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USAID/MALAWI EDUCATION SUPPORT ACTIVITY (MESA)

YEAR TWO ANNUAL REPORT

August 2004- July 2005



Submitted by:
American Institutes for Research

With:
SAVE the Children (US)
Creative Center for Community Mobilization
Malawi Institute of Education

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AED	Academy for Education Development
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIR	American Institutes for Research
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission of Malawi
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CRECCOM	Creative Centre for Community Mobilization
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
DAC	District AIDS Coordinator
DC	District Commissioner
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DCE	Domasi College of Education
DEM	District Education Manager
DFID	Department for International Development
DHO	District Health Officer
DIO	District Information Officer
DLO	District Labour Officer
DO	Desk Officer
DPD	Director of Planning and Development
DSWO	District Social Welfare Officer
DYO	District Youth Officer
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Program
GVH	Group Village Headman
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IEQ	Improving Education Quality
IR	Intermediate Result
MANEB	Malawi National Examinations Board
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MESA	Malawi Education Support Activity
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MPs	Members of Parliament
NAPHAM	National Association of People with HIV/AIDS
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
POW	Peer Outreach Workers
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RCDO	Regional Community Development Officer
SC/US	Save the Children U.S.
SEMA	Senior Education Methods Advisor
SMC	School Management Committee
SMC-EQ	Social Mobilization Campaign for Education Quality
SWA	Social Welfare Assistant
TALULAR	Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM 1 (EQUIP1)

Malawi Education Support Activity (MESA) Year Two Annual Report August 2004 – July 2005

1.0 PREAMBLE

Project Title: Malawi Education Support Activity (MESA)

Grantee: American Institutes for Research

Associate Award No. 690-A-00-03-00189-00 under EQUIP 1 Leader Award No. GDG-A-00-03-00006-00

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2.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

MESA will contribute to the quality and efficiency of basic education in Malawi by

- Improving teachers’ professional skills;
- Making schools more effective; and
- Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in the education sector.

These objectives will be achieved through a holistic MESA program that will blend the best practices and lessons learned from three successful Malawi projects: Quality Education Through Supporting Teaching (QUEST), by Save the Children/U.S. (SC/US); Social Mobilization Campaign for Educational Quality (SMC-EQ) by the Creative Centre for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM); and Improving Education Quality (IEQ) II by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). MESA will work in the four districts of Malawi: Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga and Phalombe as shown in Figure 1 and Table 1.

Figure 1. Map of Malawi showing MESA’s impact districts

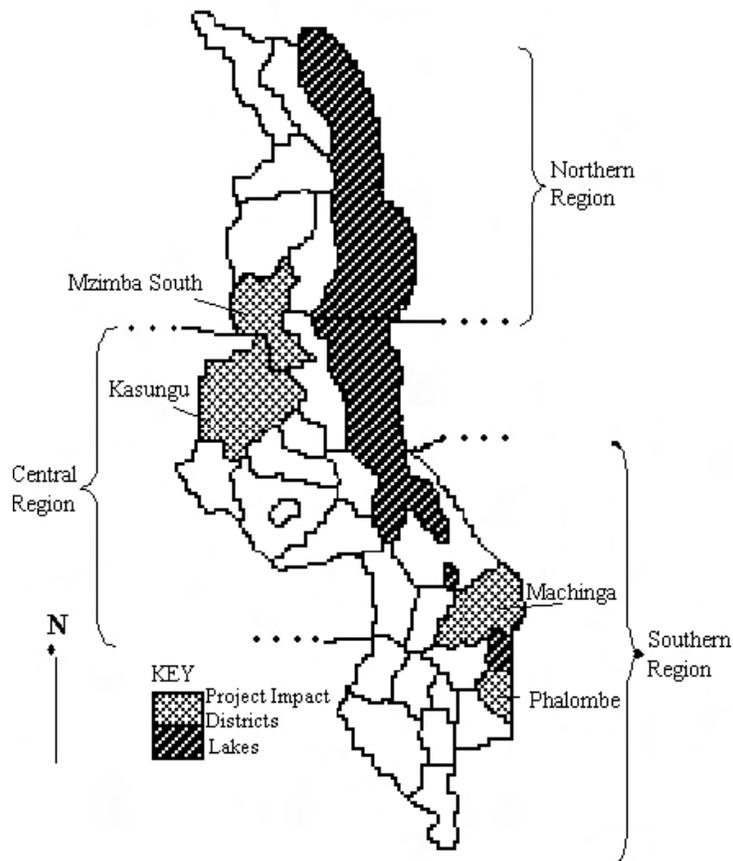


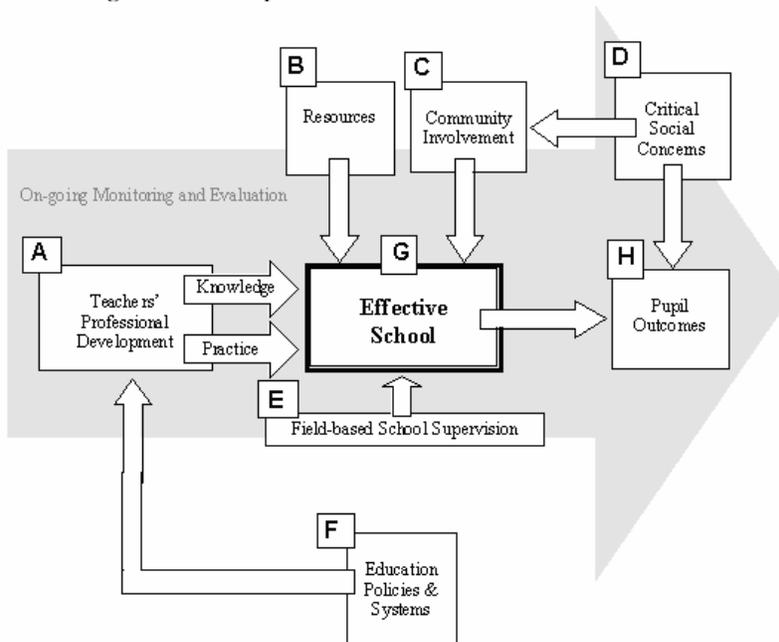
Table 1. Key impact district features

District	Size Sq. Km	Population		School-going Youth		Primary Schools	Hospitals/ Health Centers
		Male	Female	Boys	Girls		
Mzimba South	10,430	182,404	194,281	55,220	55,040	265	19
Kasungu	7,878	247,850	232,809	97,042	94,825	318	42
Machinga	3,771	176,853	192,161	47,833	45,156	154	16
Phalombe	1,633	109,229	122,761	31,741	31,485	83	11

The process begins by improving teachers’ professional skills, both in content knowledge (e.g., civics education, HIV/AIDS awareness, life skills education) and in instructional practices (e.g., continuous assessment, TALULAR, classroom management). MESA will improve school effectiveness through the infusion of new resources including improving physical infrastructure of teacher education at Domasi College of Education (DCE) and Mzuzu University and facilitating the production and distribution of textbooks and other classroom resources. In addition, MESA will focus on community participation in the classroom, and making school management committees (SMCs) and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) more effective. It is through this process that MESA is addressing and mitigating critical social concerns, particularly HIV/AIDS, which impinge on access, persistence and quality of basic education.

The following figure helps to illustrate the interconnectivity of MESA’s key components.

Figure 2. Conceptual framework for an effective school



MESA is an Associate Award implemented under the Educational Quality Improvement Program Leader with Associate Award I: Building Education Quality Through Classrooms, Schools and Communities (EQUIP I). AIR is the lead implementing organization with Save the Children U.S, CRECCOM, and the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) as joint implementers.

The key project outcomes include:

- Teachers increasingly using
 - creative/participatory methods of teaching;
 - continuous assessment;
 - effective teaching methods to promote equitable learning for boys and girls; and
 - teaching/learning resources effectively.
- Teachers mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS through integration of life skills curriculum.
- Teachers incorporating civic education into the curriculum effectively.
- School management committees increasingly
 - achieving “effective” status; and
 - implementing as well as supporting strategies for HIV/AIDS mitigation at their schools, zones, and/or at the district level.
- Pupils increasingly
 - retained in schools;
 - promoted to higher classes; and
 - achieving mastery in reading skills in English and numeracy.
- MESA constructing four classrooms and twelve lecturers’ offices at Domasi College of Education.
- MESA establishing an Information Technology Center at Mzuzu University.

3.0 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

3.1 Summary of Project Implementation Activities Accomplished in Year Two

3.1.1 IR 9.1: Teachers' professional skills improved

- Trained the following groups in the third cycle of training:
 - 32 members of the core group of trainers
 - 577 district level resource persons in the 4 impact districts
 - 5,738 Standards 1-8 teachers at cluster level in the 4 impact districts
 - 1,568 untrained teachers at cluster level in the 4 impact districts
- Supervised 4,353 Standards 1-8 teachers teaching
- Continued with reading campaign initiative
- Provided mentor teachers with 269 bicycles to support training and supervision

3.1.2 IR 9.1: Indirect teachers' professional development interventions

- Printed and distributed nationwide the following Social Studies materials:
 - 20,000 copies of the new Standards 5 to 8 syllabuses
 - 11,000 Standard 5 teacher’s guides
 - 16,000 Standard 6 pupil’s books
 - 11,000 Standard 6 teacher’s guides
- Oriented 10,026 Standards 5 and 6 teachers to the new Social Studies materials
- Supervised Social Studies teacher orientation sessions
- Refined:
 - 22 units for Standard 7 pupil’s book
 - 22 units for Standard 7 teacher’s guide Social Studies
- Drafted, edited, printed and distributed:
 - 2,700 copies of *self and peer monitoring resource book*
 - 2,700 copies of *Use of educational data resource book*
- Drafted, edited and typeset :

- *Code of professional ethics for teachers*
- *Integrated curriculum for Standard 2 terms 1 to 3*
- *Integrated curriculum for Standard 3 terms 1 to 3*
- *Integrated curriculum for Standard 4 terms 1 to 3*
- *Integrated curriculum for Standard 5 term 1*

3.1.3 IR 9.2 and 9.4: Effective schools and HIV/AIDS mitigated in education sector (Community involvement)

- Supported 110 field worker facilitated community-based training workshops
- Conducted TFD sensitization performances at 8 school community sites in all the four impact districts.
- Coordinated 264 cluster-based general sensitisation meetings in all the four impact districts.
- Supplied 264 bicycles to all cluster mentor leaders in all the four target districts.
- Conducted 4 field worker review and re-planning meetings one in each of all the four target districts.
- Facilitated 78 cluster review and re-planning meetings in all the four target districts.
- Awarded 74 grants to school communities across the 4 impact districts.
- Held 18 district implementation meetings/consultations at district level.

3.1.4 Support Activities

Mass Communication Interventions

- Broadcast 52 ; 15 minuted sponsored radio programs called *Chimvano Cha Mavu*
- Featured in:
 - 22 Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) radios 1 and 2 news bulletins
 - 21 MBC 1 *Morning basket* programs
 - 6 MBC radio 2 *On the scene* programs
 - 2 MBC radio 1 *Kasakaniza* programs
 - 1 MBC radio *Nzeru Nkupangwa* programs
 - 28 Television Malawi news bulletins
 - 18 times in the local print media
- Compiled, printed and distributed nationwide 8000 copies of *MESA Forum* newsletter
- Updated MESA website three times in collaboration with the Home Office

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Established the 2004 school session follow-up survey results on:
 - Pupil and teacher performance
 - School Management Committee involvement in HIV/AIDS mitigation.
- Collected and interpreted school statistics.
- Launched 2005 school session follow-up pupil tracking survey.
- Established 2005:
 - Percentage of SMCs involvement in the implementation of and /or consultations on education development plans at zonal and district assembly level.
 - Pupil baseline survey results
- Monitored field activities in Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga and Phalombe

Coordination and Reporting

- Held 18 formal staff and management meetings to synergize project interventions among implementing partners.

- Interacted regularly with the host government ministry officials for relevance and sustainability of project outputs and outcomes.
- Hosted 15 distinguished external visitors.
- Participated in a wide range of national and international forums for professional efficiency and effectiveness
- Revised the MESA technical work plan for the period May 2005 through September 2006.
- Produced:
 - 3 quarterly performance reports
 - *Highlights of MESA* write up
 - End-of-year one M&E follow up survey performance report.

3.2 MESA Accomplishments Relative to Work Plan

3.2.1 Summary

MESA achieved nearly all of its intended targets for the second year of its operations. In the four impact districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga and Phalombe approximately 60% of teachers are using participatory teaching methods after MESA trained 5,738 qualified teachers and 1,568 unqualified teachers. The 1,324 School Management Committee members and PTA chairpersons trained in year one in turn trained approximately 343,500 people in the second year. These mobilizations and trainings led to numerous community-based initiatives in a wide range of areas including: renovation of school buildings and teacher's houses, HIV/AIDS mitigation activities, engagement in the decentralization process, and a reading campaign. Teaching and learning materials comprising 15 titles were drafted, illustrated, edited, printed and distributed to schools. Nationwide orientation to the new social studies curriculum was completed for all the 10,026 teachers who were then teaching Standards 5 and 6.

The Smart classroom at Mzuzu University refurbished and equipped in year one continued to serve as a lecture room for Library and Information classes five hours a day on average and plans to use it as an American corner - an outreach program for the University.

For Domasi College of Education, a consortium of engineering consultants, Norman and Dawbarn (Malawi) Limited was chosen to construct four classrooms and twelve lecturers offices. Although architectural plans of the buildings were drawn, the project did not take off due to funding constraints.

MESA had another very successful year despite the prevailing funding constraints. The following summary shows the status of each scheduled activity as of August 31, 2005.

Activities	Quarter 1		Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Qtr 5	Remarks
	Aug	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	
m. Producing <i>Self and Peer Monitoring</i> resource book	■												Accomplished
n. Producing <i>Code of Conduct</i> resource book		■											Drafted, refined and typeset. Not printed due to financial constraints
4 Producing <i>Use of Data</i> resource book					■								Accomplished
5 Printing <i>School Management Committee (SMC)</i> booklet													Pending due to financial constraints
o. Producing <i>Integrated Curriculum</i> book								■					Pending due to financial constraints
p. Producing <i>Teacher-Community Outreach</i> resource book									■				Pending due to financial constraints
q. Compiling illustrative case studies on teacher professional development initiatives	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Accomplished
2. Community Mobilization													
a. Supporting field worker facilitation of planned activities	■												Accomplished
b. Supporting school communities, cluster, zones and district initiatives	■												Accomplished and ongoing
c. Distributing bicycles to mentor cluster leaders	■												Accomplished and ongoing
d. Sensitizing on and processing small grants for school improvement	■												Accomplished and ongoing

Activities	Quarter 1		Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Qtr 5	Remarks
	Aug	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	
e. Compiling illustrative case studies on community initiatives	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Partially accomplished (due to financial constraints)
f. Holding field worker and cluster mentor review and replanning workshops		■											Accomplished
g. Mounting district field worker training workshops		■											Accomplished partially (due to financial constraints)
h. Performing TFD sensitizations		■											Accomplished
i. Sensitizing traditional/cultural groups				■									Accomplished partially (due to financial constraints)
3. Monitoring and Evaluation													
a. Reviewing monitoring and evaluation plan based on baseline findings	■												Accomplished
b. Monitoring in-service teacher training sessions				■				■				■	Accomplished and ongoing
c. Monitoring implementation of community activities	■												Accomplished and ongoing
d. Monitoring district field worker training workshops			■										Accomplished and ongoing
e. Training, collecting and analyzing data for community mobilization			■										Accomplished
f. Identifying additional needs and monitoring use and impact of Mzuzu SMART classroom	■			■				■			■		Accomplished
g. Training, collecting, entering and analyzing data on teacher professional development			■										Accomplished

Activities	Quarter 1		Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Qtr 5	Remarks	
	Aug	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July		
h. Training, collecting, entering and analyzing data for Standard 3 & 6 pupils assessments			[Solid bar from Oct to July]										Accomplished	
i. Disseminating follow-up survey findings				[Solid bar from Nov to April]										Accomplished
j. Collecting and analyzing school attendance records			[Solid bar from Oct to July]										Accomplished and ongoing	
k. Collecting and analyzing school statistics				[Solid bar from Nov to Dec]			[Solid bar from Feb to March]						[Solid bar in July]	Accomplished and ongoing
4. Mass Communication														
a. Airing radio program	[Solid bar from Aug to July]											Accomplished and ongoing		
b. Covering initiatives by media	[Solid bar from Aug to July]											Accomplished and ongoing		
c. Producing and distributing Quarterly MESA newsletters	[Solid bar from Aug to Sept.]				[Solid bar from Dec to March]					[Solid bar from May to June]			Accomplished and ongoing	
d. Updating website	[Solid bar in Aug]			[Solid bar in Nov]							[Solid bar in June]		Accomplished and ongoing	
5. Project Coordination and Reporting														
a. Convening monthly MESA management meetings		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Accomplished
b. Meetings with USAID and line ministries		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Accomplished
c. District Implementations Committee meetings	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Accomplished
d. Hosting home office visits	[Solid bar from Aug to Sept.]							[Solid bar from Feb to March]					[Solid bar in July]	Accomplished
e. Monitoring activity sites by line ministries	[Solid bar from Aug to Sept.]				[Solid bar from Nov to Dec]			[Solid bar from Feb to March]				[Solid bar in May]	[Solid bar in July]	Accomplished
f. Holding Parliamentary Committee on Education briefing			■											Pending due to financial constraints
g. Holding Project Implementation Committee meetings		■			■			■				■		Accomplished
h. Hosting National Launch			■											Not done due to financial constraints

Activities	Quarter 1		Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4			Qtr 5	Remarks
	Aug	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	
i. Attending quarterly USAID SO9 meetings		■			■			■			■		Accomplished
j. Holding meeting for critical review and reflection of activities					■							■	Postponed due to financial constraints
k. Holding MESA Advisory Committee meeting						■						■	Accomplished
l. Producing quarterly or annual reports	■								■			■	Accomplished
m. Producing report on results of Standard 3 pupil and teacher follow-up survey findings				■									Accomplished
n. Editing, printing and distributing TFD research findings and district profiles	■	■											Accomplished

4.0 DETAIL OF ACTIVITIES ACCOMPLISHED IN YEAR TWO

4.1 IR 9.1: Teachers' Professional Skills Improved

The teacher professional development component concentrates on the process of improving teachers' professional skills through both pre- and in-service training activities for untrained and trained teachers. The training focuses on both content knowledge and instructional practices to complement MESA interventions.

4.1.1 Cycle 3 In-service teacher training

Cycle 3 core group of trainers

The second year of MESA's teacher professional development activities built upon 2 cycles of in-service teacher training workshops in year 1 in all 4 impact districts. MESA used the cascade model to train trainers in three stages beginning with the national level group of trainers. This core group drew its members from the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), education divisions and district offices, teacher training colleges, primary schools and from the MESA team of professionals (*see Table A1, Attachment I*). MESA expanded the depth of the course content to improve the quality of the workshops by including professionals who had demonstrated expert knowledge of and skills to teach life skills over the first year of the project. The results were impressive. Using a variety of teaching/learning resources and participatory methods, the trainers skillfully covered the following training content:

- Significance and use of data in education
- Achieving literacy in English:
 - Creative ways of teaching reading for understanding
 - Creative ways of teaching composition writing
- Achieving numeracy in mathematics:
 - Using English as the medium of instruction in mathematics
 - Understanding mathematical concepts
- Continuous assessment:
 - Formulation of tasks and items in English and mathematics
 - How to assess pupils
 - Remediation and enrichment
- Life skills, with a focus on lesson planning and practical experiences
 - Coping with emotions and stress
 - Interpersonal relationships
 - Empathy
 - Assertiveness
 - Critical and creative thinking
- Teacher supervision
 - Types of supervision
 - Supervision techniques
 - How to use MESA supervision forms
- Teacher code of conduct
 - The teaching profession
 - Ethics that govern teaching
 - Relationships between teachers, pupils, parents and other community members
- School management
 - What constitutes a 'good' school
 - Roles of the head teacher, teachers, pupils, parents and other community members in school management
 - Head teacher as the pillar of the school

Training of Trainers (TOT) at district level

The core group of trainers workshop was followed almost immediately by district level TOT workshops in all the four impact districts. PEAs, cluster mentor teachers and trainer heads were equipped with the knowledge and skills expected of all the Standards 1 to 8 teachers in the districts. This ensured uniformity and quality of both content and delivery of the course materials. *Table A2* gives details of the district level TOT outreach.

Cluster-level training of Standards 1-8 teachers

The training of classroom teachers was the ultimate goal of both the core group of trainers and the TOT preparatory sessions outlined above. Some 5,738 trained teachers were reached (see *Table A3*). The teachers covered the content highlighted earlier on in this section and the results were very encouraging: their knowledge of and skills in continuous assessment and in the integration of HIV/AIDS information into lessons showed remarkable improvement. This is one of the strengths of MESA incremental training strategy. The project builds on previous levels of learning without overburdening teachers with new information which they cannot digest, let alone apply.

It was equally satisfying to note that most of the cluster mentor teachers had taken “ownership” of the cluster trainings in the cluster trainings and that they displayed high levels of commitment in both planning for and running the workshops. Interaction between facilitators and participants was equally remarkable. As it was pointed out in year one, the quality of cluster trainings was always highest where cluster mentor teachers worked collaboratively with PEAs. MESA continued to encourage this partnership throughout the second year.

Training of untrained teachers

Following the successes of a similar initiative in the first year, a second course for MIITEP and some volunteer teachers was designed and conducted in the second year. The initiative began by orienting some 415 district level resource persons to serve as TOTs (see *Table A4*) to the following topics:

- Class management
- Effective use of participatory and creative methods of teaching
- Teaching techniques (how to create and use learning centers to enhance learning)
- Creative ways of teaching reading for comprehension
- Creative ways of teaching composition
- Using English as a medium of instruction to teach mathematics concepts

Despite the extremely limited period allotted to the orientation, as a result of financial constraints, the TOTs greatly appreciated sharing strategies for the training of the untrained and volunteer teachers.

The course was successfully conducted for 1,568 untrained and volunteer teachers (see *Table A5*) who had little or no teacher training. The inclusion of volunteer teachers in the in-service courses is proving to be critical. These are individuals from within the communities that are selected by the communities to teach in order to address acute teacher shortages. It is becoming increasingly important therefore that their capacity be built to effectively teach and manage classes. The workshops that were conducted for this target group equipped them with skills to enhance their performance in the classroom. They greatly appreciated the move.

4.1.2 Supervision of teachers teaching

Teacher supervision was the focus of activities in year 2 to enhance teachers’ pedagogical skills and ensure sustainability. District education coordinators, education facilitators, PEAs and mentor teachers teamed up to supervise 4,353 (75%) of the teacher population over the year (see *Table A6*). Sometimes the supervisors conducted team supervisions, a practice that enabled them reach most teachers in their zones at least once per term. This marked a tremendous improvement over pre-MESA supervision frequency which rarely reached 30%. Given adequate financial support, MESA would have achieved more in this regard. Out of the

teachers that were supervised 60% used participatory methods of teaching. Areas where most teachers perform well are in continuous assessment record keeping (i.e. progress chart and progress record book) and in the promotion of equal participation of girls and boys in the classroom. The areas where most teachers still need improvement are in remediation, enrichment and in integration of life skills into other topics and subjects. Although most teachers are using participatory methods such as group work and demonstrations, one still wants to see more creativity among most teachers so that learning is made more interesting and effective. Evidently this takes time to take roots.

During supervisory visits to the schools, it was also noted that teachers have become empowered to share their knowledge and skills with their peers to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. Cluster mentor teachers and trainer head teachers are proving invaluable in providing critical support and guidance to teachers as evidenced by their voluntary designing and facilitating of numerous school – and cluster-based trainings geared to addressing local pedagogical constraints. The commonest topics that teachers have worked on in their school and cluster-based workshops include the development of teaching and learning aids using materials from the local environment, formulation of tasks and items for continuous assessment and improvement of pedagogical skills and content knowledge to teach mathematics and English. Teachers have learned how to organize and conduct needs-driven workshops for the benefit of their pupils.

4.1.3 Reading campaign

The reading campaign is a school and community-based activity aimed at improving children's reading levels. Its main goal is to develop a habit of reading in children through supplementary reading at school and home. The reading campaign is a collaborative process between community members and teachers to develop appropriate level reading materials for children, especially in Standards 1-4 when children are acquiring foundational reading skills. This began in year 1 and continued in year 2 in collaboration with the community mobilization component. The reading campaign has progressed well in all the 4 impact districts over the year. Active involvement of the communities in the reading campaign is evidenced during open days. In many schools the school management committees and PTAs have organized open days to display reading materials they have produced and asked children to demonstrate their reading abilities. This has contributed towards the improvement of pupil performance in reading English.

4.1.4 Provision of bicycles to cluster mentor teachers

MESA provided 269 cluster teachers with a bicycle each (*See Table A7*) which they use to supervise teachers. They also use the bicycles when traveling to conduct in-service courses organized by them at school and cluster levels. Some mentor teachers have reported that the bicycles have served as an incentive to supervise teachers more frequently than they used to do before. A random survey by MESA revealed that the bicycles are indeed used for the intended purposes and that they are generally well maintained.

4.1.5 Collaboration between MESA and the Malawi Teacher Training Activity (MTTA)

MESA collaborated with MTTA to facilitate MTTA's:

- Development of baseline data instruments
- Running the follow-on baseline surveys on teacher and pupil performance
- Co-facilitating 3 cycles of workshops for the core group of trainers and district level TOTs, and the
- Monitoring of cluster level in-service trainings for teachers.

The collaboration demonstrated conclusively how projects with a common focus can work together for the benefit of the children of Malawi and the professional gains derived from it by staff were invaluable.

The prevailing project funding constraints became the major challenge of the year. Several times over the year, the teacher professional development annual work plan was reviewed to cut-back its scheduled activities in order to match it with the constrained and eventually reduced funding levels. This however did not demoralize staff nor was it allowed to derail the teacher-based interventions. This enabled the teacher

professional component to have a fairly successful year. For illustration a case study showing project impact is included in Attachment I, case study #1.

4.2 IR 9.1: Indirect Teachers' Professional Development Interventions

5.2.1 The Social Studies Initiative

MESA is charged with orienting 16,000 teachers nationwide to the new upper primary school Social Studies curriculum. The new curriculum was introduced in Standards 5 and 6 in all primary schools in Malawi beginning January 2005. Between August 2004, and July 2005, three major activities were carried out:

- Development of instructional materials
- Training of zonal trainers
- Training of Standards 5 and 6 teachers

Building on materials developed in the first year over the second year, MESA printed 20,000 copies of the new Standards 5-8 Social Studies syllabuses, 11,000 Standard 5 teachers guides 11,000 Standards 6 teachers' guides and 16,000 Standard 6 pupils books in readiness for nation-wide orientations. The materials were designed to promote an understanding of democracy, human rights and responsibilities, the Constitution of Malawi, gender equality and equity, sustainable use of the environment, dangers of HIV and AIDS, drug and substance abuse. Standard 7 Social Studies supplementary materials were in the final stages of development in readiness for printing by the close of the reporting period.

Year 2 was also marked by nation-wide training of trainers and classroom teachers. The nationwide TOT targeted zonal trainers (ie PEAs and one classroom teacher from each zone), SEMAs and teacher educators. (See *Table A8*). Participants were drawn from all the 316 zones, the 6 Teacher Training Colleges (40 teacher trainers) and all the 6 education divisions. There were 14 training sessions conducted at separate training venues by the national Training Team (NTT) which assisted in the development of teaching/learning resources. The 5-day orientation focused on the following:

- Background to the new Social Studies curriculum for Standards 5-8
- Components of the Social Studies teaching syllabus for Standards 5-8
- Critical contemporary issues: gender, drug and substance abuse, HIV and AIDS
- Participatory methods in Social Studies
- Teaching and learning resources
- Assessment procedures
- Preparing to teach: pre-planning and planning stages, reparation of schemes of work and lesson plans, teaching using prepared lessons
- Orientation of Standard 5 and 6 teachers in the new curriculum: a briefing on dates and management of the orientation

The orientation program was designed to encourage “active participation” and also took participants to a nearby school to demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired during the training sessions.

Orientation of Standards 5 and 6 classroom teachers followed. A total number of 10,026 teachers were reached, representing almost all the teachers who were teaching those classes then.

The new syllabus was considered a welcome development as it incorporates some critical contemporary issues such as human rights, democracy, gender, HIV and AIDS, the environment, drug and substance abuse. There was also a general consensus that the issues at hand needed immediate attention by schools and community since they were a national concern.

5.2.2 Teaching and Learning Resources

In Year 1, MESA developed, printed and distributed 6 classroom resource titles. In an effort to provide teachers with additional resources, during year 2, MESA drafted, edited, printed and distributed:

- 2,700 copies of *self and peer monitoring resource book*
- 2,700 copies of *Use of educational data resource book*

MESA also drafted, edited and typeset:

- *Code of professional ethics for teachers*
- *Integrated curriculum for Standards 2,3,4 and term 1 work for Standard 5*

Due to funding constraints, these resources could not be printed.

4.2.3 Construction at Domasi College of Education (DCE)

The constructions plans were received from the engineering consultants, Norman & Dawbarn (Mw) Limited, through the Education , Physical Facilities and Development Unit (EPFDU). Final payment was made to mark the end of the initiative following funding constraints that arose.

4.2.4 Refurbishment of an ICT hub at Mzuzu University

All the specified equipment, furniture and materials were delivered, fitted within the first year of the project. The smart classroom is now used for a variety of activities: It is used as a lecture room for Library and Information Science classes five hours per day on average. Students use the computers in the room for typing their assignments and research, especially literature search on the internet. Some browse the internet for notes to supplement their class notes. Committee meetings for the Information and Communication on Education Technology (ICET) project are conducted there. The room is also used as a conference room for public lectures conducted at the University. When the university is on semester break, the room is used for ICT and computer repair and upgrading short courses.

There are plans to use the smart classroom as an American corner as an outreach program for Mzuzu University to provide a resource centre for information on America in general and on American education in particular.

4.3 IR 9.2 and IR 9.4 Effective Schools, and HIV/AIDS Mitigated in Education Sector: Community Involvement

MESA's community involvement component bridges and integrates IR 9.2 and IR 9.4 in order to:

- raise awareness on the importance of having a quality and efficient basic education through having effective school management committees, IR9.2; and
- empower school communities, SMCs, PTAs, community leaders, and special cultural groups to determine and take appropriate action to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS within their school communities, IR9.4.

Over the past twelve months the following activities were undertaken to achieve the targets set for year 2.

4.3.1 Community Based planning workshops, sensitization meetings and follow-ups

Community-based workshops were continued from year one schedule. The workshops served to raise awareness among local communities of the barriers that hinder quality education within the communities' individual settings. The people determined possible solutions to the barriers and strived to achieve their goals. Approximately 28,186 community leaders, SMC/PTA members and teachers were reached (*see Table A9*).

Field workers reached 94% of the targeted communities with sensitization meetings and follow up visits to community-based initiatives (*see Table A10*). This demonstrates the field workers' commitment to MESA work and probably suggests better chances of project sustainability after its end-date especially considering that most of these activities were carried out at no cost (by the project).

4.3.2 TFD sensitization performances

The Theatre for development sensitization activity was successfully undertaken at 8 sites (2 per district) as planned to:

- Research and uncover high-risk behaviors that proliferate HIV/AIDS in specific areas
- Mobilize school/cluster/zonal communities to mitigating HIV/AIDS
- Enhance stakeholders' roles in addressing critical social issues (including HIV/AIDS) and supporting the affected and the infected, (i.e., orphans, the widowed and the sick).
- Mobilize members of assembly and chiefs to take an active role in ensuring community district consultations.

Some 968 people were interviewed and 6,888 attended the verification/sensitization and mobilization performances. (*See Table 11 and 12*).

The major factors that proliferate the spread of HIV/AIDS as revealed during the TFD research were:

- **Cultural practices:** Polygamy, wife inheritance, night dances and funeral rites.
- **Socioeconomic environment:** The development of periodic markets promotes promiscuity while the economic imbalance between men and women forces feminine promiscuity and male dominance which induces sexual abuse.
- **Social Change:** The introduction of public video shows (some of which unlawfully show pornography), and lack of proper sensitization regarding contraceptives accompanied by 'sexual advertisement' were highly cited by the grassroots level communities as strong factors inducing the proliferation in both the rural and urban areas.

It was particularly satisfying to note the wide range of people who attended these performances from the grassroots beneficiaries to the district managers. Tentative action plans were made and the people were charged as marked from their words and actions during and after the performances. The initiatives continue to be monitored and supported technically by field workers and by MESA.

Despite the sensitization and motivation of community members, some traditional authorities (TAs) do not have strong command over their subjects. This affects the implementation of plans developed during the performances. Authorities around Kasasanya feature as an example of this. Efforts will continue to be made to encourage both the TAs and the people to forge ahead for the sake of their children.

4.3.3 Bicycles distribution to cluster leaders

The purpose of supplying mentor leaders with bicycles was to ease transport problems encountered by the cluster leaders in executing their duties just as was the case with mentor teachers (section 4.1.4).

Bicycles to not only support the cluster leaders' work they also serve as a motivational tool. With increased monitoring and mentoring by the community mentors, MESA continued to maintain its momentum despite funding constraints. *Table A13* shows the distribution of the 264 bicycles provided to mentors across all the four impact districts.

It should be noted that to show their appreciation of the bicycles, the communities contributed money for maintaining them. Mzimba South, for example, had K21,500 set aside for this purpose at the time the bicycles were provided. This is unparalleled in this country. Like the cluster mentor teachers, the cluster

leaders expressed their commitment to use the bicycles for the intended purpose. *Table A14* gives an overview of the outreach during the bicycle distribution gatherings; and *Table A15* depicts the extent of cluster leader outreach as a result of having transportation.

4.3.4 District review and re-planning meetings

District review and re-planning meetings in Phalombe and Machinga were done as planned but those for Kasungu and Mzimba South were modified due to financial constraints. The objectives of the meetings were:

- Allow participants to share experiences (outreach, success stories, challenges, suggested solutions, lessons learnt and the way forward)
- Discuss and re-orient participants to such topics as: small grants, decentralization and life skills.
- Draw fresh plans of action based on the experiences.

The meetings targeted all Primary Education Advisors, Community Development Assistants, Social Welfare Assistants in each district; District Team members (DCs, DEMS, Desk Officers, DCDOs, DPDs, DYOs, DSWOs, DIOs, Education Divisions, Regional Community Services and Ministry headquarters (MOE) and MOGCWCS representatives (*see Table A16*). Attendance at all venues was very good, and participation during sessions was generally excellent and exciting. Some of the participants followed-up project issues in the field after these meetings more readily than they were before.

4.3.5 Community-based field worker facilitated trainings

Field workers built on first year trainings to achieve a grand total of 825 workshops, 5 above the scheduled number of 820 (necessitated by changes in school management committee membership). Approximately 28,186 participants were reached of whom 7,839 were female. The impact of these interventions is partly evidenced by the numbers and variety of community-based interventions in all the impact districts. (*see case studies 2-11* just to illustrate the point).

4.3.6 Cluster review and re-planning meetings

MESA facilitated and conducted cluster review and re-planning meetings in Phalombe and Machinga. A total of 1019 participants who included cluster leaders, community leaders, SMC/PTA members, former members of the district assembly, teachers and field workers participated in the meetings. Each school was represented by at least 7 members (*See Table A17*).

The re-planning meetings aimed to provide forms for grassroots level people to:

- review what had been done, successes and challenges encountered after the initial training
- share ideas and success stories, and find solutions to challenges met. Role model schools were identified and were motivated by being given a small grants application form.
- sensitize and train the participants on decentralization, life skills and the small grants scheme.

Some major issues discussed, which were common in most sessions were:

- Ways of curbing absenteeism (making the school environment exciting by launching extra curricular activities).
- Ways of sustaining drama groups that have sprouted, for example,
 - Giving them some training
 - Giving them incentives
 - Encouraging them to perform at places away from their own schools/villages.
- Ways of minimizing early marriages, for example:
 - Village heads to take an active role
 - Joint meetings on the issue to be facilitated by cluster leaders, village heads, head teachers, school management committee members
- Low turn up to meetings

- Use of registration lists during development activities and meetings
- Lack of external support
 - Work with Members of Parliament
 - Work with Traditional Authorities (TAs)
 - Effective lobbying

The activity achieved its objectives in that:

- All the 78 clusters in Phalombe and Machinga were covered.
- There was active participation from the female participants as well.
- A variety of interventions are underway by the community members and schools as a result of the meetings.
- The meetings allowed the participants to identify weak areas and draw plans on how to improve on them.

Although Kasungu and Mzimba south were not covered due to financial constraints, efforts were made to capture their achievements and aspirations through extension worker and MESA staff follow-up visits. The visits served to encourage them as well.

4.3.7 Disbursement of small grants

Small grant disbursement is an on-going activity. The activities under this initiative include:

- Appraising processes and awarding of small grants to schools.
- Assessment of the progress and impact of the small grant in schools that had already been awarded the small grants
- Encouraging schools to focus on tracking pupil outcomes as well (i.e., improved access, attendance, academic performance).

Following budgetary cut-backs, 74 schools out of 843 schools received amounts that ranged from MK15,000 to K30,000 per school. The total sum of MK1,114,580 was disbursed (*see Table A18*). Nearly 25,000 community members attended the small grants award ceremonies (*see Table A19*). MESA encouraged other donors to make contributions and examples are given in *Table A20*.

Illustrative benefits arising from the small grants:

- Mr Peter Kasanduka, Head teacher for Thambe. Thambe School has registered increased enrolment from 462 pupils in November 2004 to 645 pupils in February 2005.
- The grants have led to better understanding of decentralization, the strengthening of different skills of SMCs, local leaders and community members in terms of record keeping and lobbying for external assistance. GVH Mbwesio, cluster leader of Katambasula cluster in Machinga district, for example lobbied support from Emmanuel International.
- Some schools have realized gains from the use of grants as seed money for income generating activities. For example, Phalombe Catholic School sewed and sold uniforms as a result of MESA inspired interventions and reinvested part of the profits. They have now ventured into baking. The profits are used to improve the school.
- Some individuals and organizations are coming to the schools with moral and material support. MESA has helped stakeholders realize their role in a decentralized system of operation and has equipped some beneficiaries with book keeping and financial management skills at school level. For example, Mtubwi School in Machinga initiated the construction of a Head teacher's office and got K13,500 from the Member of Parliament of the area, Hon. D. Ngulinga, for cement for the floor. Naungu school received K2.19 million for the construction of a school block, 3 teacher's houses and purchased 160 desks after the community contributed sand and the funds were well accounted for.

- Vulnerable children especially orphans benefit from the proceeds of the skills training supported by the small grants. School attendance has generally improved as a result.

To ensure transparency and accountability disbursement of funds was done in the presence of all stakeholders of a school: SMC/PTA members, teachers, local leaders, parents and pupils.

The success of the small grants scheme caused two major challenges:

- Non-school going vulnerable youths want to return to school. Some schools enroll them mid term while others do not. Those that are not enrolled feel segregated against.
- An increasing number of schools sought funding, but their requests could not be met since project funding had been constrained. This caused a lot of concern among the applicants.

4.3.8 Community support for school work

In many schools parents and guardians went to their local schools on a regular basis to assist with school work particularly in the teaching of some vocational skills. *Table A21* is an illustrative example of the range of skills taught by community members.

The benefits of this development are far reaching. Kazengo school in Mzimba South, for example, took advantage of its carpentry lessons with pupils to repair the school's damaged desks. Chizimya school in the same district went further to lobby for computers so that their children are exposed to the computer world at an early age.

Challenges sometimes arise when the most active community members move away to other locations. Some communities try to avoid situations like this by targeting teachers in the training process. This works in most cases.

4.3.9 Reading Campaign re-sensitization

MESA organized and conducted a reading re-sensitization campaign to:

- Re-motivate and re-mobilize the communities towards production, care and use of reading materials
- Advocate for and promote involvement of parents in the production of teaching/learning resources
- Emphasize the need for continued re-sensitization on the reading campaign at community level by PEA/CDA, cluster leaders, mentor teachers, trainer heads, SMC/PTAs and teachers.

Cluster leaders and trainer heads were involved in the re-sensitization activities. They explained the background, objectives and processes of the reading campaign. This ensured continued community empowerment. *Table A22* depicts the campaign outreach.

The achievements of the initiative were:

- All the schools that were reached made tentative action plans for the production and use of reading materials.
- The members of the SMC/PTA and community and cluster leaders pledged improved monitoring of the initiative.
- Teachers who sidelined parents in the production process promised to re-involve them while the parents also expressed willingness to get fully-onboard.

It is important, however, to note that this intervention did not reach all the school communities of the impact districts due to funding shortfalls. But those reached were reported to be doing well. At Macheretcheta zone in Mzimba South, for example, members meet at least once a month to appraise their activities and to re-plan.

Others follow up habitual absentees and dropouts diligently. Just to illustrate the point, Mjinge School in Edingeni devised a system which they called Mjinge. The system is used to allocate all dropouts and regular absentees in the villages. The parents of these absentees are visited and counseled. As a result, enrolment at the school improved from 564 pupils in February to 671 pupils in May this year. Group Village headman Kwilasa at Madziabango in Machinga, like a number of other village heads, fines K500 any parent who allows an underage girl to get married instead of going to school. The crux of the discussion is that the reading campaign among other achievements is promoting access and retention as school communities seek ways of getting their youths to read.

4.4 General Support Activities

4.4.1 Mass communication interventions

Mass communication interventions ensured publicity of MESA activities in the year. The interventions recorded the progress and impact of technical activities in order to:

- keep the public informed on MESA activities and solicit feedback.
- encourage those involved in the projects' initiatives; and
- promote ripple effect for project sustainability and expansion.

Chimvano cha Mavu radio program

A total of 52 programs of the sponsored *Chimvano Cha Mavu* radio program were broadcasted. The program featured MESA activities on teacher professional development, community mobilization, learning resources, the social studies orientations and the ICT Hub at Mzuzu University. Some of the programs covered TFD sensitization performances; USAID official Mr. Bill Mvalo's field visits to Phalombe and Machinga; MESA trainings and some school/community based initiatives. The program also covered the visit of USAID/Washington African Bureau head, Dr Sarah Moten, to Madziabango primary school in Machinga.

The program merged with MTTA in order to cover both projects. There are all indications that the nation listens to the program. For instance, three listeners including a reporter from Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, Mr Chikumbutso Mtumodzi, sought more information on one of the initiatives in Phalombe district which was featured in one of the programs. The initiative is about Nkhulambe community members who resolved to mitigate the effects of orphanage by training their orphans in various vocational skills such as carpentry, tailoring, tinsmithing and handcrafts. The initiative has now been replicated in many schools such as Kayuni in Machinga and Chamaji in Mzimba South.

MESA Newsletter

8000 copies of the English versions of second and third issues of the *MESA Forum* were printed and distributed to all primary schools in the MESA impact districts and various stakeholders including USAID and government ministries. The second issue was translated into Chichewa but was not printed due to financial constraints. The name of the newsletter for the third issue changed from *MESA Forum* to *MESA/MTTA Forum* as it bears articles from both projects. The development has necessitated an increase in the number of pages from 8 to 12. It was particularly encouraging to find many schools actually letting pupils read the newsletter as part of supplementary reading material partly as a result of Mr Mtumodzi's publicity efforts.

Electronic media coverage

Television Malawi had 28 MESA broadcasts over the year. The material ranged from grassroots level interventions to activity site visits by distinguished project guests such as Dr Sarah Moten and Cabinet Ministers. Radio broadcasts were as follows:

- Malawi Broadcasting Corporation Radios One & Two – 22 times in the news bulletin. Some of the activities featured by the programs were on the orientation of the new Social Studies curriculum; distribution of bicycles by the project; and open days.

- 6 times on MBC Radio 2 in the *On The Scene* Program
- 21 times on MBC Radio 1's *Morning Basket* Program.
- 1 time in *Nzeru Nkupangwa* Program.
- 2 times in *Kasakaniza* Program on MBC Radio 1.

The impact of the media influenced two renowned local journalists Bright Kumwenda and Deogratius Mmana to ask for field visits to some of MESA impact areas in order to see for themselves what was being reported. Bright is an editor with *The Nation* newspapers and Deogratius is a feature writer with Malawi News Agency. They were very impressed and they have significantly influenced the positive mass media coverage since then. Illustrative examples of such reporting are:

Title of article	Name of Newspaper	Date published
USAID pledges more support for primary education	The Nation	February 22
Machinga schools impress MESA	<i>The Nation</i>	February 28
Hunger threatens primary education	<i>The Daily Times</i>	February 28
Girls still dropping out of school – MESA	<i>The Daily Times</i>	March 21
MESA trains pupils	<i>The Nation</i>	March 22

EQUIP 1 MESA Web Site

The Field Office in collaboration with the Home Office updated the project website www.equip123.net/equip1/mesa/default.htm. It includes photos and illustrative case studies of MESA's achievements..

Tsogolo Lathu

Tsogolo Lathu, is a 15-minute Television Malawi program that was awarded to CRECCOM and MESA on free air time to help publicize their work in education even more. Over the year, it featured programs on various project activities that ranged from community-based interventions to policy maker involvement. Comments from some of those who watch the program were complimentary.

4.4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

MESA monitoring and evaluation process aims at measuring the project's impact in three intermediate results in order to inform policy and practice at the community, school, district and national levels. Over MESA's second year the following activities were undertaken in order to achieve this goal.

Standards 3 and 6 end of year one follow up data collection in October 2004

MESA conducted Standards 3 and 6 pupils end of year one follow-up data collection, analyzed the data and reported the results to all stakeholders in the four impact districts in particular.

Results showed a significant gain in English pupil performance where many pupils moved from the lower levels to the higher levels. For instance, at the beginning of the academic year in February 2004, 97.2 % of the boys and 98.5 % of the girls were in the non mastery level, while in October the percentages had gone down to 82.6 % and to 84.4 % for boys and girls respectively. Almost 15 % of the pupils moved to the higher levels. This is also evidenced by the increase in the other levels where boys moved from 0.3 to 5.7 % and girls from 0 to 5.1 % in the full mastery level. In the partial mastery the boys moved from 2.5 to 11.7 % and the girls from 2.0 to 11.1 % (see *Tables A23 to A28*).

The data was collected from a total of 126 primary schools randomly selected in year one. These included 40 schools from Mzimba South, 47 from Kasungu, 26 from Machinga and 13 from Phalombe districts. In February 2004, 1,998 Standard 3 and 999 Standard 6 pupils were assessed shortly after the school year started to get baseline scores. Out of these 998 were boys and 1,000 were girls from Standard 3 and 501 were boys

while 498 were girls from Standard 6. English and mathematics curriculum based assessment items were administered to these pupils. Approximately 30 percent of the pupils who tested at baseline in February 2004 were not found during the post-test in October 2004. In Standard 3, 68% of the boys and 72% of the girls were present at the follow-up data collection while in Standard 6, 72% of the boys and 74% of the girls were present.

Teacher professional skills follow-up

A follow up data collection on the impact of MESA's teacher professional development activities on teachers skills was conducted in October 2004. Teachers were observed on the use of participatory methods in the classroom which includes a variety of skills, like continuous assessment, used during English and mathematics lessons. *Table A29* shows that approximately 60% of the teachers from MESA target districts were then using participatory teaching methods as compared to 36.9% found during baseline. This is approximately 10% over the 2004 target of 50%.

2005 Pupil baseline data collection

A year two baseline survey on pupil performance was conducted in February 2005. Data was collected from 2,011 and 994 pupils from Standards 3 and 6 respectively. A sample was drawn following the same protocol as in 2004 data collection as outlined earlier. The analysis showed some improvements in the 2005 baseline as compared to the baseline results of 2004 when the project was just starting. This shows that the interventions MESA is making by working with the teachers have a positive impact. (*see Tables A30 to A35*)

Monitoring of Social Studies training of trainers

Over the reporting period Monitoring and Evaluation officers monitored training of trainers for the new Social Studies curriculum. The sessions were well organized in that:

- Trainers were conversant with the materials since they were the ones who developed them
- Methods used during the training sessions were participatory
- The training manual assisted the participants to participate fully
- The materials are well broken down into two categories of content and methodology

The greatest observation derived from monitoring the social studies initiative was that there was need for more interaction between MESA operational sections especially the teacher professional development sections to ensure that good training practices like those observed in the social studies do not go unnoticed by professionals who needed them even more for application in their own trainings.

School records

In order to assist in capturing pupil and teacher position in the target districts, school record forms were distributed to all schools in the target districts. The forms were to assist capture school statistics for 2004 and 2005 school sessions. The following were the areas MESA focused on.

School enrolment

Enrolment in 2005 went down to 463,712 from 466,605 in 2004. Largest drop is in Kasungu where enrolment dropped from 190,027 to 184,552 in 2005 (*Table A36*).

Kasungu is followed by Machinga where enrolment dropped from 102,143 to 99,710 in 2005. Enrolment for Mzimba South and Phalombe rose from 105,083 in 2004 to 106,952 in 2005 for Mzimba South and 69,352 to 72,498 for Phalombe. Reasons for the drop were investigated. The reasons given by teachers, SMCs, PTAs and other stakeholders were:

- Hunger
- Enrolment of under age pupils
- Changes in the World Food Program (WFP) School feeding program – In some schools WFP changed its school feeding program from feeding Standards 1 to 8 pupils to feeding only

Standards 5 to 8 pupils. As a result of this many pupils from the lower primary dropped out from school

- Seasonal farm tenants who change locations following crop situations
- Poverty that affects children's clothing in particular
- Lack of parental care
 - Orphans
 - Actual lack of interest on the part of the parent
- Lack of interest arising from:
 - Lack of school facilities (sporting)
 - Shortage of teachers

However, in Mzimba South and Phalombe and some schools in Kasungu and Machinga districts enrolment had risen and that the reasons for the rise were:

- Standard 8 Secondary School selection was good
- Sensitization meetings and Open Days by MESA
- MESA Small Grants
- MESA/MTTA teacher training activities and the resulting improvements in teachers knowledge and skills

Mzimba South, Kasungu and Machinga continue to experience an influx of volunteer teachers especially in schools where there are acute shortages of teachers. However, the overall number of teachers has gone down from 6,244 to 5,826. This is mainly due to inter-district postings and deaths (*Table A37*).

Pupil tracking

In order to enhance the process of tracking absentees, dropouts and repeaters attendance registers were sent to 15% sample schools as in year one. Using these attendance registers teachers entered individual pupils' names, sex and age for all pupils in Standards 1 to 7. The teachers also followed up pupils' classroom attendance for a period of one month. Follow up registers with pupils names already printed were sent back to schools in February 2005 for verification. Cleaning and analysis of the data is currently in progress.

Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in education sector

Follow up data collection was conducted in November 2004 and analysis of the data looked at HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies/activities going on in the impact districts. In September 2003 11.1% of the SMCs engaged themselves in HIV/AIDS mitigation activities. In the follow up data collection 38.1% of the School Management Committees were found to be involved in one or more HIV/AIDS initiatives, exceeding target of 35.0% (*see Table A38*)

Strategies/activities being done in the MESA target districts include:

- Home Based/Orphan Care centres
- Anti-AIDS youth clubs
- Counselling/Civic education by AIDS committees
- Chiefs taking roles in the issues of HIV/AIDS

The analysis also looked at the SMCs awareness and knowledge of the spread of HIV/AIDS. Approximately 99.2% of the SMCs interviewed indicated that they were aware of how HIV/AIDS is spread and were able to mention some of the ways the epidemic is spread. Some 64% of the communities indicated that they learned more about HIV/AIDS from the training sessions MESA had organised.

Decentralization data collection

MESA conducted a follow-up data collection in April 2005 to establish the percentage of SMCs involvement in the implementation of and /or consultations on education development plans at zonal/district assembly level. Analysis of the decentralization data shows positive changes in the SMC behavior in that 59% SMCs indicated that they have interacted with or involved the ward councilors (*Table A39*).

A number of schools also indicated that they have been involved in lobbying from various development partners (e.g., European Union, MASAF, MPs and the District Assembly) (*Table A40*). For instance, the members of the School Management Committee, Mvunguti School in Phalombe district lobbied 46 school uniforms from Hon. Joshua, MP to encourage regular attendance of orphans who were rarely at school due to lack of clothing. The uniforms were given to 25 boys and 21 girls.

The follow-up data collection on implementation of education plans shows that 21.4% of the SMCs were involved in the implementation of and /or consultations on education development plans at zonal/district assembly level (*see Table A41*). This comes from a baseline of 0% while the estimated target was 20%. MESA under Community Mobilization Component translated the District Education Plans and distributed them to the zones and schools to publicize the plans.

Monitoring of education plans implementation

The MESA M & E team visited Machinga, Kasungu, Phalombe and Mzimba South districts to find out how much teachers, headteachers, cluster mentor leaders, SMCs and PTA knew of the education plans. The team also wanted to verify findings from the decentralization data collection on school committees participating in the implementation of education development plans at zonal or district assembly levels. Apart from the schools the team also talked to the District Education Managers and District Commissioners before visiting selected schools in the districts. The findings confirmed the reports that had been received and the communities greatly appreciated the interest the M & E team has in their endeavours.

4.4.3 Coordination and Reporting

Both planned and unplanned activity implementation coordination and reporting occurred at all levels throughout the year. The following events were of particular significance.

Monthly staff and management meetings

MESA monthly staff and management meetings serve to provide the opportunity for staff to share experiences and determine solutions to challenges. They help to instil a healthy team working spirit and assure collective responsibility. Over the reporting period, 18 formal meetings were held. Among the outcomes, to illustrate the point, the idea of intensified field supervision visits by MESA's M&E team originated from one such meeting and the idea has improved project performance.

Briefing/Consultative meetings

- A meeting with the new Principal Secretary (PS) for Education Dr. Simeon Hau: The PS received the project performance update which emphasized progress of the social studies curriculum initiative. Dr Hau was very appreciative of the updates. He indicated that he would keep the Honourable Minister of Education informed and urged MESA to keep up what he termed “the good work”.
- Fifteen formal meetings were held with USAID/Malawi besides the monthly synergy and quarterly SO9 extended meetings. The meetings culminated in MESA mounting what was rated “an excellent pavilion” during USAID/Malawi 44th anniversary celebrations. MESA had the opportunity to brief the State President, Dr Bingu wa Mutharika, an overview of MESA. The then Minister of Education, Hon Yusuf Mwawa, M.P., said on TVM, that he was very happy with the project.
- A meeting with the USAID/Botswana Regional Environmental Advisor and USAID/Malawi's Project Management Specialist, Mr Autman Tembo, served to satisfy the visitors that MESA had

communicated USAID's environmental conservation guidelines to the prospective engineering consultants of the Domasi College of Education construction initiative through EPFDU, Blantyre.

- MESA's project advisory committee (PAC) met twice. The committee's encouragement helped the professional staff to work even harder and spread the message of what MESA was accomplishing to relevant stakeholders.
- MESA participated in and made a presentation at MOE's Strategizing Seminar for Malawi's major donors in education. The seminar aimed at exploring strategies to coordinate donor efforts. Sharing experiences and best practices with the country's renowned educationists was extremely useful.

Incidental meetings

These were many and varied. Most of them involved meeting with other implementing partners like Ms Kristen Boose, Chief of Party of the BRIDGE Project, to share ideas and possibilities of coordinating our projects. It is encouraging to note that MESA ideas and practices are often sought by many partners.

- Dr Marcey Ramsey with a team of three from the Safe Schools Program (SSP), DevtECH Systems Inc., Washington visited the MESA Field Office then later visited Machinga LEA primary school to get a feel of MESA operations and impact at the grassroots level. That SSP recommended to USAID that it sets up its offices in Zomba to leverage investments in MESA communities that are now committed to improving education quality and gender equality is proof enough that the team was satisfied with MESA'S performance.
- Nearly 100 debriefing meetings between MESA supervisors and district-based stakeholders were held. The meetings were usually held immediately after supervising/monitoring school-based activities including observations of teachers teaching in order to keep the district team informed of progress and highlight areas for follow-up action. These meetings strengthened team work and fostered the success of project interventions at grassroots level.

MESA and MTTA collaboration

MESA and MTTA staff continued to plan and work together in many activities that included:

- Development of MTTA's baseline survey data collection instruments
- Training of 120 data collectors
- Collection of pupil performance baseline survey data
- Facilitation of MTTA's second and third cycle in-service teacher training workshops
- Supervision of teachers to enhance the teaching of English, science and mathematics

The experience derived from these joint ventures did not only help to strengthen the capacity of the two projects as well as ensuring that schools got the best service in the most efficient and resource effective manner.

Activity site visits by external stakeholders

Field visits enable various stakeholders and officials to see for themselves what the project is doing. Often it is only then that reports become more meaningful. In addition, the encouragement from the stakeholders is of great value to the beneficiaries at grassroots level. Some of the visits over the year were:

- Dr Sarah Moten, USAID/Washington D.C. Africa Bureau Head of Education, the then USAID/Malawi Acting Mission Director Mr Erick Locken and Mr Bill Mvalo USAID/Malawi Education Team Leader visited Madziabango School in Machinga on a familiarization tour of education projects in Malawi. Apart from seeing community-driven interventions at the school, the team observed a Standard 1 English lesson taught by a volunteer lady teacher. The team expressed satisfaction with what they saw.

- Ms Tracey Brunnet, USAID/Washington D.C., led a three-member team to MESA office and to Chimkwezule school in Machinga district. The team heard school communities and some role models talk about their involvement in MESA activities. They also visited Chimkwezule Community Day Secondary School which is a direct outcome of GABLE SMC project. The visitors said they were happy with what they saw and heard.
- Six visits by USAID/Malawi officials to Phalombe, Machinga and Mzimba South districts. The occasions enabled Mr Bill Mvalo, (Education Team Leader) Dr Tom Le Blanc and Mr Humphreys Shumba (HIV/AIDS Education Specialist) (individually and at one occasion two of them) to see the impact of the project at grassroots level and talk directly to the people the project targets. The results were almost invariably renewed commitment to working even harder by the people.

Visits to the Field Office

- The Field Office hosted AIR's Vice president responsible for International Development, Dr Janet Robb, and Dr John Hatch of USAID/Washington, the Project Manager, Ms Cassandra Jessee, and the Project Assistant, Ms Kristen Barba. They provided assistance with the technical and financial administration and planning of the MESA project. Community members at Michesi Primary School were particularly thrilled with Ms Jessee's and Ms Barba's presence when the two joined them watch a Theatre for Development (TFD) sensitization performance with the then Minister of Tourism and Information, Hon. Dr Ken Lipenga, in attendance.
- Ms Elizabeth Pearce, Save the Children (US) M&E Specialist based in Westport, US and Ms Jessee observed MESA's and MTTA's data collectors' training session in Machinga. The visitors presence was highly appreciated by the participants who reported that the visitors' comments were inspirational. Ms Jessee followed-up the training experience with a spot-checking visit to some Phalombe district schools to see how the data collectors actually performed their tasks. She expressed satisfaction with what she saw.
- AIR Senior Field Accounting Manager, Mr Stephen Sealy, visited the Field Office while on a visit to MTTA. In his brief visit, he appreciated the internal financial controls the MESA Field Office has put in place. He urged the office to remain vigilant.

Project staff visits to U.S.A.

- MESA's Chief of Party (CoP) attended a two-day EQUIP I Chief of Party summit in California, U.S.A. It was a unique occasion which provided an opportunity to professionals with common interests but operating in a wide range of geographical settings to share experiences/challenges and learn from one another. The CoP stayed on for a further three days to attend and present a paper, *Using role models to improve education: the story from Malawi* in collaboration with Ms Jessee at this year's CIES Conference at Stanford University. The presentation drew a very large audience and it was well received. Attending the conference was also educational and inspirational.
- The CoP also attended a summit for all the Chiefs of Party and AIR Home Office professionals in the International Development Program division in Washington, D.C. He co-facilitated a session titled *Delivering and Maintaining Quality* alongside Dr Phil Christensen, AIR's Chief of Party in South Africa. The sessions over the week has strengthen connections with other projects and home office, as well as learn ways to manage and implement projects more effectively.
- Mr Harold Lyson, MESA's Finance Manager, made a very fruitful trip to the Home Office in Washington, Mr Lyson was exposed to various financial procedures and processes that have clearly increased his confidence and level of performance back home in Malawi. Mr Lyson organized meetings with counterparts from MESA implementing partners to share experiences with them. The trip was a valuable experience for Mr Lyson as an individual and to the project as a whole.

Reporting

The following main reports were prepared and submitted over the year:

- Three quarterly technical reports.
- A comprehensive report of end of Year One M&E follow-up survey performance results
- *Highlights of MESA*, a five page write-up of MESA's achievements: This was distributed to most key stakeholders and donors to keep them informed of the project progress. The document was one of the most appreciated of MESA publications. Some donors such as CIDA thought that other implementing partners had something to learn from the action.

During the second year MESA's coordinating and reporting component involved many interesting and informative activities.

5.0 PERFORMANCE PROGRESS AGAINST PROJECT INDICATORS

The monitoring and evaluation process aims at measuring the project's impact under USAID Strategic Objective 9 *Quality and Efficiency of Basic Education Improved* in order to inform policy and practice at the community, school, district, and national levels and support project implementation for improving the quality and efficiency of basic education in Malawi. In conjunction with USAID, MESA developed nine indicators to monitor its performance. To track these indicators, a sample representing 15% of the total number of schools in each district was drawn, for a total of 126 primary schools. It was drawn using a stratified random sampling based on enrolment, geographical location (rural, urban or semi urban), and ensuring every zone was represented. Surveys were administered in October 2003 to collect baseline data on teachers, head teachers, and PEAs prior to project interventions. In February 2004, 2,997 Standard 3 and 6 pupils were assessed shortly after the school year started to get baseline achievement scores in English and maths. Follow-up data was collected in October for pupils and teachers. Using attendance registers, all pupils in the same 126 schools were followed to track pupil status (e.g., dropout rates, repetition rates). Following is a description of each indicator, the baseline data and any resulting implications.

1. Percentage of teachers using participatory teaching methods in target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga, and Phalombe increased.

This indicator is determined by observing teachers while giving lessons in English and maths. Calculations are based on the percentage of teachers using active teacher-pupil interaction methods that involve teachers using creative teaching methods, continuous assessment, promoting equal gender participation, active learning methods, etc. Nearly 37% of the teachers, 42.4% of the female teacher compared to 35.6% of the male teachers used participatory methods prior to training. End of Year One follow-up survey performance results showed that the female and male teachers had moved to 61% and 58.9% respectively, averaging 59.5%.

2. Percentage of pupils achieving full mastery in reading English at Standard 3 in four new target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga, and Phalombe increased.

This indicator is calculated as the number of pupils in the four target districts achieving 80% and above of words read correctly from an English passage of their class textbook divided by those tested. The situation is quite dire with essentially no pupils reaching full mastery. In fact, 92% could not even read one English word. As a result, MESA is launching a reading campaign to promote literacy through parental involvement and community ownership. MESA is expecting at least 12% of the pupils to achieve full mastery in reading English. Year one saw the mastery level move from a baseline of 0.1% to 5.4%. Year 2 baseline data was collected in February 2004.

3. Percentage of pupils achieving full mastery in numeracy at Standard 3 in four target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga, and Phalombe increased.

This indicator is calculated as the number of pupils in the four target districts achieving 80% and above on 50 mathematics items from their class textbook. Like reading English, less than 1% of the pupils are at the full mastery level in maths, however, approximately two-thirds of pupils are at the

partially mastery level. Training of teachers includes lessons on how to achieve permanent numeracy and MESA is projecting 11% of the pupils will achieve full mastery by project end. Pupils' mastery level moved from a baseline of 0.4 to 5% by the end of Year One. Year 2 baseline data was collected in February 2004.

4. Percentage of pupils repeating Standard 3 in target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga, and Phalombe

This indicator is determined by a pupil tracking exercise and finding out the percentage of pupils remaining in Standard 3 for more than one academic year. Baseline levels show 34.8% of the pupils are repeating at Standard 3, while 30.3% are repeating across all Standards. Drop out rate is higher in the lower Standards and there is no significant differences based on gender. MESA expects repetition rates to drop in 2005.

5. Number of children enrolled in primary schools affected by USAID basic education programs in target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga, and Phalombe

Enrollment data is collected through school record forms, which track the number of children enrolled in primary schools in the target districts. The enrolment for Year One was 458,789 against 452,047 in 2003. In 2004 enrolment rose to 466,605 and in 2005 enrolment has dropped to 463,712.

6. Percentage of school committees participating in the implementation of and/or consultations on education and development plans at zonal/district assembly levels in the four target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga, and Phalombe

This indicator is calculated through surveys that tell us the percentage of trained school committees comprised of community representatives that are involved in facilitating two-way communication between school and community, and mobilizing community to participate in school development projects, and take action in implementing the decisions. The baseline is lower than initially expected. From a baseline of 0% the follow up data collection on implementation of education plans show that 21.4% of the SMCs were involved in the implementation of and /or consultations on education development plans at zonal/district assembly level. The target for the year was of 20%. MESA has translated the education development plans into the local vernaculars and given them to SMCs.

7. Percentage of school committees in the target districts that undertake one or more HIV/AIDS initiatives

This indicator is calculated through surveys that tell us the percentage of school committees that are involved in HIV/AIDS outreach activities such as sensitization on HIV/AIDS awareness, voluntary counseling and testing, prevention measures on HIV proliferation, cultural break through, social-economic strategies established, dialogue on the life skills curriculum, acceptable life skills curriculum taught in schools, students display some knowledge of sexuality and reproductive component of life skills curriculum and home based care. At baseline, 11.1% of the SMCs undertook HIV/AIDS initiatives. At the end of year one, 38.1% SMCs were engaged in HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies.

8. Number of children completing primary school education in primary schools affected by USAID basic education programs in target districts

This indicator is calculated by finding out the number of children enrolled in Standard eight and sat for the Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSCLE) in target districts. Since the number of children enrolling and sitting for the PSCLE includes a range of factors beyond the influence of MESA, targets are not set but data will be collected and reported after exams are administered. 19,230 children completed primary school in 2004 against 18,409 in 2003, a 0.4% increase

9. Number of teachers oriented to the Social Studies materials

This indicator is calculated by finding out the number of teachers trained in civic education that involves democracy and human rights, HIV/AIDS, gender, drug and substance abuse, use and abuse

of power, courts and their functions and the Malawi Constitution etc. The total number of teachers oriented to-date is 10,393. MESA expects to reach 12,000 teachers altogether

Table 2. MESA Performance Monitoring Plan

IR	Indicator	Means of verification	Baseline			2004						2005						2006		
			Year	Male	Female	Total	Target			Actual			Target			Actual (October)			Target	Actual
9.1.2	Percentage of teachers using participatory teaching methods in target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga and Phalombe	Classroom observation	Oct-03	35.6	42.4	36.9	48.0	55.0	50.0	58.9	61.9	59.5	68.0	75.0	70.0					
9.2.3	Number of teachers oriented to the Social Studies materials	Training Reports	Oct-03			0			8,000			10,393			12,000					
9.0.2	Increased percentage of pupils achieving full mastery level in reading English at Standard 3	Pupil Assessment	Feb-04	0.4	0.2	0.3	7.0	5.0	6.0	5.7	5.1	5.4	9.0	7.0	8.0					
9.0.2	Increased percentage of pupils achieving full mastery level in numeracy at Standard 3	Pupil Assessment	Feb-04	0.5	0.4	0.5	6.0	4.0	5.0	5.6	4.4	5.0	9.0	7.0	8.0					
9.0.3	Repetition rate at Standard 3	Pupil Tracking	Feb-04							36.1	33.6	34.8	32.1	30.0	31.0					
9.2.4	Number of children completing primary school education in schools affected by USAID basic education programs in target districts	MANEB Results	Oct-03	11,036	7,373	18,409				11,426	7,804	19,230								
9.0.4	Number of children enrolled in primary schools affected by USAID basic education programs in the target districts of Mzimba south, Kasungu, Machinga and Phalombe	Pupil Tracking	Oct-03	229,142	222,905	452,047				231,169	227,620	458,789								

	Indicator	Means of verification	Baseline		2004		2005				2006	
			Year		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
9.2.2	Percentage of school committees participating in the implementation of and/or consultations on education and development plans at zonal/district assembly levels in the four new target districts of Mzimba South, Kasungu, Machinga and Phalombe	SMC activities Interviews	Oct-04	0.0			20.0	21.4	30.0			
9.4.1	Percentage of school committees in the target districts that undertake one or more HIV/AIDS initiatives	SMC activities Interviews	Oct-04	11.1	35.0	38.1	50.0					

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FROM YEAR TWO

	Challenges	Status of proposed solutions
1	The laying off of MITTEP teachers who failed their professional examinations has aggravated the staffing situation in schools	MESA will continue to advocate with DEMs and give guidelines on how to effectively use an overlapping timetable and/or a double shift system.
2	Frequent teacher mobility between schools, districts and in some cases between regions impacts negatively on consolidation of desirable pedagogical skills among teachers	Continue to keep on training new teachers through school-based in-service trainings
3	The number of Standards 5 to 8 teachers has increased from 1,600 since MIE first made its estimates using 2001 data, to 5,600 teachers in 2004 the period is received funding. This has cost implications in terms of training an extra 4,000 teachers in the social studies initiative.	Effort will continue to be made to find an alternative financial support to train the extra 4,000 teachers.
4	Critical social studies contemporary issues are highly value-laden. It will take time to change the mindset of some teachers that children and women, for example, have tights in the context of Malawi's social and cultural practices	Patience and continued dialogue will characterize follow-up professional support
5	The dissolution of ward councilors creates a gap in communication between the community and the District Assembly.	MESA will continue to encourage communities to deploy the services of the old ward counselors and any other influential citizens to communicate with the District Assembly.
6	Unprecedented death and resignation rates of Field Workers rob the high spirited schools and communities of an invaluable human resource.	Efforts to intensify sensitization of new staff will continue to be made.
7	The number of orphans in the communities is rising at an alarming rate.	MESA will continue communicating these findings to relevant authorities and the outside at large. But in some situations, crises points are impending.
8	Slow or no response at all to community requests from other service providers to support such community initiatives as infrastructure, technical know how e.g. fish farming, care giving to the sick as well as care for under five children.	Lobbying is being intensified at both community and stakeholders levels.
9	MESA did not implement its high costs but crucial interventions, such as teacher training following the current funding constraints. Coming at a most critical period of project implementation this will have a significant negative bearing on project outputs and outcomes.	Everything possible was done to intensify low cost interventions such as school-and cluster-based supervision-cum-training to minimize the impact of constrained funds.

7.0 LEASONS LEARNED

Every effort was made over the year to heed the lessons from the successful GABLE SMC, SMC-EQ, QUEST and IEQ projects in the MESA implementation process. For example, MESA was mindful of the need to be flexible and ready to adjust to changing environments; to acknowledge that research cannot be eliminated altogether or else risk community ownership; to know that project staff must “set the stage” from day one regarding commitment, work ethic, and professionalism and many other lessons. MESA does not aim at re-documenting lessons like these in its reports, however, MESA conscientiously keeps track of any new lessons that help to improve MESA’s performance. The following were noted over the period under review:

- Targeting school heads promotes project impact
Most school heads who reported to have received through MESA orientations exhibit very good work at their schools even with minimal follow-on supervision. While intensive follow-up supervision is imperative to ensuring the sustainability of MESA’s interventions, revelations over the reporting period suggest that head teachers who report having received thorough grounding in MESA’s aspirations and methodologies display very good work at their schools regardless of the reduced intensity of follow-on supervision visits. This development will be monitored to determine if it suggests the need to target head teachers in their own right.
- Regular district level de-briefing meetings enhance project impact
Most times MESA supervised or followed up school/community based interventions, they made it a point to brief the district team (DEM’s office) of their findings and recommendations. The result was very rewarding. In many cases, the district officials followed-up the recommendations and in effect enhanced the project impact at grassroots level. This concerted effort and coordination is something project implementers ought to bear in mind at all times.

8.0 CONCLUSION

It is greatly satisfying that MESA has a success story to tell for its second year because the challenges that faced it then were great. Twice the project had to re-plan its activities relative to reduced funding levels, for example. Yet this did not derail the project. Approximately 80% of the primary schools in the impact districts have at least one initiative aimed at improving the quality of education offered to the local children; over 60% of the teachers use participatory teaching methods; basically all the Standards 5 and 6 teachers nationwide were oriented to the new social studies curriculum and they are being supported by 15 titles of additional professional print resources. Then Mzuzu University boasts of a lively ICT hub which it plans to develop further into an American corner. The next couple of months before the project closes, will focus on consolidating and extending these achievements so MESA leaves a permanent mark on the Malawi education service.

ATTACHMENT 1: DATA TABLES

Table A1. Core group of trainers by location and gender in Cycle 3

Organization/office	Female	Male	Total
Lilongwe Teacher Training College	1	1	2
Blantyre Teacher Training College	1	0	1
Montfort Teacher Training College	1	0	1
St. Joseph Teacher Training College	1	0	1
Kasungu Teacher Training College	0	1	1
Malawi Institute of Education	0	1	1
Mulunguzi Secondary School	0	1	1
Northern Region Education Division	0	1	1
Central East Education Division	0	1	1
South East Education Division	1	0	1
Shire Highlands Education Division	0	1	1
Selected PEAs	1	3	4
MESA professional staff	7	9	16
Grand Totals	13	19	32

Table A2. District level resource persons trained in cycle 3 for trained teachers

	PEA		Cluster Mentor Teacher		Trainer Head		Totals	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Mzimba South	2	12	16	57	11	64	29	133
Kasungu	5	11	20	89	15	94	40	194
Machinga	1	9	14	43	2	47	17	99
Phalombe	1	6	3	26	4	25	8	57
Totals	9	38	53	215	32	230	94	483
Grand Total	577							

Table A3. Standards 1-8 teachers trained in cycle 3

District	Female	Male	Total
Mzimba South	452	1,206	1,658
Kasungu	793	1,456	2,249
Machinga	357	838	1,195
Phalombe	123	513	636
Grand Total	1,725	4,013	5,738

Table A4. District level resource persons oriented to train untrained teachers

District	PEA		Cluster Mentor Teacher		Trainer Head		Totals	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Mzimba South	1	7	17	57	3	28	21	92
Kasungu	5	12	19	89	0	0	24	101
Machinga	1	9	14	43	2	47	17	99
Phalombe	1	5	3	24	4	24	8	53
Totals	8	33	53	213	9	99	70	345
Grand Total	415							

Table A5. Untrained teachers trained in cycle 3

District	Female	Male	Total
Mzimba South	44	300	344
Kasungu	70	436	506
Machinga	166	447	613
Phalombe	26	79	105
GRAND TOTAL	306	1,262	1,568

Table A6. Teachers supervised in year 2

District	Male	Female	Total
Mzimba South	709	341	1,050
Kasungu	1,440	800	2,240
Machinga	237	122	359
Phalombe	577	127	704
Total	2,963	1,390	4,353

Table A7. Number of bicycles provided to mentor teachers

Districts	Total
Mzimba South	75
Kasungu	108
Machinga	57
Phalombe	29
Totals	269

Table A8. TOT trained in new social studies curriculum

District	Female	Male	Total
Northern	131	29	160
Central East	77	27	104
Central West	120	44	164
South East	67	29	96
South West	63	21	84
Shire Highlands	62	20	82
National totals	520	170	690

Table A9. Numbers reached through sensitization meetings, focus group discussions and follow-ups

District	Type of activity	Total Planned	Total Done	# Of Participants				Totals
				Adults		Children		
				M	F	M	F	
<i>Mzimba South</i>	Sensitization Meetings and Focus Group Discussions	298	267	6,718	3,866	7,803	8,453	26,840
	Follow ups	153	166	2486	1536	1776	1773	7,571
	Totals	451	433	9,204	5,402	9,579	10,226	34,411
<i>Kasungu</i>	Sensitization Meetings and Focus Group Discussions	86	224	6,355	4,306	13,479	13,124	37,264
	Follow ups	222	198	4,499	3,712	3,875	3,390	15,476
	Totals	408	422	10,854	8,018	17,354	16,514	52,740
<i>Machinga</i>	Sensitization Meetings and Focus Group Discussions	158	125	5,060	5,622	5,055	5,145	20,882
	Follow ups	88	79	1,119	848	432	543	2,942
	Totals	246	204	6,179	6,470	5,487	5,688	23,824
<i>Phalombe</i>	Sensitization Meetings and Focus Group Discussions	67	56	4,255	5,123	4,806	5,089	19,273
	Follow ups	59	43	1,088	1,047	216	179	2,530
	Totals	126	99	5,343	6,170	5,022	5,268	21,803
	Grand Totals	1,231	1,158	31,580	26,060	37,442	37,696	132,778

Table A10. Numbers reached through non-funded activities done by the extension workers

District	Type of activity	Total Planned	Total Done	# of Participants				Totals
				Adults		Children		
				M	F	M	F	
<i>Mzimba South</i>	Zonal Review Meetings	42	25	287	84	0	0	371
	Cluster Meetings	19	13	64	17	0	0	81
	Role Model Utilization	26	25	1,371	1,226	611	572	3,780
	School Open days	38	25	1,491	954	3,620	3,486	9,551
	Zonal Open days	5	2	1,113	1,216	3,008	2,642	7,979
	Totals	130	90	4,326	3,497	7,239	6,700	21,762
<i>Kasungu</i>	Zonal Review Meetings	68	80	197	67	0	0	264
	Cluster Meetings	46	62	303	59	0	0	362
	Role Model Utilization	12	15	331	581	625	592	2,129
	School Open Days	46	56	6,556	4,684	22,041	17,785	51,066
	Zonal Open days	15	7	1,443	641	8427	8491	19,002
	Totals	187	220	8,830	6,032	31,093	26,868	72,823
<i>Machinga</i>	Zonal Review Meetings	25	13	235	81	0	0	316
	Cluster Meetings	10	6	171	80	0	0	251
	Role Model Utilization	10	0	0	0	0	0	0
	School Open days	3	3	70	110	210	315	705

	Zonal Open days	3	2	440	370	5,789	5,701	12,300
	Totals	51	24	916	641	5,999	6,016	13,572
Phalombe	Zonal Review Meetings	25	14	426	307	0	0	733
	Cluster Meetings	4	4	49	22	0	0	71
	Role Model Utilization	4	3	543	347	721	610	2,221
	School Open days	6	5	453	550	614	405	2,022
	Zonal Open days	6	2	482	533	942	1,063	3,020
	Totals	45	28	1,953	1,759	2,277	2,078	8,067
	Grand Totals	413	362	16,025	11,929	46,608	41,662	116,224

Table A11. Number of people interviewed per district

District	Com. Leaders		SMC/ PTA		Parents		Teachers		Pupils		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Mzimba. S.	9	0	9	1	61	48	8	13	55	37	142	99
Kasungu	25	3	5	1	64	44	6	5	19	11	119	64
Machinga	20	12	9	3	31	89	9	10	42	53	111	167
Phalombe	30	22	14	18	56	35	8	0	39	32	147	107
Sub totals	84	37	37	23	212	216	31	28	155	133	519	437

Table A12. Outreach of people who attended the TFD sensitization performances per district

District	Com. Leaders		SMC/ PTA		Parents		Teachers		Pupils		PEA/ CDA		District Team		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Mzimba. S.	26	0	13	8	495	530	16	29	520	610	4	2	9	4	1,083	1,183
Kasungu	33	4	23	6	230	280	12	3	290	285	4	1	16	0	608	579
Machinga	14	4	8	13	290	360	10	5	320	360	0	3	2	1	644	746
Phalombe	36	13	16	16	336	450	22	5	600	540	4	3	2	2	1,016	1,029
Total	109	21	60	43	1,351	1,620	60	42	1,730	1,795	12	9	29	7	3,351	3,537
Grand Total	6,888															

Table A13. Number of community mentor leaders supplied with bicycles

Districts	Total
Mzimba South	78
Kasungu	108
Machinga	49
Phalombe	29
Totals	264

Table A14: Attendance during the bicycle distribution exercise

District	Target group								Totals	Cash contributed
	District Extension Staff		Community Leaders/MAs		SMC/PTA members/Cluster Leaders		Teachers			
	PEAs	CDAs	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Mzimba South	17	10	367	202	486	391	117	58	1648*	K21,500
Kasungu	3	14	239	10	297	231	242	97	1133*	K31,060
Machinga	6	9	831	304	935	379	157	23	2,644	K4, 500
Phalombe	6	7	155	18	299	183	119	38	825	-
Grand Totals	32	40	1,592	534	2,017	1,184	635	216	6,250	K57,560

* In Kasungu and Mzimba South Districts turn up was affected because the activity coincided with the registration of people for the Target Input Program, which was underway in some clusters.

Table A15. Number of people reached by cluster leaders through their activities

District	Number of People Reached by cluster leaders		
	Males	Females	Totals
Mzimba South	122,304	68,640	190,944
Kasungu	153,792	124,416	278,208
Phalombe	42,283	45,414	87,697
Machinga	57,926	68,330	126,256
Totals	376,305	306,800	683,105

Table A16. Number of people reached at district field worker review and re-planning meetings

District	PEAs	CDAs	SWAs	District Team	Ministry/Regional Team	Total
Mzimba South	17	13	3	8	2	43
Kasungu	20	12	2	6	1	41
Machinga	10	10	2	6	0	28
Phalombe	7	8	1	5	3	24
Totals	54	43	8	25	6	136

Table A17. Number of people reached during the cluster review and re-planning meetings

District	Comm. Leaders		SMC/PTA		Teachers		Cluster Comm. Members		Ward Councilors		Field Extension Workers		Totals
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Mzimba S	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kasungu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Machinga	118	5	97	73	125	23	22	2	2	0	8	3	478
Phalombe	56	14	258	79	61	16	31	12	2	0	10	2	541
Totals	174	19	355	152	186	39	53	14	4	0	18	5	1019

Table A18. Summary of schools supported by small grants per district

District	Total No. of schools	No. of schools Supported	% of schools supported in the district	Total Amount Disbursed
Mzimba South	288	37	12.8	K 329,720.00
Kasungu	318	22	6.9	K 168,550.00
Machinga	154	37	24.0	K 292,860.00
Phalombe	83	21	25.3	K 323,450.00
Total	843	74	13.9	K 1,114,580.00

Table A19. Number of participants at grant awarding meetings

District	Participants										Total
	Parents		Children		SMC/PTAs		Comm. Leaders		PEA/CDA		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Mzimba S	869	1106	1734	1686	83	22	116	17	14	0	5647
Kasungu	1276	1486	2085	2194	96	41	136	32	8	0	7354
Phalombe	782	1061	1543	1674	27	17	46	15	7	1	5173
Machinga	866	943	2028	2357	38	11	59	14	4	2	6322
Total	3793	4596	7390	7911	244	91	357	78	33	3	24, 496

Table A20. Examples of donors in support of MESA grants

District	Zone	School	Type of initiative	Donor
Phalombe	Mpatza	Mlirankhuda	16 chickens	Local pastor
	Swangoma	Mwimba	Constructed classroom block	DDF
	Nambiro	Nalingula	Provision of 31 school uniforms and 45 second hand clothes to orphans	Hon. Joshua, MP
	Nambiro	Migowi	Construction of a two- class roomed block	MASAF
Machinga	Ngokwe	Chitundu	Bole hole installation underway	MASAF
	Mpombwe	Mauwa	Construction of a two class roomed block	MASAF
Mzimba South	Vazala	Vazala	Lobbied K500,000.00 and constructed a school block	Fr. Ben of Nkhamenya Parish
Mzimba South	Chikangawa	Kamwamphindi	Lobbied 2 bags fertilizer and put in a garden meant to help orphans at school	Tovwirane Center

Table A21. Vocational skills taught to children by community members

District	Zone	School	Activity	Boys	Girls	Total
Mzimba South	Chikangawa	Bara	Pot making	-	33	33
			Wood curving	7	5	12
			Knitting	24	12	36
			Tinsmith	20	5	25
		Chipombo	Tailoring	25	30	55
			Wood curving	10	-	10
		Kachere	Carpentry	15	-	15
		Makhuwira	Tailoring	10	2	12
Mzimba South	Mzoma	Berere	Bicycle Repairing	25	-	25
		Matikija	Toilet slabs	15	-	15
		Chizinya	Carpentry	8	5	13
			Computer operation	3	3	6
	St. Monica	Orchard garden	35	20	55	
Phalombe	Nkhulambe	Thambe	Carpentry	11	-	11
			Tailoring	6	3	9
			Knitting	-	12	12
	Swang'oma	Chipalanje	Tailoring	85	36	121
			Carpentry Knitting Cooking			
	Mpoto	Tailoring Tinsmith	7	3	10	
Machinga	Ngokwe	Nkapalira	Tailoring Mat making Basket making	15	10	25
			Chitundu	Knitting Curving	35	25
	Puteya	Lingamasa	Hoe handles Mat weaving Pottery	15	20	35
		Nabukwi	Wire cars, Pots Drama	25	10	35
Kasungu	Sankhula	Msiwa	Needlecraft		11	19
			Tinsmith	8		8
			Radio repair	2		2
	Nkanakhoti	Msenzaumoza	Brooms	7		7
			Bike repair	2		2
		Simlemba	Carpentry	10	3	13
	Weaving		3	2	5	
	Tailoring		9	3	12	

Table A22. Number of people reached during reading campaign re-sensitization

District	Number of Schools Reached	Number of People Reached										Totals
		Parents		Children		SMC/PTAs		Teachers		Comm. ldrs		
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Mzimba-South	27	243	462	632	711	128	23	77	17	102	12	2407
Kasungu	31	292	478	720	863	176	56	102	46	123	72	2928
Machinga	29	233	368	630	722	146	55	83	23	98	32	2390
Phalombe	32	276	431	651	677	138	43	78	15	87	64	2460
Totals	129	1044	1739	2633	2973	588	177	340	101	410	180	10185

Pupil Performance results for 2004**English Reading**

Pupils were scored on the number of words read correctly from passages of Standards 3 and 6 English textbooks.

Table A23. Standard 3 pupils' levels of mastery in English reading

Sex	Levels of Mastery	February 2004 Survey (%)	October 2004 Survey (%)
Boys	Full Mastery	0.3	5.7
	Partial Mastery	2.5	11.7
	Non Mastery	97.2	82.6
	N	682	682
Girls	Full Mastery	0	5.1
	Partial Mastery	1.5	10.4
	Non Mastery	98.5	84.4
	N	720	720
Total	Full Mastery	0.1	5.4
	Partial Mastery	2.0	11.1
	Non Mastery	97.9	83.5
	N	1,402	1,402

There was a significant gain in English pupil performance where many pupils moved from the lower levels to the higher levels as seen in Table A23. For instance, in February 2004, 97.2 % of the boys and 98.5 % of the girls were in the non mastery level, while in October the percentages have gone down to 82.6 % and to 84.4 % for boys and girls respectively. Almost 15 % of the pupils moved to the higher levels. This is also evidenced by the increase in the other levels where boys moved from 0.3 to 5.7 % and girls from 0 to 5.1 % in the full mastery level. In the partial mastery the boys moved from 2.5 to 11.7 % and the girls from 2.0 to 11.1 %.

Table A24. Standard 6 pupils' levels of mastery in English reading

Sex	Levels of Mastery	February 2004 Survey (%)	October 2004 Survey (%)
Boys	Full Mastery	46.8	74.5
	Partial Mastery	36.6	16.6
	Non Mastery	16.6	8.9
	N	361	361
Girls	Full Mastery	45.4	74.1
	Partial Mastery	38.9	18.6
	Non Mastery	15.7	7.3
	N	370	370
Total	Full Mastery	46.1	74.3
	Partial Mastery	37.8	17.6
	Non Mastery	16.1	8.1
	N	731	731

The results clearly show that learning took place in the just ending school session. This is evidenced on how pupils move from lower levels to higher levels. Both boys and girls realize significant gains in full mastery. Boys move from 46.8 to 74.5% and girls move from 45.4 to 74.1%.

English Comprehension

After reading the passage, pupils were expected to answer some comprehension questions from the passage read. Tables A25 and A26 below shows how the pupils in standards 3 and 6 performed in comprehension.

Table A25. Standard 3 pupils level of mastery in English comprehension

Sex	Levels of Mastery	February 2004 Survey (%)	October 2004 Survey (%)
Boys	Full Mastery	0	1.0
	Partial Mastery	0.1	1.6
	Non Mastery	99.9	97.4
	N	682	682
Girls	Full Mastery	0	0.7
	Partial Mastery	0	1.5
	Non Mastery	99.9	97.8
	N	720	720
Total	Full Mastery	0	0.9
	Partial Mastery	0.1	1.6
	Non Mastery	99.9	97.6
	N	1402	1402

Pupil performance in Standard 3 comprehension (Table A25) above shows that only about one percent of both boys and girls were able to comprehend what they had read with full mastery. The majority of the pupils are in non mastery which shows that a lot has to be done in this area.

Table A26. Standard 6 Pupils level of mastery in English comprehension

Sex	Levels of Mastery	February 2004 Survey (%)	October 2004 Survey (%)
Boys	Full Mastery	2.2	8.0
	Partial Mastery	17.5	38.8
	Non Mastery	80.5	53.2
	N	361	361
Girls	Full Mastery	1.6	6.2
	Partial Mastery	16.5	39.5
	Non Mastery	81.9	54.3
	N	370	370
Total	Full Mastery	1.9	7.1
	Partial Mastery	17.0	39.1
	Non Mastery	81.1	53.8
	N	731	731

While there are significant differences in English Comprehension scores between baseline and follow up (Table A26), the scores are not pleasing bearing in mind that this is standard 6 and that pupils should at standard 6 be able to comprehend what they read. Imagine boys in the full mastery move from 2.2 to 8.0 and girls from 1.6 to 6.2% respectively. It should also be borne in mind that over 50% of both boys and girls were in the non mastery at follow up which really shows that a lot has to be done at this level to assist pupils to read with understanding.

Mathematics Results

In standard 3, fifty mathematics items from a scope of standard three curriculum were administered while in standard 6 thirty mathematics items from a scope of standard six curriculum were used. The results are shown in Tables A27 and A28.

Table A27. Standard 3 pupils' levels of mastery in mathematics

Sex	Levels of Mastery	February 2004 Survey (%)	October 2004 Survey (%)
Boys	Full Mastery	0.4	5.6
	Partial Mastery	71.0	81.7
	Non Mastery	28.6	12.8
	N	682	682
Girls	Full Mastery	0.3	4.4
	Partial Mastery	69.2	79.7
	Non Mastery	30.6	15.8
	N	720	720
Total	Full Mastery	0.4	5.0
	Partial Mastery	70.0	80.7
	Non Mastery	29.6	14.3
	N	1,402	1,402

In Mathematics (Table A27), it is pleasing to note that there are low percentages of pupils in the non mastery level in the follow up survey 12.8 % for boys and 15.8 % for girls as compared to 28.6% and 30.6% for boys and girls in the baseline survey respectively. Many pupils moved from the lower levels to the higher levels. For instance, it can be seen that in February 2004, 71.0 % of the boys and 69.2 percent of the girls were in the partial mastery level while in October 2004, it can be seen that the percentages have gone up from 71.0 to 81.7 % and 69.2 to 79.7 % for boys and girls respectively. The increase in the full mastery level where boys moved from 0.4 to 5.6 % and girls from 0.4 to 5.0 % also shows that learning took place. The changes of pupils within the levels as stated above show that most pupils now understand the mathematical concepts that they were taught in the course of the year.

Table A28. Standard 6 pupils' levels of mastery in mathematics

Sex	Levels of Mastery	February 2004 Survey (%)	October 2004 Survey (%)
Boys	Full Mastery	0	0.6
	Partial Mastery	1.7	11.9
	Non Mastery	98.3	87.9
	N	361	361
Girls	Full Mastery	0.0	0.0
	Partial Mastery	1.1	8.1
	Non Mastery	98.9	91.9
	N	370	370
Total	Full Mastery	0.0	0.3
	Partial Mastery	1.4	10.0
	Non Mastery	98.6	89.7

In standard 6 just about 1% of boys are in the full mastery and there no girls in full mastery at follow up. However, it is encouraging to note that at follow up some pupils move from non mastery to partial mastery which indicates that learning took place what remains is to find out what makes pupils perform like that in mathematics at standard 6. It might be language problem or that some concepts were very challenging.

Table A29: Percentage of teachers using participatory methods of teaching

Sex	Baseline October 2003	Follow up October 2004	Target
Male	35.6	58.9	48.0
Female	42.4	61.9	55.0
Total	36.9	59.5	50.0

February 2005 Baseline English Reading

Pupils were scored on the number of words read correctly from passages of Standard 3 and 6 English textbooks. Most of the pupils assessed in Standard 3 could not read a passage of their class textbook, while half of the standard 6 pupils demonstrated full mastery in English reading

Table A30. Standard 3 pupils' level of mastery in English reading – February 2005

Sex	Non Mastery	Partial Mastery	Full Mastery
Boys	96.5	2.6	0.9
Girls	97.0	2.4	0.6
Overall	96.8	2.5	0.7

Table A31. Standard 6 pupils' level of mastery in English reading – February 2005

Sex	Non Mastery	Partial Mastery	Full Mastery
Boys	17.9	38.4	43.8
Girls	11.7	39.7	48.6
Overall	14.8	39.0	46.2

February 2005 Baseline English Comprehension

After reading the passage, pupils were asked to answer questions based on the passage they read. Most of the standard 3 pupils were unable to comprehend what they read while over 80% of the standard 6 pupils could not comprehend what they read.

Tables A32. Standard 3 pupils' level of mastery in English comprehension – February 2005

Sex	Non Mastery	Partial Mastery	Full Mastery
Boys	99.7	0.3	0.0
Girls	99.9	0.1	0.0
Overall	99.8	0.2	0.0

Table A33. Standard 6 pupils' level of mastery in English reading – February 2005

Sex	Non Mastery	Partial Mastery	Full Mastery
Boys	80.5	18.1	1.4
Girls	85.3	13.9	0.8
Overall	82.9	16.0	1.1

February 2005 Baseline Mathematics

In standard 3, fifty mathematics items from a scope of standard three curriculum were administered while in standard 6 thirty mathematics items from a scope of standard six curriculum were used. Almost none of the pupils are in the full mastery category, but three-fourths of the pupils in standard 3 are in the partial mastery category, The results are shown in Tables A34 and A35.

Tables A34. Standard 3 pupils' level of mastery in mathematics – February 2005

Sex	Non Mastery	Partial Mastery	Full Mastery
Boys	20.1	78.4	1.5
Girls	25.9	73.5	0.6
Overall	23.0	76.0	1.0

Tables A35. Standard 6 pupils' level of mastery in mathematics – February 2005

Sex	Non Mastery	Partial Mastery	Full Mastery
Boys	97.6	2.4	0.0
Girls	97.6	2.4	0.0
Overall	97.6	2.4	0.0

Table A36. Total enrolment by district and gender

District	March, 2004			March, 2005		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Mzimba South	54,006	51,077	105,083	54,449	52,503	106,952
Kasungu	95,068	94,959	190,027	91,900	92,652	184,552
Machinga	51,548	50,595	102,143	49,707	50,003	99,710
Phalombe	34,992	34,360	69,352	36,258	36,240	72,498
Total	235,614	230,991	466,605	232,314	231,398	463,712

Table A37. Number of Primary teachers in 2004 and 2005

District	2004			2005		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Mzimba South	1,192	485	1,677	1,155	432	1,587
Kasungu	1,980	809	2,789	1,715	782	2,497
Machinga	787	308	1,095	761	290	1,051
Phalombe	557	126	683	555	136	691
Total	4,516	1,728	6,244	4,186	1,640	5,826

Table A38. Percentage of SMCs engaged in HIV/AIDS mitigation strategies by district

District	Baseline October 2003		Follow up October 2004		Target
	Yes	%	Yes	%	
Mzimba South	4	10.0	14	35.0	
Kasungu	4	8.5	18	38.3	
Machinga	4	15.4	12	46.2	
Phalombe	2	15.4	4	30.8	
Total	14	11.1	48	38.1	

Table A39. Frequency of meetings with the ward councilor to discuss issues for the school by district

District	Once or more per month	Never	Not responded	N
Mzimba South	62.5	37.5		40
Kasungu	55.3	42.6	2.1	47
Machinga	42.3	57.7		26
Phalombe	92.3	7.7		13
Total	58.7	40.5	0.8	126

Table A40. Percentage of SMCs that lobbied partners by district

District	MP	TA	District Assembly	Donor Agencies	DEM/DCDO/DHO	N
Mzimba South	47.5	22.5	60.0	47.5	50.0	40
Kasungu	74.5	31.9	44.7	59.6	31.9	47
Machinga	61.5	15.4	50.0	73.1	23.1	26
Phalombe	38.5	0.0	53.8	61.5	30.8	13
Total	59.5	22.2	51.6	58.7	35.7	126

Table A41. Percentage of SMC involvement in the implementation of school education plan by district

District	Yes	No	Did not answer	N
Mzimba South	35.0	65.0	0.0	40
Kasungu	10.6	80.9	8.5	47
Machinga	23.1	76.9	0.0	26
Phalombe	15.4	84.6	0.0	13
Total	21.4	75.4	3.2	126

ATTACHMENT 2. SOME DETAILED ILLUSTRATIVE SUCCESS STORIES

SUCCESS STORY 1: THE SECRET BEHIND HIGH SELECTION RATE FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION AT SANTHE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Santhe Primary School is situated 58 km south of Kasungu. It is 50 meters from Santhe Teacher Development Centre.

Years before MESA, the school never produced impressive Standard 8 results. It was only last year that the results improved. This was after all teachers at the school had implemented a number of teacher professional activities that were introduced during MESA trainings. A Standard 7/8 English teacher at the school expressed his sentiments on the impact of MESA activities on Standard 8 results for 2004 through the following explanation.

Indeed prior to the advent of MESA, Standard 8 results were not very encouraging. It was only in 2004 that we noticed a tremendous improvement in the results. For instance, in 2003 twenty five out of seventy two were selected to go to various secondary schools. In 2004, forty pupils out of the same number, seventy two were selected to go secondary schools. All this happened because we (teachers) implemented the following MESA activities:-

- Use of participatory methods of teaching
- Use of teaching and learning materials
- Use of gender sensitive methods
- Use of continuous assessment

We are hopeful that the results for 2005 will even be better than last year

Wickson Mangazi
Std. 7/8 teacher

SUCCESS STORY 2: MARGARET MUKHUNA: A MESA ROLE MODEL

After the theatre for development exercise at Chimbiri School in Phalombe District in 2003, the school saw a number of pupils return to school. Four girls who got married prematurely divorced their husbands and chose to go back to school. One of such girls was Margaret Mukhuna. Advancing with her education at Providence Secondary School in the same district, Margaret Mukhuna is a talk of the villages in Chimbiri cluster. During holidays the young girl now in Form II is frequently put forward by the authorities of Chimbiri School and the PEA as a role model to other girls.

“We make sure she comes to address other children at the school. This motivates a number of pupils; especially girls. It is enough prestige for a girl from this area to be at a national secondary school; let alone at Providence Secondary School,” commented Mrs. C. Mwanayaya, head teacher for Chimbiri. Margaret, herself being a product of some MESA initiatives, was invited to sensitization meetings and other activities as a role model by CRECCOM in June 2005. She reached out to more than 559 people – 113 men, 112 women 143 boys and 172 girls. During the sensitization tour, Margaret visited Mwanayenga and Chimbiri cluster centers which covers five schools.



Margaret speaking and answering questions at Mwanayenga Primary School

“Their success is our success. And this reminds those in the MESA committee to continue the village sensitizations for dropout boys and girls to come back to school.” Group Village Head, Kaledzera commented.

GVH. Mulopa spoke in praise of Margaret and warned parents at Mwanayenga,

This has happened because of determination. Now I am warning you, parents. If I find anyone marrying off a kid in her primary school age, I'll kick him/her out of this village. Development is not only about infrastructure. You have to get developed in the mind. Anyone who does not choose development should go and live with animals.



Margaret and her mother (right) being introduced and praised about by village heads at Chimbiri

Commenting on the impact of such activities at local level Mrs. Mwanayaya said, “Girls’ retention in the upper standards is improving at the school. She said by second term before MESA more than 15 girls would withdraw in the upper section.”

“The numbers of girls going to school changed for the better after MESA. So far no girl has withdrawn this year, so they must trust you,” said Ngulinga, witnessing the grant disbursement exercise said.



GVH. Mulopa speaks in praise of Margaret and warns parents at Mwanayenga

SUCCESS STORY 3: NANYUMBU PLEDGES TO KEEP ORPHANS IN SCHOOL

Just as many other schools in Malawi, Nanyumbu Primary School of Ntaja Zone in Machinga district had the problem of orphans absenting themselves and dropping out of school because they lacked basic support of school materials.

After MESA's sensitization meetings and trainings, the community decided to start an income generating activity. They agreed to build a restaurant near the school for generating funds to support orphans in and out of school in Traditional Authority Kawinga's area. Chief Kawinga took the lead by offering a piece of land where the community built a restaurant.

Chief Kawinga graced the restaurant at its opening ceremony by saying:

The land on which this restaurant is built is given to the school more especially to support orphans. We need to have a vision from this humble beginning. I envision to establish an orphanage near this restaurant, and I pledge support to all the orphans and other affected people.

All the people at the opening ceremony of the restaurant nodded in agreement with their chief and pledged to keep the orphans and other children in school by giving them the necessary support.

The restaurant is currently functional and so far making a good profit, which will in the long run serve to support the orphans. In his remarks, the SMC chair said they are planning a big open day where they will distribute school uniforms to orphans and other vulnerable children at the school.

SUCCESS STORY 4: THE FUTURE OF THESE CHILDREN AT KAUNGA SCHOOL GLOWS...

Kaunga School lies 4 km away from Liviri Trading Center to the East of Liviri Teacher Development Center (TDC). The school is surrounded by Kamzunguzeni, Doniza, Shundu, Kamchanda, Mkhawera, and Jeremani villages.

The school was started by the community as a result of SMC-EQ sensitization. The community constructed 2 school blocks and 3 teachers' houses. However, all the structures are semi-permanent in that they are brick walled, thatched with grass and without cement floor. Frustrated by unfulfilled promises made by different politicians, the community never engaged themselves in developing their school further. They became despondent.

When MESA sensitized and trained three target groups: Kaunga school teachers, School Management Committee, community leaders, they realized that development of their school is not the infrastructure alone and that if they stayed idle, it was their children who would suffer. After the training, they began conducting a variety of sensitization meetings with community members to discuss pertinent issues including HIV/AIDS mitigation. This led to the mushrooming of several initiatives that are taking place at the school, some of which include orphan care and vocational skills training.

Kaunga School decided to venture into opening an orphanage and training the pupils especially orphans and needy children some vocational skills at the school. Under the leadership of VH Kamzunguzeni, the school management committee and the PTA chairperson and the communities were sensitized on the importance of teaching the pupils vocational skills so that they cease to continue depending on well-wishers to support them, especially in the future. It was important to start training them on vocational or local survival physical skills which can make them earn a living and support themselves in future.

Some of the vocational skills Kaunga School has already started teaching are metal fabrication and knitting. The community identified 81 orphans. Of these 42 were girls and 39 boys. These orphans lacked some basic needs and they used to absent themselves from school. Led by the village headman Kamzunguzeni the community contributed some food items, soap and learning materials to assist the orphans. *The orphans are now happy and attend school more regularly than before. "Before they used to miss an average of 3 out of the five school going days, today they are present all the days, the Head teacher of the school reported.*

Mr. Clement Nkhoma from Kamzunguzeni village teaches 10 pupils to make axes and spears at the school from standards 4 through 7. *It is the responsibility of the community to train the pupils on some skills so that they can be self-reliant in future. I appreciate that the MESA project recognizes the role and impact we can make on our children. Before MESA project came, we had no idea of imparting these skills to our children. Now that our children are learning various skills at the school, I am sure that these will assist them in future,* commented Mr. Nkhoma.

One skill the children are learning, pupils learned how to make axes and spears. The axes are sold to people in the villages around the school and each axe costs K150. So far the school has realized K900 from the sales, reported the Head teacher.

The school has left no stone unturned in coming up with initiatives. The pupils at this school do not only learn brick laying, weaving and pottery but also knitting. Twenty girls were selected to learn knitting. Their instructors, Mrs. Theu and Mrs. Tembo from Kamchanda village come every Tuesday afternoon to teach pupils how to make jerseys, shawls and socks. The Village Headman

Kamzunguzeni remarked, *We are very happy with this initiative. A lot of girls are benefiting because apart from learning the skills it is also kept them busy. They do not just loiter in the village.* The Village Head Kamzunguzeni, further said with confidence brimming all over his face, *We may not be able to concretely see the impact the activities are having on the children now, but surely the future of these children glows and will certainly make us remember the good work we are doing for them today.*

SUCCESS STORY 5: MESA INVIGORATES MJINGE COMMUNITY

Mjinge School is about 30 km from Mzimba Boma. The school has a total of 671 pupils with 361 boys and 310 girls. The school is involved in the teaching of life skills to pupils in a bid to assist orphans and combat absenteeism.

Even though there is a curriculum on life skills the school had only restricted itself to imparting mental life skills as opposed to teaching physical or vocational skills as well. Most of the teachers do not know how to teach skills like carpentry, tailoring and knitting. Furthermore, the poor teacher-parent relationship that existed was reason enough for the parents not to take interest in school affairs. However, with the inception of MESA project, the teachers sat down with the SMC, PTA, and community leaders at which meetings they discussed and the need of their working together and the importance of teaching physical life or vocational skills at the school. All the stakeholders welcomed the idea.

The community leaders around the school took up the initiative and mobilized their subjects to start doing something on imparting some survival skills to pupils. The school is now able to impart such skills, like carpentry and knitting to pupils.

For carpentry training, the school mobilized the community to acquire over 100 planks of timber and K2,000 to buy some tools for carpentry. *It is not easy to raise K2000 looking at the current hunger which has hit our country. I also commend MESA for opening our eyes. We are really proud of this and we are going to make sure that all the stake holders are involved in this program,* said Mr. John Munga, the cluster leader who is also member of the school committee.

Bearing in mind that many pupils at the school absent themselves often, and that their campaign for MESA project activities would be frustrated if they do not combat absenteeism, the School Management Committee devised a system which was named “Mjinge missing out map.” This system aimed at locating all the school going children who were always absent. The parents for these children were approached and sensitized on the importance of their children to go to school regularly. The village heads had since formed village monitoring committees to ensure that all school going children attend classes regularly. For this reason the school enrolment increased from 311 boys and 253 girls in February to 361 boy and 310 girls in May 2005.

Apart from the teaching of vocational skills, and the campaign to combat absenteeism the school has also engaged in assisting orphans. One of the beneficiaries is a standard 3 boy, Gerald Mkandawire. He hails from Chuya Nkhata Village.

Gerald Mkandawire lost both parents and lives with his grandmother. Because of poverty, he dropped out of school. He never came to school the whole of first term this 2005 academic year. Having realized their obligation, the school committee raised K360 for purchasing school uniform for the boy. Gerald is now attending classes regularly and his performance in class is good. He stayed in red just for a week and now he is in the blue column. I thank the SMC for assisting him, commented Mrs. Mhango, his class teacher.

SUCCESS STORY 6: FINALLY DWANKHALI SCHOOL REAPS SOME FRUITS

Dwankhali School is a cluster center for all the schools in Dwankhali cluster in Sankhula zone in Kasungu district. The other schools include Sankhula and Chakhukwa. Initially, the communities were victims of political rhetoric that kept them waiting for others to develop their school in vain.

This is one school which progressed very slowly even during the SMC-EQ Project sensitization and mobilization activities. People were reluctant to do development work because politicians promised them the moon which never shined. But MESA through sensitization meetings, the community has long at last re-roofed the block which was blown off 5 years ago, the chairperson of the school commented.

Upon their participation in the sensitization meetings, the community got empowered and agreed to renovate their school block. With the guidance of their ward councilor, they were mobilized and contributed K250 or a tin of maize from each family. They raised about K34,700. The twin block is now re-roofed and pupils are now free to learn under a shelter that does not leak. Realizing that resources that contribute towards efficiency in basic education are more than just infrastructure, the community is also involved in producing reading materials. They have so far made over 400 reading items.

With MESA sensitization on HIV/AIDS issues, the community within and around the school is determined to fight the disease. Pupils conduct HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns through the AIDS Toto club. The club has 25 members (9 girls and 16 boys). The community leaders have joined the initiative. They organize sensitization meetings on HIV/AIDS. So far they have done about ten meetings. In addition, they take advantage of any gathering like church meetings and funeral ceremonies to disseminate HIV/AIDS messages.

Further, the community also contributes highly towards vocational skills by teaching skills such as carpentry, tinsmith and vegetable gardening. Under the guidance of Mr. Manuel Mwale 15 pupils (5 girls and 10 boys) were taught tinsmithing. Mr. Chikolera leads the carpentry lessons with 20 pupils (8 girls and 12 boys). About 6 orphans are involved in the vocational skills. Dimba gardening lessons cover pupils from standards 6 and 7 classes with Mr. G. Chakana(a teacher) as their patron. He is supported by Dwankhali School Management Committee members. They have over 60 beds in the vegetable garden planted with onions, mustard and rape. Mustard vegetables started benefiting the school and have already realized K3,500 from the sales. As for other skills, pupils are able to make simple items like frying -pans and stools.

The proceeds from these vocational skills are benefiting the school, the community and the pupils themselves. The pupils that have acquired the skills are kept busy and prevented from engaging in sexual behaviors. The dependency syndrome is gradually going as pupils can generate some money on their own to buy basic needs for their education.

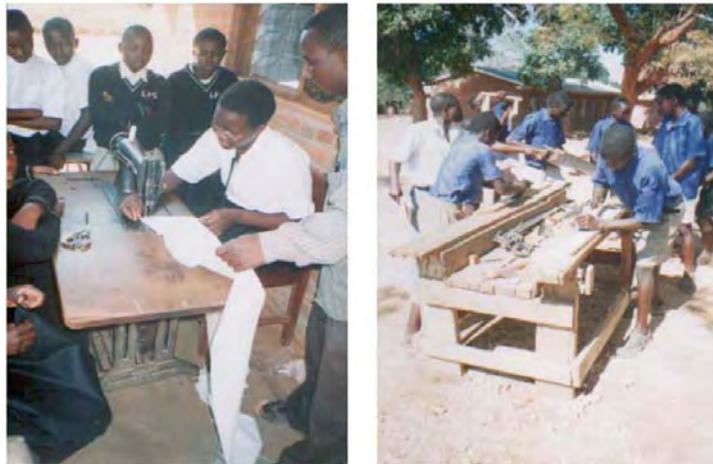
We cannot run away from the fact that as we continue to go to school, there are some needs that we require like soap and pens. For some of us, we stay with very old people who cannot even raise a penny for a tablet of soap. Through the life skills we are acquiring, we are able to raise some little money to afford us a pen and a tablet of soap, but above all, we are working hard in class, commented a standard 7 orphaned pupil who is involved in vegetable gardening.

SUCCESS STORY 7: MESA, A STREAM THAT BRINGS LIFE BACK INTO OUR VILLAGES AROUND EMBANGWENI SCHOOL

Embangweni F.P. School is situated at Loudon CCAP Mission Station under Livingstonia Synod in Mzimba South Education District. The school is surrounded by eleven villages: Champhonya Banda, Kaseka Nyirenda, Sinda Nkhoma, Malizweni Lungu, Joseph Ziba, Forster Chitete Jere and Simeon Jere under Chief Inkosi Mzukuzuku in Embangweni Zone.

Care of orphans, dissemination of HIV/AIDS message, and reading campaign were not a priority at the school, let alone teaching of vocational skills. Today, with the coming of MESA project, these are issues of concern to all the stakeholders around the school.

To us issues that help us to realistically combat HIV/AIDS, make life for the orphans less painful and worth living are a stream that brings life back into our village, commented one Village Head, Joseph Ziba. Vocational skills were not taught in schools before MESA initiatives. Today MESA has revamped the issue into reality. Various vocational skills have been established at the school. Under home economics, we introduced needle craft, tailoring, knitting and cookery to 132 girls and 98 boys and are taught by Ms C.T. Kamanga and Mr. Sitambuli Banda.



Boys and girls learning tailoring and joinery

The pupils have greatly improved in making various things such as skirts, blouses, shorts, shirts, dresses, sweaters and school bags. Currently, with the assistance of their teachers, the pupils are sewing uniforms for boys and girls which they sell at K560 and K570 respectively. So far they have sewn 42 uniforms for girls and 20 for boys.

Mr A.W. Chisi teaches carpentry and joinery to 13 boys and 6 girls. The pupils are able to identify tools and make simple forms/benches and door shutters and do some maintenance. In addition, the pupils are not only doing physical skills but they are also drilled in decision making, resisting peer pressure, and assertiveness. Community participation on issues of reading campaign and HIV/AIDS mitigation has improved greatly. They are able to contribute towards production of reading items from local resources which target to boost the reading culture amongst the pupils. So far, there are over 1000 reading items produced by the community and in use.

With regard to disseminating HIV/AIDS prevention message, there are dramas, and choral groups which perform plays, sing songs and recite poems that depict the HIV/AIDS scourge and give lessons to the public. Currently, these groups also work hand in hand with the mission hospital in disseminating HIV/AIDS messages at the school and in the villages surrounding the school.



Photo showing pupils wearing clothes and uniform donated by Dwankhali School Orphan Care Committee

HIV/AIDS in the area has contributed to high increase of numbers orphans. They identified 1,003 orphans at the school. This led to the formation of an orphan care committee. The committee managed to raise well over K30, 000 through voluntary contributions from its local community upon sensitization on what MESA wants to achieve. Last year, in May 2004, the school orphan care committee bought school uniforms and other clothes for some of the orphans (65 girls and 38 boys).



Beneficiaries of community interventions by MESA

MESA has also had positive impact on individual beneficiaries of community interventions. Doreen Msimuko, a 15 year old standard 8 girl is one of the many examples. Upon receiving the uniform, she started to concentrate on her studies. Came MANEB examination, she made it for Robert Laws Secondary School. Tiwonge Kumbawa, 12 years old standard 7 girl, Mavuto Ngwira a 17 years old boy who is also in standard 7 and Tafwaiyi Ngwira, a 12 year old girl, in standard 6 are among the orphaned children whose lives have changed with the coming of MESA. They are now able to mix freely with fellow pupils attend school regularly. They are also concentrating on their studies very well and get their academic performance has also significantly improved.

They used to appear on the red column of our assessment chart but today, hard work, free learning mind and regular attendance have paid off for them such that they now have moved to the blue column, said the deputy head teacher at the school.

SUCCESS STORY 8: CHIPALANJE SCHOOL IN PHALOMBE IS A ROLE MODEL THAT INFLUENCES OTHER SCHOOLS' INITIATIVES IN THE CLUSTER

The last will be the first one was a concluding statement from Mr. D. Topola, the Head teacher of Uthwa school, at one of the inter-school meetings organized by the cluster leader of Chipalanje cluster. He said this to emphasize the point that much as his school was found to be lagging behind in terms of MESA initiatives unlike the other two schools in the cluster, they will do their best to turn the tables by the next role model exchange visit. While at it, Joni, the Group Village Headman of Dzenje School said Chipalanje has set the fire from which the other two schools are 'lighting their flames'. GVH Joni was actually acknowledging the fact that Chipalanje School has set a good example of MESA initiatives in the cluster.

Chipalanje is used as a role model for the three schools in the cluster and there have been two cluster meetings at different sites between April and June, 2005 where cluster sharing has been facilitated by Mr. Chimwala, the cluster leader.

Chipalanje School has undertaken life skills training since March 2004. Starting with tailoring training sessions skills multiplied to include carpentry, sawing, cookery/baking, mat making and Music. These skills are taught on Wednesdays and Saturdays by volunteer villagers, under the leadership of the cluster leader, Mr. Chimwala and the ex-ward counselor, Mr. H Nandolo.



Tailoring at Chipalanje



Carpentry



Cookery

These initiatives led to the school receiving a small grant from MESA. Community contribution was estimated at K6,000 in the form of material and service provisions. Through sharing, Dzenje Primary school emulated the example and has children learning carpentry and weaving through volunteer parents. The cluster leader again sought the input of the ward counselor for the area, Mrs. Lise and had her support throughout the progress. The ward counselor, according to Chimwala, played a key role in the sensitization and mobilization meetings.



Group Village Head, Joni addressing the community at Chipalanje

Meetings like these have helped us and we hope to receive the MESA grant just like Chipalanje did, GVH Joni, of Dzenje, remarked at one of the inter-school discussions at Chipalanje. We are not happy to be behind. Parents have contributed K2, 540 to buy materials for carpentry, cookery and weaving. By next week we will be on board, Uthwa's Head teacher said.



SCM/PTAs, teachers and community leaders from the Chipalanje Dzenje and Uthwa schools view some of the items made at Chipalanje. Mr Chimwaza the cluster leader and Mr. Mubarara, SMC chair for Chipalanje lead the viewing.



Carpentry at Dzenje



Weaving at Dzenje

Uthwa has used the funds to buy some timber, tools and other materials to start carpentry and other vocational skills at the school. According to the Uthwa School's head teacher, they want the whole cluster to shine before the others just as Chipalanje.

One recent development that was admired by the other two schools was the mentoring activity at Chipalanje, Ms Chikwama, a villager, facilitates the acquisition of mental life skills to pupils from standard 5 to 8 at the school. One of life skills is assertiveness which she explained to be a tool for girls and boys to resist sexual temptations and premarital love relationships.

These girls have to be protected from HIV/AIDS. They have to make strong decisions in life. So I tell them that all the efforts parents are making would be fruitless if they themselves are not responsible for their actions. They have to resist boys and still stay in school, explained Ms Chikwama.



Ms Chikwama talks to girl-pupils

Apart from influencing other schools in the teaching of life skills and the reception of the small grant at Chipalanje has sparked the spirit of HIV/AIDS mitigation in the minds of villagers. Five villages have since started the teaching of life skills every Saturday in Mukakha, Mangasanja, Chabuka, Mwangala and Musawu. Pupils are taught carpentry and efforts to feed them are underway.



Mr. Chikwama teaching carpentry in Mangasanja village

Cluster leader, Mr Chimwala remarked, *The teaching of vocational skills is becoming wide spread. We are now thinking of a collaborated system to ensure that there are no clashes between the school and community programs. The village programs should complement what is happening in the schools.*

SUCCESS STORY 9: CLUSTER LEADERS SHARE NOTES IN MPASA ZONE

Cluster leaders in Mpsasa Zone are getting used to the idea of inter-cluster gatherings where they share ideas and use role models among other initiatives. Between the months of April and June 2005 the leaders of Mpsasa, Ndungunya and Linguni clusters have met six times to reflect on their successes and challenges and have a collaborative plan of the way forward. Two of these meetings were facilitated by the PEA of the zone Mr. C. Misyoni while the rest were facilitated by the cluster leaders themselves: Mrs. Nathupo (Linguni), Mr. Kamanga (Ndungunya) and Mr. D.S. Livoso (Mpsasa). In the meetings the leaders speak of their role model schools which are visited by the others for admiration and emulation.

"The interlock among cluster leaders has influenced initiatives in the zone as those that are behind pull up their socks to much up to the level of the others. One such example is how Mpsasa has influenced Mvunguti. After the distribution of food items at Chinjika in Mpsasa (in March 2005) a similar idea was speeded up at Mvunguti (in Ndungunya cluster) which later in April distributed soap and uniforms to orphans." (Misyoni, PEA for the Zone)

At Chinjika School the community opened up a garden and contributed money to buy food stuffs for orphans. This was what Mvunguti later emulated. Chinjika is also finishing a teacher's house.



Cluster leaders at one of their meetings before their Open Day: Mr Kamanga, Mrs Nathupo and Livoso, looking on are the PEA for Misyoni and Cluster committee members



Orphans receive maize flour at Chinjika: Kamanga and Mrs Nathupo witness the occasion

Two young men, Happy Benedicto and Andrew Menadi, at Mvunguti are involved in the teaching of tailoring to pupils at the school. Seven pupils (3 girls and 4 boys) are learning the skill. The SMC and PTA in collaboration with five village heads around the school contributed over K4,000 which was used to buy clothes and soap. These were shared with orphans some old men and women who are hosting orphans in the villages. To sum up their commitment, the community lobbied for support from the MP of the area, Hon. Joshua who bought forty school uniforms to be given to some needy orphans at the school. The MP also pledged to buy iron sheets for the house which was started in October 2004 by the community; using local resources. The school has also opened up a vegetable garden from which they will assist orphans after sales. This was after their maize garden failed to produce due to the long dry spell.

All these were taken as important initiatives by Mr. Kamanga who invited his fellow cluster leaders to an open day on 13th May, 2005 to share their successes.



Mr Kamanga, Chiefs and SMCs show a house to Mrs. Nathupo



Linguni Cluster leader, Mr Kamanga shows the pupils' skills to Livoso/Mpasa Cluster leader, Mrs Nathupo

The vegetable garden being shown to a team of visitors



Appreciating the inter-cluster networking, Mrs. Nathupo said her schools are doing everything not to lag behind. *At Linguni parents are contributing money to buy school uniforms for orphans. We are going to consult the MP as did Nalingula and Mvunguti. At Mlirankhandwe we purchased and gave ten uniforms to five girls and five boys. At Linguni and Mvunguti, cookery and carpentry classes are also taken by both boys and girls; and Namasoko is following the examples of the other two schools. They have just bought iron sheets and a cloth for carpentry and tailoring.*

The Hon. Mr. Joshua MP for the area is one of the most forthcoming politicians supporting MESA initiatives and he applauded the collaboration and commitment of the clusters which he said are instrumental in the implementation of decentralization policy.



Hon. Mr Joshua at Mvunguti/Ndungunya cluster in June 2005

Hon. Mr. Joshua at Mvunguti/Ndungunya cluster in June 2005 said, *Now I get the whole point. This unity of purpose in my schools was triggered by MESA. I am happy that we are able to meet even in the absence of MESA officials. I cherish you for that and urge that it should be a rule of thumb. My door is open for the whole zone. Not only in HIV/AIDS issues, but also in school improvement activities. I do not forget the iron sheets Mvunguti mentioned to me three months ago. I personally will contribute and make further consultations.*

Asked whether all these initiatives are having an impact on the orphans and other pupils, the head teacher of Mvunguti had much to say: *The initiatives to the orphans and other vulnerable children are helping a lot. Though a Junior Primary school we are able to note improved interest of pupils in school. There is improved attendance of the targeted pupils and other pupils in general. This has translated into good performance; at least to an extent we are capable of performing. Enrollment keeps increasing but the numbers who pass do as well - 86 out of 100 passed in 2002, 101 out of 194 when MESA came and 132 out of 275 last year; at least we are moving with the little steps. Our pupils are even among good performance when they go out of there. This has been so because of the increased campaign on the MESA project. One Standard One child was able to mention to me that her mother told her to 'work hard in school because there is the MESA project. Though from a little child, you can see that some parents are getting really concerned. They just do not want to come and dig the fields and build the houses for teachers only to see their children fail.*

The impact of MESA is clear from the story of Charles Saveya is one child whose father died some two years ago. The mother faces economic hardships but struggles to get by. She has a little garden in which she grows maize. Being hit by economic and moral embarrassment Charles usually missed school. So Charles repeated his Standard 2. When MESA sensitizations were intensified the eyes of some parents opened up. MESA sensitized parents on MESA objectives. The community started the monthly distribution of soap and other food items to the vulnerable children.

The head teacher explains, *I think this served the situation; because despite the material support the guardians/single parents of the orphans grasped the idea that some people do care for them. Charles is one of such pupils whose attendance and performance improved. He was absent for at least three days in a week but now is present for almost everyday of the week. Now Charles is one of the very best performers. He is in the green See the inscription of Charles' attendance and performance!*



Charles receives soap and uniform from Hon. Mr. Joswa: Charles sewing on the machine

SUCCESS STORY 10: MEMBER OF PARLLAMENT TAKES PART IN MESA ACTIVITIES

By 28 May, 2005 Mtubwi School in Mombe cluster of St. Therese zone in Machinga district realized its vision of making finished touches to the teacher's office and purchasing of items for the school's fish pond.

The dream started to materialize with the development of the school's action plan when the SMC/PTA members, community leaders and teachers were sensitized on MESA goals and objectives. All stakeholders started to take ownership and responsibility in running the school; thus identifying needs, prioritize and making decisions on how to address their needs. Among the projects to be carried out at the school were the construction of the head teacher's office to address the problem of preparation space for teachers and the digging of a fish pond that could be used as a fundraiser to assist orphans who are enrolled at the school.



Mtubwi teachers' office

The first two steps in achieving ownership and responsibility – identifying needs and prioritizing – had been achieved. The third step was to make a decision on how the needs could be addressed. The stakeholders agreed to start looking for their own resources first, those that could be locally found for both the teacher's house and the fishpond. They mobilized resources like baked bricks, planks and iron sheets for the office. The iron sheets were bought with funds that the community members contributed towards the project. Labor was the main contribution that was made towards the fishpond. *That done we realized that there were some things we could not find for ourselves. So we started lobbying around as we were advised during the MESA training. We consulted the MP for the office and MESA for the pond and it worked well,* the SMC Chair commented.



The fishpond at Mtubwi School in Livonde

Hon. Mr. Joshua making a remark at Nalingula school/Mpasa cluster in October 2005, *Let me express my appreciation for your work. Just yesterday I gave you money, and today MESA is also giving you money. Development follows the footpaths of those who quest for it through their own involvement. I only demand that you keep your records well and work hard to invite more aid...I've been challenged by your commitment that I will consult other parties including former pupils of this school, to take you further. I will inform them that MESA has trained you on financial recording. Let us remember, There's no orphan in African society. We all are responsible for the kids around.*



Hon. Mr. Joshua presents school uniforms to pupils (21 girls and 25 boys) at Mvunguti



Hon. Mr. Joshua presents clothes to the old: 3 old men and 3 old women benefited



Hon. Mr. Joshua distributes clothes to 83 Orphans at Nalingula – Mpasa, now Nambiro Zone

SUCCESS STORY 11: LET'S MEET BEFORE WE BURN THE BUSH- COUNSELORS' AND CHIEFS' INITIATION

In African traditions fire is a symbol of many a thing. In initiations among the Yao fire symbolizes the opening of the Jando rites, and even Nsondo among others. While Jando is a rite of passage (from youthfulness to adulthood) for boys, Nsondo is for girls.

Village heads of Ntaja area in TA Kawinga are some of the best examples that show changed attitude towards culture versus issues of education and HIV/AIDS. Initiation ceremonies were highlighted as some of the practices that could, if not well administered contribute to the spread of HIV and AIDS and also directly conflict with the formal education calendar in terms of initiation time.

After the MESA trainings of community leaders and special groups conducted in 2004, different cultural counselors and chiefs made action plans. One of the deliberated ways forward was the establishment of zonal initiation committees. These had to comprise chiefs and initiation counselors at zonal level. One such vibrant committee is at Ntaja. The committee convenes meetings especially before the opening of the initiation sessions. These meetings are aimed at:

- Reminding respective chiefs and counselors on the school calendar and the need for timely initiations
- Reinforcing MESA messages on initiation ethics (e.g., the need to refer initiates to the hospital where necessary).
- Reviewing areas that worked well during the previous year and making suggestions for better performance
- During the meeting convened by GVH Ntaja, on behalf of the TA Kawinga on the 19th of June 2005, members noted some developments/successes in the administration of the rites; some of which included revisions of timing of the girls' and boys initiations. Boys and girls in most of the shrines entered the camps at the same time, therefore, allowing for girls to graduate early and boys later on. Often when they graduate together, there is risk of promiscuity.

Most camps got the initiates into camps early enough (immediately after schools closed) and graduated them in before the schools opened.



(Left) - GVH Ntaja during the gathering of 55 GVHs and initiation counselors: *"A lot is improving; but there are a few remnants of the old practice. These will be dealt with by Gogo (the TA)."* and a cross section of the gathering. (right)

TA Kawinga has decentralized the initiation procedures. Each Village Head (VH) will have the mandate of holding a ceremony in their territory and they will inform the Group Village Head (GVH) of the area. This will ensure that there are a few novices/initiates at a shrine and make processes simple and fast. It will also mean that the GVHs will be empowered to monitor the processes; unlike in the past when they reported to the TA and GVHs were passive.