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GABLE SMC  
A Government of Malawi Project  
Funded by USAID  
Contracted to  
Creative Associates International Inc

GABLE is a Government of Malawi program supported by funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). GABLE is an acronym for Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education and is designed to support Government of Malawi efforts to address constraints to girls' educational attainment.

A major component of Malawi's GABLE program is the Social Mobilization Campaign (SMC). The major objective of the SMC is to develop, test, and implement a national campaign to change attitudes about the importance of girls' primary education. The SMC is funded by USAID and contracted to Creative Associates International, Inc.

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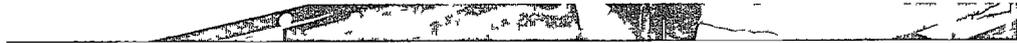




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Monitoring and assessment activities were designed as an on-going component of GABLE SMC to identify areas of success and weakness and to provide strategies for project modification and change

## Introduction



The GABLE SMC project was comprised of various components, each consisting of a number of activities. Monitoring and assessment of these various components from the project's inception allowed GABLE SMC to judge the impact of each activity, its cost effectiveness, and its success at improving girls' enrollment, retention, and achievement in primary school. Following an assessment of each component, the project could select those activities which yielded the highest returns and phase out those which did not prove as effective. Without this process, it would have been difficult for the project to track the progress and impact of each component and activity.





The pilot phase of GABLE SMC then served as a testing ground for activities which would be expanded throughout Malawi during phases I through III of the project. The pilot phase monitoring and assessment activities were designed to pinpoint the aspects of the campaign which were most successful, fine tune those components and activities, and assess the possibilities for expansion of the component.



Monitoring of the pilot phase activities was done by the GABLE SMC project staff, desk officers from both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Community Services, regional- and district-level officials from both ministries, and community members themselves.

In addition, a follow-up KAP study was conducted to assess the impact of individual components of the project. The follow-up study collected data on the number of villagers who knew about the GABLE Social Mobilization Campaign (mass media component), who had attended a TFD performance (action research activities), and who knew basic information about the nearest primary school and the community constraints to girls' education (community-based sensitization component). The follow-up KAP also helped to establish a standard format for reporting information gathered during the Research and Verification component of the project.



## District Activities



Project staff, teams of trained Primary Education Advisors, and Community Development Assistants traveled throughout the country to observe, monitor, and assess the on-going district- and community-initiated activities. This was made possible through the tracking of activities that were recorded on plans of action prepared by the field workers during their initial training and in follow-up meetings. In addition, teams made up of the District Education Officer and the District Community Development Officer adhered to their own developed visitation and monitoring schedule created from the various zonal plans of action for their district. Personnel from each ministry's headquarters often joined in the monitoring visits.



Making the individual plans of action transparent and available allowed the monitoring process to be planned independently of the activities themselves. The monitoring teams knew when activities were scheduled and were able to arrive unannounced to observe them in progress. The teams were prepared to assist the activity facilitators if they observed difficulties and reported back to the project office their observations, comments, and recommendations.



Field workers and key target group members, who served as facilitators of the various activities, reported back to the project office through monthly submitted field reports. Field workers were also provided with *Project Outreach Diaries* to record their observations and to provide an easily accessible record of what was taking place throughout their work areas.





Unique interventions, extraordinary results, and/or problematic situations were reported back to the project office for additional follow-up. These often resulted in a number of visits made by the project staff to either reinforce the training of the field worker or the target group member involved, or to help verify the success and determine ways of replicating the intervention in other work areas or districts.



# Data Collection

GABLE SMC undertook their own data collection activity to help assess changes in enrollment taking place before, during, and after project interventions. Enrollment figures from the end of the first month of the academic year were collected on site, at a random sampling of all primary schools in GABLE SMC's pilot district, as well as phase I and phase II districts. Phase III data was not collected due to the short time in which GABLE SMC interventions had been in place.



A minimum of 30% of all the government registered primary schools were visited during this exercise. In most cases, data was collected directly from the permanent or temporary registers at the school. In rare cases, the monthly returns were used to provide the necessary data. The comparative results were very encouraging. Every district was recording an increase in both boys' and girls' enrollment, with girls increasing two to three times as much as boys.



However, the data collection process was not without its difficulties. Poor record keeping practices at the school- and district-level made it extremely difficult to verify findings. In addition, children in Malawi are allowed to move freely from school to school, making it especially difficult to assess the difference between transfers and dropouts. The tremendous increase in the number of junior primary schools and new primary school facilities being constructed also made it difficult to track enrollment over time. Most decreases in a given school could be accounted for in the initial enrollment of new schools being built. However, this was never a one to one correlation since any new school may draw pupils from a variety of surrounding schools, not just one specific school. Inadequate record-keeping made it nearly impossible to accurately identify which pupils came from which school.

Published data revealing the number of pupils selected to secondary school from a given primary school also influenced enrollment figures. When parents and children see that pupils from a particular school seem to have a better chance at getting selected, they often choose to transfer to the school with the higher selection rate.

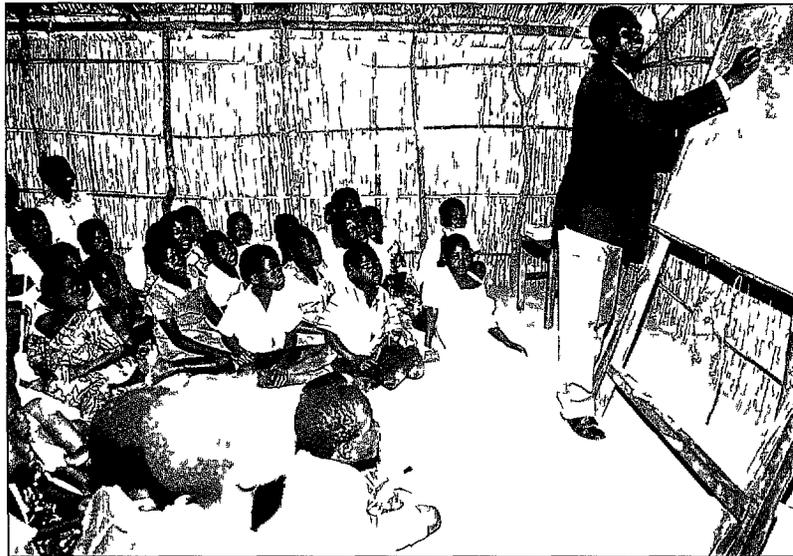


Due to these issues and others, GABLE SMC also collected total district enrollment figures for each of pilot, phase I, and phase II districts. In every case, a steady increase in girls' enrollment has been recorded.



# Project Office

Apart from the district-based activities, GABLE SMC also had mechanisms in place to monitor and assess the overall project office activities. On-going dialog with professional personnel from Creative Associates International, Inc offices in Washington, DC, USAID offices in Malawi, and both line ministry headquarters, provided the opportunity to reflect on initiatives that were working and to adjust and re-define efforts that were proving less effective and/or efficient. Quarterly reports were provided to both offices as a way of tracking progress and assessing outreach. Annual enrollment analyses helped to add the quantitative element to assessing indicators of change, while individual case studies allowed for a broader, more qualitative look.





A Project Coordinating Committee was also used to assist in assessing progress the project had made and recommending and/or supporting new directions it should undertake. This committee was comprised of individuals from USAID, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Community Services, and other institutions with a keen interest in girls' primary education—UNICEF, Chancellor College, Malawi Institute of Education, Center for Social Research, and the Center for Educational Research and Training.

District-level field workers also provided constant feedback to the project office through workshop evaluation forms and monthly reports highlighting obstacles they were encountering and successes they were achieving. Through this feedback the project office was able to assess areas of critical need and devise strategies for assistance.





essential within every component and throughout every stage of the project. Both formal and informal mechanisms worked together to assure that progress was being made toward the ultimate goal—to change attitudes about the importance of girls' education and to convince communities that a primary education is useful to individual girls, as well as to society.

