		
304	If the teacher is maintaining an attendance register, make one "X" per column below for the approximate number of absences during the third, sixth and ninth weeks of Term 2 (For any instances where numbers are not available, write – 99):	Approximate number of absences	A –Third Week of Term 2	B - Sixth Week of Term 2	C – Ninth Week of Term 2
		0 = 0			
		1 – 15			
		16 - 30			
		31 - 50			
		51- 75			

305	Is the teacher regularly maintaining performance record book? (Check grade book and record your observations).	Yes.....1 No0
-----	--	------------------------

SECTION 4: PUPIL REPETITION

401	How many pupils are repeaters in your class?	Boys: _____ Girls: _____ Total: _____	
402	What do you think is the main reason pupils have to repeat a standard?		
403	How is the decision on repetition made?		
404	How does the child respond when told to repeat a class?		
405	As a teacher, how do you feel when a pupil repeats a class?		
406	Who do you think is responsible for pupil's drop outs?	Teachers.1 Parents2 Students3 All the above.....4 Other (specify).....5	
407	What support would you have loved to be given to repeaters?	Moral support.....1 Academic support2 Material support3 Other (specify).....5 Don't know/Refuse to answer. 99	
408	Have you ever heard about the automatic promotion policy?	Yes.....1 No0	410
409	What do you think about the automatic promotion policy?		
410	What do you think about repeaters' performance in your class?		

411	What do you think is the relationship between repetition and dropping out of school?		
412	In your view, what role do parents play in the repetition of their children?		
413	What do you think is the relationship between a child's disability and repetition of a class?		
414	What challenges do you face in handling repeaters?		
415	Suggest ways of overcoming the challenges mentioned in (414) above.		
416	Do you think the teacher's teaching strategies can contribute towards repetition?	Yes.....1 No0	305
417	If yes, how do they contribute towards repetition?		
418	How can the issues mentioned in question 417 be addressed?		
419	Do you think the teacher's assessment strategies can contribute towards repetition?	Yes.....1 No0	421
420	If yes, how do they contribute towards repetition?		
421	How can the issues mentioned in question 39 be addressed?		

SECTION 5: PUPIL ATTRITION

501	How many pupils dropped out in your class last school year?	Boys: _____ Girls: _____ Total: _____	
502	What do you think is the main reason pupils drop out of school?		
503	As a teacher, how do you feel when a pupil drops out of school?		

504	Who do you think is responsible for pupil's attrition?	Teachers.....1 Parents.....2 Students.....3 All the above.....4 Other (specify).....5	
505	Who decides whether a pupil should drop out from school?	Pupils themselves.....1 Parents/guardians.....2 Teacher.....3 Other (specify).....4 Don't know/Refuse to answer. 99	
506	What support would you have loved to be given to pupils who decide to drop out from school?	Moral support.....1 Academic support.....2 Material support.....3 Other (specify).....5 Don't know/Refuse to answer. 99	
507	In your view, what role do parents play in the attrition of their children?		
508	What do you think is the relationship between a child's disability and dropping out of school?		
509	Are there activities that you have done to help pupils stay in school?	Yes.....1 No.....0	511
510	What are the activities that you have done to help pupils stay in school?		
511	Who else has tried to help pupils stay in school?	Parents/guardians.....1 SMC/PTA members.....2 Mother groups.....3 Community leaders.....4 CSOs.....5 Other (specify).....6	
512	In which language do you think most of the learners prefer to be taught in? (Don't know/Refuse to answer = 99):	In Chichewa.....1 In English.....2 In Citumbuka.....3 In Ciao.....4 Other (specify).....5	

513	In which language do you teach them?	In Chichewa.....1 In English.....2 In Citumbuka.....3 In Ciao.....4 Other (specify).....5	
514	Do you think the teacher's teaching strategies can contribute towards attrition?	Yes.....1 No.....0	517
515	If yes, how do they contribute towards attrition?		
516	How can the issues mentioned in question 52 be addressed?		
517	Do you think the teacher's assessment strategies can contribute towards attrition?	Yes.....1 No.....0	601
518	If yes, how do they contribute towards attrition?		
519	How can the issues mentioned in question 54 be addressed?		

SECTION 6: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

601	Does your school have a functioning Parent Teacher Association?	Yes.....1 No.....0	
602	How often does it meet in a term?		
603	Do you have meetings with groups of parents of your pupils (outside of SMC/PTA meetings) to discuss repetition and attrition issues?	Yes.....1 No.....0	
604	How often do you have meetings with groups of your pupils' parents to discuss	Issues of attrition? _____ Issues of repetition? _____	
605	What topics do you discuss with the parents?	On issues of attrition? _____ On issues of repetition? _____	
606	Do you ever invite parents to participate in their pupils' classrooms or become engaged in extra-curricular activities?	Yes.....1 No.....0	

Time Interview Ended:.....

Thank you for your participation



PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAWI

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW: STAKEHOLDERS

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is _____. I am working with D R Consulting Services. We are asking some questions on pupil attrition and repetition in primary education in Malawi. The purpose is to understand the driving factors that are leading to high repetition and dropout rates that are persistently seen in the Malawian primary education sector. I therefore request to interview you. The interview will take about 45 minutes. All the information collected will be held in confidence.

A. PERSONAL DETAILS

Please record the following information:

1. Date of Interview
2. Name of Interviewer
3. District/Institution
4. Gender of Interviewee
5. Occupation of Interviewee
6. Role in Education Sector

B. ISSUES OF REPETITION

7. What do you think are the main reasons for pupil repetition in Malawi?
8. How would you describe the relationship between pupil academic performance (achievement of learning outcomes) and repetition?
9. How would you describe the relationship between class attendance and repetition?

10. From your observations, which learners (by standard 1 - 4) are most likely to:
 - i. Experience poor attendance
 - ii. Repeat
11. How would you describe the capacity of teachers to address the needs of learners that are failing to achieve prescribed learning outcomes?
12. How would you describe the capacity of teachers to address the needs of learners that are repeating a class?
13. In your opinion, are the existing educational facilities adequate to meet the needs of all children including those with special educational needs? Explain.
14. In your opinion, what are the key factors that can reduce repetition amongst Standard 1- 4 learners? [probe: at school level/at community level/at national level]

C. ISSUES OF ATTRITION

15. What might lead to pupil dropping out permanently from school?
16. How would you describe the relationship between pupil academic performance (achievement of learning outcomes) and pupil dropout?
17. How would you describe the relationship between class repetition and pupil dropout?
18. From your observations, which learners (by standard 1 - 4) are most likely to drop out permanently?
19. In your opinion, what are the key factors that can reduce pupil dropout amongst Standard 1- 4 learners? [Probe: at school level/at community level/at national level] .
20. Do you think our schools in Malawi are adequately equipped to reintegrate and keep dropouts performing well? Explain.

If Ministry of Education, Science & Technology official, include questions 19 & 20.

21. What are the current repetition prevention programs or strategies that are being implemented in the zone/district/country? [Probe: who it targets, primary outcomes, dates implemented].
22. What are the current dropout prevention programs or strategies that are being implemented in the zone/district/country? [Probe: who it targets, primary outcomes, dates implemented].

If service provider sector – Health/Agriculture/Gender/Youth official, include questions 21 & 22.

23. What role are you playing to reduce pupil repetition in the country? [Probe: who do you target, primary outcomes, dates implemented].
24. What role are you playing to reduce pupil dropout in the country? [Probe: who do you target, primary outcomes, dates implemented].

Thank you for your time



**STUDY ON PUPIL ATTRITION AND REPETITION IN PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN MALAWI
FGD GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY (SMCS, PTAS & MOTHER GROUPS)**

Instructions: Record the following in your notes:

- a. Date
 - b. Facilitators name
 - c. Note takers name
 - d. Time started
 - e. Supervisors name
 - f. Name of school
 - g. Name of division
 - h. District
 - i. Number of participants by gender
 - j. Time ended
1. What are the major factors that keep pupils in school?
Kodi ndi zifukwa ziti zomwe zimapangitsa kuti ophunzira asasiye sukulu?
- Intervention/programme (SFP, child friendly school initiative, WASH)
 - Infrastructure
 - Availability of resources at school
 - Teaching and learning practices
 - Staffing levels corrective measures
 - Community participation
2. What are the parent/community perceptions and expectations of benchmarks that pupils are expected to reach at each standard/grade?
Kodi makolo/anthu ozungulira sukulu ino amayembekezera kuti ophunzira asonyeze zizindikiro zotani kuti apite kalasi lina lapatsogolo?
- a. Standard 1 learner is able to display to be promoted to Standard 2?
 - b. Standard 2 learner be able to display to be promoted to Standard 3?
 - c. Standard 3 learner be able to display to be promoted to Standard 4?
 - d. Standard 4 learner be able to display to be promoted to Standard 5?
3. In your opinion, do you feel that learners are treated equally by the school authorities regardless of their socio economic background?
Mmaganizo anu, kodi mukuona kuti ophunzira amalandira chisamaliro chofanana kuchokera kwa akulu akulu apasululuyi posatengera komwe akuhokera?
4. If they are not treated equally, how does the community intervene to reduce this malpractice?
Ngati salandira chisamaliro chofanana, mumalowelarapo bwanji kuti muchepetse nchitidwe oterowo?

5. Does the school have any cases of learners dropping out of school?
Pasukulu yanuyi, pali ana amene anasiyira sukulu panjira?
6. If yes, what are the contributing factors?
Mukuganiza chinachititsa ndi chiyani?
- School factors (teacher to learners ratio)
 - School environment (school facilities/resources)
 - Home environment
 - Parent/family perception towards girl child education
 - Social /cultural factors
 - Distance from home to school
7. Of the cases of learners' dropout does the community have learners with physical/mental disabilities/challenges?
Alipo ophunzira amene anasiyira sukulu panjira pa chifukwa choti ali ndi chilema?
8. At what time of the year are cases of learners' dropout from school common?
Kwenikweni ndi nyengo iti yomwe ophunzira ambiri amasiyira sukulu panjira?
9. What can you say about teacher's behavior in:
Munganenepo chani pa nkhalidwe la aphunzitsi makamaka pa nkhani ya:
- **Kupititsa patsogolo maphunziro**
 - **Kupelekapo mbali pa kusiyira sukulu panjira**
 - **kubweleza**
- promoting learning and or
 - contributing to pupil attrition/repetition/
 - drop out
10. At what grade of schooling are cases of learners' drop out common? (grade 1-4)
Mu standard 1-4, ndi kalasi iti yomwe ophunzira ambiri amasiyira sukulu panjira?
11. What are the community and parents actions/reactions towards pupil attrition and repetition in the primary schools in this community?
Kodi makolo komaso anthu a mmudzi muno amapangapo Chiyani pa nkhani ya kusiyira panjira kwa ophunzira komaso kubwelenza?
12. What role does the community play to reduce pupils' attrition and repetition/retain pupils in school?
Kodi inuyo mukuchitapo chani kuti:
- **Kuti ophunzira asamabwelezebweleze**
 - **Ophunzira akhalebe kusukulu**
 - **Abwelere kusukulu**
13. What can you say about pupil assessment methodology?
Munganenepo chiyani mmene ana anu amayesedwela mayeso kusukulu?

5.6 Study Organization and Management Structure

