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MALAWI

January- March 2006, Quarterly Report

MALAWI TEACHER TRAINING ACTIVITY (MTTA)



April 30, 2006

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIR	American Institutes for Research
DEM	District Education Manager
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IEQ	Improving Education Quality
KRA	Key Result Area
MESA	Malawi Education Support Activity
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Corporation
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MTTA	Malawi Teacher Training Activity
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
QUEST	Quality Education Supporting Teachers
SMC-EQ	School Management Committee-Education Quality
SC/US	Save the Children U.S.
TALULAR	Teaching and Learning Using Locally Available Resources
TDCs	Teacher Development Centers
TTC	Teacher Training College
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Malawi Teacher Training Activity (MTTA)

January – March 2006 Quarterly Technical Report

1.0 PREAMBLE

Project Title: Malawi Teacher Training Activity (MTTA)

Contractor: American Institutes for Research

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2.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Government of Malawi is faced with a declining quality of teaching and learning in its primary schools. Since it began its policy of free primary education in 1994, the Government has seen enrollment skyrocket from 1.9 million to 2.9 million pupils. It has not been possible to provide trained teachers for the overcrowded classrooms both at primary and secondary school levels. As a result, teachers who are not adequately qualified for their jobs now teach many pupils. Although the MOE has worked laboriously to provide pre-service and in-service training to teachers, the training has only met a part of the need.

Malawi Teacher Training Activity (MTTA) is a three-year initiative funded by USAID/Malawi in collaboration with the Malawi Government in response to the need to improve the quality of education in Malawi. AIR in its lead role implementing MTTA will contribute towards improving the quality of education in Malawi through the improvement of the professional skills of primary school teachers at the pre-service and in-service levels. MTTA is jointly implemented with Save the Children (U.S.), Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), and Miske Witt and Associates.

In four target districts (Kasungu, Machinga, Mzimba South and Phalombe: See Figure 1.), MTTA is strengthening teachers' content knowledge in mathematics, science and English by building on AIR's former initiative in Malawi, Malawi Education Support Activity (MESA), which included in-service training on pupil-centered, gender-fair, and active-learning teaching methods.

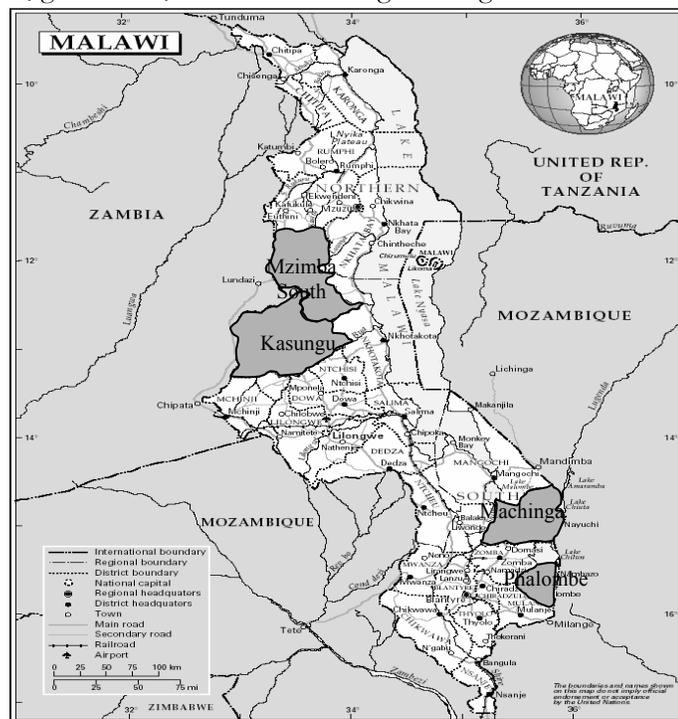


Figure 1: Map of Malawi showing MTTA's impact districts

By the end of Year 3, MTTA will

- Train approximately 6,300 teachers in every primary school in each target district;
- Develop and disseminate learning resources to every teacher and school; and
- Train more than 800 head teachers, approximately 50 PEAs, and 300 mentor teachers to support these classroom teachers through field- based supervision.

Continuing to support In-service training, MTTA will also

- Conduct a nation-wide orientation of teachers in the new social studies curriculum for the lower primary, reaching a total of 20,000 teachers
- Train 5,500 teachers in the new social studies curriculum and 8,000 teachers in the Life Skills for HIV/AIDS Education curriculum as part of the pre-service training in the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs)
- Introduce, as one of the innovative strategies, the use of DVD technology to produce an effective tool for interactive teaching and build capacity within the TTCs that will be accessed and sustainable after MTTA is completed. The creation of a DVD with best practice teaching models and supporting resources is an effective tool for interactive teacher training for both HIV/AIDS and Civic Education
- Improve school effectiveness through the provision of new resources such as books and radios at the Teacher Development Centers (TDCs), and learning materials and DVD players Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). In addition, a weekly radio program will address all the themes of the project

In line with USAID/Malawi, MTTA will also contribute towards three USAID's Key Result Areas:

- KRA 1: Improving teachers' professional skills,
- KRA 2: Making schools more effective, and
- KRA 3: Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS in the education sector.

3.0 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

3.1 Summary of Project Implementation Activities Accomplished January-March 2006

3.1.1 In-service district level interventions

Development of in-service training and resource materials: Preparing for cycle 5 in-service trainings

- A team of 24 professionals participated in developing cycle 5 training materials. The team was comprised of both external members and MTTA's own staff as well as the technical advisor, Dr Shirley Miske.
- The team assembled the materials necessary for drafting the May training materials.
- The project personnel outlined the objectives and approaches for the writing workshop.

3.1.2 Editing first draft of In-service Mathematics, and Science Resource Manuals

- Project personnel edited the first draft of In-service Mathematics Resource Manual in preparation for pilot testing.
- MTTA pilot-tested the In-service Mathematics Resource Manual in three Kasungu district primary schools.
- The team reviewed the first draft units of the In-service Science Resource Manual.

3.1.3 Teacher In-service Trainings

- MTTA developed guidelines for the Mobile Teacher Training Troupe (MTTT) activities
- Trained 11 MTTT members.
- Drew up an activity schedule for the MTTT members beginning from May 2006 as the new school term starts.

3.1.4 ZINFA-facilitated teacher training workshops

- MTTA supported 26 non-funded ZINFA-facilitated INSETs that reached 1169 teachers (314 female and 855 male).

3.1.5 Utilization of IBB Books

- The project continued to monitor the utilization of IBB books by teachers and pupils. About 40% of the teachers interviewed reported enthusiastically and showed evidence that they were using the books for teaching.

3.1.6 Orientating supervisors to a revised lesson observation tool

- Project personnel oriented 54 ZINFAs and PEAs to MTTA's improved lesson observation tool. They, in turn, oriented 538 mentor teachers and trainer heads who assist with the supervision of teachers.
- The team monitored how the mentor teachers and trainer heads were actually using the instruments in schools and how they were providing feedback to teachers.

3.1.7 Supervision of classroom teaching

- MTTA team members supervised and provided technical support to 1544 teachers. About 70% of the teachers observed were using participatory teaching methods; 36.7% were actively seen using continuous assessment.

3.1.8 Monitoring teacher supervision and classroom observation

- Project personnel monitored 20 supervisors as they observed 101 teachers teaching in order to determine the quality of MTTA's supervision exercises and technical support it provides teachers. Almost all of the teachers were performing very well.

3.1.9 Writing success stories

- Five success stories were refined by the MTTA team.

3.1.10 Pre-service Life Skills for HIV and AIDS training

- MTTA reviewed a draft copy of the Life Skills DVD, and the final production of the DVD was completed in mid-March.
- Completed procurement of DVD equipment.
- Developed guidelines for teacher training college guest speakers.
- Monitored the teaching of Life Skills education by lecturers in seven teacher training colleges including two private ones, and found out that generally they were performing very well.
- Developed a program for guest speakers for next academic term.

3.2 Support activities

3.2.1 Mass Communication

- Aired 12 fifteen-minute Chimvano cha Mavu MTTA radio programs.
- Finalized the preparation of an MTTA radio drama program with MBC Radio 1.

3.2.2 Coordination and Reporting

- Facilitated district level coordination meetings.
- Participated in three USAID/Malawi synergy meetings, and one SO 9 meeting.
- Held twelve weekly senior management meetings, and three monthly staff meetings.
- Gave a presentation to USAID/Malawi showcasing Life Skills activities at TTCs including the viewing of a DVD.

3.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

- Conducted February 2006 baseline survey.
- Monitored the performance of MTTA supervisors and the quality of technical support they provide to classroom teachers.

3.4 MTTA Accomplishments relative to work plan

Activities		2006			Remarks
		Q1			
		Jan	Feb	Mar	
1	In-service District Level Intervention				
1.1	Planning for training				
1.2	Develop handbook for trainers				
1.3	National Core Training (NCT)				
1.4	Training of Trainer (TOT)				
1.5	Cluster Training				
1.6	Classroom supervision	■	■	■	Accomplished
1.7	Phase 2- Math materials for teachers dev.	■			Accomplished
1.8	Phase 2- Math materials—test, revise, print		■	■	Accomplished
1.9	Phase 2 materials disseminated at training				
1.10	Phase 3- Science materials for teachers dev.	■	■		Accomplished
1.11	Phase 3- Science materials—test, revise, print			■	In progress
1.12	Phase 3 materials disseminated at training				
1.13	ZINFA refresher training				
1.14	ZINFA in-service courses	■	■	■	Accomplished
1.15	Planning for Teacher Training Troupe	■			Accomplished
1.16	Teacher Training Troupe intervention			■	Accomplished
1.17	Teacher Training Troupe reporting/ monitoring			■	
2	Social Studies Training (In- and Pre-service)				
2.1	Pilot training guide	■			Accomplished
2.2	Revise and print guide		■	■	Revision accomplished but printing awaiting PCAR roll-out
2.3	Develop posters				
2.4	Six Divisional orientations including TTC tutors				
2.5	Develop and produce DVD				
3	Pre-service Life Skills for HIV/AIDS training				
3.1	Plan training for 1 plus 1 program				
3.2	Training Life Skills TTC tutors				
3.3	Develop resource guide for training (for DVD)		■	■	Accomplished
3.4	Test, revise, print guide			■	Accomplished
3.5	Guest lecture / support to TTCs	■	■	■	Accomplished
3.6	Develop and produce DVD	■	■		Accomplished
3.7	Procure DVD equipment	■	■		Accomplished
3.8	Training / Support on how to use DVD equipment		■	■	Accomplished
3.9	Materials/poster development and production				
3.10	HIV/AIDS video conference				

Activities	2006			Remarks
	Q1			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	
4 Monitoring and Evaluation				
4.1 Supervising and monitoring teachers/classrooms				Accomplished
4.2 Plan data collection				Accomplished
4.3 Train data collectors				Accomplished
4.4 Conduct data collection for teachers				
4.5 Conduct data collection for pupils				Accomplished
4.6 Data entry				Accomplished
4.7 Data analysis				Accomplished
4.8 Dissemination of data				Accomplished
4.9 M & E for in-service training				
4.10 M & E for HIV/AIDS at TTCs				
4.11 M & E for social studies in-service				
4.12 M & E for social studies pre-service				Awaiting PCAR roll-out decisions
5 Mass Communication				
5.1 Radio program planning				Accomplished
5.2 Radio program broadcast				Accomplished
5.3 Develop MTTA Newsletter				
5.4 Print and disseminate newsletter				Accomplished
6 Project Coordination and Reporting				
6.1 Hold MTTA weekly team meetings				Accomplished
6.2 Conduct Advisory Committee Meeting				
6.3 Meet with USAID and line ministries				Accomplished
6.4 Participate in USAID quarterly SO9 meetings				Accomplished
6.5 Conduct policy maker briefing				
6.6 Hold National Launch				
6.7 Write monthly report				Accomplished
6.8 Write quarterly report				
6.9 Write annual report				Accomplished
6.9 Update work plan and PMP				Accomplished
6.10 Calculate quarterly accruals				Accomplished

4.0 ACTIVITIES ACCOMPLISHED OVER THE REPORTING PERIOD

4.1 In-service district level interventions

4.1.1 Development of in-service training and resource materials: Preparing for cycle 5 in-service trainings

The activity kicked off in February when MTTA staff met to

- Identify writers and get confirmation they will participate in the planning workshops
- Assemble resources for the development of materials
- Hold preliminary meetings with Save the Children (US) and MIE professionals to discuss
 - Possible sources of topics to be considered for inclusion in the training handbook
 - Conceptualization of Cycles 5, 6 and 7 mode of training at cluster training level
 - Some pertinent issues concerning the actual planning workshops, for example, the prospective writers identified; the need to use the existing primary school books.

Following this preliminary meeting, a total of 24 professionals committed themselves to participating in the development of Cycle 5 training materials. Table 1 illustrates the composition of the team.

Table 1. Number of subject writers by gender.

Subject	Number of primary teachers		Number of secondary school teachers		Number of teacher trainers		Others, e.g. SEMA & Technical Advisor (TA)		Total number of writers		Total number of subject writers
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
English	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	4	11
Mathematics	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	5
Science	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	4	0	8
Total	1	1	2	1	3	0	1	3	8	4	24

All participants except two were once primary school teachers.

The selection of the participants across primary, secondary and teacher training college levels assured a balance of experiences in the production of the materials in that

- Primary school teachers would provide information about teachers' and pupils' needs based on their hands-on experiences.
- The secondary school teachers and those who once worked in secondary schools would assist in coming up with the subject content of the identified topics.
- Similarly, the teacher-trainers would suggest pedagogical skills and approaches of imparting the subject matter effectively to the learners in the classroom.
- Dr. Shirley Miske from Miske Witt and Associates Incorporated (IA) was invited to assist in conceptualizing strategies and approaches to be used in Cycles 6 and 7 at cluster training level.

The materials assembled for cycle 5 planning workshop included

- English, mathematics and science textbooks and teachers' guides for standards 1– 8
- Primary school syllabuses for standards 1 – 8, English, mathematics and science
- IBB books for English, mathematics and science
- Cluster training schedules for cycles 5, 6 and 7
- Stationery

The identified workshop facilitators were individuals with varied experiences in teaching and training at different levels of education ranging from primary school to post secondary school institutions of education. In addition to having such experiences most of them had previously participated in developing MTTA training and other instructional materials. Table 2 shows the number of prospective resource persons by gender and institution.

Table 2. Number of resource persons by gender

Subject/Logistics	F	M	Institution
Coordination, technical assistance monitoring and Evaluation	2	2	MTTA Secretariat and Miske Witt and Associates
English	2	1	MTTA and MIE
Mathematics	0	1	MTTA Secretariat
Science	0	1	MTTA Secretariat
Totals	4	5	

The preparations for cycle five in-service trainings will continue to the next reporting quarter. The workshop will be held in April. Its objectives are

- Select and prioritize topics suggested by teachers
- Revise notes on how to use the English resource manual
- Introduce how to use the resource manuals for mathematics and science with reference to the English resource manual
- Draft training handbook units and a pre–test instrument for English, mathematics and science for Cycle 5

The expected workshop outcomes will be

- A list of topics considered difficult by teachers
- Revised notes on how to use the English resource manual
- Briefing notes on how to use the resource manuals for mathematics and science with reference to the English resource manual
- Training handbook units and pre–test instrument for English, mathematics and science drafted for cycle 5

The approaches used will include

- Subject specific group discussions
- Plenary reporting and discussions
- Individual work during drafting stage
- Evaluation of learning gains by the participants using a fill-in instrument

4.1.2 Editing first drafts of In-service Mathematics Resource Manual and In-service Science Resource Manual

Another activity performed was editing first drafts of *In-service Mathematics Resource Manual* in preparation for pilot-testing. Having completed the initial editing, a few copies of the edited pilots were sent to Bua, Chankhoni and Nthema primary schools in Kasungu, one of the 4-impact districts, for pilot-testing. It was pilot-tested for four weeks. The pilot-testing was completed.

At the end of the pilot-testing, teachers made the following observations:

- Some mathematical terms were difficult to understand. These have been modified accordingly.
- Methods used for solving problems are in line with what is described in the primary school mathematics teachers' guide.
- Use of models to help explain things like working out problems involving basic operations in fractions makes concepts easy to understand.
- Solutions to some problems for practice were incorrect and have been corrected.
- Certain concepts involving division of fraction by fraction using models, for example, $\frac{1}{2} \div \frac{1}{4}$, required more examples to illustrate the process.

The first draft units for the *In-service Science Resource Manual* were reviewed in readiness for initial editing. As this report was being written, the work on editing *In-service Science Resource Manual* was still in progress. The project pilot-tests instructional materials before they are mass-produced; this is an extremely useful intervention that helps ensure that the products are user-friendly.

4.1.3 Teacher in-service trainings

Developed materials for the mobile teacher training troupe activities

During the first month of this reporting period, one of the main teacher in-service training interventions was the re-conceptualizing mobile teacher training troupe (MTTI) activities under the following headings

- Goal of teacher training troupe intervention
- Roles of mobile teacher training troupe members
- Criteria for selecting mobile teacher training troupe members
- Criteria for selecting the 30 intervention schools in the four impact districts
- Training content and resource persons for the training of the troupe
- Setting time line for troupe activities
- Monitoring and evaluating mobile troupe intervention activities

After re-conceptualizing the mobile teacher training troupe (MTTI) activities, MTTA designed and developed guidelines and contractual documents for the orientation workshop. The notes included criteria for selecting schools such as fair representation of sites within the project impact districts with the ultimate goal of creating “centers of excellence” within the districts.

In March, the Mobile Teacher Training Troupe (MTTT) training workshop was conducted. A total of eleven participants were trained. These included

- Seven participants out of eight persons who were invited for the training. These comprised five retired PEAs and two former MESA staff members. The seven comprised 3 female and 4 male participants.
- Two female and two male MTTA district education facilitators as participants from the 4 impact districts.

The resource members were four MTTA education professional staff members and one data manager.

The content covered at the workshop included the following areas:

- MTTT workshop objectives
- What MTTA is and how MTTT fits into it
- Objectives of MTTT
- Characteristics of MTTT
- Role of MTTT
- Identifying needs in priority and secondary areas
- Criteria for selecting troupe members
- Criteria for selecting schools
- Developing an action plan indicating the activities in the first two weeks of school visits in Mzimba South and Kasungu districts.

The workshop was exceptionally motivational. Being the first of its kind, both the participants and the facilitators were excited and looked forward to demonstrating that a “mobile teacher training troupe” might prove to be the answer for filling the gap of poorly supervised teachers in primary schools.

Anticipated challenges

The participants identified the following potential challenges and shared possible ways of overcoming them.

- How to identify subject content and pedagogical training needs of teachers during the classroom observation and teacher supervision
- Writing interview questions to be used during discussion with teachers
- Addressing teachers’ content needs through demonstration lessons and teacher training workshops
- Support to be given to troupe members in conducting action research

Suggested solutions

During the first two weeks of their work, MTTA professionals will accompany troupe members in order to

- Guide them on subject content needs identification
- Help them on how to plan training workshops and demonstration lessons effectively
- Provide them with support on actually addressing the needs of teachers

Lesson learned

- As a result of the experience gained from the site visit at Chikala school, it is imperative that addressing the needs of teachers will be done in the afternoon in order to avoid disturbing teaching and learning.

4.1.4 ZINFA facilitated teacher training workshops

MTTA district education facilitators supported ZINFAs in conducting no-cost (voluntary) zonal in-service teacher-training workshops. A total of twenty six workshops were conducted in the four impact districts from January to March. *See Table 3.*

Table 3. ZINFA - facilitated teacher-training workshops

4.1 District	# of training workshops	total # of participants		Totals # of participants for each district
		Male	Female	
Mzimba South	9	312	145	457
Kasungu	7	231	87	318
Machinga	6	209	50	259
Phalombe	4	103	32	135
Grand totals	26	855	314	1169

The major objective of the training workshops was to improve teachers' content knowledge in areas of specific need in English, mathematics, and science. The content topics covered were

- Simple accounts, ratio and proportion, word problems and averages in Mathematics
- Reading and writing skills and teaching grammar in context in English
- Parts of a flower, vertebrate and invertebrate animals, sound and light energy in Science

Having participated in a number of in-service teacher training cycles and ZINFA facilitated workshops, mentor teachers, trainer heads and ZINFAs including PEAs

- Demonstrated good command of content knowledge in English, mathematics, or science
- Used participatory methods and innovative resource materials significantly well

Impact of ZINFA facilitated workshops

The impact of ZINFA facilitated workshops was determined through feedback from both teachers and pupils. For example the training workshops assisted teachers to

- Handle content knowledge in English, mathematics, and science with confidence
- Use participatory methods for teaching and learning
- Prepare suitable teaching and learning materials for their lessons
- Motivate pupils in the learning of mathematics and science and English

Challenges

- Long distances to and from TDCs limit participation of the teachers in the workshops. Effort is being made to vary the venue so every teacher benefits.
- Where two or more cluster workshops take place simultaneously, monitoring by MTTA district facilitators was difficult.

Lessons learnt

- Teachers are able to address their own subject content training needs in English, mathematics and science by conducting their own training workshops.
- PEAs use the training sessions to provide a feedback on teacher supervision and classroom observation where issues pertaining to observations made are addressed.

4.1.5 Utilization of IBB books

Despite long distances to TDC libraries, schools in the impact districts reported that they are increasingly using IBB books well and that the books are benefiting teachers and pupils in English, mathematics, science and other subject areas.

Over 40% of the teachers interviewed, especially those who are closer to the Teacher Development Centers, reported to have been using the IBB books. Most of the teachers teaching in schools far away from the TDCs indicated that some of the books need to be supplied to cluster-centers which are within walking distances from their schools to enable them have easy access to the books. In an effort to address this setback, MTTA intends to encourage head teachers of cluster schools to sign for books needed by teachers in their schools. In this case, the headteacher or any chosen teacher will have to ensure that the books are returned to the TDC at the end of the given period.

4.1.6 Conducting orientation workshops

Orientation workshops on teacher supervision instruments

During this reporting quarter a total of fifty four ZINFAs and PEAs in the four impact districts were oriented to MTTA's revised classroom observation/teacher supervision instruments for English, mathematics and science using participatory approaches, such as, simulation games, group and plenary discussions.

In turn, all the fifty-four ZINFAs and PEAs conducted orientation workshops to mentor teachers and trainer heads on how to use the revised teacher supervision instruments in their respective zones. A total of 538 mentor teachers and trainer heads were oriented as follows:

- 150 in Mzimba South
- 232 in Kasungu
- 98 in Machinga and
- 58 in Phalombe

The orientation workshops covered the following headings:

- Interpreting the supervision instrument
- Reasons for completing all the items of the instrument
- Need for conducting a discussion at the end with each teacher supervised

Orienting supervisors to an improved teacher supervision instruments

MTTA staff monitored orientation of PEAs and ZINFAs to the use of the new supervision instruments. The following were noted:

- Most instruments were properly filled in, and
- Comments written at the end of each section of the instruments reflected that ratings made on individual items were rationalized

The instruments will help both teachers and supervisors to be focused on critical elements of an effective lesson to improve teaching and learning.

4.1.7 Supervising classroom teaching and learning

Following the fourth cycle in-service teacher education trainings held in December 2005, and the orientation of supervisors to the revised supervision instrument, the district MTTA staff and their partners conducted teacher supervision of classroom teaching/learning to find out whether teachers were implementing what they had learned and to provide technical support where appropriate.

The district MTTA teams included the District Education Facilitators, PEAs, trainer heads, mentor teachers and ZINFAs. They supervised a total of 1544 teachers representing 27% of all the teachers in the 4 impact districts. See Table 3.

Table 4. Number of schools visited and teachers supervised

Month	District	# Of schools visited	# Of Teachers Supervised
January	Mzimba South	18	66
	Kasungu	22	74
	Machinga	17	58
	Phalombe	13	43
	Total	70	241
February	Mzimba South	48	216
	Kasungu	56	254
	Machinga	30	123
	Phalombe	19	66
	Total	153	659
March	Mzimba South	41	176
	Kasungu	54	249
	Machinga	29	129
	Phalombe	21	71
	Total	145	644
Grand Total		368	1544

During the visits, the supervisors noted that

- About 71% of the teachers had detailed and quality schemes and records of work.
- About 71% of the lessons had realistic and attainable objectives
- About 70 % of the teachers used creative/participatory methods of teaching
- 80% of the teachers gave equal opportunity to boys and girls using gender sensitive language
- Improved proficiency levels by pupils in English, mathematics and science
- Approximately 70% of the pupils clearly understood the mathematics concept explained by the teacher. This was evidenced by a higher percentage of pupils raising hands and also their scores when they were given exercises
- Approximately 50% of the pupils were able to read some words from their class textbooks
- Approximately 70% of the pupils clearly understood the science explained by the teacher

- 36.7% of the lessons observed the teacher used continuous assessment. The teachers using continuous assessment had updated records that clearly showed detailed and quality charts as well as record books
- Approximately 30% of the teachers were able to integrate HIV/AIDs or related life skills content into the lesson
- Approximately 70% of the teachers were able to use innovative teaching and learning resources
- Mentor teachers and head teachers provided greatest support to teachers followed by PEAs and other teachers
- About 62% of teachers observed demonstrated remarkable improvement in subject content knowledge of English, mathematics and science
- Almost all schools had the local communities involved in the life of the schools in one way or another
- Teacher involvement in ZINFA – facilitated zonal workshops was commendable
- There was good collaboration between MTTA District Education Facilitators and district education partners

The findings provide an insight into areas where MTTA needs to pay attention as the school year progresses. The supervision provided an opportunity for teachers to be assisted in areas in which they had difficulty, especially in subject matter, due to the lack of resource materials in most schools. Some topics were noted for subsequent zonal in-service training workshops.

4.1.8 Monitoring teacher supervision and classroom observation

In *March* MTTA staff from the secretariat together with the District Education Facilitators, PEAs and ZINFAs monitored teacher supervision and classroom observation in the four impact districts. The purpose of the exercise was to monitor and assess the quality of supervision and technical support MTTA's supervisors provide to classroom teachers. This teacher supervision and classroom observation exercise was conducted in selected schools in two zones in Mzimba South, Machinga and Phalombe while in Kasungu three zones were visited. Table 4 shows the number of zones, schools visited and teachers supervised during the monitoring teacher supervision and classroom observation.

Table 5. Number of teachers and supervisors monitored.

District	# Of teachers supervised	# Of supervisors monitored
Mzimba South	30	6
Kasungu	30	6
Machinga	22	5
Phalombe	19	3
Total	101	20

While the teacher supervisors held feedback discussions with the teachers after each classroom observation, the monitors thereafter discussed strengths, weaknesses and suggested solutions with the supervisors themselves. Details of the strengths, weaknesses and suggested solutions noted during this activity are outlined in Attachment 1.

Writing success stories

During this reporting period MTTA collected some success stories and testimonials of project impact from teachers, head teachers, teacher supervisors, PEAs, ZINFAs and pupils. A few of them were refined and submitted alongside the monthly technical reports.

4.2 Pre-service Life Skills for HIV and AIDS training

Reviewing draft copy of Life Skills DVD and sending comments to Seward Inc. for final production of the DVDs

In January 2006 the draft copy of Life Skills DVD was reviewed and comments were sent to Seward Inc. for the production of the DVDs. Seward Inc. sent back the reviewed copy for second review. Final comments were sent to Seward Inc. in February for the final production which was completed in mid-March.

Continuing the procurement of DVD equipment

Procurement of DVD equipment which began in 2005 was completed in March this year. The equipment will strengthen the access and use of DVD technology in TTCs.

Developing MTTA guidelines for guest speakers for HIV/AIDS and Life Skills at the TTCs

During this reporting period MTTA developed guidelines for guest speakers on the following

- Teacher Training Colleges' roles and responsibilities, that is, identifying guest speakers, topics and choice of date(s)
- Some conditions to be observed in connection with guest speakers' locality, cash claims, and feedback with some details, such as number of participating female and male students

Planning for second training of all Life Skills Education tutors in collaboration with MIE

Planning for second training of all Life Skills Education tutors in collaboration with MIE was done during this reporting period. The next training will be conducted in April.

Monitoring of the teaching of Life Skills in teacher training colleges (TTCs)

MTTA conducted a five-day monitoring exercise. The exercise took place at seven government and private teacher training colleges. The public TTCs were Blantyre, Karonga, Kasungu, Lilongwe and St. Joseph's. DAPP and Emmanuel private TTCs were also monitored.

The objectives of this exercise were to

- Find out if lecturers make use of the knowledge and pedagogies they learned during the workshop in December 2005
- Find out challenges lecturers encounter when teaching Life Skills for HIV/AIDS education
- Receive suggestions from lecturers and students that will improve the teaching and learning of Life Skills for HIV/AIDS

Some of the findings were as follows

- Generally, all lecturers were competent and had enough mastery of the subject matter they were teaching
- A variety of participatory methods and approaches such as pair work, group work, dramatization, role play, story telling
- Case studies, debates, singing songs with life skills and HIV/AIDS messages, resource persons and micro peers were presented
- These were followed by plenary discussions
- Students' participation was very encouraging and there was conducive interaction between the lecturers and students
- In almost all lessons observed, there was always reference to real life situations of the concepts learned to show how relevant they were to the students

This information was obtained from lecturers and students who were observed teaching and learning, and through interviews.

Way forward

There is immediate need to provide reference books instructional materials which contain content knowledge about HIV and AIDS and its prevention as well as case studies that focus on life skills to tutors to address the problem they are facing when dealing with questions that are content specific. There is also a need for MIE to consider providing TTC students with HIV and AIDS manuals. A dialogue with MIE will ensue.

Developing a program for guest speakers

A program for guest speaker initiative was developed comprising the following points:

- Number of permitted guest speakers per college per term
- Considerations when choosing a guest speaker
- Duration for guest speakers presentations
- Number of students and lecturers that attend each guest presentation

The guest speaker initiative is aimed at providing an opportunity to both lecturers and students for enrichment talks from competent individuals in specific HIV/AIDS and Life Skill issues. Copies of the guideline for guest speaker initiative were distributed to all teacher-training colleges in the country. As a result of these initiatives, TTCs hosted a couple of guest speakers on selected areas of interest. Details of the activities are yet to be received.

4.3 Support Activities

4.3.1 Mass Communication

Airing MTTA / MESA radio program

In collaboration with MESA, MTTA aired four 15-minute Chimvano cha Mavu programs on a wide range of project interventions on the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) Radio 1 up to January 31st. From February 1st MTTA began airing Chimvano cha Mavu program without MESA's participation. Thus, MTTA aired eight out of a total of twelve radio programs.

Continuing preparation of radio drama program

MTTA in liaison with the MBC Radio 1 and Story Workshop technical staff continued preparation of a radio drama program, however, it did not start in March as it was scheduled due to some logistical reasons. The broadcasts are scheduled to start early in April 2006.

4.3.2 Coordination and Reporting

4.3.3 MTTA district education facilitators' meetings

During the quarter, MTTA district education facilitators, in collaboration with the district education partners, conducted planning and coordination meetings in each of the 4 impact districts. Issues discussed included the following

- Improving classroom teaching and learning through teacher supervision and classroom observation
- Team working spirit at district, zonal, cluster and school levels
- Creating conducive learning environment in the classroom
- Collaboration between MTTA District Education Facilitators and district education partners

The meetings were important in that they helped the partners to understand the need for working together in order to improve teachers' and pupils' performance in the classroom.

Participating in USAID meetings and line Ministries

During the months of January, February and March MTTA management and professional staff participated in over four USAID and line ministries meetings to share experiences. Of these, one was an SO9 extended meeting held in Lilongwe where current project activities were reported. The meetings helped to promote efficiency and effectiveness in activity implementation processes through sharing experiences.

Conducting planning and coordination meetings

MTTA held an average of four meetings monthly to share experiences and discuss innovations that would enhance classroom teaching and learning.

Also, MTTA gave a presentation to the new USAID Mission Director and other staff members showcasing the Life Skills activities at TTCs including viewing a DVD produced under the project.

Writing technical reports

From January to March, MTTA wrote and submitted in Washington the following reports:

- September 1, 2004 – December 31, 2005 Annual Technical Report
- January 2006 Monthly Technical Report
- February 2006 Monthly Technical Report
- 2004 – 2006 Mid – Term Review Report

All the technical reports summarized the major activities accomplished during the reporting months of January, February and March, 2006 and an annual report for the period of September 1, 2004 – December 31, 2005.

4.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Conducting February 2006 Pupil baseline Survey

MTTA conducted the February 2006 Pupil Baseline Survey with an aim of establishing the proficiency levels at the beginning of the 2006 school session. Looking at the February 2006 and the findings during supervision, the trend indicates that pupil performance is increasing. The learning gains will be determined during the October 2006 follow-up survey.

5.0 CHALLENGES AND STRENGTHS

5.1 Challenge

- MTTA visits to the four impact districts revealed that there is indeed a need to intensify monitoring of teacher supervision in all zones and that PEAs should be encouraged to conduct team supervision with mentor teachers and trainer heads. The visits also revealed that there is a need to strengthen the community involvement in supporting classroom teaching and learning.

5.2 Strengths

- Despite phasing out of MESA in January 2006, MTTA successfully accomplished all the activities planned.
- The field experience which the Mobile Teacher Training Troupes (MTTI) had at Chikala, one of the Zomba rural schools, inspired the teachers at that school and it is hoped that it will enhance teachers' and pupils' performance in Phalombe, Machinga, Kasungu and Mzimba south.

6.0 LESSONS LEARNED

- Clear role definition of MTTA's district education facilitators has greatly helped them to take up their responsibilities with determination and confidence, thus off-setting possible negative impacts of the departure of their MESA counterparts.
- Monitoring of teacher supervision helped to strengthen the relationship between MTTA district education facilitators and their counterparts in the four impact districts of Phalombe, Machinga, Kasungu and Mzimba South.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Almost all the activities planned for the months of January, February and March were successfully accomplished. MTTA continues to successfully accomplish its district level interventions.

8.0 ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1. Findings during supervision and monitoring: Strengths, Shortcomings and Successes

This attachment highlights some strengths, weaknesses, and suggested solutions to the weaknesses observed in the impact districts during the monitoring of the supervisors visits. All teachers observed, and teacher supervisors monitored were given feedback on the strengths and weaknesses noted during classroom teaching and feedback forums.

Strengths/Successes

1. Most teachers showed good class and time management skills, although a few teachers did not indicate dates and time in their lesson plans.
2. Participatory methods of teaching such as role-play, pair and group work were widely and effectively used.
3. Most teachers were gender sensitive.
4. Some teachers had updated Continuous Assessment charts and records especially in Kasungu.
5. Slow learners were being assisted appropriately.
6. Most teachers showed good content knowledge of the subjects. This made lessons interesting.
7. Supervisors were able to give appropriate piece of advice during feedback to teachers sometimes using the vernacular.
8. Teachers were assisted in content knowledge in a friendly manner by supervisors.
9. Some pupils were able to express themselves in English.
10. Some teachers were encouraging pupils to ask questions related to the lessons.
11. Many teachers prepared good lesson plans
12. Most teachers especially in mathematics gave individual help to pupils.
13. Supervisors encouraged teachers to indicate dates and time on lesson plans.
14. They were also be encouraged to explore the environment for TALULAR
15. Proper lesson preparation by teachers should be done if they are to stand confidently in front of a class.
16. A few teachers used effective teaching and learning materials, for example, use of compound leaves to teach X 2 'multiplication' table.
17. Most of the teachers used participatory methods effectively
18. All teachers were ready to be observed and welcomed pieces of advice during feedback
19. Most of the teachers used hands on experiences in science lessons

Challenges/Weaknesses

1. Poor arrangement of group work and inadequate of supervision of group work.
2. Most teachers did not encourage pupils to make comments about the lessons or to ask the teacher questions.
2. Many teachers did not use subject integration. No HIV/AIDS messages were integrated, even where the topic allowed such to be included. For example, a topic on sexual reproduction was taught at one school, but no reference to HIV/AIDS was included.
3. In most cases, pupils did not ask each other questions.
4. In many schools, continuous assessment was not given the prominence it deserves.
5. Some teachers lacked creativity in the use of TALULAR. They were seen drawing things they could easily find in their local environment, e.g. counters
6. Some supervisors said that the last section of the supervision instruments, which involves community participation, was not proper to be included on the supervision form.
7. Many classrooms had no displays of teaching and learning materials.
8. Many of the teachers were not borrowing IBB books although they knew of their presence.

9. A few supervisors were failing to use supervision instrument forms effectively and did not conduct the feedback session properly.

Recommendations

1. PEAs should be encouraged to conduct team supervision with mentor teachers and ZINFAs in an effort to keep empowering the latter.
2. Encourage teachers to involve pupils in Quiz, debates etc., to help pupils develop fluency in spoken English.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to continue using continuous assessment since PCAR is going to introduce it to all schools.
4. Teachers should be encouraged to integrate more HIV/AIDS messages in their lessons.
5. Encourage teachers to supervise pair/group work.
6. Classroom displays should be in every classroom.
7. Some IBB books should be placed in cluster centers for easy reach by most teachers and pupils
8. There is need for additional books especially for those, which are on high demand; more books for children are also needed.
9. Encourage exchange visits among schools.
10. Less able teachers should be encouraged to observe lessons taught by more able teachers.