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**USAID MALAWI COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY
STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS REPORT**



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USAID MALAWI COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY (CDCS) STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS REPORT



Stakeholder Consultation Focus Group Workshop, Mzuzu, January 25, 2012

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ACRONYMS

ADC	Area Development Committee
AEDO	Area Education Development Officer
ASWAp	Agriculture Sector Wide Approach
ASWAp-SP	Agriculture Sector Wide Approach Support Project
CBCCCs	Community Based Child Care Centres
CDAs	Community Development Assistants
CERT	Center for Educational research and Training
CHAM	Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CIPA	Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief
CPDs	Continuous Professional Development
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
CO	Clinical Officer
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPEA	Coordinating Primary Education Advisor
CSCQBE	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DA	District Assembly
DADO	District Agriculture and Development Officer
DAPP	Danish Aid from People to People
DC	District Commissioner
DCBT	District Capacity Building Team
DCP	Democratic Consolidation Program
DDHO	Deputy District Health Officer
DDP	District Development Plan
DEC	District Executive Committee
DEM	District Education Manager
DEMIS	District Education Management Information System
DfID	Department for International Development
DHO	District Health Officer
DIAS	Department of Inspection and Supervisory Services
DMO	District Medical Officer
DNO	District Nursing Officer
DOPP	Department of Director of Public Procurement
DPs	Development Partners
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DSS	Direct Support to Schools
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDSA	Education Decentralization Support Activity
EFA	Education For All
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESIP	Education Sector Implementation Plan

EWS	Early Warning Systems
FAWEMA	Forum for African Women Educationalists Malawi
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHA	Farm Home Assistants
FPE	Free Primary Education
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GAPS	Gender and Primary schooling
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoM	Government of Malawi
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HSA	Health Surveillance Assistant
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
IRS	Indoor Residual Spraying
ISP	Input Subsidy Program
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
KII	Key Informant Interview
LCA	Learner Centered Approach
LEAP	Lilongwe Education Assistance Project
LLITN	Long Life Insecticide Treated Nets
MBS	Malawi Bureau of Standards
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MIDEA	Malawi Institute for Democratic and Economic Affairs
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement
MOAIWD	Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Water Development
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoGCCD	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Community Development
MoLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MPRSP	Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
MTPDS	Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support
NACAL	National Census for Agriculture and Livestock
NAMISA	National Association of Media Institutes of Southern Africa
NSCPPSM	National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management
NESP	National Education Sector Plan
NICE	National Initiatives for Civic Education
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NRC	Natural Resources College
NRU	Nutritional Rehabilitation Units
NSO	National Statistics Office
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children

PAC	Public Affairs Committee
PASS	Primary Assessment School Survey
PCAR	Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PLA	Participatory Learning Activities
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisals
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSA	Primary School Assistant
PSIP	Primary School Improvement Program
PSSP	Primary School Support Project
PT4	Primary Teacher Grade 4
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SEG	Sustainable Economic Growth
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SOER	State of Outlook Environmental Report
SOW	Scope of Work
SPU	Specialized Procurement Unit
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TA	Traditional Authority
TDC	Teacher Development Center
T'LIPO	Teachers Living Positively with HIV/AIDS
TOT	Training Of Trainers
TTC	Teacher Training College
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDCs	Village Development Committee
VS&L	Village Savings and Loans
WFP	World Food Program
YONECO	Youth Net and Counseling

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has committed itself to becoming a quiet force for progress, fostering a more peaceful and secure world through the use of its people, technology, resources and global imperatives to meet the challenges of improving lives of Malawian people. As part of its continued commitment to transforming lives and bringing a new spirit of entrepreneurship and results-based development to help people build a path out of poverty, USAID/Malawi has embarked on the development of its new 5-year Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). The main aim of the consultative exercise was to provide a forum for those most directly affected by and interested in USAID-supported programs to give honest feedback and suggestions that will be seriously taken into consideration for future work. The researchers were expected to document and report stakeholder responses and recommendations for incorporation into the CDCS.

Using participatory methodologies, CERT undertook the consultative task over a period of four weeks. The main data collection tools were Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and document analysis. Workshops were held in Lilongwe, Mzuzu and Blantyre. After each workshop, the researchers visited two districts representing each workshop center respectively: Nkhotakota and Lilongwe, Rumphu and Nkhata Bay, and Zomba and Phalombe. This process generated numerous sets of data whose analysis has culminated into this report.

Key Findings

The main findings in the Sustainable Economic Growth (SEG) portfolio were that productivity among farmers is very low, mainly due to declining soil fertility and use of unimproved technologies, among others. There is also overdependence on rains for production and these rains have lately become more unpredictable both in terms of timing, distribution (prolonged dry spells), and total amount in any one season. The “collapse” of the tobacco market was noted as a big setback in the short term, but as an opportunity to think outside the tobacco box in future programming. Lastly, it was noted that large pieces of arable fertile land are lying idle, especially among estates, further contributing to land shortage. In the livestock subsector there are low numbers of animals and low productivity per bird or animal. Furthermore, the whole agriculture sector is more production-oriented as opposed to market-oriented. Participants pointed to poor research/extension/ farmer linkages resulting in deteriorating extension support to farmers. The evidence also pointed to poor information generation and sharing/dissemination on natural resource management. The main recommendation arising from this portfolio was the need to promote business oriented crop production with value additions. Participants also alluded to the need to invest in animal breeding research; beginning with a rapid assessment of the existing structures (both private and public) to see what is functional

and equip the public centers accordingly, and to introduce an animal identification system to curb thefts. The promotion of diversified livelihood options that take pressures off land and other natural resources (e.g. small livestock, horticulture, etc.), was also emphasized. This diversification can also be out of agriculture.

Delivery of health services is limited by inaccessibility of some areas due to inadequacy in facilities and brain drain. Participants to the workshops and in the FGDs were more concerned with issues of improving preventive services and human resource development. Current local institutions and trainers are not adequate to produce the required number of skilled health workers to fill many vacant posts. As such, community based workers are being given more and more tasks beyond their current skill and capacity. At the same time, they appreciate the opportunity to develop their careers and continue professional development. The main recommendation in health was the need to strengthen the preventive sector and broaden intervention by supporting integrated vector control. Human resource development for health is also imperative.

The basic education sector took precedence over both secondary and tertiary levels for the numerous problems it encounters. The introduction of the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy exacerbated the already declining standards of education in Malawi resulting in low primary school completion with unacceptably high drop-out rates especially in the first five years of schooling, despite increased access. Consequently, primary education outcomes have remained poor, and there was great consensus among participants at both the national workshops and FGDs at district and community levels that children are progressing through the primary school without attaining basic literacy skills. Inappropriate reading pedagogy, shortage of teaching and learning materials, and a lack of reading culture were reasons stakeholders identified for children's failure to read. The evidence pointed to the need to review the text in Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR), teacher preparation to teach reading, and the infusion of phonics and whole word approaches. Other challenges plaguing the system included drop out, teacher capacity, unrealized decentralization initiatives, and issues related to accountability, environment and cultural norms. Data showed appreciation of efforts to improve the sector: teacher production and deployment, funding, girls' education initiatives and formation of guidelines to support implementation of policies. The profile and visibility of Mother Groups to be role models and strengthen parents' role in the care and support for their children needs to be increased. Rewarding teacher competences, improving conditions of service and providing resources for decentralization were also seen as critical in improving the sector.

The main message from the Democracy, Human Rights and Governance portfolio was that the optimism that was raised after the emergence of democratic governance in Malawi in 1994 has not been realized. Overall, community participation and good governance have not been

institutionalized. Low literacy levels mean that people cannot demand from duty bearers on various governance issues. Local councilors who are supposed to be instrumental in community participation have been absent since 2005, leading to problems in accountability and transparency, community participation, local level policy paralysis, and signaling a collapse of constitutionalism leading to “government without governance”. In addition, the environment for the operation of the media and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) has been characterized by

government threats, intimidation, and the introduction of controls and legislative frameworks that restrict their operation. There is need to support programs that generate a critical mass of people that would demand services and accountability from duty bearers. There is need to raise awareness on human rights through CSOs and the building of grassroots critical mass for championing human rights by strengthening Village Development Committees (VDCs). The need for USAID to concentrate on CSO and media capacity building initiatives was also highlighted. These interventions should be focused on specialized areas through partnership with relevant training institutions that can provide relevant tailor-made courses.

Several issues ensued in terms of how the four portfolios of Economic Growth, Education, Health and Democracy, Human Rights and Governance interact. The major recommendation arising from these linkages is the need for a holistic approach to the development process. A recurring issue across the portfolios was the problems of lack of capacity. The holistic approach to development being advocated will demand that communities participate beyond bricks, VDCs are made more proactive, clinics and hospitals are staffed with appropriate personnel, CSOs and journalists are capacitated and that the many vacant posts in the sectors at the various levels are filled.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

I.1 BACKGROUND

Since 1961, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has committed itself to becoming a quiet force for progress, fostering a more peaceful and secure world through the use of its people, technology, resources and global imperatives to meet the challenges of improving the lives of Malawian people. USAID programs in Malawi span five broad areas: democracy and governance, economic growth, health, education, and humanitarian assistance. The mission takes pride in the strategic partnerships formed with the government of Malawi, other US Government agencies, international and national Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), as well as community and faith-based groups, as it works to achieve sustainable development in Malawi through the following umbrella portfolios: Health, Population and Nutrition; Sustainable Economic Growth; Education; Democracy, Human Rights and Governance; and Humanitarian Assistance. As part of its continued commitment to transforming lives and bringing a new spirit of entrepreneurship and results-based development to help people build a path out of poverty, USAID/Malawi has embarked on the development of its new 5-year Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). This report was a product of an extensive consultative process that was instituted to support the development of the USAID/Malawi CDCS.

I.2 PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATIONS

USAID requested the Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT) to finalize its proposal for the consultation process, and after a series of consultations and feedback, CERT carried out the consultations on which this report is based. This report is meant to inform USAID/Malawi in the development of its five-year CDCS designed to guide major activities in USAID/Malawi cooperation assistance. The main purpose of such stakeholder consultations was to listen, ground-truth, and discuss key stakeholders' views on Malawi's development, with an eye on USAID's place in such development through its new CDCS. The overriding goal of the consultations was to initiate dialogue and sustain relationships with key stakeholders to provide opportunity for contributions that would influence decision-making in the development process of Malawi. The specific objectives of the Stakeholder Consultations were to:

1. Provide a forum for those most directly affected by and interested in USAID-supported programs to give honest feedback and suggestions that will be seriously taken into consideration for future work.
2. Document and report stakeholder responses and recommendations for incorporation into the CDCS.
3. Inform stakeholders about the value of their contribution and how it was applied to the CDCS.

In particular, CERT was expected to:

1. Review key background and other related documents.

2. Coordinate and involve relevant USAID staff in the planning and execution of Stakeholder Consultations to take place from January 17- February 10, 2012.
3. Design participatory Stakeholder Consultations with feedback and approval from relevant USAID staff.
4. Identify and invite stakeholders according to the criteria set out in the Scope of Work (SOW) with approval from relevant USAID staff.
5. Conduct discussions in Chichewa as needed and document Stakeholder Consultations in English.

Given these objectives, the consultative process adopted Participatory Learning Activities (PLA) that engaged stakeholders to participate in discussions. These included Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KII), and document review. The field work was conducted across all three administrative regions (North, South, and Central) to cover a sample of six districts. A centrally located site was identified in which to conduct the regional consultative workshops: Mzuzu, Blantyre, and Lilongwe in their respective regions. The consultations engaged stakeholders from various levels and these key stakeholders were purposively sampled so that the process engaged only those with rich and useful information, experience and perceptions on the respective portfolios.

I.3 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

I.3.1 Introduction

The design of the consultative process was based on the premise that understanding the real problems of a society requires analysis within the local context where the problems occur. Data collection deployed a Mixed Method design which required rigorous attention to data triangulation and analysis prior to reaching evidence-based decisions. Commonly used methodologies were employed in a new and systematic way to maximize the level of rigor and reliability of the evidence that was to be the basis for recommendations made in the report. The nature of the study necessitated a combination of tools to strengthen credibility by providing multiple sources of data points and methods for collecting them. Thus, triangulation of this data was built into the design of the study to ensure that the inferences and conclusions drawn from them were valid. Issues of place of residence, categories, and sex of participants were all addressed. An overall strategy that combined a range of data collection methods was planned as detailed below.

I.3.2 Sampling

The sample for the consultations was drawn across all three administrative regions of the country. Two districts were randomly selected from each region to total six as follows: Rumphu and Nkhata Bay in the North, Lilongwe and Nkhotakota in Central, and Zomba and Phalombe in the South. These districts subsumed existing demarcations/zones for the various portfolios as well as included districts both with USAID beneficiaries and those without. Place of residence (urban versus rural) was inbuilt in the design: national workshops were treated as urban settings, while the district and community level sites were considered rural residences.

1.3.3 Participants

Data relevant to help inform the consultation was sought from various individuals and stakeholders at national, regional, and district levels. Appendix 2 and 6 summarize the list of participants at these levels.

1.3.3.1 National Level

National level participants included staff from Government of Malawi (GoM) ministries and agencies, development partners (DPs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based Organization (FBOs) and other relevant stakeholders from each of the portfolios. The key stakeholders were purposively sampled so that the consultation engaged only those stakeholders with rich and useful information, experience and perceptions on pertinent issues in the respective portfolios. In addition, snowballing sampling procedures were used. Thus, once key informants were identified, they then identified other key players in the portfolios at district and national levels, which were then interviewed by the team. For example, participants to the regional workshops helped identify other key stakeholders within their district and in other regions.

1.3.3.2 District Level

At the district level, the District Executive Committee (DEC) was our entry point. The DEC guided us in terms of names and locations of stakeholders implementing initiatives in the respective portfolios, as well as names and locations of villages to be sampled. The various stakeholders in the DEC participated in KII. These included the GoM ministries' agents at district level: District Officers in the various portfolios including the District Commissioner, the Director of Administration, the Director of Planning, and District Health Officer, the District Agricultural Development Officer (DADO) and the District Education Manager (DEM). Additional participants came from NGOs, FBOs, and others working to support the various portfolios.

1.3.3.3 Community and Village Level

The consultations were extended to stakeholders at the community and village level to accommodate grassroots voices into the consultation process. The stakeholders included Chiefs (Traditional Authorities, Group Village Heads and Village Heads), members of the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), School Management Committees (SMC), Mother Groups, Village Health Committees, Village Development Committees (VDC) and Area Development Committees (ADC), Child Protection Committees, Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs), Community Development Assistants (CDAs) and Primary School Assistants (PSAs). This was in addition to the school personnel (head teachers, teachers and pupils). Deliberate efforts were made to include the views of both men and women, as well as those with special needs and other forms of vulnerabilities. The community level contributors participated in FGDs and KII. Efforts were made so that some FGDs were conducted separately for men and women in order to create an environment conducive to free, active, and unprejudiced participation in discussions, as well as to include voices from marginalized groups. At the same time mixed FGDs including men and women demonstrated remarkably balanced contribution from both genders. Generally, between 8 and 12 villagers participated in FGDs in each community.

However, these numbers varied depending on sites, as evidenced at Bunda community site, where as many as 37 villagers (about 50:50 women and men) appeared for the consultations.

1.3.4 Data Collection Instruments

A variety of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools exist. Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) are approaches and methods that provide a means of giving various stakeholders (especially poor people) a voice, enabling them to express and analyze their problems and priorities. PRA methods thus utilize research methodologies framed on the theory that data gathering, identification of problems, and the generation of potential solutions actively involves those whose lives are the subject of research. A number of instruments based on PLA were developed for collecting and generating data. These main procedures and data collection methods are briefly discussed below. First is a description of the workshop as a method of data collection.

1.3.4.1 One Day Workshops

As a participatory methodology, the consultation process engaged national level stakeholders from the four portfolios in a one day workshop in each region, conducted in Lilongwe, Mzuzu, and Blantyre. These workshops initially created awareness around the issues already identified by USAID under the relevant portfolios. After creating awareness, stakeholders participated in FGDs in smaller breakout sessions according to portfolio to hold more focused discussions around the issues/questions raised, and to identify opportunities and challenges. Each group spelled out for that portfolio the major areas or topical issues in Malawi, commented and assessed what GoM and its DPs have done so far. Additional thought included: What should the government be focusing on, and what would be the role of development partners like USAID?

Stakeholders concluded their group activities by reporting back in a plenary session where each portfolio group reported their discussions. This format provided opportunities for participants from other portfolios to contribute their input, and it was not surprising that these generated very lively and enriching discussions and feedback. A total of 31 participants contributed to the Lilongwe workshop, while 38 and 40, respectively, interacted with each other in Mzuzu and Blantyre districts. A schedule and workshop program is appended (Appendix 2). At the end of the workshops, participants were instructed to prioritize the issues that had been presented. Each participant was given five stickers and asked to place a sticker on the most striking issue across the four portfolios. This exercise was very useful for the research team as it facilitated drawing up the proposed recommendations.

1.3.4.2 Key Informant Interviews:

Key informant interviews (KII) were held to collect data from influential individuals at district and community levels. At the district level, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the District Assembly, NGOs, and FBOs operating at those district levels. At the community level, KIIs were conducted with Chiefs, Clinicians at a health facility, local government, village development committees (VDC), area development committees (ADC), members of faith-based organizations (FBOs), Primary Education Advisor (PEA)/Head teacher, and Area Education Development Officer (AEDO). These interviews focused on investigating the extent

of existing opportunities, participation in these opportunities, and spaces for contribution to national development and empowerment. Challenges, both real and perceived, were discussed. KII performed the multiple functions of information-seeking, perception-seeking and problem-seeking, and integration of issues.

As many KIIs in this consultative process were exploratory and unstructured, in order to collect comparable and consistent information, structured instruments were utilized to guide interviews for the following stakeholder groups:

- Ministries (district)
- Members of the DEC
- Coordinating Primary Education Advisor and Primary Education Advisor
- CDAs
- HSAs
- Other donors and NGOs
- Head Teacher
- School Management Committees (SMC)/Parent Teacher Associations (PTA)/Mother's Group/other village and community members (using the community level questionnaire)

1.3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with a wide range of stakeholders at community level. In each FGD, the participants were stakeholders comprising of one member from various local structures: school (SMC/PTA/Mother Group), local government (ADC/VDC), health (HSA/Nurse), agriculture (AEDO), and FBO (Pastor/Sheikh). As observed above, men and women were separated during the FGDs. In addition, people with special needs, e.g. physical disabilities, vision and hearing impairments, and those from vulnerable groups (orphans, school dropouts, and victims of violence, including gender based violence), were included in the various FGDs. It was imperative to hear from the lived experiences of the various categories of stakeholders to help enrich our understanding of the phenomena and their magnitude in the four portfolios¹.

1.3.4.4 Review of Documents

As expected, a substantial part of data gathering techniques required that information be obtained via documents solicited from various offices and sources. Quantitative data in the form of school enrollment, repetition, drop out and pass rates, and other records were collected. In Agriculture, these included production trends for various crops/livestock products and their values, participation in the various enterprises between men and women, contribution of the various crops/products to gross domestic product (GDP) and their trends, current and potential cash crops, as well as potential enterprises, participation in various programs like the Input Subsidy Program (ISP), again broken by sex, various food and nutrition indicators, etc. In Health, quantitative data were also collected. In addition, critical economic indicators were sought from, among others, Reserve Bank documents, e.g. rates of inflation and trends between rural and urban areas, interest rates, etc.

¹ Besides the above, the SEG sector had the privilege of holding a special FGD with department heads or their representatives at Bunda College of Agriculture.

I.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The consultative process described above generated very rich quantitative and qualitative data. Consequently, the emergent data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative data were subjected to various quantitative analytical procedures. The analysis took the form of univariate analyses such as frequency counts, percentages, and the calculation of appropriate indicators. The analysis of the qualitative data involved the building of a logical chain of evidence. The data were reduced by clustering common themes as well as writing stories and tallying and ranking of key informant responses to uncover main issues that arose and these in turn informed the recommendations. Research documents available were subjected to a meta-analysis in order to corroborate evidence from the different sources. Where applicable, data is segregated by sex and location (regional workshop, district or community).

I.5 EXECUTION OF THE CONSULTATIONS

This study was executed under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Chimombo. A team of five researchers was identified, each to be responsible for the four portfolios (with two for Health) as mentioned above. The team worked full-time for four weeks to collect and analyze data from the three regions and to prepare the report. A secretary and an Accounts/Office Assistant supported the team in performing most of the logistical activities/errands during the workshops. Appendix 3 summarizes the team members and responsibilities. The exercise followed an extensive consultative process with USAID staff until the methods and logistics were finally agreed. The first workshop was organized by USAID staff and conducted in Lilongwe². The CERT team organized the two workshops in Mzuzu and Blantyre. A visit to these two districts on two separate days preceded each workshop. Once at the district, the team first engaged with the Assembly and other relevant stakeholders, and later proceeded to the identified community to work with stakeholders at the grassroots level. This process generated invaluable information, and the challenge to the research team was how to adequately ground-truth, and discuss the key stakeholders' views on Malawi's development, and USAID's place in such development through its new CDCS. The voices as articulated by various stakeholders have been presented in the remainder of this report.

² The team is very grateful to USAID staff for this support.

SECTION 2: SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH (SEG) MAIN FINDINGS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, it has been assumed that Sustainable Economic Growth (SEG), in terms of both policy and programming, essentially entails poverty reduction. Poverty in Malawi is both widespread and deep rooted. Over 80% of the population resides in the rural areas, where the majority of the poor population is. The greatest cause of poverty is low income. Since most Malawians make their livelihoods from agriculture, the main underlying cause of poverty is low agricultural productivity (Malawi UN, 2010). Focus in the study has therefore been on this sector.

Agriculture is the most important sector of the Malawi economy. It employs about 80% of the total workforce, contributes over 80% to foreign exchange earnings, accounts for 39% of gross domestic product (GDP) and contributes significantly to national and household food security. The agricultural sector has two main sub-sectors: the smallholder sub-sector (contributes more than 70% to agricultural GDP), and the estate sub-sector (contributes less than 30% to agricultural GDP) (GoM, 2007 as quoted by UN, 2010). Smallholders cultivate mainly food crops such as maize (the main starchy staple), cassava, and sweet potatoes to meet subsistence requirements. Estates focus on high value cash crops for export such as tobacco, tea, sugar, coffee and macadamia. Smallholder farmers cultivate small and fragmented land holdings under customary land tenure with yields lower than in the estate sector. There are also gender disparities, according to the National Census for Agriculture and Livestock (NACAL) (NSO, 2007 as quoted by UN 2010), female headed households and female operators had less land than male headed households and male operators. Male farmers had on average 1 hectare (Ha) land compared to 0.8 Ha for female farmers.

Since independence, development resources, strategies and policies in Malawi have been heavily biased towards agricultural development. However, agricultural exports have remained undiversified, with little value addition. Most Malawians are poor, with 52.4% of the population living below the poverty line (MK44 per person per day). Of those below the poverty line, some 22.4% are barely surviving (GoM, 2009). There is also high prevalence of HIV and AIDS, currently estimated at 12%.

Crop yields have been too low to provide adequate national growth. There has been low uptake of improved farm inputs by smallholders, and smallholder agriculture remains unprofitable. This is exacerbated by weak links to markets, high transport costs, few and weak farmer organizations, poor quality control and inadequate information on markets and prices.

Malawi registered a real GDP average growth of 8% and average inflation rate of 10.9% for the financial years 2005/06 and 2006/07. By 2009, inflation had fallen to 8.4%, and was forecast to fall to 7.8% by 2011. The 2010 growth figure was estimated at 6.5%, and for 2011 it was estimated at 6.2%. The country's macroeconomic performance has been strong for the past

three years due to sound economic policies pursued by the government and good performance in the agricultural sector (GoM, 2009).

2.2 FINDINGS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION PROCESS

2.2.1 Crop Production

Stakeholders observed that the agriculture sector is dominated by numerous but small scale discrete actors, who are not coordinated, have diverse objectives and resource endowments, and follow individualistic approaches. Productivity among these actors is very low mainly due to declining soil fertility and the use of inappropriate technologies. Special mention was made of the overdependence on rains for production, and that these rains have lately become more unpredictable both in terms of timing, distribution (prolonged dry spells), and total amount in any one season. As a result, most families cannot even feed themselves year round. In addition, smallholders tend to think more of food self-sufficiency than food security. If it were the latter, farmers would be thinking in terms of economic security and thereby easily diversify. The whole area of marketing was noted to be problematic both in terms of arrangements and opportunities due to lack of processing for value addition and also poor compliance to standards. For instance, a group in Nkhata Bay that has been making wine from bananas has been waiting for 7 years for feedback from Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) resulting in limited market horizon and production.

Also noted was the fact that public resource support is biased towards crops, in particular maize. Both the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp) and the Input Subsidy Program (ISP) exhibit these traits. In this regard, maize security has been mistaken for food security, resulting in overinvestment in the crop. The “collapse”³ of the tobacco market was noted as a big setback in the short term, but as an opportunity to think “outside the tobacco box” in future programming. Lastly, it was noted that large pieces of arable fertile land are lying idle especially among estates, further contributing to land shortage.

All the above issues were raised at the FGD at Bunda College, the three regional workshops (national), as well as at district level interviews; while at community level the issues that were highly emphasized were low production due to erratic rains, problems in finding good markets and the hard times they face with the ISP.

2.2.1.1 Recommendations

- Promote business oriented crop production – explore higher support into horticultural and other high value crops as link to export and economic growth is better than some of the traditional crops. The motto should be “Produce for the market and eat the surplus” instead of the adage saying “produce for consumption and sell the surplus”. In addition, stakeholders demand that efforts should be made to bring insurance activities on board in the agriculture sector to facilitate trying new things which is also good for the diversification strategy.

³ The phrase frequently used by communities was “*Msika wa fodya udagwa*,” meaning the tobacco market has collapsed.

- Improve road infrastructure for easy movements of buyers and sellers as well as various produce.
- Organize farmers into commodity focused groups/ associations or even cooperatives, based on agro-ecological capabilities. This would facilitate access to better markets, better prices, financing opportunities, and access to technologies (groups may be more willing to try new things than individuals – i.e. be less risk averse). This formation of groups has to be backed by effective capacity building for effective market exploration and management, among other reasons.
- Promote processing for value addition both for income generation and for nutritional purposes. Processing increases palatability and intake as well as number of recipes that can come from a particular product. On the income generation side, for value addition to bear fruits, it requires adherence to standards. Stakeholders felt the centralized services of MBS are not keeping pace with time, and need to be decentralized as standards certification has been a nightmare for some groups.
- Diversify away from tobacco, and change emphasis to livestock or at least give the sectors equal emphasis. Dairying and horticulture could be good substitutes for tobacco in foreign exchange earnings. Diversification within the cereal crops away from maize toward sorghum, millet, and cassava; and out of the cereal crops into legumes like soya beans and pigeon peas should also not only be talked about, but be seen to be translating into programs, and reflected in policies.
- Ensure that seed systems and the seed industry can also “walk the diversification talk”. This could take the form of direct support or subsidization of commercial seed producers or promoting community based seed production and multiplication systems.
- Address hurdles in the current land policy. Stakeholders would like to see that some idle land under leasehold is freed for use. In addition and as a complementary action, the owners of these lands could be contracted for some specific products: both crop and animal.

2.2.2 Irrigation Farming

The observations centered on low coverage of irrigation as compared to the total reported irrigable land. Furthermore, it was noted that the focus on possible technologies has been rather narrow, leading to everybody thinking treadle pumps. There is need to do more work in identifying which areas are suitable for what type of irrigation. Another issue raised was that irrigation was falling into the same trap as upland farming: over emphasis on maize production instead of opening up. Lastly, stakeholders have noted that irrigable land size seems not to be definite as different sources quote different figures. This needs to be addressed for proper planning.

The issues raised here were mainly from national level stakeholders (regional workshops and district level interviews). Suffice it to say that at community level people noted erratic rains as being a problem to farming, and acknowledged the need for irrigation, but did not go into many details.

2.2.2.1 Recommendations

- Explore what technologies could be suitable other than the treadle pump. In some cases, drip irrigation may be the answer, as opposed to other methods currently in use.

- Rehabilitate old dams, an inventory of which is already available with the Irrigation Department.
- Implement market oriented commodity based irrigation. Start with the market (products, quantities and standards), then produce through irrigation.

2.2.3 Animal (livestock) Production

Challenges or concerns observed centered on low numbers of animals, but also low productivity per bird or animal. A number of interrelated contributing factors were flagged out. Breeding centers are poorly stocked, both in terms of numbers and diversity, leading to poor availability of improved breeds. A compounding factor in breeding is that there is only one plant for liquid nitrogen in the whole country. Other contributing factors to low numbers are poor disease control measures, and rampant thefts of livestock, resulting in people having to share homes with their animals, which is a health hazard. On the policy front, stakeholders lamented the bias toward crops and against the livestock subsector. They said “the livestock sector may have a closer link to economic growth and nutrition than some of the crops taking precedence”. Lastly, it was noted that there was very low consumption of meat/meat products and milk/milk products in the country compared to other countries at similar levels of development.

Participants at the FGD at Bunda College and stakeholders at all the workshops in the three regions were very emphatic on all the issues raised here. Communities were, however, more concerned with thefts of their animals and the lack of extension staff to assist with disease control.

2.2.3.1 Recommendations

- Invest in animal breeding research – begin with a rapid assessment of the existing structures (both private and public) to see what is functional and equip the public centers accordingly.
- Make an inventory of all mini dairies or milk bulking groups and do an analysis of needs. Rehabilitate those that are in a state of disrepair. Engage larger farms (private sector) in breeding interventions under contract farming, for instance.
- Invest in one liquid nitrogen plant per region.
- Embark on animal restocking programs through “pass on system” in communities.
- Channel more public resources into the livestock sector including a share of the ISP.
- Train para-vets for simple disease control and other vet services in rural areas.
- Introduce an animal identification system to curb thefts. The color of a stolen animal is not enough to assist police in tracing it.

2.2.4 Cross Cutting – Animal (livestock)/Crop Production

The first point raised by stakeholders was the poor research/extension/ farmer linkages resulting in deteriorating extension support to farmers. One contributing factor has been that strategies and systems of extension have been changing frequently and haphazardly. The grassroots level extension where farming takes place is the hardest hit. The current Natural Resources College (NRC) cannot substitute for the old public-funded one that was inclusive, and therefore produced graduates who were ready to immerse in the rural areas. Stakeholders do not think this is the case now. Where are the people that used to facilitate food preparation and utilization right in the villages – the Home Craft Workers/Farm Home

Assistants (FHAs)? Who have taken their roles? Furthermore, it was noted that the whole agriculture sector is more production oriented as opposed to market oriented. In addition, there is little investment into processing for all crops. Another problem is poor access to financial services. Lastly, it was also noted that the agriculture sector as a whole has become too politicized to be efficient, i.e. politics are inhibiting effectiveness and efficiency, as technocrats may not be as free to exercise their knowledge and abilities.

While all the above issues were heavily debated at the regional workshops, the FGD at Bunda College, and to some extent during informant interviews at district level, communities went straight on to what they considered to be challenges. These were mentioned as “lack of extension workers to visit us frequently.” They particularly singled out livestock as having an extension system that has disappeared.

2.2.4.1 Recommendations

- Promote value addition as emphasized under Crop Production. Promote more involvement of private sector in the input supply chains.
- Revamp research/extension activities: stock the labs that are lacking even basics, but link this to specific programs of technology generation and dissemination. In addition, there is need to have properly translated research findings in a manner that is friendly to users, i.e. the farmers. Invest in extension training institutions like Magomero for Community Development Assistants (CDAs) (Nkhata Bay has 10 CDAs against 28 posts), Mikolongwe in Chiradzulu, Chitala in Salima, and Mmbelwa Farm Institute in Mzimba, to turn them into centers for producing grassroots extension staff whose numbers are declining by the day. Make it a point that if you enroll at this institution you are agreeing to go to work in rural areas. Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) Malawi is doing this with its Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), and it is working. Besides revamping training of extension staff of all cadres, necessary efforts need to be made to fill vacant posts. Also, change curriculum to promote the spirit of self-employment (including making some funding opportunities available) as well as facilitating relocation to rural areas.
- Promote access to finances. This could be through micro-financing strategies, loan guarantee schemes, etc. Village Savings and Loans (VS & L) schemes which have worked so well for women groups in many parts of the country should be scaled up. Let more women benefit from this intervention. These VS & L groups will require some capacity building support for them to make good use of their savings.

2.2.5. Natural Resource Management and Climate Change

It was noted that some policies currently in use require updating, and it lacks an effective monitoring system. Also related is the fact that there is lack of a comprehensive inventory of all the natural resources that the country has, where each one is, and its limit of exploitation. Partly as a result of this, there is also poor information generation and sharing/dissemination on natural resource management. This information is currently outdated and scattered, and approaches are rather uncoordinated. On the operational side, two issues were raised: Depletion and Degradation of Natural Resources, and inadequate extension personnel on the ground. The former applies mainly to degradation of land (soil/forests), water, and fish. All these have been due to overharvesting of the country’s natural resource base. For example, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) report (GoM, 2009 as quoted by UN, 2010), stated

that the proportion of land covered under forest in Malawi decreased from 41% in 1990 to 35% in 2008. In the process of natural resource losses, the country has also witnessed the erosion of biodiversity. “Give the responsibility over natural resources back to us and we should determine what role Government should play” said chiefs in Nkhotakota.

There was general agreement on these issues, whether it was at regional or community level. The point of departure was on what needs to be done and more so from the chiefs in Nkhotakota who demanded a radical approach.

2.2.5.1 Recommendations

- Commission a comprehensive natural resource mapping exercise that defines where resources are, what they can be used for, and the potential/limit for use. This should cover both biophysical aspects and socio-economic demands on each particular natural resource. This should also be able to show the amount of irrigable land the country has.
- Promote the strategy of watershed management as “an entry point” to all natural resource utilization interventions. In addition, and in order to deal with the issue of conflicting policies, it was suggested to harmonize crop production and natural resource management policies and practices. These could be done within the same exercise of reviewing strategies and guidelines. Produce, print, and distribute guidelines that can act as reference materials for natural resource use at national, district and community levels. There is need to introduce a more effective monitoring system for natural resource use. This should be grounded in traditional structures. For instance, the Forestry Department should work together with local committees like the Village Forestry Committee in a complementary fashion. Reports in some cases indicated that these local structures were not supported, and in some cases even undermined.
- Besides promoting community based natural resource co-management or co-ownership on customary land holdings, there is need to engage local leadership in management of gazetted natural resource management areas. Give more responsibility to chiefs, and let them be given a chance to state how they see GoM coming on board. In terms of co-management, it is important to support the establishment of natural resource based enterprises for communities, e.g. bee keeping; reward those that have taken care of or conserved a natural forest, as emphasis seems to be more on who has planted an exotic tree. Let us move away from emphasizing trees planted, to trees nurtured and managed to full establishment.
- Promote diversified livelihood options that take pressures off land and other natural resources, e.g. small livestock, horticulture, etc. This diversification can also be out of agriculture. Within agriculture, however, there is need to increase productivity per unit area to avoid over exploitation of land and the cultivation of marginal areas. Implement interventions that replenish dwindling fish stocks and fish catches in Lake Malawi.
- Establish community-based biodiversity centers. These could follow the agro ecological zones so that you have one in each zone.
- Promote the use of fuel efficient stoves, which will reduce pressure on forest resources.
- Support Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities and information flow through Early Warning Systems (EWS). In addition, support activities toward carbon offsets. In this regard, it was also recommended that donors should support local institutions that are specifically doing work in addressing climate change effects.

- Commission a study to generate research-based evidence of the specific effects of climate change so that we separate experiences that are due to farmers' own lack of proper knowledge from those that are effects of climate change.

2.2.6 Nutrition

It was acknowledged that malnutrition levels in Malawi, especially for children, are unacceptably high. It was further agreed that some of the measures proposed in advancing crop and livestock production, e.g. diversification outside maize and outside crops, as well as ensuring adequate availability of extension staff, would go a long way in assisting in dealing with nutrition issues. However, stakeholders added the following as some contributing factors to poor nutritional status of people in Malawi: poor eating habits, and neglect of traditional recipes and dishes, as well as neglect of traditional indigenous food crops, including vegetables.

Almost all the issues raised here came from the regional workshops and the discussion with Bunda College. Communities emphasized low production and not so much malnutrition.

2.2.6.1 Recommendations

- Support indigenous vegetable research at Bunda College. This needs to be linked to dissemination of information and seed packages to the ultimate users: the farmers.
- Invest in a handbook designed for rural communities. Information in these handbooks should include traditional recipes and dishes.
- Continue supporting Nutritional Rehabilitation Units (NRUs) with adequate supplies as these cater to people who have already had a chance in having adequate nutrition lost.
- Noting the high nutritive value of milk and the very low intake of the same among Malawians, authorities could consider subsidizing consumption of milk and milk products as a way of dealing with malnutrition.

2.2.7 The Input Subsidy Program (ISP) and the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp)

The major policy directions/issues that were specifically flagged out for discussions were the ASWAp and the ISP. The sector wide approach being applied to agriculture was noted as a welcome development. However, it was observed that it was not as inclusive as the term would suggest. For instance, an important agricultural institution like Bunda College has felt sidelined, and yet a sector wide approach has to seriously consider capacity issues within the sector. The College has expressed concern to this effect. Stakeholders are also concerned that if you go by what was in ASWAp –SP (Support Project), a precursor to the full operationalization of the ASWAp, overemphasis on crops, and in particular maize, was also evident. Malawi should be thinking “outside the crop/maize box”. The issue of emphasizing “farming to be taken as a business” should be imbedded in the ASWAp and not business as usual. The same applies to ISP. It is maize ridden. More importantly, it is felt that the ISP should be transformed from a social program into an economic growth tool. Lastly, ISP is full of operational challenges. Discussions with communities centered on the many design and logistical challenges that they face with the ISP. All communities visited lamented that they still had coupons in their possession, and yet the maize in some instances was tasseling (Box I).

2.2.7.1 Recommendations

- ASWAp should live up to its design, which is quite inclusive (with production, marketing and natural resource management well balanced). Its precursor the ASWAp–SP, according to stakeholders, gave a different notion. Livestock was not emphasized, thereby raising fears of planning one thing and getting into business as usual during implementation.
- Transform the ISP from a social tool to one of economic growth. There is need to determine who just deserves social support, and who has productive assets like land and labor, and therefore requires inputs. It is a known fact that farmers have been categorized but when it comes to conceptualization of programs it tends to be business as usual.
- Use ISP to foster diversification both within and without the crop area. Stakeholders felt that at that level of investment, we should be able to use the ISP as a key towards advancing diversification and not concretizing crop production stereotypes. For instance, it was noted that a very small proportion of the ISP could dip all animals in Malawi weekly every year, and yet animals are dying of curable diseases.
- Give women special support within the ISP by having a definitive share of the cake.
- Develop an exit strategy.

Policy issues were derived mainly from the regional workshops, district interviews, and Bunda College FGD. However, communities were very bitter with the problems they have to face when trying to access inputs through the ISP.

Box 1: Fix the ISP Problems or scrap the program altogether



SECTION 3: HEALTH: MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Malawi's health care service comprises 260 medical doctors, 4,812 nurses and midwives, and 10,507 health surveillance assistants (GoM, SOER 2010) serving a population of over 13,066,320 (2008 Population Census). Despite the comprehensive health care delivery system, the system is constrained by shortage in human resources, essential drugs and diagnostic services.

Human resource shortage is largely caused by brain drain, low life expectancy, the aggravating HIV/AIDS prevalence, high mortality rates, and the changing environment. For example, problems of deforestation and afforestation in some parts of Malawi, together with some agricultural practices, are being associated with increased incidences of river blindness, malaria and sleeping sickness. Shortage of essential drugs is among the challenges facing Malawi's health care system (GoM, SOER, 2010).

Box 2: Quotes by stakeholders interviewed

- *“Agriculture and health need to be closely working together to improve nutrition.”* – a female participant in FGD at TA Mphonde
- *“Major challenges are delayed procurement in hospitals that has resulted in drug shortage.”* – Social Welfare Assistant at Nkhotakota and member of DACC
- *“We put so much more emphasis on curative than prevention. What a system?”* – Mzuzu stakeholder Mzimba North DHO
- *“Family planning is the backbone of preventive Health services.”* – Lilongwe Stakeholder
- *“In my opinion, people go to traditional healers and seek spiritual prayers as well ... and come to the hospital after going to these places.”* – Lilongwe District AIDS Coordinator
- *“We do not have even a full blood count machine as a district hospital, making most of our diagnoses based on guess work.”* – Nkhata Bay DHO

3.2 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The sections that follow present the results of the health related consultations from the workshops, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) (see Box 2).

Findings in the health sector services fall within the sections below:

1. Human resource development for health
2. Diagnostic services
3. Curative & rehabilitative services
4. Integrated vector control/ preventative strategy
5. Emergency response
6. Procurement, logistics and policy
7. Infrastructure

3.2.1 Key findings

3.2.1.1 Human resource development for health

- Inadequate number of health workers due to poor working conditions, and lack of capacity in training institutions resulting in the few health workers being overworked, which has resulted in lowered quality of services and poor patient/provider relationship.

3.2.1.2 Diagnostics services

- Diagnoses are mostly based on assumption due to lack of diagnostic equipment resulting in poor and delayed treatment assignment and unreliable disease epidemiology, e.g. malaria data is presumptive.

3.2.1.3 Curative & rehabilitative services

- Long distances to health centers results in delayed access to treatment resulting in poor prognosis.

3.2.1.4 Integrated vector control/ preventive strategy

- There is too much focus on one intervention, Long Life Insecticide Treated Nets (LLITN), strategy for malaria control instead of an integrated approach.
- There is negligence of neglected conditions, e.g. schistosomiasis and sleeping sickness, though prevalence is very high in endemic areas.
- Access to safe water and sanitation services is still limited.
- Poor nutrition and dietary habits.
- HIV/AIDS prevention focuses more on knowledge but not effective behavior transformation, resulting in more new infections.

3.2.4.5 Emergency response

- Referral system is poorly organized and grossly inefficient.

3.2.4.6 Procurement, logistics and policy

- A lot of resources have been spent to make the Central Medical Stores a bio-medical supply monopoly, yet it remains inefficient with continued delayed and slowed supply process resulting in hospitals having critically low or no supplies.
- Lack of computerized resource management systems results in not knowing where and what is available.

3.2.4.7 Infrastructure

- See Box 3 Phalombe Case Study for discussion.

Box 3: Case Study: Phalombe



3.2.2 Outstanding Findings

3.2.2.1 Disease prevention:

It was noted that most HIV/AIDS and malaria community outreach interventions have focused on information dissemination for knowledge. As a result, most people are knowledgeable about the diseases, but this has not brought about change in behavior to promote protective behavior/practices. Knowledge has not resulted in transformation.

3.2.2.2 Access to health services is limited by the following:

- a. Some areas are difficult to access as there are no road networks; they can only be accessed by boat. In some instances, people have to walk over 15km to find a facility particularly for Nkhata Bay and Rumphi.
- b. Most health facilities have no personnel as many health workers shun working in remote areas without electricity and clean water. As their families grow they desire to move to a town where their families will have access to all essential services like good schools.
- c. Many health workers have moved out of the country or into other private institutions where working conditions and pay are better than in public institutions.
- d. General lack of services, e.g. institutions without functioning units. The whole Northern Region has no dialysis facility and the whole country has no cancer treatment center; if cancer patients cannot afford to travel out of the country, they cannot access treatment. Phalombe District has no public referral site (no district hospital) but only health centers.

3.2.2.3 Increased capacity:

There is need to focus more on capacitating the health sector beleaguered by weak capacity, given the absence of in-house specialist. The enormity of the problem calls for greater USAID involvement both financially and technically. Problems also dictate the involvement and empowerment of the private sector, especially in making sure that those specialists in the private facilities are accessed by all Malawians where required. This can be achieved by enabling a referral system to private facilities that have specialists and equipment. The service level agreements provide a good model for public/private partnerships.

3.2.2.4 Referral System:

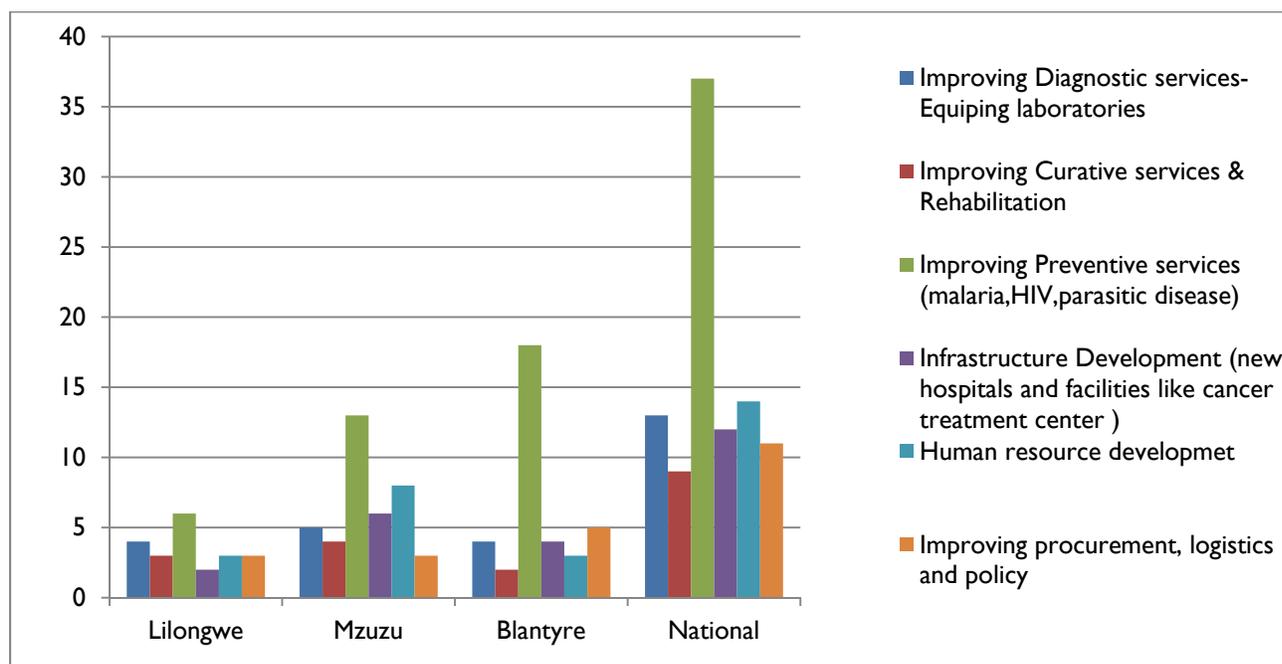
It is widely accepted that substantial reductions in maternal mortality and severe morbidity cannot be achieved without an effective referral system for complicated cases. An effective referral system means access to transport and communication. For many people in Malawi the mere act of getting to the hospital is momentous in itself. A well-functioning referral system means having a designated adequately resourced referral center, and transportation in a purpose equipped vehicle with personnel trained in their use. Referrals face a lot of setbacks:

- a. **Policy does not support lower level referrals:** Due to regular stock outs at central hospitals and district hospitals, referrals from the health centers sometimes do not get assistance in time, as they usually find that the referral center has no drugs. It has been noted that in some cases the policy does not support downward referral, especially where the central or district hospital have stock outs yet the smaller health facilities may still have adequate stocks, e.g. rabies vaccination. There is need for deliberate facilitation of downward referral where the need can be met by a lower level facility. Another complex issue is the lack of support to refer patients to private hospitals and Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi (CHAM) facilities. In some cases, in CHAM facilities there are service level agreements where only maternal and under-five patients are referred. When funds are low this becomes impossible as government cannot afford to pay the CHAM facilities.
- b. **Duration for emergency response:** Duration of waiting for ambulance is mostly long as a result of shortage of ambulances. This resulted in waiting, in some instances, over 13 hours. The road conditions make it even worse as they are so rough, resulting in slow drives, and worsening of the patient condition.
- c. **Referral Transport:** A government ambulance is the major mode of transport used for referrals. However, these ambulances are not equipped for patient transportation as they have no resuscitation equipment, no oxygen supply, and mostly do not even have a stretcher or bed to absorb the rough road shocks. To make matters worse, these vehicles have no paramedics to take care of the patient. The only personnel in the vehicle is the driver, who cannot, and does not, attend to the patient.

3.3 PRIORITIZATION OF ISSUES

At the end of the three workshops in Lilongwe, Mzuzu, and Blantyre, participants were asked to prioritize issues that were presented. Each participant was given five stickers to stick against priority issues. The graph below presents the ranking by participants.

Figure 1: Graph Showing Ranking Priorities According to the Six Sections in Health



It can be noted from the graph that participants' primary concerns were around issues of improving preventive services and human resource development.

3.4 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The consensus among consulted stakeholders supported the following recommendations:

- Support human resource development for health. It is common for health workers, especially nurses, to work long hours due to the critical shortage of human resource for health. Current local institutions and trainers are not adequate to produce the required number of skilled health workers to fill the many vacant posts. As such, community based workers are being given more and more tasks beyond their current skill and capacity, but they appreciate the opportunity to develop their careers and continue professional development. State-of-the-art technologies like full blood count machines and many other medical technologies being imported into Malawi would be in more use if more local medical technologists are trained to maintain and repair them.
- Many Malawian mothers carry their children on their backs for long distances to health centers for services that can be provided at village clinics and outreach services. Expanding and strengthening village and mobile clinics would be more helpful.

- Strengthen diagnostics services. This will give a true picture of the disease epidemiology, as opposed to the current practice where most cases are reported without laboratory confirmation. There has been so much doubt on the malaria data being reported, as most of it is presumptive.
- Strengthen the preventive sector: malaria can be eradicated by supporting integrated vector control that includes (a) indoor residual spraying (currently scaling to all lakeshore districts.), (b) controlled larvicide spraying along mosquito breeding areas, and (c) universal distribution of insecticide treated bednets. Schistosomiasis is easily preventable. HIV/AIDS prevention can be more effective by going beyond informative knowledge to transformative knowledge. Increased access to safe water and sanitation will reduce diarrheal diseases, and improved nutrition and dietary habits will improve well-being.
- Expand partnership with private hospitals in referrals to ease access to equipment and expertise for those who cannot afford them.
- There is local expertise in disease control at district and national levels. Building the capacity and use of these experts will benefit the districts; for instance, in implementation of the Malawi Water and Sanitation Policy and Strategy to construct ecological toilets to preserve forests. Building the capacity and use of local human resources will benefit the villages; for instance, in door-to-door water chlorination and waste disposal and recycling. This would be more effective if all interventions and projects were known to, and implemented in partnership with, the program coordinators at district health offices to avoid duplications and redundancies, in the same way meaningful involvement of people living with HIV (PLHIV), Area Development Committees and Village Health Committees is effective in behavior change.
- Engage FBOs, CBOs, NGOs and CSOs in working on programs that would promote behavior change. It was noted that although most programs have focused on information dissemination, this has not brought about transformation in behavior and practices.
- Improve supply chain management to avoid supply stock outs. Stop Central Medical Stores monopoly. District health offices have local procurement systems (although they need to be strengthened), and there are many local suppliers of biomedical and pharmaceutical items that are more accessible to health facilities. With computerized resource management systems and health management information system (HMIS) that are currently being used for procurement of drugs and supplies for vertical disease programs (which do not experience severe stock outs), all essential drugs and supplies can be procured at district level from local private suppliers, according to their service delivery requirements. Local procurement will minimize delays.
- Base on stockholder ranking for priority areas to be considered, the top three are: (1) enhancing the preventive services, (2) human resource development, and (3) improving diagnostic capabilities.
- In summary, while USAID is called upon to assist in leveraging more resources, it is also requested that USAID address issues such as critical shortages of health workers, by simply increasing numbers of those available and making sure that rare skills like medical technicians to repair medical equipment are available. Specifically, USAID assistance is sought to secure availability of drugs and medical supplies in health facilities.

SECTION 4: EDUCATION: MAIN FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the first democratic elections in 1994, the then newly elected government embarked on an ambitious program of free primary education (FPE) in fulfilment of one of its campaign promises. The resultant dramatic increases in enrolment notwithstanding, the FPE policy exacerbated the already declining standards of education in Malawi. Primary school completion remains an elusive target, owing to the unacceptably high drop-out rates, especially in the first five years of schooling. For decades, the proportion of children who enter and complete a full cycle has persistently remained low, ranging between only 23% and 33%. In addition, primary education outcomes have remained poor despite an increase in nominal terms of public resources allocated to the education sector. A number of learner achievement studies (Primary Assessment School Survey- PASS, Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality-SACMEQ I, II, and III, Monitoring Learning Achievement- MLA and Gender and Primary schooling -GAPS) to determine learners' levels of cognitive competences have all revealed low levels of achievement in core subjects (English, Chichewa and Mathematics). It is against this background that Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) developed the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) to respond to challenges in the education sector and start on the path towards a Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp). The Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) was then created to guide the implementation of the education plan. NESP is organized around the thematic issues of access and equity, quality and relevance, and governance and management. Cooperating partners have also supported Government of Malawi (GoM) in various ways to improve both the delivery and quality of education in the country.

4.2 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS FROM THE CONSULTATIONS

4.2.1 Introduction

Basic education sector took precedence over both secondary and tertiary levels. Participants noted that although there were issues in both secondary and tertiary levels, these paled in comparison to those encountered in the basic sector. The issues are largely organized around reading, access to school, and teacher issues. A final category is termed *Other* to include issues related to resources, accountability, decentralization, environment, and culture.

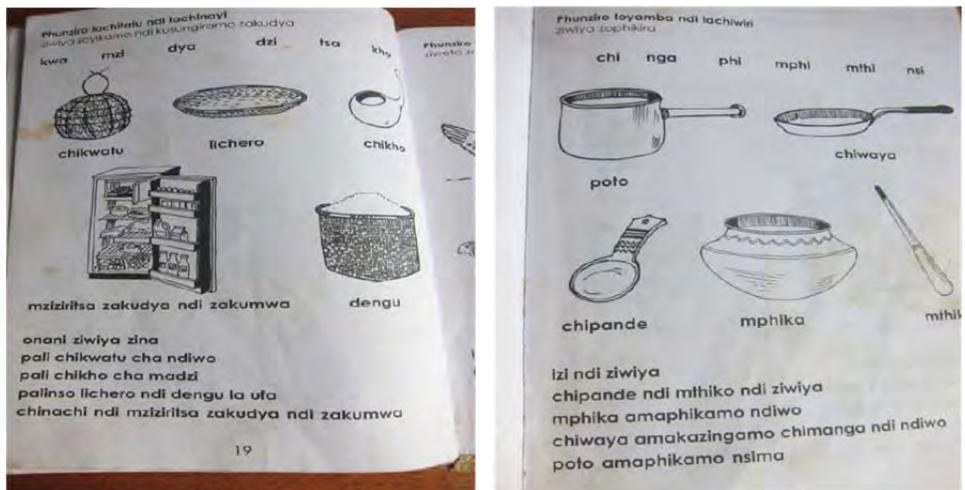
4.2.2 Reading in Lower Primary grades

The Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform (PCAR) advocates for the *Whole Word* approach to teach reading in the early grades and encourages learner centered approach (LCA). Children are assigned to group activities and then expected to make presentations. Yet LCA is still unrealized in many schools where teachers are untrained and class sizes remain large (Chiuye and Kunje, 2011). Participants noted that reading is a progression of skills and expected children to be able to recognize letters and combine syllables to make words by the end of standard 1, while by standard 4, they should be able to read. There was great consensus among participants at both the national workshops and district and community level discussions that children are progressing through the primary school without attaining basic literacy skills. These

findings are consistent with achievement studies conducted in the past 15 years (Chiuye, 2005; Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support (MTPDS)(MTPDS, 2010; Milner, G. et al. 2001). The 2008 Population and Housing Census reported similarly low literacy levels among children. Around one fifth (21%) of children aged between 5 and 9 are literate, while 76% are literate in the 10 to 14 age group (National Statistical Office, 2009).

Inappropriate reading pedagogy was one of the top four reasons stakeholders identified for children’s failure to read. Teachers and parents strongly believed there was need to “*maintain the teaching of phonics to drill children in letter knowledge, their sounds and how they combine to make up words*” before they read. Other reasons for reading failure were associated with the absence of a reading culture and materials to support reading. In particular, participants, especially at the national workshops, cited the absence of a preparatory class for orienting children to print before joining primary school as a major explanatory factor. Currently, a 2010 World Bank Report estimates that only 32% of the 2.4 million children aged between 3 and 5 have access to Early Childhood Development (ECD). In addition, PCAR was mentioned to demand children to read long sentences with multisyllabic words before they have even acquired word decoding skills (Figure 2). In one lesson, there are too many activities to complete: language structure, reading, answering questions, group work and making group presentations, modeling, and writing. It is clear that these sentiments reflect inadequacies of teacher knowledge on teaching reading in context of authentic activities as opposed to presenting it as discrete skills.

Figure 2: Sample of PCAR Reading Texts

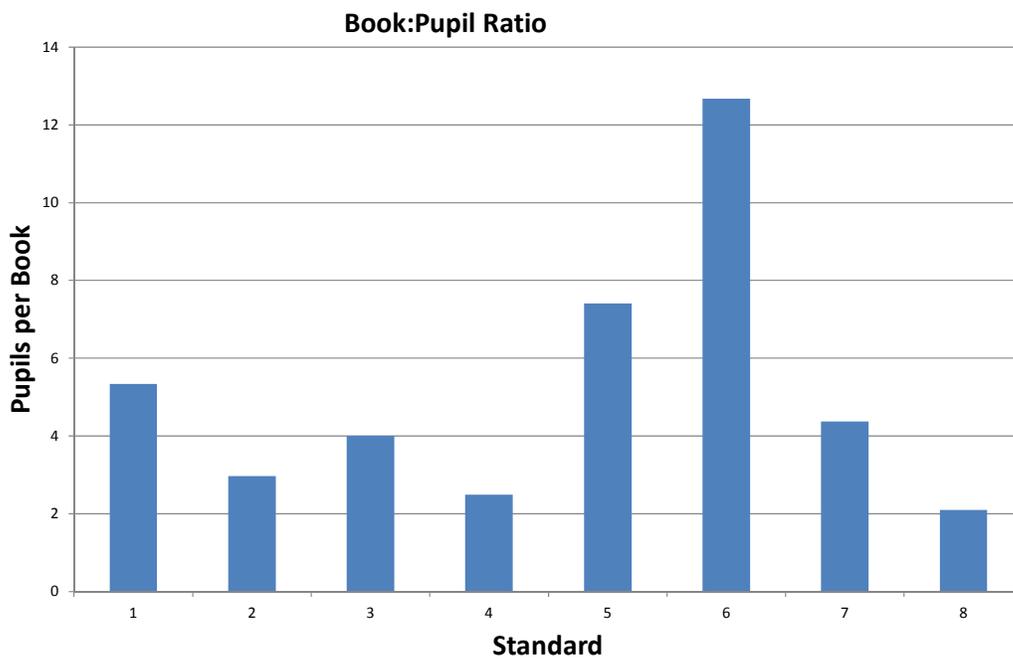


Additional reasons for general reading failure included lack of parental support in children’s schooling activities, books written beyond children’s cognitive development level, large classes, irregular school attendance, and inadequate teaching and learning materials. For example, school records showed that there were inadequate English books to support learning to read (Figure 3). Participants also mentioned brevity of orientation time for teachers when compared to training of trainers (TOT) conducted at national and district levels. Stakeholders widely acknowledged the presence of complementary initiatives to PCAR (Interactive Radio

instruction [IRI], continuous assessment, Continuous Professional Development [CPDs], and recently, Read Malawi). Nonetheless, there was also widespread fear as captured in the comment, “We are afraid of being caught teaching using unauthorized pedagogy ...drilling children in letters, syllables...like before...the bosses will reprimand...we use *Sosa* secretly because we know it helps our children”.

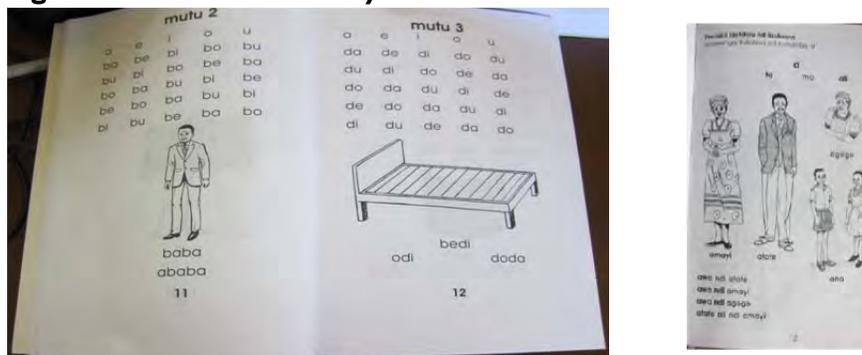
Figure 3: Number of Pupils Sharing One Book

Number of Pupils Per Book



What teachers believe about teaching children to read and write is a critical factor in implementing literacy reforms (Leu and Kinzer, 2003; Rasiski and Padak, 1996; Vacca and Vacca, 2002). It is obvious with PCAR that its philosophy and approaches do not parallel those which teachers hold. Teachers revealed incorporating books from the previous methodologies such as *Sosa* that introduced learners to letters and letter combination to help struggling readers (Figure 4). The polarization in beliefs about reading epitomizes those in the reading arena dubbed the *Reading Wars*: phonics instructions versus whole language approach (National Education Association, 1999; National Institute for Literacy, 2001). Significant change is needed to align literacy pedagogy with teachers’ beliefs, children’s background, and realities in the Malawian classrooms to improve reading outcomes.

Figure 4: From Letter to Syllable to Word Formation in Sosa Book



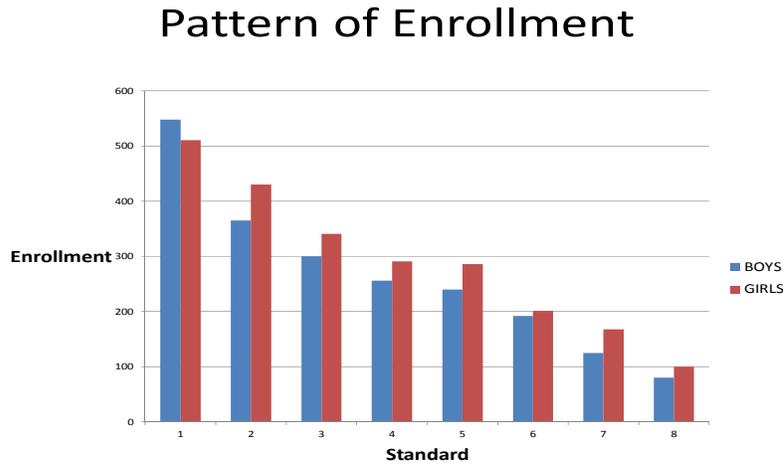
4.2.2.1 Recommendations

- Infuse phonics instruction and the whole word approach.
- Provide main class readers and supplementary readers to all schools.
- Reduce the dense text in both PCAR and Read Malawi books.
- Empower teachers to use their discretion and select texts and materials to meet individual children’s reading needs.
- Strategies for managing large classes need to be identified to increase teacher support for learners. Teachers from other classes could assist during the reading lessons.
- Increase time for orientation of teachers to help them internalize the new concepts and approaches being introduced.
- Train all teachers in IRI, Read Malawi, and other initiatives to address teacher shortage when teachers in targeted grades have been reallocated, whether within or without the schools, or are absent.

4.2.3 Access to School

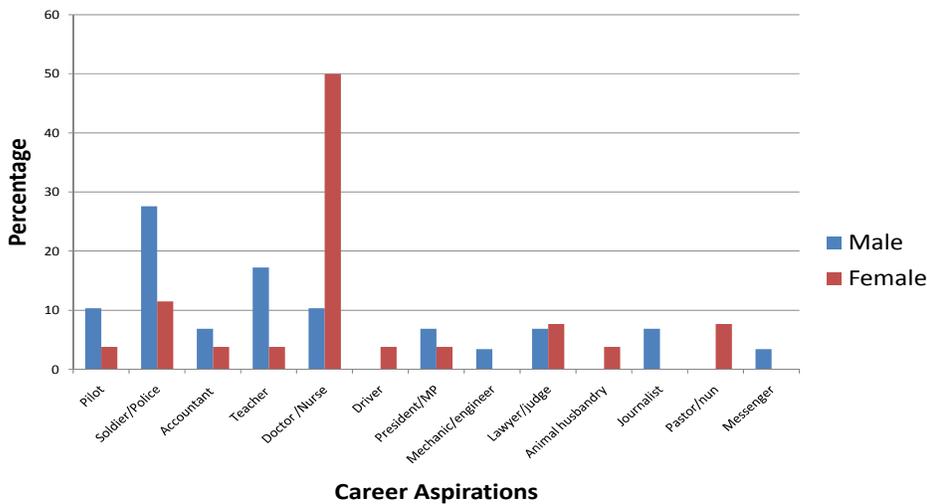
Undoubtedly, prioritization of attainment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and equity in education is clearly stipulated in GoM’s strategic documents: Malawi Growth and Development (MGDS), National Education Sector Plan (NESP), the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and international protocols, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA). There was overwhelming agreement among all stakeholders that access to school had increased, including that for marginalized groups like girls, orphans and vulnerable children, as well as children with special needs. Nationally, enrollments have increased as shown in education statistics published annually (EMIS 2008, 2010; World Bank, 2010). Enrollment records showed evidence of increased access although patterns differed widely across schools, grades, and sex. Girls’ proportions were higher than for boys in both lower and upper grades, except for standard I (Figure 5). Although these proportions reflect national trends, they are strikingly higher percentages and continue to upper grades. Modest effort was noted in the case of providing resources (teachers, resource rooms/centers and materials), awareness campaigns and training teachers in managing learners with special needs.

Figure 5: Enrollment by Sex and Standard in the Sampled Schools



Suggestions were readily provided to explain enrollment increases. Learners mentioned that participation in school clubs, determination, hard work and regular attendance promote staying in school. Parents mentioned the presence of role models, shifts in perceptions regarding girls’ and women’s status, awareness campaigns on education, and increased recognition of children’s rights. Nationwide, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Forum for African Women Educationalists Malawi (FAWEMA) have championed the establishment and capacity building of Mother Groups to support girls’ education at the community level. Even aspirations have changed among girls from traditional teaching and nursing to medical doctor, security force (police or army), pilot, politics (President or Member of Parliament), and lawyers (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Pupils’ Aspirations by Sex



Enrollment increases notwithstanding, drop out remains a challenge in the schools. Reasons included participation in fishing, work, and vending to earn money to contribute to family

income, and meet for their own needs. Even at Havala, where girls' proportions were higher than for boys, girls dropped out due to early pregnancies and marriages (see Box 4). Progression to secondary school is also limited because of failure to pay fees, and for girls, they simply get married. Repeatedly however, participants identified low levels of appreciation for education among parents and their children emanating from limited employment and income-generating opportunities for countless primary and secondary school graduates idling away around the communities.

Beyond basic education, access to secondary school expanded due to proliferation of private secondary schools and conversion of Community Day Secondary Schools to Conventional Secondary Schools. Introduction of non-residential programs and establishment of private universities has also expanded tertiary education. It is the bottleneck in the transition from one level to the next that participants highlighted as a problem. Lack of infrastructure and tuition, especially among girls and vulnerable students, were also noted as hindering schooling opportunities beyond basic education.

Box 4: Drop Out at Havala Junior School: A Case Study

In Phalombe, Lake Chilwa, the low lying lands and proximity to neighboring Mozambique offer vibrant opportunities for livelihoods through rice and vegetable farming, fishing and vending activities. The school is located between the lake and a main road bustling with market activities. Early marriages and pregnancies are exacerbated by boys and men who use money as bait to entice girls into sex, leading to early pregnancies. Each year, a number of girls fall pregnant and leave school prematurely. This academic year, a 13 year old standard 4 girl got pregnant and another standard 6 girl was impregnated by a married man. Members of a Mother Group recounted the story of a girl who opted to get married in order to curb hunger brought on by her father's one meal a day rule. For boys, the aspiration to own a bicycle takes them all the way to Mozambique where they work in exchange for a bicycle. Upon return home, they

4.2.3.1. Recommendations

- Increase the profile and visibility of Mother Groups to be role models, and strengthen parents' role in the care and support for their children to discourage children from engaging in economic activities.
- Strengthen parental involvement in their children's education.
- Strengthen private participation in provision of education through provision of incentives in form of waived levy requirements and subsidies. Intensify Social Cash Transfer scheme to ensure that more families have access to subsidies for caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs).
- Increase number of female role models and school relationships to improve messages about importance of education.
- Establish and support women's forums to counsel girls.
- Continue and intensify scholarships for girls in secondary and tertiary institutions.

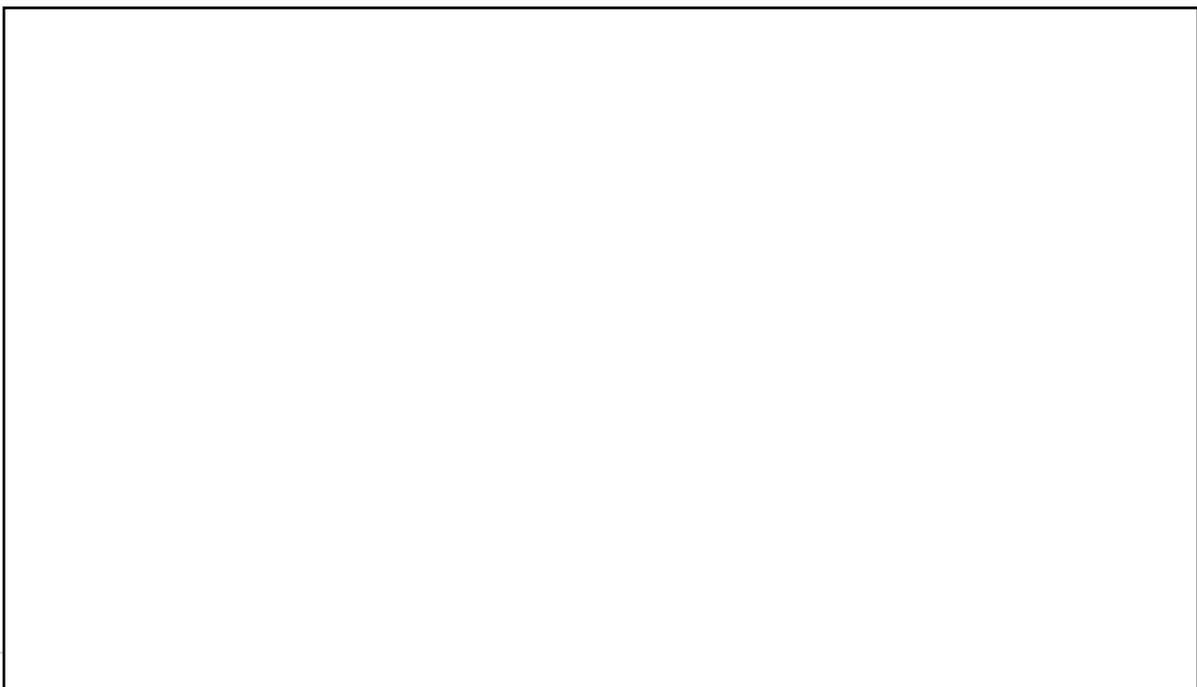
- Acknowledge parents that send their children to school at public meetings or functions to commend them for their efforts and motivate others.

4.2.4 Teacher Issues

Discussions on issues about teachers centered largely on capacity as it relates to quality and quantity. Quality of teachers was considered in terms of academic and professional qualifications. Salaries, incentives and other conditions of service were thought to contribute to quality. Teachers with adequate academic qualifications and who have received professional support through CPDs were considered to contribute to quality of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Kunje and Stuart, 1997). However, CPDs were regarded as few, conducted in shorter duration, and for a small portion of teachers, despite appearing in school plans. A mismatch was noted between the curriculum teachers study in college and the reality of the environment in which schooling occurs: large classes, considerably rural settings, inadequate infrastructure and instructional resources, among others. The Danish Aid from People to People (DAPP) model of teacher training was particularly singled as a “*relevant and working curriculum to orient and prepare teachers for realities in rural Malawian schools*”.

Quantity related to capacity of existing Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) to produce enough teachers to reduce the ever increasing pupil enrollments. Participants applauded efforts in expansion of teacher production capacity through multiple models of teacher education and infrastructure which vastly improved staffing. These expansions notwithstanding, pupil enrollments have outpaced teacher production resulting in high pupil teacher ratios (PTRs) where effective teaching is impossible to accomplish. Explanations for this centered on high population growth, large numbers of children entering school, uneven teacher distribution (within division, districts and even schools) and high teacher attrition. The use of PTR to guide allocation was perceived as an inaccurate yardstick, especially in Nkhata Bay district. Box 5 typifies teacher issues and uses Nkhata Bay district as a case study.

Box 5: Teacher Issues: A Case Study



Additional teacher issues were presented in terms of conditions of service in which teachers work. Teacher remuneration and accompanying rewards were also believed to motivate teachers significantly and enhance their commitment to quality teaching. Across all districts, participants highlighted lack of a clear career path and introduction of “*busy paper work*”. Teachers’ salaries are low, and incentives to reward hard work and commitment were seen to be strikingly missing in the profession. Teachers with long years of service are pegged at the same grade and salary as those fresh out of college. Moreover, successful teacher candidates during interviews for promotion “*are those that are ineffective in the classroom, come to class unprepared, absent themselves frequently, drunkards...it’s just that they know how to express themselves, or maybe they know some people at headquarters ...it’s not those that deserve to be promoted*”. Finally, PCAR incorporates continuous assessment and requires teachers to complete rubrics, portfolios, checklists and a report card for each child. Teachers acknowledged the merit of continuous assessment in identifying students experiencing difficulties and guiding subsequent instruction. Nonetheless, they bemoaned the sheer volume of work it required and duplicating the activities for the same purpose (Figure 7). They especially criticized PCAR for requiring teachers to draw the tedious forms manually by “*writing the various assessments by hand for all children in every subject... we received some two years ago with only 60 names yet there are 245 children in standards 1 and 2...this is very inconsiderate*”.

Figure 7: Demands of Continuous Assessment



Participants’ views at national workshops, suggested that PCAR stopped at curriculum reform and did not continue to address equally the assessment component. Both Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) and teachers hastened to add that teachers were busy completing these assessments instead of focusing on teaching. Teachers did not appear to adhere to the assessment protocols because of limited understanding on how to conduct them and overwhelming class sizes. A basic education assessment conducted in 2008, reported similar findings (Williams et al. 2008).

4.2.4.1 Recommendations

- Introduce and enforce performance assessment forms that can also be used for promotion.

- Review salary structures so that veteran teachers are remunerated differently from those joining the profession for the first time.
- Reward hard working teachers with meritorious awards.
- GP6 forms should revert to the district office function, at least for the first few months, to guarantee that teachers get their salaries.
- Use class ratio –number of classes a school offers- to decide the number of teachers, rather than PTR.
- MoEST should provide teachers with convenient assessment forms with the criteria in the various subjects already filled in to free teachers of this extra burden.
- Need to consolidate the assessment and provide adequate training to teachers in how to complete and use them.
- Discourage the opening of new schools, and instead expand junior to full primary schools.
- Include lesson observation as part of criteria for promotion.
- Reduce the emphasis on record keeping, to discourage teachers from arbitrarily assessing learners, and allow them time to teach.

4.3 OTHER ISSUES

Throughout the process, several issues emerged that did not fit well in the preceding categories, but which affected the delivery of quality education. These included resources, decentralization, environment, and accountability.

4.3.1 Resources

Resources were considered at multiple levels, ranging from policy formulation to their availability in the schools. At policy levels, participants suggested the absence of a comprehensive policy and appreciable levels of budgetary allocation to ensure a consistent and regular supply of resources in schools. The 2010 Country Status Report on education estimated that Malawi's public expenditure, especially for primary education (32%), is much lower than those for the region (CERT, 2009; World Bank, 2010). However, this was an improvement from a low of 14% in 2006/2007 year (Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE), 2007). The flow of resources from central to district and from districts to schools also delayed and obstructed quality teaching. Members noted that it was largely a problem of bottleneck at MoEST to get resources out to schools rather than at funding levels. It was reported that the central office continues to estimate school level needs while the process of procuring and distributing materials was also noted to be excessively long. The public/private partnership to support provision of education was noted to be weak. The absence of a regulatory body to govern commitments seriously undermined potential for improved service delivery (Chimombo, 2009).

4.3.1.1 *Instructional Materials*

The consultations revealed that schools did not have adequate teaching and learning materials. With the exception of the case of Read Malawi, the only materials available were Teachers' Guide and the Learners' books. It is not surprising that teachers were reported demonstrating a lack of content knowledge in their subjects beyond the guides and the Learners' books. It is

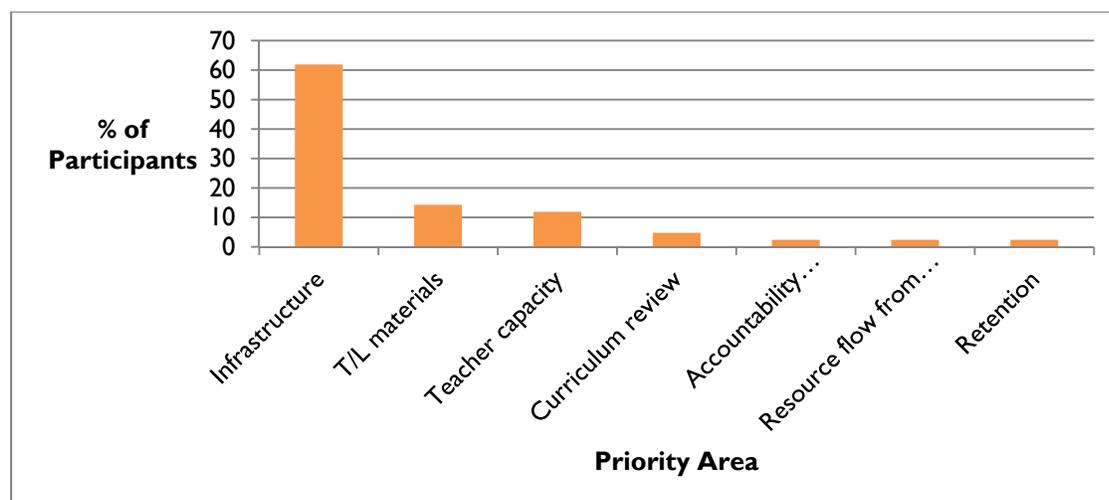
clear that children and teachers have limited knowledge because of the narrow resource base for the various learning areas.

The rhetoric of decentralization has contributed significantly to the poor supply and delivery of textbooks and instructional materials. This process is still controlled by the central office, and schools have not received any materials since 2009. At Bunda L.E.A school as many as 49 children shared a book during English in standard 3, while 36 children scrambled for a book in both standards 5 and 6. There is a Specialized Procurement Unit (SPU) in the MoEST and Supplies Unit structures, yet procurement and production of materials is outsourced, thereby further delaying their supply to schools. Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has been a major partner in supporting provision and delivery of textbooks. A World Bank Direct Support to Schools (DSS) initiative introduced in 2006 provided funding for materials other than textbooks. The lack of secure storage facilities both at school and home shorten the lifespan for books. The directive by MoEST for schools to issue books to children has caused its own problems: lack of proper care and safety resulting in wear and tear, missing pages, and the complete loss of books.

4.3.1.2 Infrastructure

Resources are also related to infrastructure at the school level. These included teacher housing, classrooms, water and sanitation facilities, head teacher office, staffroom, and furniture. The shortage of classrooms forces many children to sit under trees where they spend more time “*playing than learning*”. Sanitary and safe school grounds were articulated as important to the overall attractiveness of the school, especially for girls. There were inadequate toilets and in some schools (Havala, Mambala, and Bunda) there were temporary shelters. Havala was the most affected of the schools and even lacked a water source. In Nkhata Bay, the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CIPA) works in 10 schools to provide basic health education through school hygiene campaign, garbage collection days, open days, construction of toilets and water points, and recycling lessons. Teacher housing was seen as related to regular teacher school attendance which strongly improved instruction time. MoEST statistics reports estimate that housing is not available to 63% of the teachers. It is not surprising that infrastructure remained the highest priority in the workshops and discussions (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Priority Issues in Education



4.3.1.3 Recommendations

- MoEST should create a line budget for procuring and distributing books and other T/L materials and not leaving it to development partners like CIDA and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).
- Provide skills in the management and care of resources.
- Schools should determine their own needs and forward information to MoEST and not vice versa.
- Decentralize fully the process of procuring and distributing materials.
- Schools should open only when they have the basic necessities to function.
- School construction should include teachers' houses and water and sanitation facilities.

4.3.2 Decentralization

Participants noted the efforts being made toward decentralization and appreciated the seriousness of GoM through the development of the devolution guidelines to support the process. However, participants noted that although on paper functions have been devolved to the district structures, the policy has not been supported by funding and dubbed it “*decentralization without resources*”. In addition, there are no technical advisors at the community level to guide and support policies and oversee their implementation. District level officers reported to have no powers to discipline teachers who are in violation of the code of conduct, failure to report for duties, drunkenness on the job, coming to school unprepared, and for having relations with pupils. They felt “their hands were tied” and equated it to caring for an egg “*kulera dzira*”. Supervision is still centrally controlled and district and school level stakeholders “*can inspect but mandate and budget is not there... and we do it rarely*”.

Widespread misconceptions about democracy and favoritism were also perceived to have contributed to limitations of powers of the district office. Teachers find dubious reasons to move out of their designated schools through connections they have at the central office. District Education Managers (DEMs) and head teachers reported simply receiving “*copies of*

transfer instructions for the teacher in question". In school, teachers did not think that parents and their children understood their roles in the context of FPE and democracy. Children attend school as they please and parents are reluctant to buy materials since school is free and therefore perceived as demanding no financial obligation from parents.

4.3.2.1 Recommendations

- Transfer functions together with funds and empowerment to districts.
- Empower DEMs, Coordinating Primary Education Advisor (CPEA) and Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) to inspect and make decisions to hire and discipline teachers and simply forward letter to MoEST.
- Inspection must move to district to improve service delivery.
- Clearly spell out roles for district structures.
- Teachers must be under the immediate charge of DEM's office despite the rhetoric of decentralization, district office indicated that they have no control over the management of teachers.

4.3.3 Accountability

The lack of accountability was related to the overall dysfunction of the structures in the education system. It was perceived that stakeholders at various levels did not organize themselves to put pressure on duty bearers and demand better service delivery. One participant in the Lilongwe workshop commented, "Parents should be able to mobilize themselves and go to head teachers to complain should they feel the quality of education their children are getting is poor". In addition, the structural weakness of the system made enforcement of accountability difficult.

This was aggravated by low levels of engagement with school management and erroneous notions regarding school management. Responses from parents and community level structures demonstrated overtones of schools as a government responsibility, but they indicated participating through volunteering for labor, time, and other contribution. A National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management (NSCPPSM) was developed in 2001 to extend parents' participation beyond bricks to engage in management and planning processes of their schools. The strategy mandates communities to monitor quality of learning and make decisions regarding teacher recruitment and appraisal. NESP also stipulates an intensified role of the community in decision making activities to improve quality of schooling. There are limitations in accountability demands that communities can demand from service providers if they are left in the periphery. Beyond getting children ready for school, parents perceived supporting children with school work, reading to them and telling them stories would all support children's learning in general. At Bunda L.E.A. teachers and the community reported to have worked together: "As teachers we have to think outside the box and think of creative innovations to help our children ... We contributed MK550,000.00, funds raised through the school garden, poultry farming and help from the Lilongwe Education Assistance project (LEAP) to support our children ...".

Naidoo (2003) asserted that bringing communities and schools together "*can generate a sense of ownership, enhance accountability, and ensure that content, scheduling, and educational requirements*

are accurately identified and adapted to local conditions” (p.9). Lack of supervision of teachers and schools in general was envisaged as an accountability issue. It was not clear to whom teachers and other officers were accountable. Guidelines stipulate three visits per teacher per year, but that it is not followed (National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development [NSTED], 2004).

4.3.3.1 Recommendations

- Strengthen community participation through sustained capacity building.
- Reinforce school based supervision done by section heads and the head teachers.
- Decentralize inspection.

4.3.4 Environment and Cultural Issues

Participants perceived that the social environment of the families and communities from which children come also impacts their learning. Low levels of appreciation for education, and deep rooted cultural beliefs and practices negatively affect schooling. Education was perceived to compete with cultural values and the demands for economic participation, thereby diminishing participation in schooling. Primary and secondary school graduates do not secure employment, further communicating the perceived futility of education.

Nutrition was mentioned as critical to promote children’s cognitive development and other aspects to prepare support academic growth. Health, nutrition, and environments that nurture children’s cognitive, social and physical development, shape the nature and quality and children’s lives. Community Based Child Care centres (CBCC) were viewed as providing the necessary environments and opportunities in readiness for successful schooling experiences). GoM conceptualizes ECD as a pillar in the attainment of EFA goals as evidenced by expanding the concept of basic education to include ECD and heightened its priorities and targets (Chiuve & Chimombo, 2011). However, currently, under a third (30%) of the targeted children attends ECD centers (NESP, 2008). Hungry and stunted children cannot concentrate on school, and risk creating a poor foundation for education, consequently leading to schooling failure.

4.3.4.1 Recommendations

- Engage community in education campaigns.
- Expand and improve provision and regulation of early childhood care and development (ECCD) to provide a strong foundation for education.

SECTION 5: DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GOVERNANCE MAIN FINDINGS

5.1 SETTING THE CONTEXT

When Malawi gained democratic governance in 1994 after 30 years of dictatorial rule, many citizens were optimistic that rights would thrive and community participation and good governance would be institutionalized. The thinking was that there would be active citizenship, which is critical for community participation, upholding human rights, and holding duty bearers and service deliverers responsive and accountable, all of which were conspicuously absent during the one party regime. These aspirations were operationalized through the 1995 Constitution, Local Government Act of 1998, and other relevant legislations and policies. In particular, the Constitution provides for a bill of rights, mechanisms for community participation, and various democratic accountability institutions that are aimed at safeguarding democratic governance. In addition, the Local Government Act creates a decentralized system that aims to further the constitutional order based on democratic principles, accountability, transparency and participation of the people in the decision-making and development processes. The onset of democratic governance also saw the proliferation of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and the media, which are both mechanisms for holding the government accountable and consolidating democratic governance.

However, the case of Malawi exposes how “present multiparty politics has failed to erase past practices and institutions” (Englund, 2002:172; see also Khembo, 2004). It would appear that the legacies of the one party dictatorial regime were still haunting the democratic Malawi; so that community participation has in most cases been problematic due to several institutional, political and structural reasons (see Kayuni and Tambulasi, 2011). It would appear that the center does not want to pass on power to the local populations for effective participation (see Chiweza, 2010). Local councilors which are supposed to be instrumental in community participation have been absent since 2005, leading to problems in accountability and transparency, community participation, local level policy paralysis and signaling a collapse of constitutionalism leading to “government without governance” (Tambulasi, 2011). Moreover, the 2008 afro-barometer results show that citizen engagement, participation, and the will to hold service providers accountable in Malawi is very minimal (see Chinsinga and Kayuni, 2008). There have been problems in the area of human rights protection as well where abuses have been common both at the national and community levels. In addition, the environment for the operation of the media and CSOs has been characterized by government threats, intimidations, and the introduction of controls and legislative frameworks that restricts their operation.

It is within the context of this backdrop that, through a bottom up approach, USAID seeks to understand the dynamics of the operationalization of democratic governance in Malawi in order to come up with well-focused and targeted interventions which reflect the realities on the ground. The aim is to use such information for the development of its Malawi Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for 2012 to 2016. This section therefore unearths critical community participation, human rights, civil society and media issues that came up from various stakeholders and draws up some recommendations on what USAID can consider implementing in the area of democracy and governance. It has two main sections, with the

first section bringing out study findings in terms of issues and challenges affecting community participation, human rights, civil society organizations and the media. The second section presents recommendations for USAID's interventions.

5.2 STUDY FINDINGS

5.2.1 Community participation

The study noted that there are a lot of challenges in the area of community participation which can provide an opportunity for USAID interventions. Firstly, levels of literacy are low, which affects community participation. It was noted that although there have been initiatives to improve literacy levels in the country, there are gaps that inhibit participation. This was visible in the study as areas with better literacy levels had higher levels of participation and saw the need to demand from duty bearers on various aspects. For instance, communities in Zomba and Phalombe districts (which have relatively low levels of literacy), did not think that it was their responsibility to demand from duty bearers on various governance issues while those in Rumphi (which has higher literacy levels) saw it pertinent to demand for services. Experiences of Bunda College researchers who work with the community confirmed that those with less educational levels rarely participate.

Secondly, people at the community level hinted that they were frustrated in their efforts to participate and demand for various services because duty bearers did not listen to them. They highlighted that the supply side is irresponsible. To this end, one Director of Planning and Development confirmed that *"demand is there but to meet that demand is problematic as the supply is low"*. At one district, it was noted that when the community members go to the District Council they get the indication that they are not welcome.

This unresponsiveness also emanates from the fact that most District Councils do not have enough capacity in terms of institutional, financial, and human resources to adequately carry out their duties. At one site for instance, it was noted that their District Development Plan (DDP) expired in 2010 and there have not been any attempts to formulate a new one. In all the districts visited, government funding was too low to be used for various initiatives so that a lot of projects on demand have not been implemented. It was also a common occurrence for positions of key personnel at the District Councils to be vacant. For instance, at one site the next person from the District Education Manager (DEM) is a working at a PT4 grade, which is significantly lower than what a DEM should be.

Even in the districts where they had updated DDPs, it was noted that the process of coming up with such plans was mostly not participatory enough in terms of incorporating Village Development Committee (VDC) and Area Development Committee (ADC) voices in the decision making process. As one respondent noted *"VDCs are used by Councils for rubber stamping but not for decision making in various stages of the DDP processes"*. Another respondent highlights an example of the dynamics in this regard, *"In 2010 we had a right to development campaign where we also carried out decentralization sensitization at the VDC level. We found that the VDCs did not know which projects are in the DDP and how they came to be there. They even did not know that they are supposed to participate in the DDP formulation process. At another community, the development committee said that "projects being implemented are*

not our priority as the district council is implementing a fish ponds project but we want access to clean water” (a District level CSO manager)”.At another site, the ADC and VDC members confirmed that they have never participated in any DDP development process.

Moreover, there are gender imbalances that stifle participation as most decisions are made by males and women and children do not adequately participate. This is made worse by cultural orientations in most areas of the country where the male figure is seen to be dominant. In one area, it was noted that the youth and women are culturally not supposed to make decisions and this only makes them available for implementation of community projects rather than decision making. This was seen to be true even where deliberate attempts to include women in committees were made. For example, although there is a requirement for female presence in VDC and ADC, in some areas it was noted that they do not make decisions due to cultural orientations.

In addition, there is a tendency to commercialize participation on the part of the community. Some communities want to be paid in exchange for their participation. For instance, at some community it was noted that *“almost a week ago the road supervisor delivered timber for school construction and it could not be offloaded because communities were asking for wages for offloading the timber”*. At another site it was noted that some NGOs wanted to implement a public works program in a certain area in exchange for farm inputs. However, chiefs refused to be given farm inputs, but wanted money equivalent to the inputs, and as a result, the project could not be implemented in the area⁴.

Another challenge is that there is lack of awareness and information on the part of the community that they can participate in various issues affecting them. Most of them think that if anything, participation is limited to implementation rather than decision making. One respondent at the district level hinted that *“only in areas that have trained VDCs and ADCs is where there is better participation but in most of the areas participation means making bricks and collecting sand for school blocks rather than decision making”*. This is compounded by the lack of appreciation for the need for participation as most communities think that government is there to do everything for them. This also relates to communities’ misguided perception of representation as they place much trust in MPs. However, it was noted that most MPs do not articulate community issues, and if some projects are done through the constituency development fund, they are usually politicized.

The study also noted that the available spaces for participation have limitations. Although VDC and ADCs are available, most of them are weak; some of them exist only on paper and do not adequately address community concerns. It was also mentioned that most VDC members do not know their roles and obligations. This weakness on the part of VDCs was also stated as a reason why some CSOs create their own structures when they have community interventions.

Additionally, the lack of a fully functioning local government due to the absence of councilors was seen to affect local participation. It was mentioned that councilors were a mechanism for community participation as they were critical in channeling community concerns to the District

⁴ The issue of allowance is countrywide and requires serious government intervention. At one of the six districts visited for this consultation, members of the Assembly demanded that they be paid for being interviewed.

Council. MPs were not seen to be very important in this regard, as they rarely visit the communities, and mostly come during election time. In the context of weak and non-functioning VDCs, chiefs are overburdened with a lot of functions. As one traditional authority hinted, “*councilors are not available, the MP stays in town and as a result councilors’ and MPs’ functions are both in the Chiefs’ hands*”.

There is political interference in community participation endeavors as politicians want their political stooges to be at the center of the activities. Moreover, government politicians tend to allocate development projects in their own areas rather than in areas which are most technically suitable for such projects. In addition, political parties that are supposed to be one of the avenues for enhancing community participation and human rights are weak and suffer from the lack of internal democracy. They are hobbled by the owner syndrome where the party is seen as the property of the founder and they lack the spirit of constitutionalism.

5.2.1.1 Community Participation Recommendations

- There is need to support programs that generate a critical mass of people that would demand for services and accountability from duty bearers. The focus must be on empowering citizens to demand for services rather than mere community participation awareness. The fruits of such empowerment were noticed in Rumphu where the communities held a contractor responsible and claimed for compensation for damaging their bridge and negatively affecting the environment. However, for citizen demand to actualize, service providers also need to be civic educated so that they are aware of their obligations.
- Through CSOs, USAID needs to empower women so that they fully participate in decision making. This can be done not only through mainstreaming gender in all projects but also coming up with projects that particularly target women. For example, in Rumphu, Action Aid helped to support a women’s group so that members realized that they had rights to own property contrary to cultural values in the area which hold that property such as land is an exclusive right of men.
- Community radios were seen to be an important avenue for civic education on community participation and human rights. Most communities visited indicated that they listen to community radios more than national radios as they air programs that are seen to be more relevant to the people. USAID can consider strengthening such radios.
- Apart from community radios, free local newspapers like *Boma lathu* and *Fuko* which are exclusively in vernacular languages were seen to be critical in raising awareness among local communities. There is therefore need to support such papers with resources so that they are able to increase and sustain their circulation.
- USAID needs to fund programs that can aid in strengthening intraparty democracy to ensure that political parties adequately work as mechanisms for popular participation. This also entails strengthening them, especially those on the opposition side, so that they adequately hold the government accountable.
- Related to the above, members of parliament also need to be targeted in civic education interventions so as to strengthen citizen participation.
- Since DPPs are critical for instituting community development projects and are an avenue for local participation in decision making, it is recommended that USAID should consider providing support for DDP formulation processes in the districts.

- USAID, through CSOs, should consider capacitating and strengthening community participation structures which include VDCs and ADCs so that they are accountable and can adequately work as avenues for community participation. One District Planning and Development Officer highlighted that the “*need to strengthen local structures is even pertinent now in the absence of councilors as they are mostly used as venues for local community voice*”.
- In all interventions, there is need to use bottom-up and needs-driven approaches so that issues should come from the community and not otherwise. To this end, the current consultation processes for the development of the USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy was heralded by stakeholders as an important step towards to the realization of the same.
- Since the absence of councilors is seen as a missing link in local participation, USAID should consider engaging government on the need to hold local government elections.

5.2.2 Human Rights

The study’s respondents stated that there are opportunities in the country for the enjoyment of human rights. This includes the availability of the bill of rights in the country’s constitution, international conventions to which Malawi is party, a vibrant media and CSOs, functioning judiciary and various democratic accountability institutions which include the Law Commission, Human Rights Commission, and Ombudsman. Although the actual effectiveness of these institutions was not assessed in this study, they are an opportunity for enhanced protection of human rights in the country. Despite these opportunities, some challenges in regard to human rights were observed.

Firstly, the level of awareness and understanding of human rights and its associated responsibilities is low. The concern was that many human rights interventions place less emphasis on responsibilities. As a result, people claim and practice human rights without regard to their responsibilities. A chief at one site lamented that “*people cut trees carelessly claiming that they have rights to do so without knowing that they have responsibility to protect the environment*”.

Related to the above, it was observed that there has been a tension between human rights and tradition in some communities. Chiefs in Nkhotakota, for example, observed that they are not respected as people do not understand the concept of rights and democracy. They hinted that people now think that the enjoyment of human rights means disobeying traditional leadership. As one of them hinted, “*People do not respect us, when we tell them to do something benefiting the community they say that they cannot as they have rights not to do so*”.

The police was also mentioned as an institution where human rights abuses are common, especially against suspects. The issue was that the police reform program was not institutionalized among the police officers through continuous training. On the other hand, the community is also mostly ignorant of their rights insofar as police processes are concerned. The issue of police bail, for example, was mentioned as an area of contention. One CSO related such an instance: “*We had civic education in all the TAs on human rights and one of the participants indicated payment for police bail as corruption and an infringement of human rights. There were journalist and when this went on air the next day, the police officer–in-charge came to my office to demand my explanation (a CSO Manager at District level)*”.

At the national level, it was stated that the tendency to slide back towards dictatorship for political leaders impinges on human rights. The challenge was that many Malawians thought that democratic dispensation would come with accountable, responsible and respect of rule of law on the part of governmental actors. However, in reality, the political elites have some dictatorial tendencies which lead to abuses of human rights.

Furthermore, there is a tendency to make human rights an urban discourse. This is the case as the majority of CSOs championing human rights mostly advance an urban agenda.

At the community level it was highlighted that access to human rights redress facilities is limited. This makes citizens not to be proactive in safeguarding their rights and also encourages human rights abusers as redress cannot be sought immediately by the victims. At the district level, Public Affairs Committee- National Initiatives for Civic Education (PAC-NICE) offices were seen to be critical points where human rights information was sought. However, NICE activities are no longer supported and all human rights and democracy experts were removed; at one district, the research team noted that the office was manned by a messenger just to keep it going.

5.2.2.1 Human Rights Recommendations

- There is need to raise awareness on human rights through CSOs. This should include the creation of a civic culture through the institutionalization of human rights and governance issues in the communities. This can be done through civic education that also targets traditional leaders and VDCs and ADCs. A leaf can be borrowed from Nkhotakota where with assistance from Democratic Consolidation Program (DCP), Nkhotakota Youth Organization is helping to build a grassroots critical mass for championing human rights by encouraging VDCs to form village rights committees which work as sub-committees of VDCs. These work as village level avenues for the protection of human rights, protecting marginalized groups and demanding services from duty bearers. However, these committees should be part of VDCs rather than independent so as to help capacitate the VDCs and avoid unhealthy competition for resources and power struggles.
- USAID, through CSOs, can also consider instituting human rights awareness among the police and community. For the institutionalization of the same, reach to the community can be done through community policing structures and VDCs.
- USAID needs to support the introduction of paralegal services at the community level to improve access. Just as the Ministry of Health has Health Surveillance Assistants and the Ministry of Agriculture has Agriculture Development Assistants within the community, there is need to introduce Paralegal Assistants at the same level.
- USAID should consider supporting efforts to re-capacitate NICE offices as they were seen to be important information hubs for human rights at the district level.
- USAID should consider strengthening government human rights and democratic accountability institutions which include the Human Rights Commission, Law Commission, Office of the Ombudsman, and DCP through capacity building interventions.

- Last but not least, USAID should consider assisting in the formulation of some kind of a think tank on human rights that would be critical in producing analysis and evidence based human rights and governance interventions. This can be done by engaging academics, CSOs, and other human rights practitioners.

5.2.3 Civil Society Organizations

Although CSOs were considered to be very important in sustaining democracy and governance, they face several challenges which threaten their effective performance.

Firstly, most CSOs lack the capacity to adequately carry out their activities. There is lack of adequate skills on critical governance and advocacy issues. In addition, most CSOs do not have a strong financial base which makes them to be fragile. Moreover, some CSOs do not have proper structures but rather they are “briefcase” and family based.

It was also noted that CSOs are urban based and do not have a community reach. This makes them concentrate on advancing an urban agenda while sidelining the many local human rights and governance issues that require urgent attention.

Thirdly, it was observed that there is generally lack of political will to strengthen the CSOs and regard them as partners in the democratic consolidation agenda. In most cases, CSOs are seen as adversaries of government which results in intimidations and threats from government. On their part, CSOs also do not consider themselves to be partners of government but rather they usually adopt a confrontation approach when addressing issues with government.

CSOs also suffer from owner syndrome where the founders of the CSO regard it as their property and hence seek to control all the activities. This stifles creativity from staff members as the owners’ interests and voice tend to dominate. In addition, some CSO leaders see themselves as indispensable and claim that they need to cling to power for the fear that when they leave, the organization will suffer. Moreover, the future of most CSOs is compromised as in a bid to perpetuate their control on the organizations, they do not develop a succession plan and as a result, their exit also means the end of the organization. The defunct Malawi Institute for Democratic and Economic Affairs (MIDEA) was given as an example of a CSO that could not continue to exist due to the problems of owner syndrome.

It was also pointed out that CSOs lack focus. They do not specialize on specific areas of interest and expertise but rather tend to be ‘jacks of all trades’. It appears that they are driven more by the desire for more resources rather than the need to advance particular democracy, human rights and governance issues they can ably handle.

Respondents also stated that some CSOs lack transparency and accountability. Some CSOs do not want the government and other stakeholders to know what resources they have and how much they are spending on various projects. Lastly, respondents hinted that some CSOs work as political incubators as members have political interests rather than civil ones. It was observed that some CSOs exist for political visibility in order to realize their political ambitions.

5.2.3.1 Recommendations: Civil Society Organizations

- There is need for USAID to concentrate on CSO capacity building initiatives. These interventions should be based on particular specialized areas. Included in this are short or long term training interventions in partnership with the University of Malawi or other relevant learning institutions that can provide tailor made courses based on particular areas of expertise required.
- Related to the above, USAID should consider strengthening CSOs through financing CSO activities aimed at strengthening the governance structures which include capacity building for board of directors and cultivating the culture of institutionalism within the CSOs.
- There is need for USAID to increase funding to CSOs so that they should be able to adequately carry out various interventions on democracy, governance and human rights. In this particular one, it was noted that USAID's funding in the area of governance and democracy is very small. The recommendation therefore is to increase this resource base.
- Most CSOs hinted that USAID has very laborious procedures for accessing funding which dissuade some CSOs from accessing the funding basket. It is therefore recommended that USAID should consider making its funding facility user friendly so that many CSOs can benefit from it.
- Since CSOs receive continuous threats and intimidation from government, there is need for USAID to engage with government through appropriate donor forums. Additionally, CSOs need to be capacitated on mechanisms to deal with government intimidation.
- USAID should consider particular capacity building interventions targeting women and other marginalized groups. This will be pivotal in ensuring that they can adequately champion and promote issues relating to women and other marginalized groups.

5.2.4 Media

Just like the CSOs, participants considered the media critical in ensuring that governmental actors are accountable, advocate on various issues and inform the community on human rights and good governance issues. However several challenges affect the media as follows:

- Firstly, workshop participants observed that the media face threats and intimidation from government, especially when they publish reports that expose lapses in good governance. This was also seen to have resulted into the politicization of the state media so that they should work as a buffer zone for any media criticism against the government.
- The other challenge was the problematic issue of access to information. It was seen that it is difficult for most media practitioners to access information from government to enable them to cover well balanced reports. This mostly arises from the fact that the enabling legislation (access to information bill) is not yet passed into law, several years after it was drafted.
- The media also lack resources to adequately carry out their activities and as a result they are not proactive in sourcing for stories and cannot verify on some issues. To this end, it was seen to be common for journalists to only go to functions where the conveners provide monetary incentives and not otherwise due to the same problem of funding. Participants to the workshops pointed out that lack of adequate finances has

also resulted into the erosion of media ethical standards as exemplified by the increase of mercenary journalists in various media houses whose main job is to cover news items that enhance the interest of particular elites and individuals who fund them.

- Lastly, just like CSOs, the media was seen to lack capacity on some specialized areas, and as a result, all journalists cover everything even in areas they are not conversant with.

5.2.4.1 Recommendations: Media

For the media to thrive in its duty of holding the government accountable, the following recommendations are put forward:

- USAID should consider strengthening the media through capacity building programs that include training on mechanism to deal with government intimidation.
- Related to the above, USAID can help the media practitioners to specialize in various areas. This can be done through training interventions that are focused on particular specialized areas for particular journalists.
- USAID needs to engage the government to ensure that a conducive environment for the media is created. This could be through initializing discussion on the need to enact the access to information bill.
- The Media Council and National Association of Media Institutes of Southern Africa (NAMISA) need to be technically capacitated so that they help in raising ethical standards and that they adequately monitor media actors.

SECTION 6: INTEGRATION AND INTER-SECTORAL ISSUES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Several issues ensued in terms of how the four portfolios of Sustainable Economic Growth; Education; Health; and Democracy, Human Rights and Governance interact. Education and levels of literacy have much influence on almost everything. In the agricultural sector for example, it was generally observed that with the current low levels of literacy, effective promotion of agricultural and other economic activities is problematic. Extension messages do well with a certain level of literacy. In addition, the notion that has come out widely in the consultations: taking agriculture as a business - will exert even higher demands on education. Functional literacy interventions may thus, in the short to medium term, be of great value. On the other hand, the evidence pointed to the need for integrating health education into school curriculum and for public awareness programs that entails positive behavior change not just knowledge. There is also need to support health worker training institutions to increase output and produce specialists the sector needs most and education is key to this. Education can also empower farmers and make agriculture more profitable so that farmers can have resources to get other basic necessities. Education would also enable the introduction of mechanized farming possible thereby enabling the use of cheaper mechanized technologies that would result in improved productivity but not at the cost of farmers' health, as is the case now, where farmers manually till large areas.

In all the consultations, democracy and governance was regarded as an issue which must be considered within all the sectors. For instance, the health service was seen to be corrupt and

unresponsive to patients needs as people are not aware of how to hold duty bearers accountable. The patient's charter which was supposed to provide rights and responsibilities of the patients and health service providers was seen not to be institutionalized and known among the communities.

In Agriculture, lack of accountability and abuse of rights was seen in the distribution of the subsidized farm inputs and commodity marketing. There seem to be no deliberate efforts to highlight issues of governance in this regard leaving poor farmers at the mercy of irresponsible duty bearers and traders. At one site for example, a fertilizer selling official was said to only make half of the subsidized fertilizer consignment available to the people, claiming that the rest was his, since he was the one that ensured that fertilizer should be delivered at the center.

In the area of education, it was noted the democratic governance was key for quality education and reduced drop-outs, especially for female learners. Overall, the misleading notion of equating democracy to being free to do what one desires was the problem. At the community level, parents and teachers blamed democracy for negative behaviors among children because they think they can do anything without facing consequences: they have rights without responsibilities, "there are no limits to what they can do and do not listen to us". Attendance and adhering to dress and behavior codes in school was challenging, as teachers and parents expressed fear of accusations of violation of children's rights. District level stakeholders were prevented from taking appropriate measures against teachers who were slacking in their work and behavior because "they will go to the Ombudsman... besides they have people at central office". Learners were well aware of their rights and judged teachers to be *treating* them well. Counseling and doing punishment after classes were judged as indicators of respecting children's rights. At national level, the issue was linked to overall low levels of education and the lack of structures to institute civic education limit citizens' demand for good service delivery in the system. Thus, lack of awareness of human rights and need to demand for quality education was seen to lead to laxity and unprofessional behaviors on the part of both teachers and pupils.

In the health sector, the issue of Patients' Rights and Responsibility Charter was also seen to be related to democratic governance. It was generally agreed that integrating and strengthening health facility advisory committees to champion the Patients' Rights and Responsibility Charters of health workers and patients will bridge the gap between service providers and communities.

On the demographic front, population growth trends as recently confirmed by the census, indicate that development gains – whether economic growth, food security or Malawi Development Goal (MDG) achievements – will remain fragile and will not meet required levels due to increased pressure of a growing population on a limited resource base (UN Malawi, 2010). Serious multi-sectoral efforts are required to maintain a sustainable fertility rate and reduce population.

Other areas of linkage included lack of adequate veterinary/livestock personnel at community level that leads to people eating uninspected meat or carcasses that are uncertified for human consumption, which is a health hazard in this era when TB is already a menace through HIV. Housing for extension staff: Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Water Development

(MOAIWD) has houses but no bodies to occupy them while the Ministry of Education has lots of bodies on the ground but no houses. In Phalombe, a community had approached MOAIWD for the vacant house to be used by a teacher and the request was turned down. Community members are bitter as the house continues to be vacant while teachers are suffering. This is food for thought for inter-ministerial collaboration.

Household level poverty also forces many students to stay out of school, come to school without pens, exercise books and on an empty stomach. Hungry and stunted children cannot concentrate on school and risk creating a poor foundation for education and consequently leading to schooling failure. It was also evident that agricultural activities were affecting children's participation in school. Rice schemes and sugar plantations and regular maize fields in the districts were a major source of livelihoods for many households. Children are expected to provide labor and contribute to family income. In addition, fishing provided income. These activities created opportunities for children to make money and lured them out of school.

Water and sanitation facilities emerged as main concerns in discussing inadequacies of infrastructure. Lack of access to safe water resulted in water borne diseases that affected children's attendance and participation in school especially in Nkhata Bay, Zomba, and Phalombe. It was therefore noted that increasing attention to environmental health by addressing clean water provision, and strengthening prevention of water borne diseases would also have positive effects on other sectors, especially education, as pupils' absenteeism would be reduced, thereby increasing time of task. Toilets were inadequate while others were built on a temporary basis.

Another important linkage that was conspicuous was the need to have a very good road network. The evidence pointed to the fact that an improved road network will facilitate the delivery of social services. Currently, the conditions of our roads are a hindrance to the efficient delivery of social services.

Last but not least, it was agreed that there is need to consider special needs group. In all the portfolios, participants pointed to the need to make deliberate effort to specifically target the following special groups:

- Pregnant women (family planning)
- Elderly
- Children under five
- People with disabilities-- especially vision, hearing and speaking-- as the health delivery service does not have personnel specifically trained to handle these categories, e.g. sign language
- Mentally challenged
- People living with HIV/AIDS, to improve quality of life

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The major recommendation arising from these linkages is the need for a holistic approach to the development process. A recurring issue across the portfolios was the problem of lack of capacity. The holistic approach to development being advocated will demand that communities

participate beyond bricks, VDCs are made more proactive, clinics and hospitals are staffed with appropriate personnel, CSOs and journalists are capacitated, and that the many vacant posts in the sectors at the various levels are filled. A lot of resources are needed to capacity-build the systems. This will also require collaboration among service providers to increase impact of initiatives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INSTRUMENTS

USAID Malawi Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

Stakeholder Consultations: January 17- February 10, 2012

Workshop Questions

KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

1. What are the major challenges facing crop production? What solutions would you propose? What should be the role of donors in your proposed solutions?
2. What are the major challenges facing animal/livestock production? What solutions would you propose? What should be the role of donors in your proposed solutions?
3. What are the major challenges facing irrigation development? What solutions would you propose? What should be the role of donors in your proposed solutions?
4. What are the major challenges facing marketing of produce/products? What solutions would you propose? What should be the role of development partners including donors in your proposed solutions?
5. What are the major challenges facing natural resource management? What solutions would you propose? What should be the role of donors in your proposed solutions?
6. What should Malawi do to increase resilience of her communities to climate change effects and enhance adaptation? Provide what needs to be done both in the short run and in the long run. What should be the role of donors and other development partners?
7. What are your views about the ASWAp? How can the approach be improved and what should be the role of donors?
8. What is your take on the Input Subsidy Programme (ISP)? Should Government and donors keep on supporting the programme? Why or why not?
9. What specifically needs to be done to better support women in agriculture? What programmes involving donors and GOM could be put in place to support your proposed solutions?
10. What innovative ways would you suggest towards tackling the nutrition issue in Malawi?

KEY GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE NATIONAL LEVEL CONSULTATIONS

Theme 1: Community participation

1. What do you consider as the major challenges facing citizens in community participation?
2. What roles can be played by USAID in order to empower communities to participate in local government?
3. What can be done (by USAID) to ensure that women and other marginalized groups fully participate in local government?
4. What needs to be improved on the part of USAID (and the donor community) in their community participation interventions?

Theme 2: Human Rights

1. What is your assessment on enjoyment of human rights in terms of challenges and opportunities
2. What can USAID do to help improve the human rights situation in Malawi?
3. What needs to be improved on the part of USAID (and the donor community) in their efforts in assisting to improve the human rights situation

Theme 3: Civil Society Organization

1. What is the role of civil society in ensuring that governmental actors are accountable?
2. What are the challenges facing the civil society in holding government accountable?
3. What should USAID do to empower the civil society to hold the government accountable?
4. What needs to be improved on the part of USAID (and the donor community) in their efforts of empowering civil society organizations?

Theme 4: Media

1. What is the role of media in ensuring that governmental actors are accountable?
2. What challenges do the media face in holding the government accountable?
3. What should USAID do to empower the media hold the government accountable?
4. What needs to be improved on the part of USAID (and the donor community) in their efforts of empowering the media to hold the government accountable?

And FINALLY

- **Any other interventions that you want USAID to consider doing in the area of democratic governance**

Questions for Health Section

National Consultative Meeting, Lilongwe

1. What health services would you like to see for your family?
2. What capacity needs are there for effective service delivery?

3. What local resources and technologies are there in the health sector that can be leveraged?
4. How can you support improved delivery of health care services in Malawi?
5. What policies and practices support and hinder health service delivery?
6. What opportunities are there in other sectors for improvement of health service delivery?
7. Which groups in our community need special healthcare?

District Consultative Meetings

1. What are the most common health problems communities experience?
2. What are the biggest obstacles/ barriers to accessing health services?
3. Where do communities specifically seek health services?
4. How can you improve health service delivery in your community?
5. Which groups in our community need special healthcare?

Community

1. What health services would you like to see for your family?
2. Where do you specifically access health services?
3. What challenges/ obstacles do you face in accessing health services?
4. At the facilities, what challenges do you encounter?
5. How can you best address the challenges in access to and quality of health services mentioned?
6. How are you involved in decision-making for health services?
7. Which groups in our community need special healthcare?

Community Level Questions

HEALTH

1. What health services would you like to see for your family?
2. How can you best address the challenges in access to and quality of health service

EDUCATION

1. Do you expect your child to be able to read by Standard 4? Explain your answer.
2. Why are so many children (especially girls) dropping out of school?
3. What else can you do as a community to improve the provision of educational services?

DEMOCRATIC, RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE

5. What can be done to ensure that you fully participate in issues affecting your life?
 - Demand for services
 - Women participation
6. What can be done to ensure that you fully enjoy your rights?

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

1. What would make agricultural production easier for you in this community?
2. How can people best protect or at least not damage the natural environment?
3. What major economic activities are people involved in the area?
4. What economic activities would you like to do in this area but you are not doing them and why?

APPENDIX 2: SCHEDULE AND PROGRAM OF WORKSHOPS

USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)

Regional Stakeholder Workshops

Lilongwe- Wednesday, January 18, 2012, Public Affairs Auditorium

Mzuzu- Wednesday, January 25, 2012

Blantyre- Wednesday, February 1, 2012- Hotel Victoria

	Activity	Time	Responsible Officer
1.	Registration	8:00 – 8:30	CERT
2.	Welcome & Introductions	8: 30 – 8:45	USAID & CERT
3.	USAID briefing on programs with Q&A	8:45- 9:30	USAID
4.	Break away Focus Group sessions	9:30 – 11:00	CERT
5.	Refreshments Break	11:00 – 11:15	CERT
6.	Plenary Report Back on Highlights of Focus Groups	11:15 – 12:30	CERT
7.	Lunch	12:30 – 1:30	CERT
8.	Reflections on group reports and emerging issues (Prioritization and Blue Sky)	1:30 – 3:00	CERT
9.	Consolidation of common issues, Closing Remarks & Thanks	3:00 – 4:00	CERT& USAID
10.	Good-bye Tea	4:00	CERT

APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH TEAM COMPOSITION

Name of Individual	Responsibility
Dr. Joseph Chimombo	Team Leader
Dr. Richard Tambulasi	Democracy, Human rights and Governance
Dr. Grace Chiuye	Education
Dylo Pemba and Paul Kawale	Health, Population and Nutrition
Joseph Ndengu	Sustainable Economic Growth
Secretary	Documenting all activities
Office Assistant	Running errands

APPENDIX 4: LETTER OF INVITATION



January 9, 2012

Dear colleague:

Invitation to USAID's CDCS Stakeholder Consultation Workshop

As USAID is currently developing its new five-year Country Strategy: 2012-2016, we value your input. Therefore, we invite you to attend a stakeholder consultation workshop, so that we may listen, ground-truth, and discuss key stakeholders' views on Malawi's development. The agenda for the workshop is attached.

Chancellor College's Center for Educational Research and Training (CERT) will facilitate the workshop, which will:

- Provide a forum for those most directly affected by and interested in USAID-supported programs to give honest feedback and suggestions that will be seriously taken into consideration for future work.
- Document and report stakeholder responses and recommendations for incorporation into USAID's new Country Strategy.
- Inform Stakeholders about the value of their contribution and how it was applied to the Country Strategy.

We greatly appreciate your attendance at this important workshop. Hearing what you think about the development directions USAID should take in Malawi is very important to us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Douglass Arbuckle'.

R. Douglass Arbuckle
Mission Director

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Malawi Mission
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APPENDIX 5: SUMMARY OF HEALTH FINDINGS FROM FGDS AND KIIS

Strategic Areas Barriers/Challenges to Healthcare	Local Opportunities	Suggested Solutions	Areas of Cross-cutting/Multi-sectoral Linkages	Location
1 Diagnostic services	<p>1.1 No full blood count machine: an essential diagnostic tool</p> <p>Most facilities have no diagnostic facility apart from malaria diagnostic tools</p> <p>1.3 Limited diagnostics has resulted in presumptive treatments hence resulting in misdiagnoses and drug wastage</p>	<p>So many health institutions that just require equipping</p> <p>Make use of local private facilities that have diagnostics through private -public partnerships</p>		Rural-Phalombe, Rumphu ,Nkhata Bay
2 Curative services	<p>2.1 Drug stock out in all facilities</p> <p>2.2 No health facilities, no O₂ concentrators, very little use of well-equipped private clinics</p> <p>2.3 Resource allocation not related to volume of service delivery (case of Phalombe and other facilities along the border and cities)</p> <p>2.4 Specialist service inequitably distributed across the referral system</p> <p>2.5 Weak and ineffective referral</p>	<p>2.5.1 Private-public partnerships, e.g. Service Level Agreements</p> <p>2.5.2 Equip village, mobile and outreach clinics</p> <p>2.5.3 Electronic database of all Specialists and specialized equipment available in every district and at the central level so that patients from other parts of the country can be referred to such centers</p>	Malawi HIS Policy and Strategy	All Rural areas

	system			
3 Preventive services	3.1 Malaria endemic environment	3.1.1 Indoor Residual Spraying 3.1.2 Larvacide 3.1.3 Universal ITN Distribution program 3.1.4 Behavior change in treatment and use of preventive strategies	Integrated malaria control link up with Education sector for behavior change and agriculture sector for environmental changes especially irrigation and rice farming. Integrate vector control programs as the resources and vectors are	All Rural
	3.2 Schistosomiasis prevention abandoned Nkhotakota, Nkhata Bay, Zomba, Phalombe, Rumphi	3.2.1 Revamp & support schistosomiasis control program		Rural
	3.3 Limited interventions for preventing sleeping sickness – Rumphi	3.3.1 Revamp & support trypanosomiasis control program		Rural

	3.4 High maternal and child morbidity and deaths	3.4.1 Utilise and equip village clinics 3.4.2 Family planning services available 3.4.3 Training of Community Birth Attendants 3.4.4 Adopt and utilise Roadmap to Accelerated Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Morbidity and Mortality	mostly the same or closely linked e.g. Malaria, sleeping sickness and filariasis programs.	Rural/Urban
	3.5 AIDS endemic communities	3.5.1 Malawi HIV Prevention Strategy 2009 – 2013 3.5.2 Home Based Care Including Palliative Care 3.5.3 Capacitating health centers to provide ART 3.5.4 Interventions to support OVC	Integrated with Education sector for behavior change programs -Utilize Malawi HIV Prevention Strategy 2009 – 2013 -Malawi National Action Framework	Rural /Urban
	3.6 People don't trust foreign aid in disease control e.g. Nkhotakota IRS program which communities noted is always carried out by foreigners	3.6.1 Utilise Local expertise in various institutions disease control at national and district levels		Rural

	<p>3.7 Inadequate access to clean water and sanitary services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Few boreholes -No running water -Polluted underground water system resulting from lack of sewage system. -New buildings being set up are not connecting to sewage system but instead soak a ways being sunk 	<p>3.7.1 Reforestation campaign to provide trees to construct toilets, case of Lilongwe area</p> <p>3.7.2 Construction of eco-san toilets</p> <p>3.7.3 Household water treatment using chlorine</p> <p>3.7.4 Improve on waste disposal and recycling services</p>	Water and Sanitation Policy and SWAp	Rural
	3.8 Malnutrition	<p>3.8.1 Diversify in agriculture rather than focusing on maize and tobacco only</p> <p>3.8.2 Focus on food processing for preservation as most food perishes and most are seasonal making families have no food in lean periods yet they had excess during the time farm products were in season.</p>	Agriculture value adding program	Rural
	3.9 Poor coordination in interventions in districts	3.9.1 Link up programs that duplicate activities.	Decentralization Policy	urban
4 Behavioral change and Communication	<p>4.1 Knowledge not transforming actions and behavior examples being no visiting hospitals when sick, religious beliefs and spiritual healing resulting in refusal to use health facilities and drugs</p> <p>4.2 Unhygienic behavior and practice</p>	<p>4.3.1 Availability of appropriate location- and context-specific IEC materials</p> <p>4.3.2 Come up with behavior change targeting programs rather than knowledge dissemination</p>		Rural/Urban

	4.3 Attitude of health workers & health worker conflict with community			
5 Infrastructure	5.1 Long distances to health facilities	5.1.1 Equip village clinics		Rural
	5.2 Need a district hospital and rural hospitals as the city is so big requiring its own hospital- Phalombe, Zomba & Blantyre 5.3 No space at the health center for caesarian deliveries, all operations and admissions are referred & inaccessible roads to healthcare	5.2.1 Build new ones		Rural
6 Human resource	6.1 Inadequate number of skilled health workers due to poor working conditions and lack of capacity in training institutions	6.1.1 Capacitate training institutions and local trainers 6.1.2 Budgetary support for personnel costs	Malawi Universities and tertiary education institutions	Urban/Rural
	6.2 Need medical technologist to repair medical equipment			

<p>7 Resource management and policy</p>	<p>7.1 Delayed procurement of drugs and supplies 7.2 No computerized management of resources</p>	<p>7.2.1 Local bio-medical and pharmaceutical suppliers accessible to district hospitals 7.2.2 Enhance District procurement systems and policy by computerizing the health management information systems for resource tracking and low supply alerts 7.2.3 Public-private partnerships, e.g. SLAs</p>	<p>District level public-private partnerships</p>	<p>Rural/Urban</p>
<p>8 Emergency response</p>	<p>8.1 No efficient referral system 8.2 Shortage of ambulances</p>	<p>8.2.1 Provide good ambulance system that is well equipped befitting for emergency response and patient transfer 8.2.2 Referral should be made to facilities with resources not based on size of facility</p>	<p>Utilize private facilities enhance service level agreements.</p>	<p>Urban/Rural</p>

APPENDIX 6: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT REGIONAL AND DISTRICT WORKSHOPS

LILONGWE CITY, January 17, 2012

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MZUZU CITY, January 25, 2012

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BLANTYRE CITY, February 1, 2012

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LIST OF CONTACTS AT DISTRICT LEVEL

Nkhata Bay

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	Mr. Kalua	DHO	Thokokalua@gmail.com 0999341898	
	FGD – Mixed group men and women	Various Positions, Mtambwa Village, Nkhata Bay District		
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	Mtambwa Village Kambuni Health Centre Committee members			
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Nkhotakota

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	FGD with Male VH and GVHs in Nkhotakota	VHs and GVHs		
	Village Heads under T/A Mphonde			
	FGD with Male VH and GVHs in Nkhotakota	VHs and GVHs		
	Mr. A.N. Zimba, Director of Administration	Nkhotakota District Council		
	Robert Mbaya, Chief Executive Officer	Nkhotakota Youth Organization		
	Chicco Phiri, Office Assistant	PAC-NICE	0999420228	

Rumphi

Date	Person(s) Met	Position and Organization	OFFICIAL EMAIL ADDRESS	Contact Details
26 Jan	L.D.Z. Kamonde	Women's Programs Officer		0999421710
	FGD – Mixed group men and women	Various Positions, communities Surrounding Rumphi Catholic Primary School.	Head Teacher	0888624770
31 Jan		Action Aid Malawi (Rumphi Office)		
	Robert Namitsutsa	DNO	Robertnamitsutsa@yahoo.com	
	Astrida Moyo	Community Nurse	Atridamoyo@yahoo.com	0888391002
	Joseph Soko Livingstonia	Community Nurse		0888500553
	Rumphi COMM ADC			
	Hanna Chimangire NGO Action Aid		hannachimangire@actionaid.org	
	Rodwell Kanyimbo		rodwellkanyimbo@actionaid.org	
	Felix Mwale		felixmwale@actionaid.org	
26 Jan	L.D.Z. Kamonde	Women's Programs Officer		0999421710

	FGD – Mixed group Men and women	Various Positions, Communities Surrounding Rumphu Catholic Primary School Names were:	Head Teacher	0888624770
		Action Aid Malawi(Rumphu Office)		
	Frank Mkandawire Director of Planning and Development	Rumphu District Council		

Lilongwe

Date	Person(s) Met	Position and Organization	OFFICIAL EMAIL ADDRESS	Contact Details
	J.K.C. Banda	Mitundu Hospital SEHO		0888671895
	J. Kaphulasi	Mitundu Hospital HAS		
	Thomas Mavuto	District Environmental Health Officer		
	H. Chatuma	Mitundu Hospital HAS		
	D. Chilambula	Dental Technician		0888526646
	Gloria Jeremia	District HIV Program Manager (District Health Office)	gloriakantema@yahoo.com	
	Lizzie Kantayeni	Matron/Nurse	kantayeiliz@yahoo.com	0999639997
	Tusekile Mwakasungula	District AIDS Coordinator (District Assembly)	mwakatuse@yahoo.com	0999726314/ 0888864108
	G. Mtambo	Clinical Officer	geomtambo@gmail.com	0999441810
20 Jan Bunda	Dr. Charles Masangano, Vice Principal	FGD with Professors (Representatives of and Heads of Depts) at Bunda College – names as follows:	cmasangano@bunda.unima.mw	08888437785

Phalombe

Date	Person(s) met	Position and Organization	OFFICIAL EMAIL ADDRESS	Contact Details
	Catherine Nserebo	Clinical Officer	cathynserebo@actionaid.org	
	Mercy Chinkunda	DNO	chinkundam@yahoo.com	099099312158
	FGD	Various Positions, Members from Communities Surrounding Mambala School in Phalombe District		
	Isaac Mkandawire, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	Phalombe District Council	zecmkandawire@yahoo.com.au	
	Fred Mphalo, Assistant Registrar	Phalombe District Council	fredmphalo@yahoo.com	0888899628
	Ibrahim Nthalika Program Coordinator	Action Aid Phalombe District	ibrahimnthalika@actionaid.org	0888353744
	Oscar Kambombe, Land Resource Conservation Officer	Phalombe District Agriculture Office	oscareboa@gmail.com	
	Mr. Mambeya, Livestock Officer	Phalombe District Agriculture Office		0884570214
	Mr. Mphepo, Crops Officer	Phalombe District Agriculture Office		

Zomba

Date	Person(s) Met	Position and Organization	Contact Details
	S.A. Bisika Zomba DHMT	DNO	sharonbisika@yahoo.com
	Ella Chamanga	IEC Officer	chamangaella@yahoo.com
	D. Kumkwawa	HRO	dkumkwawa@gmail.com
	John Kachoka	District Health Office Administrator	johnkachoka@yahoo.com
	William Mlota	DDHO	mlothawilliam@yahoo.com
	Matthews Mkandawire	District Procurement and Logistic Officer	mkandawiremmat@yahoo.com
	Modesta Banda	DDNO	Banda.modesta@yahoo.com
2 Feb	FGD	Various Positions, Members from Communities Surrounding Havala School Zomba District.	