AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

May 26, 1988

Mrs. Nwanganga Shields
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The World Bank
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Dear Nwanganga,

I have completed a brief analysis of school quality and efficiency in Malawi, based on my mission in March. The enclosed paper also reviews the government's progress in implementing our sector adjustment policies after one year into the project.

My report emphasizes four major points:

(1) The government is under tremendous pressure to expand schooling at all levels. The 1987 census reveals a 3.7 percent population growth rate. Thus the share of school-age children actually enrolled in school is far below what the education ministry has been estimating. This may raise concern in Malawi that the education ministry is not expanding enrollment fast enough. Under tight resource constraints, school expansion also provides the government a relatively cheap way of extending social opportunity to many families.

These pressures to expand will add momentum to the government's de facto policy of spreading fixed recurrent expenditures over a rising number of children. For example, the ratio of primary school pupils per teacher has risen from 42:1 to 63:1 over the past 15 years. Primary enrollments are rising at 4.7 percent per year, whereas recurrent spending on education is inching up at 0.6 percent in real kwacha terms.

(2) The First Education Sector Credit has successfully shifted the education ministry's attention to issues of school quality and efficiency. When the central government holds sufficient legitimacy and power to implement sector adjustment policies, reforms have occurred during the operation's first year. Most notably, the education ministry is moving to simplify a presently complex and costly primary school curriculum. However, when agreed upon policy reforms threaten the local school's popular legitimacy, such as reducing repetition of grade levels by pupils, the education ministry is failing to

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move decisively or creatively. The perceived political risk is simply too great, or credible means for implementing the policy have not yet been devised.

(3) Future Bank operations, and projects of other donors, should bolster the momentum created by the policy action program contained in the First Sector Credit. Timing of new operations should rest, in part, on the government's progress in implementing these adjustment policies. Otherwise the opportunity to enter primary schooling, an institution suffering from sharp declines in quality, will more and more become a symbolic good which yields few economic benefits either to families or to the aggregate economy. Fred Golladay's sector study and the education ministry will be suggesting several new policy directions. I advocate meshing these new policy areas with the existing policy action program. A substantial shift in the Bank's policy priorities could be disasterous, given the government's already sluggish response.

(4) On the other hand, appraisal of the second Sector Credit might better focus policy reforms in three ways:

(a) Finance. We might emphasize the need to allocate resources to more cost-effective inputs and encourage mobilization of private resources. Government, including the finance ministry, has been slow to target new marginal resources on inputs that most efficiently boost achievement, especially textbooks and simple instructional materials. Nor has the government moved to create the 2 kwacha per pupil textbook fund contained within the credit agreement. Given foreign exchange constraints, local construction of materials such as classroom desks is desirable. The education ministry has shown no creativity here. Stronger incentives for private and church schools might be advocated. Our collaborative school quality study, for the first time, will be giving us better data on "unassisted" or private village and mission schools.

(b) School-level management. Central government is understandably nervous about pushing local schools to reduce grade-repetition by pupils. Up to 40 percent of all students in many classrooms are repeating. The Bank should stick with its policy pressure on this issue, since potential gains in school effectiveness are great. In addition, through technical assistance, the Bank could better help central government and district education officers implement such difficult adjustment policies.

(c) Utilizing management information. The First Sector Credit includes generous support for research activities. This work aims at identifying what school inputs and teaching practices most efficiently raise achievement. For example, initial analysis of the primary school quality (pilot) data indicates that the supply of textbooks significantly raises pupil and teacher literacy. On the other hand, variation in teacher salary levels is not associated with higher pupil performance nor with the teacher's knowledge of subject matter. Note that only four percent of recurrent primary school spending now goes for non-salary items, like instructional materials. The basic point is that a wealth of data has now been collected on primary schools and their pupils. A full analysis of these data should be followed by a thoughtful, tireless dialog with government over how expenditures can be better focused on those inputs that have the highest return in boosting achievement.

I hope the more detailed (enclosed) paper is useful. Marlaine Lockheed's forthcoming overview of the education sector will augment my analysis considerably.

Warm regards,

Bruce Fuller
Office of Education
Bureau for Science and Technology

Enclosure - a/s

cc: Ms. Lockheed (PHREE)
Ms. De Beyer (AF6PH)

W#2555R

School Quality and Efficiency in Malawi: Improving the Sector Adjustment Strategy

This paper focuses on how we might improve and sharpen the policy strategies that form the centerpiece of the First Education Sector Credit. The government's reticence in implementing agreed upon adjustment policies stems from strong popular pressure to expand primary schooling, even as educational quality and efficiency erode. Therefore, this report updates earlier reports on the growth and quality of basic education in Malawi. This contextual pressure to expand schooling must be recognized within future efforts to refine the policy program.

Let me telegraph my conclusions directly:

(1) Until the government (finance, education ministries, and OPC) displays a willingness to implement policy reforms to which they have agreed, appraising the second sector credit might be a mistake. Such an action would signal that the Bank is more interested in moving capital than collaboratively working toward policy reform. On the other hand, we could focus on suggesting ways in which adjustment policies could be implemented over time in politically acceptable ways. ("Political constraints" exist at both central and local community levels.)

(2) Education sector activities must be coordinated with the public investment review and other macro-economic exercises, otherwise mixed signals will be sent to the government. For instance, we are pushing for a 2 Kwacha per child recurrent expenditure by the government for textbook replacement. This may be seen as conflicting with Bank/IMF pressure to keep spending down.

(3) Growth in child population and (slowing) increases in primary school enrollment rates represent strong pressures to expand schooling. Addressing issues of efficiency are not seen as politically advantageous, relative to simply building more schools. Questions on how to move expenditures toward more cost-effective inputs and how to mobilize local and private sources of financing also appear to be more complex (again, relative to the technically simple task of expanding schooling).

(4) The education ministry (MOEC) now has a substantial data-base with which they can assess the relative efficiency of alternative investment strategies for raising pupil achievement or teachers' own knowledge. The issue is whether ministry

staff will begin to ask questions of the data--framing choices among alternative expenditure options. The Bank and the government are investing a lot in this joint research program. The policy impact has yet to be seen.

This paper is presented in three sections. First, I sketch the contextual conflict between pressure to expand schooling versus the persistent erosion of fiscal resources. What drops out from this conflict is a distressing decline in school quality. As fixed recurrent expenditures are spread more thinly over a growing number of pupils, primary schools are becoming even less effective in imparting basic literacy. Second, I report on progress in government implementation of sector adjustment policies. Good and bad news is apparent here. The government has swiftly implemented administrative reforms that are not costly politically (e.g., consolidating national examination operations). Third, I suggest how the Bank might provide technical advice to enable the government to make better progress on policy reforms. Future work might also focus on improving expenditure choices and strengthening self-help schools, as well as mobilizing other private sources of finance.

My terms of reference, dated February 24 (Mrs. Shields to Mr. de Ferranti), specified assistance with both supervision of the Fifth Education Project and the First Education Sector Credit, as well as the review of school efficiency in preparation for the proposed Second Sector Credit. The basic material in this report, hopefully, fits my terms of reference. I also have amplified discussion of studies funded under these operations and our policy-level seminar in Lilongwe, pursuant to my TOR.

Expanding Schooling with Constrained Resources

Popular demand for schooling is enormous within Malawi. During periods of declining farm production parents do appear to draw more on their children's labor and enrollment growth temporarily slows (such as the 1981-84 period). But when agricultural conditions rebound school enrollments return to their high rate of growth.

Demographic pressure. The 1987 census suggests that fertility and population growth rates are considerably higher than previously reported. Annual population growth is now pegged at 3.7 percent. This is the rate observed between the 1977 and 1987 census exercises. It may be that an undercount occurred in 1977, artificially inflating the 1977-87 growth-rate calculation. On the other hand, the long-term growth rate between 1945-1966 had earlier been put at 3.3 percent. So the most recent 3.7 percent annual rate may not be accurate.

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The number of school-age children, age 5-14, is growing at an even faster rate. I estimate that the cohort has been growing at about 4.5 percent each year, since 1970 (see Table 1). This estimate assumes that the 1966 and 1987 census counts and age cohort calculations were conducted soundly by the government.

Rising enrollment rates. Primary school enrollments are growing even faster than child population. Since 1970 enrollments have risen at a compound annual rate of 6.3 percent (Table 1). Even secondary enrollments, which are tightly regulated by the central government, have risen at 4.8 percent per year. In recent years, annual growth in primary enrollments has "slowed" to about 4.7 percent.

Marlaine's sector review paper will demonstrate how the absolute gross enrollment rate has been significantly over-estimated, given the earlier under-estimate of child population. This much lower enrollment rate implies several more decades of primary enrollment growth before a ceiling level is reached (assuming no dramatic change in labor demand for children nor in government policy).

Eroding government resources. The public sector's resources are highly constrained, limited in the long run by rapidly rising debt service expenditures, an erratic agricultural sector, and unsteady terms of trade. The public sector review deals with these issues in greater detail. Here I focus on resource implications for the education sector.

Table 2 summarizes the central government's resource base and overall funding of the education sector. Since 1980, Malawi's aggregate GNP has risen at just 1.2 percent per year (in constant Kwacha). Given the previously assumed population growth of 3.2 percent, GNP per capita has declined 2.0 percent annually over this same period. (The 1987 census' higher reported population will further knock-down the GNP per capita level, albeit a statistical artifact.) The current account balance situation has improved somewhat, although persistent deficits presumably constrain imports, feed inflation, and make disbursement of IDA foreign exchange components more difficult.

Turning to government expenditure patterns, total spending has risen at 3.3 percent annually since 1980 (in constant Kwacha). Most of these new marginal resources, however, are allocated for servicing Malawi's rising debt (covered under "statutory expenditures"). Thirty-seven (37) percent of all annual recurrent spending now goes to debt payments.

Discretionary ("voted") expenditures have grown at 1.2 percent annually since 1980, the same rate of growth in aggregate GNP. Allocations to the education sector have grown at 0.6 percent in real terms over the same period. The share of discretionary spending going to education stands at 15 percent, virtually unchanged since 1980.

Resulting Decline in School Quality and Efficiency

The government's de facto policy is to accommodate all children who seek enrollment in primary school. Modest school fees and long distances to some village schools may discourage attendance by some youngsters. But, in general, the government attempts to serve all families expressing demand for primary school. Within largely static recurrent budgets, the government must simply spread these resource more thinly over rapidly rising numbers of children.

Table 3 reports on the resulting erosion in school quality. Note that the global indicators reported here are both input and output measures (e.g., textbook availability and persistence rates, respectively). Also global indicators of quality are not necessarily related to higher levels of pupil achievement. For instance, lowering the pupil:teacher ratio will not under all conditions increase achievement. Finally, an indicator of "quality" may not efficiently boost achievement relative to another input. Notwithstanding these provisos, the indicators in Table 3 usefully reveal the long-run decline in educational quality.

Since 1970, the ratio of primary school pupils per teacher has moved upward from 41:1 to 63:1. Recurrent spending in constant dollar terms has declined from $14 to $6 per pupil. Since teacher salaries comprise the lion's share of the recurrent budget, this decrease reflects a decline in teachers' real earnings. But it also means even less support for textbooks and instructional materials, for which only four percent of the recurrent budget is presently allocated. The education ministry's school survey shows that only two of every three pupils have the basic language textbook (in Chichewa). Availability of math textbooks is reportedly better. Our direct survey of pupils indicates a somewhat greater scarcity of texts than these reports by headmasters.

To assess the efficiency with which pupils move through the primary grades I looked at the ratio of grade 7/grade 1 children. Grade 8 is the final year in the primary school cycle; but pupil repetition of grade 8 is so high that more than one cohort is represented (including "kids" age 14-22 years). The ratio of grade 7/grade 1 pupils equalled .23 in

the 1986-87 school year. This means that the government invests resources in four children for every one that persists to grade 7. The majority of children dropping-out of primary school do so within the first three years. Girls drop-out at an even higher rate. Both male and female pupils in the southern region drop-out at a higher rate, perhaps due to plantation labor demands and the higher proportion of Muslim families. (The Bank/Ministry school survey will allow us to test these claims related to what exogenous factors shape pupil persistence through primary school.)

The low pupil persistence rate is one manifestation of many pupils repeating grades. About 20 percent of all grade 1 and grade 2 pupils are repeating their grade level. Classroom teachers often face 90-100 children in these early grades. So the 20 percent repetition rate represents a large absolute number of kids per classroom. Pupil movement between grades 3-7 improves, largely due to the fact that low achieving children are dropping-out. Then in grade 8, many youngesters repeat, waiting to get a coveted place in secondary school. About 40 percent of all grade 8 pupils are repeating the grade-level.

Table 3 allows comparison of resources allocated among primary, secondary, and university levels. For instance, pupil:teacher ratios are very rich at both secondary and university levels, 20:1 and 7:1 in the 1986-87 school year, respectively. Sector adjustment policies do focus on realizing efficiencies by increasing these ratios. But the government has made little progress on this front.

Per pupil expenditures are quite high at secondary and university levels relative to primary school spending. These figures are expressed in constant dollar terms in Table 3 to allow cross-level comparisons. Real declines in per pupil spending are overstated in that the kwacha's value declined siginificantly against the dollar over this period. Even in constant kwacha terms, however, the purchasing power of teachers at secondary and university levels declined sharply. Note that despite highly selective admission into secondary schools, one-fourth of all pupils fail to persist through the four forms. A portion of those leaving after completing only two forms do go into teaching jobs.

My analysis does not include the nonformal secondary school system, the Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE). Unit costs are much lower for pupils attending MCDE centers. But the cost per pupil actually passing the Junior Secondary School exam actually equals the cost for regular secondary school pupils (see Paud Murphy's 1986 review). Of course, a

central aim of MCDE centers is to accommodate excess demand for secondary schooling, not necessarily to boost students literacy or achievement.

Teaching Practices. We know very little about how teachers mobilize instructional materials. Within the Bank/Ministry school quality study we have observed 90 teachers in their classrooms. Also, Ms. Gordon's initial report emphasizes that teacher candidates are told to master/memorize the "facts" contained in the curriculum. It should not then be surprising that teachers use rote/lecture methods in their own classrooms. Future work on school quality should look at this interaction of material inputs and how they are utilized by the teacher.

Implementing Adjustment Policies?

The policy action program contained in the First Educastion Sector Credit aims at using existing resources more efficiently, including back-stopping further erosion in quality and more fully utilizing existing school facilities. A secondary goal has been the mobilization of private resources through pricing/fee policies.

Concrete progress. Over the first year of credit effectiveness (just concluded), the government has moved quite well in four areas. First, a plan has been devised to consolidate the primary school curriculum into a fewer number of subjects. The Malawi Institute of Education has led this effort, with good cooperation from the education ministry and (costly) technical support from UNESCO. A simpler primary school curriculum, focusing on basic literacy and numeracy instruction, may yield savings in teacher training and central government staff--although professional constituencies organized around specialized subjects are large and parochial.

Second, the education ministry has moved quickly to upgrade the skills of teachers that previously had only two years of secondary school training. Teacher training colleges at Domasi and Koronga are now serving this purpose of upgrading the subject knowledge and (hopefully) pedagogical skills of untrained teachers. (Analysis of the pilot school quality data did reveal positive effects of teacher training, at least on teachers' own literacy and numeracy levels. Effects on pupils' achievement have yet to be analyzed.)

Third, the parliament approved consolidation of national examination operations into a single agency located in Zomba.

The former director has been removed. In addition to a new director, we await appointment of an examination specialist to serve as a technical advisor. In the past, the national exams have encouraged rote memorization of "facts" contained contained in the curriculum. More general literacy or cognitive skills are not encouraged by the exams. Nor are teachers encouraged to teach writing skills (which would require more active forms of learning, not just passive memorization).

Fourth, the ministry's planning and research program is proceeding fairly well. Over the past 18 months the ministry's planning division has spent $130,000 (326,000 kwacha) on the primary school quality survey. This survey, designed collaboratively with Bank staff, covers 100 schools, 275 teachers, and 7,500 children. Very initial findings were presented at a workshop in Lilongwe, along with background papers by Ms. Lockheed and Mr. Fuller. Chaired by the Principle Secretary (Mr. Kambauwa), the day-long seminar was well-attended and quite lively. According to our aide memoir (dated 31 March), these data will be made available to Malawian and Bank researchers by the end of June 1988.

The planning division is also working on a quality survey of secondary schools, including a sample of MCDE centers. The ministry's intent is to use this secondary pupil sample for the longitudinal tracer study, focusing on the efficiency with which school attainment <u>and</u> quality raise future earnings or educational outcomes.

The planning division is completing a feasibility study of moving to a shift system in some secondary schools. The government continues to resist the idea, since implementing double-sessions departs from their conception of a conventional boarding secondary school.

<u>Government inaction</u>. The bad news is that the education ministry, and perhaps the finance ministry, are showing little willingness to move on several agreed-upon policy reforms. One question running across these topics: Can the Bank help devise ways to make these policy reforms more palatable to central government and to local school officials?

First, the education ministry has done nothing in the past year to address the high repetition rate among primary school pupils. The agreement was to limit repetition to five percent of all pupils in each grade level, except standard 8 where all pupils could repeat once. The government agreed to develop an implementation plan by December 1987. No progress has been made.

The Bank might support more specific action here, such as pilot efforts to communicate the policy to local schools and families. A three-step phase-in might occur, reducing repetition over time. Teachers might be given concrete support in assessing children throughout the year, then warning parents of those children that may not pass a grade level. Until a local community-based strategy is devised, the central government will remain nervous about implementing such an unpopular change in policy. Restricting repetition at standard 8 might be coordinated with some rise in admissions at MCDE centers.

Second, the government has not moved to raise expenditures for instructional materials. The government agreed to a 2 kwacha per pupil matching fund to augment the $3.5 million earmarked for textbooks under the First Sector Credit. Despite support from the education ministry, it was not contained in the 1988-89 budget released in March.

Several years ago the government did establish a 1 kwacha set-aside from pupil fees for financing textbook production and distribution. Annual primary school fees total 4.50 kwacha and 7.50 kwacha for urban pupils enrolled in standards 1-5 and 6-8, respectively. Rural fees are somewhat lower but not less than 3.00 kwacha per year. Total fee revenue spent for textbooks, teacher guides, and pupil exercise books was 1.8 million kwacha in 1987-88 (or about 50 cents per primary pupil). The cost of the three standard textbooks (Chichewas, English and math) runs from about $3 to $6, depending on the grade level.

The IDA-III project financed $2.8 million in textbooks. The First Sector Credit will again boost availability of texts. But pupil fee revenue is the only source of finance for textbooks and other instructional materials. Exercise books--like exam blue-books with 16 sheets of blank paper--are very scarce. I visited one school just outside Lilongwe where the headmaster cut exercise books in half, and pupils received about three halves over the entire school year (see also the attached newspaper article).

The primary school quality study will allow us to assess the relative return on achievement stemming from different school inputs. If findings are similar to other countries, we will discover that textbooks and basic writing materials hold significant effects on pupils' literacy levels. Yet to date the government has no allocation in the recurrent budget to support basic instructional materials. Linking the finance of materials to the most visible tax--the pupil fee--also constrains the political feasibility of raising this very modest level of support.

The Principle Secretary's "School Quality Committee" (created under the First Sector Credit) should serve an important role in examining research results and considering budget priorities. They should consider the present distribution of spending among teacher salaries, instructional materials, and administration. A more explicit discussion of budget priorities would ideally include the ministry of finance.

Emerging Issues

In appraising the second education sector credit, a thorough follow-up on the same adjustment policies would yield a full agenda. Taking on new issues may be a mistake. If there is room to pursue additional issues, however, I would suggest the following areas. Some of these topics do stem from earlier sector work.

The University. New enrollments could easily be accommodated with no new faculty or facilities. The vice-chancellor is talking about lengthening some diploma programs, from two to three-year degree programs. This may not be the best way to increase utilization, especially in the teacher training program where shortages are immediate.

Enrollment expansion could occur in urban areas, especially by offering courses in Blantyre, where boarding facilities would not be necessary. The tuition price should continue to be raised in light of the high private returns accruing to university graduates.

Private finance and unassisted schools. Unless local resources can be mobilized to build and staff more schools, the central government will remain largely preoccupied with school expansion. About 500 "unassisted" primary schools presently operate, often in remote rural areas. In general, they are of lower quality than state-supported schools. Assistance to these private schools (for discrete quality improvements) might be targeted within future lending operations. Even marginal government support could boost their legitimacy and bring forth some lessons on how to draw more private resources into the school system. (A handful of unassisted primary schools were included in the school quality survey.)

For the technical and polytechnic schools, employers might be specifically taxed if they are benefitting from these schools' graduates. Greater levels of employer financing would also ensure clearer demand signals for these vocational programs.

During our mission we pushed the PIU to explore the possibility of building more school furniture domestically.

This would provide support for small-scale artisans and conserve foreign exchange. Some technical schools presently produce furniture and sell it as a revenue-producing exercise. DANIDA, working in Botswana, is supporting furniture construction by secondary school students.

Education sector management. In December 1987, Price Waterhouse completed a study of management within the education ministry. Comments on the report by Mrs. Shields and Mr. Fuller are attached. The PW team did recommend a shift in management style, encouraging local initiative and managers who attempt to improve practices rather than remaining preoccupied with regulation. The feasibility of implementing many of the recommendations is in doubt, especially PW's unclear suggestions as to how decentralization of the ministry might actually occur. Nevertheless, the Bank may want to follow-up in some way.

The First Education Sector Credit is supporting a good deal of overseas training for ministry staff. In addition, USAID's new training program is encouraging the ministry to develop a training plan, involving additional overseas training slots and the placement of American counter-parts in the education ministry. Cooperation is sorely needed here between the ministry, A.I.D., and the Bank to ensure that this training activity will have a long-term impact on the quality of management. The additional thread here is the new Malawi Institute of Management in which the Bank's sector management division is investing heavily (Mr. Sullivan).

Cross-sector Human Resources Strategy. Mr. Golladay's study team raises the useful question of how the human resources sectors can better fit together. Two avenues may be worth pursuing. In the context of the primary school curriculum reform effort, greater attention to health and population topics is warranted. The education ministry remains anxious over directly taking-on family planning topics in the curriculum. But some movement may be possible. In addition, our collaborative school quality study includes interviews with 7,500 children. Several questions pertain to their daily work and household chores, levels of hunger, family structure, and housing conditions. A short literacy and and numeracy test also was administered to each pupil. Once the ministry has reported basic descriptive statistics and the data become available to the Bank, we will be able to analyze in significant depth the quality of children's lives.

Attachments: a/s

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B. Fuller
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TABLE 1

Malawi: Pressure to Expand School Enrollment

	1970	1987	Annual Compound Growth Rate
- Child Population (age 5 - 14)	1,083,965	2,290,881	4.5%
- Primary school enrollment	362,561	1,022,765	6.3%
- Secondary school enrollment	11,736	26,183	4.8%

Sources: Malawi Census Reports, 1977 and 1988. Education Statistics, 1[illegible]6 and 1988 (preliminary).

TABLE 2

Malawi: Resource Constraints

	FY 1980-81	FY 1986-87	Annual Compound Growth Rate
- GNP (millions 1980 Kwacha)	934	1,014	1.2%
- GNP per capita (current $)	180	160	- 2.0%
- Debt (long-term public, millions current $)	644	910	5.1%
- Current account balance (millions current $)	-304	-84	--
- Government's Total Recurrent Spending (millions 1980 Kwacha)	213	267	3.3%
Statutory expenditures	64	105	7.3%
Voted expenditures	149	162	1.2%
Education expenditures	24	25	0.6%
and as % voted expenditure	16%	15%	--

*Ninety-five (95) percent of statutory expenditures are allocated for debt service. Voted expenditures cover discretionary recurrent budget items. Most recent estimates come from either 1986 or 1987.

Sources: World Tables, 1987; Chief Accountant, Ministry of Education & Culture; 1988-89 budget report by Minister of Finance.

TABLE 3

Malawi: Indicators of School Quality and Efficiency

	1970	1980	1986-87
- Primary schools			
Pupil/teacher ratio	41:1	62:1	63:1
Recurrent spending per pupil (1980 $)		$14	$6
Ratio grade 7/grade 1 enrollment		.20	.23
Pupils per roofed classroom			64
desk			13
chichewa textbook			1.4
math textbook			1.2
- Secondary schools			
Pupil/teacher ratio	18.1	21:1	20.1
Recurrent spending per pupil (1980 $)		$827	$236
Ratio form 4/form 1 enrollment		.63	.74
- University			
Pupil/teacher ratio	7:1	9:1	7:1
Recurrent spending per pupil (1980 $)		$4,262	$974

Note: Secondary school data excludes enrollment in Malawi College of Distance Education. University enrollment includes all four affiliated colleges. Most recent estimates come from either 1986 or 1987. Declines in per pupil spending reflect decreasing spending in real kwacha terms and the kwacha's decline relative to the dollar. Spending levels in dollar terms are more useful in comparing across primary, secondary, and higher education than comparing change over time.

Malawi

FOCUS ON PARLIAMENT

Pupils need exercise books

THE Ministry of Education has advised teachers in the country to continue to be more resourceful in ensuring that teaching and learning take place under the prevailing financial constraints.

The advice was given by the Minister of Community Services, Mr. E.C. Katola Phiri, when he answered a question on education and culture in Parliament last week on behalf of the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Michael Mlambala.

The Minister was replying to a question from the Member for Mulanje East, Mr. R.B.L. Kamoto.

Mr. Kamoto asked the Minister whether his ministry was aware that in some primary schools, there was an inadequate supply of exercise books which resulted in teachers failing to perform their duties properly, and if so what action the ministry was taking to improve the situation.

Mr. Katola Phiri said the ministry was aware of the shortage of exercise books in primary schools.

FUNDS

He said that funds for purchasing education materials including exercise books were limited and may continue to be limited for sometime to come as prices continue rising.

"Under the prevailing financial constraints, however, teachers are being advised to continue to be more resourceful in ensuring that the teaching and learning take place," he advised.

UNIFORMS

In replying to another question, Mr. Katopola Phiri advised parliamentarians that should there be headmasters in primary schools who change school uniforms without discussing the matter with their school committees, they should either advise such headmasters not to do so or report to the local education authority concerned for their action.

Mr. Katola Phiri said that the choice of school uniform for a primary school was a joint responsibility of teachers and parents in the form of school committees.

When need for change of uniform arose, he said, teachers should discuss the matter with the school committees.

MCDE CENTRES

"It is only after this discussion that a new uniform is adopted at a school," he said.

Mr. G.M. Kampayi Banda, member for Blantyre West also asked the Minister if he would consider establishing distant education centres in the areas of Chief Kunthembwe or Kuntaja to help the children who were not selected for secondary education from the several primary schools in the areas.

Mr. Katola Phiri advised the Member that initially it was the responsibility of the local education authority in Blantyre district to establish the MCDE centres in the areas concerned.

"My ministry is keen and committed to seeing that this alternative avenue to secondary education is fully exploited and it is for this reason that the ministry, in the recent third IDA and fifth IDA education projects, embarked on the improvement of about 60 MCDE centres located all over the country," he said.

He assured the Member that the ministry would continue to support both financially and materially any new MCDE centre that the local committees may establish.

NO TEACHERS

The Member for Zomba South, Mr. J.R. Mataka asked the Minister whether he was aware that there was an acute shortage of teachers in some of the rural primary schools.

He wanted to know what action his ministry was taking to remedy the situation.

Mr. Katola Phiri said the ministry was aware of a shortage of teachers in the country. He, however, informed the Member that the distribution of available teachers to districts and regions was equitable and was based on teacher-/pupil ratio which, in the case of this year, was 1 to 70.

"Under this arrangement the staffing levels in schools should not be markedly different," he noted.

He said the ministry would, therefore, be grateful if the Member would bring to the attention of the local education authority or any school currently experiencing an acute shortage so that proper balance of teacher/pupil ratio in these school could be made.

RADIOS

Another question came from Mr. J.J. Mndeleman Banda, Member for Nkhotakota North, who asked the Minister whether the ministry was aware that very few schools have radios for schools programmes and those with radio do not have batteries to run them.

Mr. Katola Phiri said the ministry was aware of shortage of teaching and learning materials including schools radios.

He informed the Member that the initial supply of school radios was made by Unicef in the late 1960's. Since then it had been difficult to replace and or repair broken radios due to lack of funds.

"Should local education authorities have funds, they will make every effort to provide school radios and batteries to the schools," he said.

Price Waterhouse Malawi Education Service Management Study
December 1987 Interim Draft

Comments from World Bank mission

We have received the Price Waterhouse interim report. Given the Bank's past involvement in the management issue within the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), we would like to offer several comments on this initial draft.

Hopefully, the report will stimulate thoughtful discussion in the Government over (a) how the MOEC's central operations can be better managed, and (b) how the motivation and effectiveness of local education staff can be raised. The Price Waterhouse report has several strengths in our view:

1. Recommended changes in the MOEC organizational structure have considerable merit (paragraph 326). The goal of reducing the number of layers in the MOEC structure could enhance the ministry's efficiency and responsiveness. In addition, tighter coordination of those agencies involved in teacher training -- the MIE, Chancellor College, and the teacher training colleges -- is a very good idea from our viewpoint.

2. The report's emphasis on decentralizing authority to regional and district education offices, especially authority over routine decisions and details, should be considered seriously (para. 308). The Price Waterhouse authors fail, however, to (a) delineate what tasks would be controlled by local education offices and what responsibilities would remain within headquarters; and (b) what changes must occur within REO and DEO offices before decentralization could meaningfully occur. REO and DEO staff have indicated to us that enlargement of their authority and responsibility must be accompanied by additional staff, management training, and improvement in their status within the civil service. Obviously movement on these fronts would be slow given constrained resources. Unless Price Waterhouse addresses how to implement decentralization, the idea will not be taken seriously and it will appear to be unrealistic.

3. Redefining the role and incentives of local education staff is a complex task. The skills they have historically drawn upon and their sources of motivation will not change over night. No organization can simply transfer authority to local levels and expect staff to significantly shift their behavior quickly. The Price Waterhouse team must speak to these complexities and map out step by step how they would be addressed by headquarters if a decentralization scheme were to be mounted.

4. The Price Waterhouse team also talks in vague terms about how MOEC and local education staff see their role as regulatory agents,

making sure that rules set centrally are followed (paras. 317-322). Instead, education service staff might be encouraged to take more initiative, attend to their own development as professionals, and pursue new ideas and administrative practices. The idea is attractive. But again, it must be illustrated and detailed to be persuasive. Specifically how can the regulatory role and mentality be reduced? What types of action should MOEC staff and local administrators engage in to motivate improvements? Which centrally prescribed rules and standards are necessary, and which should be eliminated? How would decentralization and higher professional status of local officers affect headmasters -- as the administrators that are closest to teachers and pupils??

5. The Price Waterhouse team questions whether the education development plan is simply a rhetorical document, or whether elements are assigned to staff to actually implement. In addition, does MOEC make a serious effort to monitor progress of the plan's implementation? These criticisms should be taken up by the ministry.

6. We agree that much of the Planning Division's work is reactive rather than proactive (paras. 285-286). Part of this problem stems from constant demands and information requests coming from various donors (including the Bank). One possible response would be to more clearly separate day-to-day policy advice (for the PS and DS's) from long term planning and research activities. Planning staff are called on each day to prepare speeches, attend workshops, and to provide data to donors and other ministries. These tasks are important. But they detract from the Planning Division's responsibility to carefully plan the orderly growth and qualitative improvement of the school system -- and to monitor progress in these areas. Without some insulation from daily demands, the Planning Division (and thus the MOEC) will not be able to establish and follow a cohesive agenda of its own.

Despite these welcomed recommendations within the Price Waterhouse report, the draft document suffers from three basic weaknesses. First, the authors try to cover much too much ground. The reader must plow through 280 paragraphs before reaching any discussion of management issues. The Price Waterhouse terms of reference did not call for review of every educational problem facing Malawi. This broad sector work has been done elsewhere; the list of issues appearing in the report's first half is a very familiar list to anyone working in the sector. The Price Waterhouse team could make an original contribution by speaking to how management improvements would help in resolving some of these problems in the education sector.

Second, the unrealistic breadth of the report undercuts its key recommendations in the management area. By trying to cover all education issues, the sections on management appear to be thin and unconvincing. Insufficient attention is given to illustrating exactly when management breaks down, how the emphasis on regulation detracts

from making improvements in the schools, and precisely how decision making should be decentralized. The authors might try to build a stronger case on these basic management questions, rather than trying to demonstrate how much they learned about the education sector.

Third, the authors should avoid using jargon and vague statements that simply erode the document's credibility. For instance, the phrase 'corporate human resourcing' (para. 31) makes no sense to the lay reader. Also some paragraphs are written in a very obscure style (for example, para. 36 is impossible to comprehend).

Finally, we recommend that the Price Waterhouse team decide on what the highest priority management reforms might be. Then, the team should lay out a step-by-step method for implementing these reforms. This implementation plan must be realistic and recognize the resource constraints facing the MOEC leadership.

We hope that these comments are helpful. With a considerable amount of focused work -- highlighting management issues -- the Price Waterhouse team could make an important contribution.

Bruce Fuller / Nwanganga Shields
World Bank
March 1988

MALAWI

23rd

WORKSHOP ON SCHOOL QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY
March ~~16~~, 1988

OUTLINE

Overview

The seminar will include discussion of two topics:

First, strategies for improving school quality and efficiency will be reviewed. This will include alternative policies for increasing access to primary schooling and raising achievement at the least cost. The emphasis here is on balancing the goal of increasing coverage with the need to improve the quality of learning which pupils experience. But, of course, improvements in quality can be costly and compete with the goal of increasing access. So, we will distinguish between policies and practices which are empirically related to higher achievement from those that are not.

Second, Dr. Mundangepfupfu will report initial findings on levels of school quality in Malawi. The Planning Division (MOEC), in cooperation with the World Bank, has conducted a thorough survey of headmasters, teachers, and pupils in 100 primary schools. Preliminary findings -- reporting on several indicators of school quality -- will be reported.

Possible Participants

The seminar is designed as a round-table -- balancing the presentation of new material with open, lively discussion and questionning among participants.

We suggest that participants be invited from various divisions in MOEC. In addition, representatives from the new examinations board, the MIE, Center for Social Research, and selected faculty from the University should be invited. Staff from principal donor agencies might also be invited, including the British Council and UNICEF.

The seminar should be chaired by the Principal Secretary.

Schedule:

9:00-9:30 a.m. - Mr. Kambauwa
Opening remarks on the education sector credit, the PS's school quality committee, and the cooperative research program.

9:30-10:00 a.m.	-	Mr. Bruce Fuller, World Bank What policies and practices boost pupil achievement?
10:00-10:30 a.m.	-	Ms. Marlaine Lockheed, World Bank What practices and policies increase Education efficiency?
Break		
10:45-12:30 p.m.	-	Dr. Mundangepfupfu, MOEC What is the level of and variations in school quality among Malawi Primary Schools? Preliminary findings from school quality survey.
Lunch		
2:00-2:30 p.m.	-	Comments by Ms. Lockheed and Mr. Caple on Dr. Mundangepfupfu's presentation.
2:30-3:30 p.m.	-	Discussion
3:30-4:00 p.m.	-	Closing remarks by Chairperson, etc.