



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Contract No. OUT-HNE-I-802-00-00075-00-00**

**SUMMATIVE EVALUATION OF USAID/MALAWI'S**

**GIRLS' ATTAINMENT IN BASIC LITERACY  
AND EDUCATION (GABLE)**

**(PROJECT NO. 612-0240)**

**May 30, 2002**

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## ACRONYMS

CAII	Creative Associates International, Inc.
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CBS	Community Based Schools
CONGLOMA	Council of NGOs of Malawi
CRECCOM	Creative Center for Community Mobilization
DANIDA	Danish International Development Association
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DDC	District Development Council
DEO	District Education Office/Officer
DfID	Department for International Development
DDO	District Development Officer
DC	District Commissioner
EQ	Educational Quality
EMIS	Education Monitoring Information System
EU	European Union
FPE	Free Primary Education
FY	Fiscal Year
GABLE	Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
GAC	Gender Appropriate Curriculum
IR	Intermediate Result
IEQ	Improving Education Quality
JCE	Junior Certificate of Education
JICA	Japanese International Development Agency
LOP	Life of Project
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MIE	Malawi Institute of Education
MSCE	Malawi School Certificate of Education
MSSP	Malawi School Support System Program
MIITEP	Malawi Integrated In-service Teacher Education Program
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOGYCS	Ministry of Gender, Youth, and Community Services
NEC	National Economic Council
NGO	Non-government Organization
OPC	Office of Planning and Coordination
PAAD	Program Assistance Approval Document
PEA	Primary Education Advisor
PER	Program Expenditure Review
P/ID	Partnership and Institutional Development
PIF	Policy Investment Framework
PPC	Policy Planning and Curriculum
PPRS	Primary Pupil Registration System
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
QUEST	Quality Education through Supporting Teaching

SC/US	Save the Children/United States
SIP	School Incentive Package
SMC	Social Mobilization Campaign
SMC-EQ	Social Mobilization Campaign-Education Quality
TFD	Theater for Development
USD	U.S. Dollar
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VBS	Village Based School
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program

## I. INTRODUCTION

Development is a skill-intensive set of processes requiring a literate population capable of supporting and building a nation. An adaptive and viable educational system is an axiom if a developing nation is to modernize. In the present world order, those nations that have failed to promote and invest in the development of their educational structures for providing the skills needed to develop and modernize are at a distinct disadvantage. Over the last decade, USAID has supported numerous efforts in several African countries (e.g., Botswana, Benin, Guinea, Mali, Uganda, and Malawi) to improve and expand the educational systems of these countries. These efforts have tended to focus on:

- Expanding access to primary education, especially for girls, and improving quality overall in primary education;
- Promoting policy changes in national governmental structures in support of basic education for all of the nation's citizens;
- Boosting the capacity of ministries charged with education to more efficiently carry out their tasks; and
- Exploring avenues for greater public/private cooperation between governments, international donors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) seeking to improve basic education at the community level.

This report presents the findings and conclusions assessing USAID efforts over a ten-year period to improve basic education in Malawi.

### COUNTRY SETTING

Malawi is one of the smallest countries in Southern Africa.. Often described as the warm heart of Africa, Malawi is a sliver of land wedged between Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique about the size of Pennsylvania. The country is relatively long and narrow (650 by 120 miles) territory located in Central East Africa on a highland plateau adjacent to Lake Malawi on its eastern border. The nation is landlocked although Lake Malawi (the third largest lake in Africa) runs along most of Malawi's eastern border. In fact, Lake Malawi occupies one fifth of the nation's land area.

Although blessed with a relatively mild climate (compared to its more tropical neighbors), Malawi is one of Africa's least developed nations and is also one of its poorest. Per capita income is estimated by the World Bank to be about US\$900. Overall, Malawi's economy is predominantly agricultural, cash crops of tea and tobacco, woodland products, and extensive subsistence agriculture involving maize cultivation. Some 87 percent of its eleven million citizens live in rural areas. Currently, Malawi's economy depends on substantial economic assistance from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and other donor nations. To be sure, the Government of Malawi (GOM) faces many challenges in its efforts to develop a viable market economy, responding to pressing environment problems (i.e., deforestation, soil erosion, and over-fishing in parts of Lake Malawi), and improving the nation's educational facilities for its young people.

#### **Malawi Facts**

Total Area: 118,400 sq. km.  
Land Area: 94,080 sq. km.  
Lake Area 24,400 sq. km

Arable Land: 34%  
Forests/Woodland: 39%  
Permanent Pastures: 20%  
Other 7%

GDP: \$9.4 Billion USD  
Annual Inflation Rate: 25%  
Annual Growth Rate: 3%

### **Malawi Demographics\***

Population: 10,548,250\*  
Age Cohorts: 0-14 yrs=44%,  
15-64 yrs=53%, Over 65=3%  
Annual Growth Rate: 1.5%  
Annual Death Rate 23/1000  
Infant Mortality 121/1000  
Life Expectancy: 37 years  
Males=36.6; Females 37.6  
Fertility: 5.2 children/female  
Net Migration: 0%  
HIV/AIDS Prevalence: 16%  
No. Persons with HIV/AIDS  
800,000 (est. by WHO)  
Overall Literacy 58%  
Males 73%; Females 43%  
\*Takes into account the impact of  
mortality due to HIV/AIDS (Pop  
Reference Bureau: Wash D.C.)

Ruled for almost thirty years by a single political party and ruler since its independence from Britain in 1964, Malawi is now Africa's newest democracy having created a new constitution in 1994. Certainly, since the end of one-man rule, the country has been struggling to become a more-open democratic society. As a new democracy, Malawi's gains in political and individual freedom are tempered by the country's continuing needs to address basic health needs, drought, hunger, and environmental degradation. Besides these problems, the country is now afflicted with one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world.

The United States, through its Agency for International Development (USAID), is committed to increasing rural incomes, promoting civic involvement in democratic governance, reducing fertility and the risk of HIV/AIDS; and improving the quality and efficiency of basic education (see USAID:Results Review and Resource

Request (R4s FY2000 and FY2001).<sup>1</sup>

## **EDUCATION SETTING**

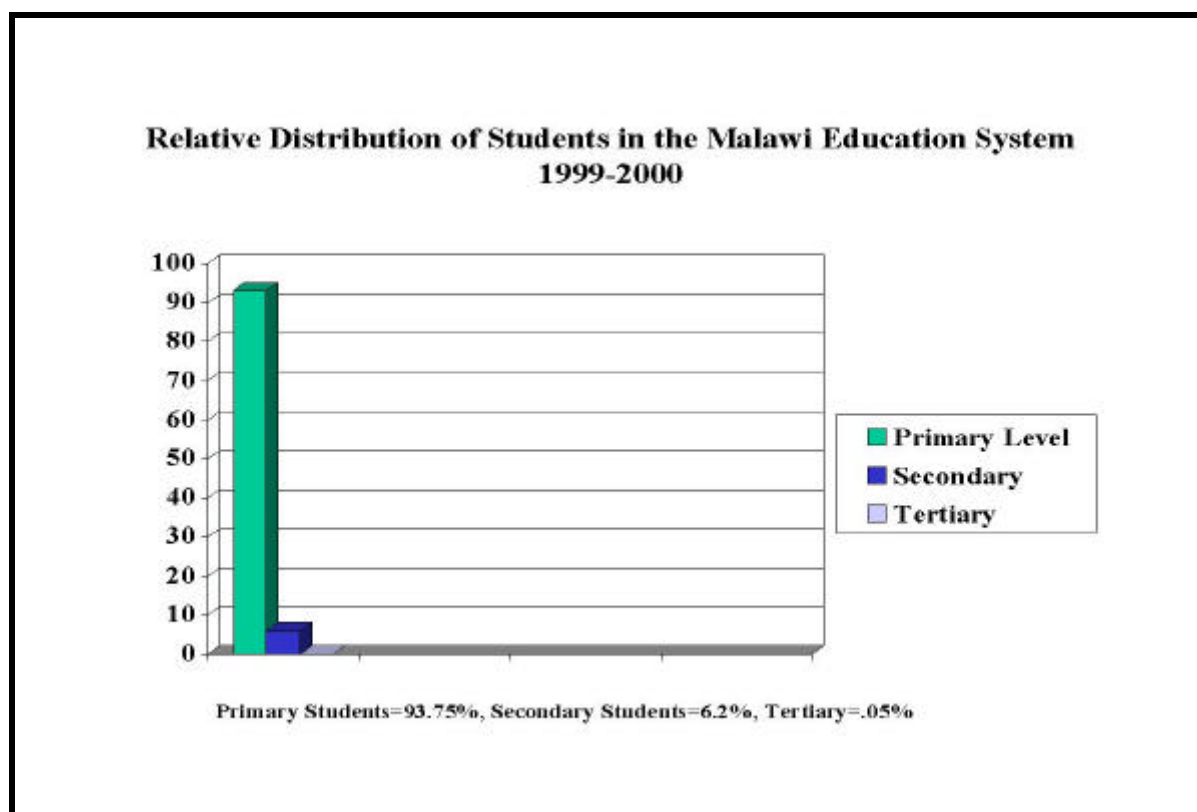
The Malawi Education System is basically elitist in its design and its operating structure, serving the needs of a few rather than the majority of the nation's young population base. The system is a throwback to the British colonial days when only a small elite was educated to serve the needs of the colonial social structure. During Malawi's colonial period, Mission schools (representing various Christian denominations) provided primary education on a limited basis. As the need for greater skills increased, government became involved in primary education and encouraged the development of secondary schools managed by Missionaries. The first secondary school was founded in Blantyre in 1940 (Muluzi 2000:13); with the government not establishing a secondary school until 1951. The current university systems (including technical and vocational schools) were not established until the country's independence. Today the educational structure is totally incompatible with the needs of a developing nation in the modern world.

The present education system is composed of three levels; eight years (Standards) of basic primary schooling, four years of secondary education and 2-4 years of tertiary education. At the end of the primary cycle, students take the Primary School Leaving Certificate Exam (PSLCE) for determining their eligibility for admittance to secondary schools. These consist of private (usually denomination schools), conventional secondary schools operated by the government most and often boarding the attending students at the institution during their enrollment years. Lastly, there are community-based secondary schools approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) for operation in approved communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Malawi is a heavy recipient of foreign assistance; in 1999, this amounted to US\$427 million, only US\$63 million less than the GOM's annual budget (World Bank Development Indicators 1999). USAID's foreign assistance portfolio for Malawi has averaged US\$30.6 million per year 1998-2002.

Only about 18 percent of those passing PSCLE examinations are admitted to secondary schools. After two years, pupils are required to take the Junior Certificate Examination (JCE). Upon passing, students are permitted to proceed to Forms Three and Four. At the end of Form Four, students take the national Malawi School Certificate Examination (MSCE) for completion of their secondary school studies--less than 5 percent of the students taking this exam go on to the tertiary level. In summation, the education system is a broad-based pyramid designed to deselect many qualified students--of 3 million students in primary schools, only a little over 6 percent enter secondary schools and a far smaller percentage of those in primary education can expect to receive tertiary education. Figure 1 dramatically shows the disparities of the education system.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1**

Despite the many challenges facing this new democracy, the GOM has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving and expanding the primary schools of the nation. In 1994, soon after the new government gained power, the Free Primary Education (FPE) Act was passed permitting open access for all children (ages 6-20) to receive education in Standards 1 through 8. Fees were no longer required for students to attend primary school and no differentiation was made on the basis of gender. As a political decision, the FPE act removed the issue of access for students seeking a basic education; unfortunately, the sheer influx of primary students within a period of one year was totally unanticipated. Between the school years of 1993-94 and 1994-95, primary school enrollment increased from 1.9 million students

<sup>2</sup> Data are taken from MOEST's Education's Basic Statistics 1999; primary school data for 2000 are available but secondary school data are still incomplete.



to 2.9 million students. By 1997, there were 3 million students attending primary school. Yet with this dramatic increase in new students, pre-existing disparities between boys attending primary school and girls in attendance were virtually eliminated.

<b><u>% of Girls in Basic Education</u></b>	
1990-91	44.9%
1994-95	47.0%
1999-2000	48.3%

The GOM, with the assistance of many foreign donors, has embraced a wide range of activities aimed at improving the basic education structure of the country. These efforts include: 1) the recruitment of an estimated 22,000 teachers between the years 1994-97; 2) the construction of new schools throughout the nation (especially in the rural areas); 3) accelerated student flows by reducing dropout and retention rates; 4) strengthening MOEST's ability to plan and manage information; and directing more resources to the primary education sector.<sup>3</sup>

### **Financing Education**

The GOM has demonstrated its commitment to education--especially basic primary education. Overall, allocations to the education sector have continued to rise; with the adoption of FPE, support for this sector rose (as a percent of total governmental revenues) from 24 percent in 93/94 to 26 percent in 94/95 and 28 percent in 99/2000. The primary education share increased from 52 percent in 1992/93 to 62 percent of MOEST's recurrent budget in 1999.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, this dropped back to 58 percent in 2000. In spite of the GOM's efforts to increase its allocations to basic education, expenditure per pupil is still low and the increases in primary expenditure has not been adequate to reverse the effects of many years of under-funding for infrastructure and instructional materials--especially given the surge of students in the primary schools. The current per capita expenditure of USD 16 is lower than that of other countries in the region which are at USD 24 (see Muluzi 2000:22).

Given the tiered nature of the Malawi system, a university student costs 103 times more than each primary student--a considerable disparity in terms of resource allocation--but consistent with the structure of the Malawi education system. Despite the assistance by many NGOs and foreign donors, the system continues to be under-funded due to the number of school-age children and rising costs for services. Against this backdrop, USAID designed and implemented a long-term effort for improving the Malawi education system during the last decade. This project was called GABLE (Girls' Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education) and was initially intended to expand the accessibility of basic primary education for girls. Later, over the life of the project (LOP), the focus shifted to educational quality and equity along with improving the managerial capacity of the educational system. More is said about GABLE in the following chapter and the objectives of a closeout evaluation of the project.

<sup>3</sup> See O'Gara, et.al., More But Not Yet Better: An Evaluation of USAID's Programs and Policies to Improve Girls' Education, . June 1999.

<sup>4</sup> In its continuing efforts to improve primary education, USAID has recommended that 63-64 percent (or higher) of the education budget should be the goal of budget planners in MOEST.

## II. GABLE BACKGROUND

### GABLE I

GABLE had its origins in the late 1980s when the Africa Bureau of USAID was funded by the U.S. Congress to step up its activities in basic education in Africa. GABLE was originally designed and authorized in 1991, with a five-year life-of-project (LOP). The original design provided US\$14 million in Non-Project Assistance (NPA) and US\$6 million in Project Assistance (PA) totaling US\$20 million. The overall objective was to increase girls' attainment (defined as access, persistence, and completion) in primary education.<sup>5</sup> During the first three years of GABLE I, the government of Malawi accomplished the following results:

- Increased allocations of the GOM budget to the educational sector--in particular to primary education;
- Implemented policies to increase access and persistence of girls in primary education (fee waivers for non-repeating girls and launching an Social Mobilization Campaign (SMC) to change attitudes and elicit parental and community support for girls' education;
- Established a Primary Pupil Registration System (PPRS) to provide essential information on the flow and performance of students throughout the primary education Standards; and
- Revised the primary school curriculum to make it more gender sensitive.

### GABLE II

USAID/Malawi, while pleased with many of the achievements of GABLE I, the Agency recognized that during GABLE I quality and efficiency issues, which were compounded by the FPE Policy issued by the government in 1994 were not addressed. Based on the achievements during the first phase of the GABLE program, and recognizing the need for greater attention to primary education, USAID/Malawi and the GOM decided in 1994 to expand GABLE's scope and duration. A GABLE Program Grant Agreement to initiate Phase II of GABLE was signed between the governments of Malawi and the United States on September 30, 1994 to add funds to the program and to extend it until September 30, 1998 to enable additional activities to be undertaken by the GOM. This agreement provided an additional US\$21 million in NPA funds and US\$4.5 million PA funds bringing the total to US\$35 million in NPA and US\$10.5 million in PA. USAID's GABLE II program was intended to make an impact on primary education quality and efficiency. However, given the massive increase in enrollments from 1994, this did not happen.

A mid-term GABLE evaluation was conducted from October to November 1997 focusing on GABLE II. That evaluation centered on two themes: (i) the extent to which GABLE II accomplished what the GABLE design documentation and USAID/Malawi's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) indicated would be done in primary education, and (ii) the extent to which GABLE, taking into consideration the evolution in the political, economic and

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<sup>5</sup> The broader yet under-emphasized goal of GABLE was to reduce Malawi's fertility rate. Extensive research on education programs in developing nations had demonstrated that improving girls' education was associated over the long-term with reducing fertility rates therein reducing population, and assisting to improve health and nutrition in these countries.

educational context in Malawi, had adequately addressed the key challenges to basic education. One major recommendation from the evaluation was to extend GABLE II for another two years from October 1998 in order for the Government of Malawi (GOM) to complete its commitments, such as the development of the Policy Investment Framework (PIF).

### **GABLE II Extension/Amendment**

The overall strategy for the GABLE II Extension/Amendment, following the evaluation's recommendation, shifted its focus from access to quality. The strategy was to support the development of an environment in which the majority of children were learning. The strategy was to work simultaneously on creating a policy environment to develop sustainable and effective schools and classroom practica, while putting into wider practice innovative and effective interventions at the community level that inform policy analysis and system reform strategies.

Under GABLE II, it was agreed that budget support would be provided in the form of three cash grant tranches of US\$7 million each over the three years of the program. This would enable the government to achieve three supporting objectives:

- Increase the long-term financial resource base;
- Improve the quality, availability, and efficiency of primary education; and
- Improve the relevance of primary education for girls.

Specifically, under these three supporting objectives, the government would:

1. Provide increased budgetary resources to the education sector revenue budget, the primary education sub sector revenue budget, and to primary level learning materials;
2. Improve educational quality by implementing a community school system; increase the number of teachers and their training; increase the supply of learning materials in primary schools, and increase the supply of classrooms;
3. Increase the efficiency of primary education by reducing repetition and late entry in all standards and improve the analytical and planning capacity of the Ministry of Education (MOE); and
4. Improve the relevance of primary education for girls through gender appropriate teacher training, gender appropriate curricula, a scholarship program for secondary school girls and the introduction of improved classroom techniques to enhance girls' achievement.

During the last two years, GABLE has provided support to the Creative Center for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM), the local NGO created by Creative Associates International Inc. (CAII) to implement Social Mobilization Campaign-Education Quality (SMC-EQ) activities at the national level. GABLE also provided a grant to Save the Children (SC/US), an American non-governmental organization, to expand the village-based school project to the three districts of Mangochi, Balaka and Blantyre Rural. GABLE policy reforms

are primarily being implemented through the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and MOEST with MIE and CERT as major research centers.

### **Funding Mechanisms**

USAID uses two mechanisms for achieving sector objectives and results. Funds are more often transferred directly to grantees in support of project activities (usually technical assistance and training); this is referred to as Project Assistance (PA). In other instances, when USAID perceives that issues are broader than any given project might be able to accomplish and may require becoming involved in developing and implementing policy reforms within a governmental setting, funds are given directly to the target government with specific conditions (i.e., usually referred to as "conditionalities") that must be met for receipt of funds. USAID refers to this type of funding as Non-Project Assistance (NPA). This type of funding has been used in a number of African nations (e.g., Benin, Guinea, and Uganda) to encourage policy changes or to promote capacity-building of specific activities in a particular Ministry. As mentioned above, USAID/Malawi used both mechanisms under GABLE to change and improve Malawi's basic education system.

### **GABLE SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

Now that GABLE is coming to a close at the end of FY 2002, a Summative Evaluation is being conducted to assess the results of a decade of USAID assistance--both in terms of PA and NPA funding activity outcomes.

### **Evaluation Purpose**

The purpose of a Summative Evaluation of GABLE is to determine the overall effectiveness and impact of USAID's assistance on the primary education sector in Malawi. A Mid-Term review of the GABLE II program was carried out in August 1998. This Summative Evaluation represents a "close-out" assessment of the changes made as a result of this earlier assessment and the subsequent extension agreement. This evaluation has focused on assessing the GABLE program's objectives and outcomes achieved, and measuring its impact to date. These objectives per the Summative Evaluation Statement of Work (SOW) called for:

- Examining the impact and effectiveness of NPA and PA activities implemented under the GABLE II Amendment;
- Analyzing perceived implementation problems; and
- Reviewing institutional capacities within MOEST and related institutions.

Subsequently, a three-person Evaluation Team examined the program and project results implemented during the GABLE II Amendment period when the emphasis moved from access to quality. In addition to the stated objective, the Summative Evaluation has sought to identify and address any issues not covered by the Mid-term Evaluation. This evaluation will provide USAID an appropriate wrap-up of the GABLE program and any lessons-learned to be drawn from this decade-long program.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The GABLE Summative Evaluation Scope of Work from USAID/Malawi is provided in Annex 1. The evaluation was carried out over a six-week period from mid-April to May in 2002.

## **Evaluation Methods**

The Summative Evaluation of the GABLE Program was carried out by reviewing relevant GABLE program and project documents (see Annex 2), conducting key informant interviews with USAID personnel and key staff in MOEST and MOGYCS. Additionally, the Evaluation Team (over a three-week period) visited division and district education officials in all three regions of Malawi to conduct focus group interviews using Interview Protocols designed to elicit responses to a common set of questions. A full listing of the persons interviewed by the Team is provided in Annex 3. The Team, in addition to meeting with government officials from various Ministries, conducted site visits to 15 different schools throughout Malawi to directly observe the activities carried out under GABLE.

### III. PROGRAM RESULTS AND IMPACT

#### GABLE TARGETS AND OUTCOMES

During the initial three years of GABLE I, several important achievements were effected: 1) allocations of the GOM budget to the educational sector and to primary education were increased 2) policies to increase access and persistence of girls in primary school were introduced, e.g., the waiver of fees for non-repeating girls, and the development of a social mobilization campaign (SMC) to change attitudes and elicit the support of parents and the community for girls' education 3) a PPRS by the MOEST was established to furnish necessary data on the flow and performance of students at all the Standards of primary education, and 4) the primary school curriculum of the primary level was revised to make it more gender sensitive.

While these improvements at the primary level were significant, the issues of quality and efficiency were not addressed to the satisfaction of USAID during this period. In summary, by the completion of GABLE I, the GOM had improved its statistics on access and equity. It had succeeded in quickly drawing many more children, particularly girls, into the primary level. Nevertheless, on other criteria utilized to measure educational caliber, there was no doubt that quality and efficiency were poorer than they were four years before when the analysis for GABLE I had been undertaken. Yet, it must be noted that if GABLE I had not been launched, the deterioration would have been even greater.<sup>7</sup>

Primary Enrollment 1992-2000	
Gross Enrollment	% Girls
93-94 1.89 Million	48.1
94-95 2.86 Million	47.0
95-96 2.89 Million	47.1
97-98 2.91 Million	47.7
98-99 2.81 Million	48.2
99-00 2.90 Million	48.2
00-01 3.02 Million	48.3

In recognition of the need for greater attention to primary education, a Phase II of GABLE, i.e., GABLE II (1994-1998), was initiated to enable the GOM to undertake additional activities. The GABLE II program was intended to effect an impact on primary education quality and efficiency (e.g., reduction in the dropout and repetition rates). However, given the huge increase in enrolments as a result of the Free Primary Education (FPE) Policy issued in 1994 this objective was never realized. On a positive note, gender disparities in the

primary sector were no longer a major issue.

In 1997 a mid-program evaluation of GABLE , with particular focus on GABLE II, was carried out to determine the extent to which the program had addressed the critical challenges to basic education in Malawi. A major recommendation from the evaluation was to extend/amend GABLE II, for an additional two years (1998-2000), i.e. GABLE II Extension/Amendment. The extension would encourage the GOM to complete its program commitments--the development of the Policy Investment Framework (PIF) and improving MOEST's Planning Unit and its Education Management Information System (EMIS) capabilities.

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<sup>7</sup> USAID was not the only donor working with the GOM to improve the primary education sector but its goal of targeting resources to the girl-child was a focused singular activity of the GABLE program/project. Moreover, while many extraneous factors have played a role in assisting this sector, GABLE has provided the critical leadership for the results achieved in primary education.

The over-arching strategy for the GABLE II Extension/Amendment, in keeping with the mid-program's evaluation, shifted the focus from access to quality. The new perspective of this strategy involved the creation of a policy environment seeking to develop sustainable and effective schools and classroom practices. Concurrently, the strategy targeted a broader implementation of innovative and effective interventions at the level of the community. Such interventions were intended to influence policy analysis and the strategies to reform the overall system.

The extension/amendment provided budget support to the GOM to target the following results:

- Increased budgetary resources to the education sector;
- Improved education quality;
- Increased efficiency; and
- Improved relevance of primary education for girls.

An evaluation of the data developed in the context of the various measures undertaken by the GOM to achieve these results demonstrates that a meaningful degree of success was effected over a three-year period (9/1998-9/2001), via an additional year bringing GABLE to final completion in September 2002.

From the start of GABLE, the GOM has committed additional national budget resources to the education sector overall and to primary education in particular. The education component of the national budget was increased by 15 percent between 1992 and 1999; with a 10 percent increase for the primary education sector, and a 9 percent increase for the provision of learning materials. Despite these general increases, the expenditure per child has actually decreased since the advent of GABLE, owing to the dramatic enrollment increases with the FPE.

<u>Education Expenditures</u> <u>1992-1999 Increase</u>	
Percent of GOM budget	12% to 26%
Primary as % of Education Budget	52% to 62%
Learning Materials	1% to 10%
Expenditure per primary student	\$20 to \$12 USD

In terms of the improvement of education quality, the QUEST project successfully established a community school system involving 33 communities in three pilot districts (Mangochi, Balaka, and Blantyre Rural; assisted 4,746 teachers via in-service training, and provided 132 new classrooms.<sup>8</sup>

In terms of primary education efficiency, a mixed picture is in evidence. There has been an increase of 1 percent in the primary total dropout rate although the rate has been fairly consistent since 1997 (9% to 10% in 2000). More importantly, a marked improvement in the primary dropout rate in Standards 1 through 4. These changes are displayed in Table 1.

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<sup>8</sup> A brief description of the Quality Education through Supporting Teaching (QUEST) is presented in Chapter IV of this report.

**Table 1**

**Dropout Rates for Girls and Boys for Standards 1-4 for 1997 and 2000**

<b>Standard</b>	<b>% Girls 1997</b>	<b>% Boys 1997</b>	<b>% Girls 2000</b>	<b>% Boys 2000</b>
Standard 1	28	28	12	14
Standard 2	15	16	11	11
Standard 3	15	15	9	9
Standard 4	12	14	8	8

Source: MOEST Education Statistics 1997; 2000.<sup>9</sup>

Dropout rates have clearly been reduced from 1997 to 2000 and gender parity is apparent through Standard 4. However, by Standard 5 through Standard 8, the rates are the same for boys (6% per Standard) but the dropout rate for girls increased to 9 percent in Standard 5 and increasing to 11 percent by Standard 8.

Repetition rates have declined from 18 percent in 1994 to 15 percent according to MOEST 2000 education statistics; the repetition rates by gender are almost similar for all primary students. Since 1997, the percentage of girls repeating courses has dropped from 49.8 percent to 47.8 percent (MOEST 2000). The overall repetition-rate for primary education students has remained fairly consistent. For boys, this rate was 7.8 percent of all students between 1997 and 2000; for girls, the repetition rate dropped slightly from 7.2 percent of all primary students in 1997 to 7.4 of all students in 2000. The percentage of late entries has also shown improvement since 1997-- a decrease from 27 percent in this year to 19 percent in 2000.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, there has been effected a marked improvement in the analytical and planning capacity of the MOEST with the establishment of an EMIS system, the development of a Planning Unit, and the formal training of ten professional staff in-country and abroad.

The relevance of primary education for girls was significantly improved by the development of a gender appropriate teacher training program, the preparation of gender appropriate curricula, the establishment a scholarship program for secondary school girls, and the introduction of improved classroom techniques to enhance girls' achievement.

Indeed, these results demonstrate that the original goals and objectives of GABLE I, II, and more particularly GABLE II Extension/Amendment have been addressed and met to an appropriate and adequate measure of success. As such, an important impact on the whole primary education sector and system has been effected.

While the various GABLE program activities have produced an impact on the primary sector and system as a whole, it is necessary to note that various beneficiaries within the sector/system have

<sup>9</sup> The latest year for which MOEST has Education Statistics is for the school year 2000-2001.

<sup>10</sup> There were no gender differences for late entries as applied to Standard 1; this assumed an Age Cohort of "Under 6-8 years" for Standard 1. Further Cohort Analysis could be done but given the present GOM regulations permitting students to attend school from age 6-20, the results would be inconclusive depending upon the criteria applied to any given cohort.



also benefited immensely from their involvement with various program activities. Among such beneficiaries are: male/female pupils, girl students, teachers, communities, school committees, parents, central/divisional/district professional staffs of the MOEST and the MOGYCS. The Evaluation Team members elicited these benefits during the course of exchanges during their visits to schools and meetings with teachers, parents, school committees, community leaders, and professional staff of the Ministries. Brief summations of GABLE successes, more particularly, QUEST are cited below:

Male/Female Pupils – increased access with more schools and classrooms available; increased quality of learning and performance via better learning environment; improved methodology and pedagogy; participatory approach; locally produced instructional materials; school/classroom discipline for absenteeism; the growing interest of their parents; reduced dropouts and repeaters; increased motivation to continue schooling; and revised curriculum.

Girl students – easier access; positive attitude of parents and community; more favorable learning and performance environment; equity in the classroom; gender sensitive curricula and instructional materials; self-respect/pride/motivation to excel; positive policy on pregnancy discrimination; incentives to persist, complete, advance; availability of role models; and respectability in the community and society.

Teachers – in-service training; improved methodological and pedagogical skills; improved instructional materials; career motivation; gender respect and acceptance; accessible housing; improved parent and community support and interest; respect of students, and sound influence on students.

Communities – role and responsibilities to the local school and primacy of school learning activities accepted; ownership of school's quality performance; interest in and motivation for education quality; appropriate training; value of collaboration, initiative, cooperation; need for community cohesion; importance of self-help and self-reliance; the school as a valuable community asset; and less dependence on government dole-outs.

School Committees – role and responsibility to the community school; development role vis-à-vis the local school; planning and managing small school projects; the school as a critical resource to the community; and relevant training.

Parents – role and responsibility in the school of their children; increased interest in the performance of their children; responsibility for absenteeism of their children; participation with the community as a key stakeholder in the quality of the local school.

GOM/Ministry staff (DEOs, PEAs, CDAs) – professional role and responsibilities; critical role in the decentralization process; career interest and motivation, value of professional development and personal growth; and involvement in policy development and implementation.

Notwithstanding some of the problems that exist in the Malawi primary education school system and to be sure the challenges to be confronted; some elements of successful results are discernible. If one looks at the numbers of students who are passing the Primary School Leaving Certificate Exam (PSLCE), progress is being achieved both in terms of quality and quantity. Table 2 shows the numbers of students passing the PSLCE from 1997-98 through 2000-01. The total number of students continued to increase from 1997 through 2000. While the percentage of boys passing the PSLCE continues to be higher than the passing rate for girls, the gap is narrowing with only a few percentage points separating these groups.

**Table 2**  
**PSLCE Passing Results for Boys and Girls, 1997-2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>% Pass Both Sexes</b>	<b>% Passing Boys</b>	<b>% Passing Girls</b>	<b>Total No. Passing PSLCE</b>
2000	78.4	79.3	77.1	109,002
1999	83.0	82.3	79.0	106,496
1998	75.2	77.7	71.1	95,229
1997	77.0	79.0	74.08	98,923

Source: MOEST Education Statistics 1997 to 2000

## **SOCIETAL BENEFITS**

If identification of benefits of GABLE on individual beneficiaries proved a stimulating experience, the societal value of the program's activities on Malawi's education community was judged to be of equal importance. Such values were well articulated by the different stakeholders during the process of assessing the influence and impact of GABLE's many facets. The following values were highlighted:

1. Inter-dependent relationship between the community and the local school and the respective role and responsibilities of each;
2. Recognition of girls as a valuable national human resource;
3. Realization of the value of education in the community vis-à-vis work, marriage, and cultural traditions;
4. Recognition of the role of traditional authority in the promotion of education quality in the community school; and
5. Acceptance of the value of self-help (*tangaka*--the local Chichewa term) and reduced dependence on GOM assistance was cited but always in a negative context); and the necessity of social mobilization to address community problems, issues, concerns.

In a presentation of the results and impact of GABLE and its activities, the critical role played by the different institutions and projects associated with the program needs to be recognized. The important contribution of three such groups and their involvement with the program is herein briefly described.

## **IMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

### **Chancellor College**

Located in Zomba in the Southern Region this branch of the National University of Malawi was actively involved in the early stages of GABLE via its vital role in the implementation of the social mobilization campaign (SMC). This campaign was intended to promote girls' education as an effective means to improved family well-being. At the time the Department of Fine and Performing Arts was interested in establishing a development communication program and it was felt that involvement in the SMC would provide an excellent first step to demonstrate the need for such skills and capability within the country. In addition, there was strong support and qualified expertise within the Department to use for the campaign. Under the experienced guidance of the Department Head, a Theatre for Development (TfD) program was developed.

The main approaches of the SMC targeted a person to person and group outreach at the grassroots level, and bottom-up communication facilitated through the TfD. The troupe, made up of students majoring in drama, went out into the rural areas where they worked with the villagers to articulate the problem of girls' enrollment and persistence in school or what the people viewed as the value of education. Subsequently, the students returned to the institution to improvise a play around the themes that the villagers had discussed. They then returned to the village and tried out the drama for the local people, encouraging them to give feedback and even get personally involved in the performance, which they often did with great humor and vitality. The drama performances seemed to free up people to express themselves spontaneously. Overall, the TfD offered an exciting and engaging message for its target population. Needless to say, the TfD supplied a critical contribution to the SMC by providing a tangible means of direct community sensitization. As such, the institution and its professional departmental activities served as a vital foundation to the subsequent work of other program actors in the SMC activity (i.e., CAII and CRECCOM). The work of these latter groups is treated in Chapter IV of this report.

While the primary focus of the College continues to be the preparation of teachers for the secondary level of the national education system, the strong needs for a better formation of primary school teachers as a result of the FPE policy instituted in 1994, led the Faculty of Education of the institution to explore the possibility of establishing a Department of Primary Education. After appropriate internal discussion and planning, the College recently announced that the new Department will be inaugurated in September 2002 and will offer a two-year Bachelor of Education Degree, with a specialty in Primary Education. The new Department is expected to play a key support role in the implementation of one of the key components, i.e., Teacher Professional Skills Improved, of the new USAID/GOM bilateral Agreement (2002-2006). This participation assures that Chancellor College will continue to play an important role

in the education sector, building on the success that it effectively contributed to the GABLE program.

### **Malawi Institute of Education (MIE)**

The MIE located at Domasi in the Southern Region is the premier education research institution of the country. Its key role in providing appropriate action research on various issues integral to the GABLE has been vital to the program's success. The action research undertaken on gender bias, equity in the classroom, gender-sensitive curricula, and gender-friendly instructional material via its Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC) Unit has played a major role in the success of the program in this critical issue. In addition to its research, the institution has also been involved in the training of professional staff at the central and district levels of the MOEST.

The MIE also has played a vital role in the work of the Quality Education through Supporting Teaching (QUEST) Project, a basic component of GABLE. In the first year of the project, Save the Children/US (SC/US), responsible for the implementation of the former, established a partnership with MIE and AIR/IEQ/Malawi to design and to conduct collaboratively a longitudinal study to be used in part to monitor the progress of the QUEST project. However, the study further provided a rich source of data from which to learn more about the various factors that influence school quality improvement. The study tracked pupil performance using a set of performance-based, curriculum-bound instruments. School level information including teacher performance, demographics (particularly community demographics) were also collected as part of the study. While data were entered and analyzed by SC/US analysts, analysis by the MIE and IEQ technical staff provided a valuable cross-check on the results. Further treatment of this major study is provided below when discussing the role of IEQ/Malawi in GABLE.

In a further partnership collaboration with MIE, SC/US developed a pilot study on the use of an integrated curriculum in a particular district of the project. The impact of the study was demonstrated by higher pupil scores, on the average, in the schools where the integrated curriculum was being implemented. The technical assistance provided by the professional staff of MIE in training the teachers to implement this new approach to curriculum development and in the collection of post-test results of pupil performance provided valuable support to the success of the pilot study.

Additional discussions have been held between MIE and SC/US to formalize their relationship for continued collaboration on future applied education research projects to support the quality improvements in primary schooling. In a three-step process, education research priorities would first be explored through a small controlled feasibility study (e.g., the feasibility of new instructional approaches for literacy enhancement). In the first step, MIE would take the lead, yet SC/US would be involved in all aspects of the study. If the result of the feasibility study were positive and the MOEST supported the continuation of the study, SC/US would then take the lead in piloting the program in a few selected districts in the country under, for example, a new QUEST project with the continued involvement of MIE. This latter study would provide the MOEST with the information it would need to ascertain the viability of the approaches for full integration into the national curriculum. The process would assure a sound research function and

an applied activity in addressing new challenges in the primary education sector. The experience and expertise gained through GABLE could thereby continue to be available to the GOM.

### **Improving Education Quality/Malawi Project (IEQ)**

The IEQ/Malawi project is an activity of the American Institutes of Research (AIR) in Washington, D.C. The stated objective of the project is to build and strengthen local institutional capacity to design, manage, and utilize action research that will assist in the development of policy at the local and national levels and that will promote practices that lead to quality basic education. The project also strives to improve education quality at the classroom level.

As was previously mentioned, in 1999 IEQ formed a partnership with MIE and SC/US, the agency responsible for the QUEST project that had been recently established, to assist the latter in its research efforts at achieving its objective of improving the quality of education in schools. In order to meet this objective, SC/US had initially planned to conduct targeted research with the purpose of establishing positions in schools and guiding its project interventions. The new tri-lateral partnership permitted an expansion of this research agenda and the potential of such research to eventually guide and inform national education policy.

The significant contribution of the IEQ/Malawi project to GABLE has been the former's approach to the generation of knowledge related to teaching and learning by evaluating pupil performance and observing instructional classroom practices. Subsequently, the use of such findings at the local and national levels is further encouraged via appropriate dissemination. Lastly, the project seeks to collaborate with local institutions to strengthen in-country research capacity.

While assisting the SC/US-QUEST project in measuring its progress in improving quality education in its targeted districts, the lead research activity of IEQ/Malawi in the major longitudinal study previously mentioned provided important findings on such critical issues as the low level of mastery in both numeracy and literacy leading to high dropout and repetition rates, the high mobility rate among primary teachers, the acute shortage of trained teachers at the primary level, the grave dearth of instruction materials in most primary classrooms, the weak system for the distribution and storage of such materials, and the strong need for provision of teacher housing. These findings have been disseminated at the national, district and zonal levels. A variety of stakeholders in the country's education system now are utilizing these data to carry out interventions in order to improve the quality of education. In addition, the participation of IEQ in GABLE has greatly helped to equip a number of local professional educators with research as well as computer skills.

## **IV. PROJECT RESULTS AND IMPACT**

### **SECTION 1**

#### **PROJECT ASSISTANCE**

Sections 1 and 2 discuss the major aspects of technical assistance, training, and other activities in support of the GABLE Project for the years 1991 through its completion in 2002. All of these activities were funded from PA obligations totaling US\$10.5 million USD over the LOP.

#### **CREATIVE ASSOCIATES-SMC**

The Social Mobilization Campaign (SMC) was originally designed in 1991 to develop and implement a national campaign to change parental and community attitudes about the importance of girls' education. It used a participatory methodology that involved parents, community leaders, students and education officials in identifying and modifying social attitudes and practices that constrain girls' access, persistence and achievement in basic education. Over an eight-year time span, SMC became the most visible component of the GABLE project. As a nationwide campaign that covered every district in Malawi, SMC used dramatization to help communities understand the constraints to girls' education. SMC developed a set of training materials that it used to sensitize schoolteachers, administrators, and officials of MOEST and MWYCS.

According to the GABLE Mid-term Evaluation in 1998<sup>11</sup>, SMC had carried out the following: conducted participatory research in 210 villages using the theater for development methodology; trained the majority of the district field workers from the MOEST and MOWYCS; trained nearly 18,000 local leaders, about 12,500 school committee members, and sensitized over 11,600 teachers who in turn implemented numerous village-based initiatives. To publicize its activities and disseminate the gender messages SMC produced and distributed 12,000 T-shirts, 30,000 calendars, 1.8 million comic books, 600,000 role model readers, 36,000 newsletters, and 6,000 postcards; produced, and broadcast 156 weekly radio programs. The successes of SMC, discussed at length in the Mid-term Evaluation may be summarized as follows:

- Established and disseminated communication channels at the community level using existing networks and structures;
- Empowered CDAs and PEAs and trained them in participatory research skills, which they in turn used in mobilizing communities ;
- Forged linkages between the MOEST and MWYCS mainly through the CDAs and PEAs;
- Empowered communities through its participatory focus-group research to identify problems that impede girls' entry and retention in primary education;

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<sup>11</sup> Bernaum, Marcia and others. Evaluation of USAID/ Malawi Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education II (GABLE II) Program. Washington DC: Academy for Education Development (AED), August 12, 1998. Volume 1, Final Report and Annexes A-C. Vol. II, Annexes D-Q.

- Developed a cadre of community researchers and next-generation change agents, mainly students from Chancellor College’s Theater for Development program.
- Promoted changes in attitudes and practices among chiefs, initiation counselors, teachers, parents, and students toward girls and their education;
- Introduced an effective role-model program for primary school girls by creating a series of booklets and calendars that publicized Malawian women’s achievements.
- Introduced effective incentives for students, teachers, and schools using girls’ sports competition awards and T-shirts.

The SMC was particularly successful in two areas:

Transformed attitudes towards girls and their education: Everybody interviewed for this summative evaluation knew about SMC, which, in many ways, became synonymous with GABLE. A common theme in all interviews, with key government officials in the central government to teachers and parents at the schools, is that GABLE “has done a lot for the women in Malawi.” One key official in the MOEST said, “ GABLE opened up a new chapter for women in Malawi.” A district education official in the Southern region addressing the GABLE evaluation team noted, “you have cured us of this syndrome (i.e., the devaluation of girls and their education.” Before GABLE, noted one education official, the girl child was considered weak, valueless, and in need of protection in the home where she belongs. GABLE helped parents realize that girls need as much attention as do boys and that their education is equally important. GABLE has become almost synonymous with girls’ education. This association continued after the emphasis shifted to educational quality for all children. People still remember the initial mandate. The gender sensitization by the SMC during the first eight years of GABLE has permeated all communities. As once village chief cogently put it, “there is no going back.”

Increased girls' access, persistence and achievement in education: The result of these attitudinal changes has been a remarkable increase in girls’ access to primary education. Several policies instituted by the government of Malawi, as a result of USAID policy dialogue with the MOEST, bolstered the rise of female access, persistence and completion of primary education. Specifically important for increased female access were the policies on fee waivers, secondary school scholarships for non-repeating girls, the uniform policy (no longer mandatory), and the pregnancy policy allowing girls that dropped out because of pregnancy to return to school. Girls’ enrollment in all Standards continues to increase, dropout and repetition rates have declined, and large numbers of girls now successfully complete Standard 8 and are selected to enter secondary schools. In many of the schools visited by the evaluation team, girls outnumber boys, especially at the early Standards. Many girls who have benefited from these measures have continued through the educational system and several have graduated from the university and are occupying key government positions.

## **SOCIAL MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION QUALITY (SMC-EQ)**

The shift from SMC for girls’ education to SMC-EQ has been a natural progression to address the serious educational quality issues resulting from the implementation of Free Primary Education in 1994, and the dramatic surge in enrollment for boys and girls. The educational

system was not prepared for the surge in enrollment; which necessitated vast improvements in the educational infrastructure, unprecedented need for teachers and educational materials and supplies, curriculum revisions, improvements in school management and supervision, among others.

SMC-EQ was designed to build upon the successes and lessons learned from the SMC, using its participatory methodology to promote quality education focusing on ways where parents and communities can support:

1. School quality using existing resources; and
2. Child health, nutritional status, and well-being so as to ensure participation in school and learning.

The strategic focus for the SMC-EQ project was to provide a basis for developing national policy and capacity for building community and school linkages.

To launch this social mobilization campaign for education quality (SMC-EQ), GABLE provided a grant to Creative Associates International, Inc. (CAII) in 1998, to create a Malawian NGO, Creative Committee for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM). The grant supported a pilot project to test the use of the SMC methodology in mobilizing communities and educators in support of educational quality improvement. The pilot project was carried out in 1998-1999 in the three districts where QUEST was operating (e.g., Balaka, Mangochi and Salima), to help parents and communities in these districts to recognize, appreciate and contribute to quality basic education for all children. The small Malawian professional staff that implemented the GABLE SMC project was employed to carry out the pilot project with the technical guidance of CAII. The pilot project succeeded and CRECCOM was officially launched in 1999.

CRECCOM had its first headquarters at Chancellor College, home of Theater for Development in Zomba in southern Malawi. It later moved to a separate office nearby. It is staffed by twelve professionals, all former employees of CAII. At the time of this evaluation, CRECCOM was operating in 17 districts in southern, central and northern Malawi, out of 32 districts. It expects to scale up its activities to cover the remaining 15 districts within the next two years.

CRECCOM works closely with the central, divisional and district officials of the MOEST and (MOGYCS).<sup>12</sup> Each has a GABLE Desk Officer who participates in all SMC-EQ training activities at the zonal and district levels. Its stated goal is “to sensitize, motivate and mobilize communities to identify and change their own attitudes, behaviors and practices that negatively impact upon educational quality.” This is in accordance with USAID/Malawi’s objective of using community mobilization as an important aspect of developing support systems for the schools that serve them.

CRECCOM employs a four pronged-approach to community mobilization consisting of the following components:

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<sup>12</sup> Formerly the Ministry of Women, Youth and Community Service (MOWYCS).



- research and verification to identify local problems and needs;
- field-worker training in SMC-EQ methodology;
- community-based sensitization; and
- village-based initiatives.

Ongoing monitoring and outreach ensure that effective changes occur in a collaborative and supportive manner involving all stakeholders in the school and community.

The field workers, mainly PEAs and CDAs, are trained in one-week residential workshops focusing on community sensitization, motivation, and mobilization techniques, creating and maintaining school community linkages, and building the capacity of community leaders and school teachers. As of December 2001, CRECCOM had trained about 650 field workers and other district and zonal officials; and sponsored 1,900 field-worker-facilitated workshops in school communities. These workshops helped sensitize 66,650 participants: community leaders, school committee members, and teachers who participated in them.<sup>13</sup> All the school communities, in the participating districts, have been reached and affected by these activities.

### **SMC-EQ Accomplishment and Impacts**

School/community sensitization has resulted in numerous community and school-based initiatives that address the community and school-based constraints to children's participation in education and the quality of education they receive. Examples of these initiatives and their impacts in addressing constraints to students' participation and learning in school are as follows:

#### **Community and Home Based Impacts**

CRECCOM has effectively mobilized communities to deal with cultural attitudes and practices as well as health and economic conditions that interfere with student participation and learning. Some examples of initiatives and results follow:

- In many communities, initiation ceremonies for boys and girls lasted over a long period, conflicted with school schedules and led to absenteeism and dropping-out. After sensitization by CRECCOM, chiefs and parents realized the negative effects of lengthy initiation schedules on their children's education and changed them to allow children to attend school without interruption. As a result dropout and repetition were reduced drastically.
- Girls in some communities interrupt their education because of early marriage, or stumble in their studies because of household responsibilities. Community gender sensitization under SMC and SMC-EQ swayed parents away from the practice of early marriage to allow their daughters to continue their education. It also convinced them of the importance of relieving girls of some household responsibilities to allow them to attend school and do their homework. During a school visit by the evaluation team, an illiterate mother spoke

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<sup>13</sup> These figures are based on data contained in CRECCOM's Annual Reports for the Pilot (1998/99), 2000 and 2001.

eloquently about the importance of girls' education. She said "it is our responsibility that girls who have not been to school attend, those who enter stay there to complete their studies, and those who have dropped out to return to school." She added, "if I send my daughter to the market instead of school I am ruining her future."

- SMC-EQ has also mobilized parents to deal with problems of hunger that have been particularly serious this year. Some parents cooked meals and sent them to school to feed hungry children. Community leaders lobbied the World Food Program to organize short-term school feeding activities.
- SMC-EQ has fostered a positive attitude toward disabled children and their education, leading to a significant rise in school attendance by disabled children.
- Communities mobilized by SMC-EQ have helped orphaned children, affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, with boarding, school uniforms and supplies, and provision of food.

### School-Based Impacts

SMC-EQ has been effective in mobilizing communities for active involvement in their schools and their children's education in order to improve educational quality and effectiveness and efficiency of schools. Following are examples of SMC-EQ activities and accomplishments in this regard:

- CRECCOM has been successful in mobilizing communities, chiefs, village heads, religious leaders and PTAs for improved educational quality. Almost every school community visited by the GABLE evaluation team has undertaken many initiatives, notably the molding of bricks, a task that uses locally available material, soil and water, and people's labor, an affordable activity for poor communities. Some school districts report over a million bricks molded for school construction; however, only a small proportion have actually been used.
- Functioning and active school committees are a critical factor in enhanced educational quality. During visits to 15 schools in seven districts, the GABLE evaluation team noted that school committees are actively involved in the management of their local schools and work closely with teachers, community chiefs and village heads, pupils and government field officers. By the end of 2001, CRECCOM reported active school committees in 2,644 schools. All schools visited by the evaluation team indicated that before CRECCOM sensitization, school committees were inactive, had irregular meetings and low attendance. Now these strengthened committees are working in partnership with community leaders, parents, teachers, education and MOGYCS officers and PEAs on initiatives to improve education quality.
- SMC-EQ has motivated communities to construct school blocks; teachers houses; pit latrines, administrative offices, temporary classrooms; libraries, learning centers, and bridges to facilitate student access to schools. Additionally, communities participated in making benches and desks for student use. These infrastructure improvements have helped to increase student enrollment, reduce repetitions and dropouts, and the completion of the

primary Standards as measured by numbers successfully completing Standard 8. Moreover, as a result of CRECCOM sensitization, teachers in the participating schools voluntarily increased the time they spend with students. They volunteered for afternoon and Saturday instruction. The construction of teacher housing has helped.

- Head teachers and PEAS in the schools visited indicated that teachers are regularly preparing lesson plans and following them. PEAs and school heads provide better monitoring of teaching and learning in the schools. This is particularly important where over 50 percent of the teachers are unqualified for teaching, and others are in need of additional in-service training. Communities have raised funds to purchase teacher guides where they are not available. Availability of support material and the use of teaching aids and locally available resources have helped improve teaching and learning. This has boosted student performance in examinations.
- Teachers' attendance and absenteeism have been reduced. This is due to greater parental and community involvement in the management of the schools. Parents have been empowered to monitor teacher absenteeism and schools use attendance charts as a visible tracking tool. Building teacher houses in many schools visited has helped boost teacher attendance also. PEAs and head-teachers are managing schools better and helping improve the learning environment. Another factor contributing to improved teaching and learning is peer advising whereby trained teachers help their untrained colleagues improve their teaching.
- The schools visited indicated that textbooks are generally available for the early grades (Standards 1-5), but shortages still exist for standards 6-8. The team was unable to ascertain how many textbooks were available for student use but did observe the textbooks delivered by CIDA in many schools although not yet distributed for use by students.
- The involvement of the community has increased the amount of educational materials available for use in the primary schools. Examples of this assistance include: pens and pencils, notebooks, foot rulers, iron sheets for roofing, bookshelves, clay pots for water, buckets, cups, plates, balls, tablets of soap, sets of football uniforms, etc. Some communities have organized feeding for children in areas affected by the drought and the hunger that afflicted Malawi and resulted in excessive absenteeism among students and teachers.
- Girls are now performing better in school tests and completing the education cycle. Additionally, according to some divisional and district educational officials, as a result of sensitization, pregnancy among girls has been reduced. This is because girls have been sensitized to say "no" to sexual overtures, and families and head-teachers have become alert to the possibility of sexual exploitation of girls at home or in school and have learned how to deal with it. Two dramatic performances by students in two schools visited by the evaluation team dealt with the theme of violence against girls, sexual exploitation, and the dangers of HIV/AIDS. These issues could not have been discussed had it not been for SMC and SMC-EQ sensitization and collaboration with the MOGYCS and other donors that provide education on sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

- A strong sense of ownership is now evident among communities and teachers. A recurrent theme in all the schools visited is that, prior to SMC-EQ sensitization, parents and communities felt they had no role in changing conditions in the schools. They waited for the government to do everything for them. After CRECCOM sensitization and training, they felt ownership of the schools and became empowered to identify school problems and find solutions for them. Some local businesses have become involved and are providing some assistance in support of infrastructure improvements. Some traditional chiefs have even donated land for building schools, and materials to make desks and chairs.
- Student attendance, attainment and completion have improved in all of the schools visited and was confirmed by district and divisional managers strongly suggesting the overall importance of community involvement. Moreover, this greater involvement has led to parents encouraging and monitoring pupil attendance.
- Interestingly, schools and communities have reintroduced school uniforms to distinguish students and discourage non-attendance. If a student in uniform shows up in the market place he or she is told they should be in school instead. Uniforms also create uniformity among students and boost self-confidence. Distinguished student uniforms and hats are given as prizes to best achieving students for one week to motivate others to achieve. Teachers and community members are helping parents defray the cost by donating uniforms to poor families and orphans. The policy of non-requirement of uniforms continues though, but all schools visited hope to have uniforms for their students within two years.
- Competition among the schools was viewed in a positive manner leading to improvements in education quality. Best performing schools are represented as role models for other schools. The message is “if the neighboring school can do it, why can’t we?”
- School Incentive Packages (SIP) help boost educational quality. The SIP, a box with support materials for the schools, provided by CRECCOM to each school, has been used effectively to increase the resources for teaching and learning in the schools. Schools replenish the boxes through fund-raising functions such as sports competitions, organizing a walk for educational quality, soliciting donations from community members and businesses.

### Discussion

Many schools in urban and rural districts have been transformed and education quality improved by SMC-EQ sensitization and training. The GABLE evaluation team observed changes in communities and schools in poor rural areas where resources are very scarce and income levels are very low, as well as in better-off communities with more resources available to families and schools. Community members spoke enthusiastically about SMC-EQ and its effects on the community and the schools and they were proud to talk about the activities they had undertaken after participating in CRECCOM training. Despite this obvious enthusiasm, there were questions about how much time it might take for things to happen.

At the district level, a strong sense of collaboration was found in all districts visited where the team met with representatives of both ministries of education and gender, youth and community

services. Some of these government representatives noted “we would not have known each other had it not been for CRECCOM.” They have been trained together and have shared the responsibility of training teachers and community members, and monitored the impact of SMC-EQ in the schools and districts.

CRECCOM is a relatively new NGO making it difficult to assess the overall effectiveness of its SMC-EQ efforts. Yet, based on the site visits and the CRECCOM literature reviewed by the GABLE evaluation team, the results to date have been impressive. Contributing to the national visibility of CRECCOM and SMC-EQ are their regularly held quality education stakeholders seminars, on-going briefing meetings; informal meetings with parliamentarians; and policy makers’ briefing seminars. Furthermore, CRECCOM’s SMC-EQ may extend its impact outside Malawi as other Southern African countries, Zambia for instance, seek assistance from CRECCOM in starting similar programs, and if it receives the UNESCO literacy award for which it has been nominated this year.

### **SMC-EQ Sustainability**

The experience of other social mobilization campaigns for education in Africa, Asia and Latin America (Kenya, Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Columbia and Bolivia) has shown that sustainability occurs when there are sufficient and appropriately trained education professionals to select, maintain and further develop the activities and programs that improve the quality and efficiency of basic education.<sup>14</sup> CRECCOM, through SMC-EQ, has created a large cadre of trained and motivated professionals at the district and zonal levels, as well as leaders and educators in the local communities to carry out and sustain the achievements in their districts. The CRECCOM Director and staff are aware of sustainability concerns and are helping district and zonal officials and field workers undertake measures to ensure the sustainability of the accomplishments in various districts.

In conferences held in several districts, CRECCOM staff members discuss with the officials, field workers and other stakeholders ways of increasing sustainability. Sustainability measures discussed at Mzimba South District workshop included: intensifying media coverage of CRECCOM activities to encourage community ownership, incorporating SMC-EQ support visits into sectoral programs; collaborating closely with the district commissioner’s office, and holding monthly briefings on CRECCOM activities with the educational commissioner and district assembly. CRECCOM has succeeded in developing a cohort of change agents in the schools and communities who continue to with some support from the school and community service districts. Currently, CRECCOM provides continuing support and coordination to the participating districts, each of which has a designated CRECCOM Desk Officer. School districts are required to collect detailed data on initiatives in each school and accomplishments to date. It is not clear if these districts can continue to do this data-gathering and reporting without CRECCOM’s financial and moral support.

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<sup>14</sup> Andrea Rugh and Heather Bossert. *Involving Communities: Participation in the Delivery of Education Programs*. Washington DC: Creative Associates International, Inc., 1998.

## Discussion

Changed attitudes, improved infrastructure, improved teaching and learning, increased attendance and persistence, reduced dropout, and improved student academic achievement in the participating districts are sustainable provided there is continued monitoring by CRECCOM staff and the extension workers of the MOEST and MOGYCS. Having a sense of ownership and the attitude nurtured by SMC-EQ that “quality education is our business” are bound to continue. But the government and the system will have to continue to provide the leadership and systemic reforms and support that are beyond community means.

One general concern expressed by several parents and government officials is that the efforts begun by the communities need further support from the donors. While communities can mold bricks, they cannot afford to buy the cement to build school blocks. They need government and donors to come in with that support. This is a danger in all social mobilization programs for education delivery, where the potential for disappointment and frustration to always exist.<sup>15</sup> As one district commissioner told the evaluation team, “Mobilization and empowerment are only the first steps.” In order for people not to get frustrated, they want support to complete the initiatives they have started. Communities in some schools visited by the team wonder when will the government come back to do more for education beyond what they have already done.

Another concern discussed with division and district officials was how to sustain the emphasis of education as an equally valuable commodity for girls as well as boys. These officials felt these gains made under the auspices of GABLE would continue as an integrated part of Malawi's national education strategy. Also, CRECCOM staff stressed that they believed that attitudes on girls' education have changed. Nevertheless, the SMC-EQ would continue to promote gender equity as an integral part of its training and sensitization efforts.

## Scaling Up

CRECCOM is in the process of scaling up SMC-EQ to cover the remaining 15 districts in Malawi over the next two years in order to achieve national coverage. According to the CRECCOM Director, the plan is to phase up into eight districts during the first year and seven districts in the second. This seems to be feasible given CRECCOM's strategy of finishing up with one set of districts and then moving into another. However, there remain some constraints that need to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Logistical Problems: Having visited schools in the southern, central and northern regions of the country, the GABLE evaluation team appreciates the difficulties that must be faced by staff members in moving from the regional office in Zomba to other districts in central and northern regions in particular. There are several logistical problems but the staff seems to have been able to deal with them when phasing up into 14 districts in 2000 and 2001. It may be difficult to scale up but CRECCOM has proven it is doable and is confident the organization can carry out this task. However, there are bound to be communication and operational problems due to the distances involved, and possible staffing difficulties.

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<sup>15</sup> Andrea Rugh and Hether Bossert. Op. Cit.

Lack of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System: CRECCOM now collects an impressive array of data from the schools and districts where it currently operates, but it lacks the resources to store and analyze the data. Its SMC-EQ program consists primarily of training inputs and processing information with officials and community members. While the organization's activities are impressive to date, it has not developed a set of outcome indicators for assessing performance over time and in different districts. A basic but reliable M&E system is needed for CRECCOM to measure its effectiveness. Hardware, software, and at least one individual trained in database development and data analysis are a given requirement for the ongoing success and transferability of the SMC-EQ approach.

Staff shortages and attrition. CRECCOM has been functioning under tight staffing constraints. It has experienced serious setbacks during the past two years because two of its best-trained staff, both women, left the organization for personal and other reasons

## **IV. PROJECT RESULTS AND IMPACT**

### **SECTION 2**

#### **The SC/US VILLAGE-BASED SCHOOL PILOT PROJECT<sup>16</sup>**

In 1994 SC/US, an American non-governmental organization, started up four “village based schools” (VBS) in the Mangochi District with funding from the USAID/Malawi GABLE program. This pilot project – modeled in part on experience of USAID on community school experiments in several other countries in Africa – was designed to address problems of poor access, especially among girls; low levels of community participation in schools; large classes taught by untrained and infrequently supervised teachers. A wide variety of benefits were envisioned:

- Improved access of children in isolated villages to quality basic education;
- Enhanced village attitudes towards schooling and increased girls’ enrolment;
- Parents enabled to be involved in decisions about their children’s education;
- Parents sensitized to and trained on the value of the school in the life of the community;
- Formation and training of school committees;
- Teacher training methods appropriate to rural schools and less costly than center-based long-term training;
- Manuals and guidelines for running village-based schools;
- A demonstration of how smaller class sizes and pupil-centered and activity-based teaching methods could reduce repetition; and
- A model for the MOEST and other NGOs to replicate nation-wide.

The VBS “model” involved a package of innovative practices:

- A smaller geographical zone of one to four villages;
- Local recruitment of teachers;
- Reliance on primary school graduates as teachers;
- Community participation in the selection of teachers;
- Regular supervision of teachers by a local supervisor;
- A reduced curriculum focusing on English, Chichewa, mathematics and general studies;
- Field-based preliminary training, as well as regular in-service refresher programs for teachers.

While primary funding from USAID supported the pilot activity, the villagers provided in-kind support and labor to mold/burn bricks, build and maintain schools and take part in school management activities. The GOM paid those teachers who possessed the appropriate professional certificates. The local residents and the MOEST District officials were consulted extensively during implementation and involved in carrying out some of the work. Nevertheless,

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<sup>16</sup> Much of the information presented on the pilot project was drawn from the study of B.S. Strickland and J.H. Williams “Communities and School: A Research Report on Save the Children’s Village-Based Schools in Mangochi, Malawi” – 1997.



the project was closely managed by SC/US. According to the post-pilot plan for the project, teachers were to be paid and instructional materials provided by the GOM, supervision was to be carried out by District Primary Education Advisors (PEAs), and the communities would continue their responsibility for the maintenance and support of the school.

The pilot project was initially funded for two years. Toward the end of Year 2, a team was engaged to evaluate the project. Village-based schools were compared with regular government schools in terms of achievement, retention, and the participation of girls. The evaluation team produced data that warranted the following conclusions related to quality, costs, community participation, and sustainability.

- Village-based schools enjoyed better supervision and instructional support than did other schools;
- Children in village-based schools performed significantly better in English and Chichewa than did students in other schools;
- There was little difference in community support in the various communities, although parents in VBS had more and better contact with the teachers;
- Gender balance was better in VBS institutions, with respect to teachers and schools committees; however, no significant differences were observed with respect to pupil enrollment; and
- Promotion rates appeared to be higher, and repetition rater lower in the village-based schools than in the government schools.

### **Quality:**

- There is evidence that village-based schools are “friendlier” to young children and to girls than government schools;
- Children in village-based schools performed significantly better in English and Chichewa than did students in other schools;
- Classes in village-based schools are much smaller and are much more likely to have instructional materials than classes in government schools; and
- Village-based teachers are more likely to be female, are much more closely supervised, but are less educated than teachers in government schools.

### **Costs**

- The village-based “model” appears to cost more than government schools but is generally more cost effective (in terms of cost per unit of instructional input);
- VBS may offer some ways to increase the cost effectiveness of government schools; and
- The innovative features and possible cost savings represented by the village-based schools are hidden by the discrepancies in resources available to government and SC/US schools;

### **Community Participation**

- Villagers see current – and future responsibilities – for their schools as being shared;
- Villagers in VBS communities expressed a clear and greater willingness to take part in the running of their schools than residents near government schools;
- The implications of a “grass roots-up” model of community participation that SC/US is promoting in its institutions stand in clear contrast to the former “top-down” models of community participation;
- The “grass roots-up” model requires sensitization and training of all stakeholders; and
- Dynamics in the community demonstrate: the complexities and sensitivities of increasing community involvement in the school, the need for mechanism to assure full participation, and the frequent necessity for facilitation of the process.

### **Sustainability**

- Whether the VBS are sustainable depends on the particular meaning given to the term “sustainability;”
- If their very survival is involved, the village-based schools will not close down when SC/US leaves;
- If the term refers to current levels of supervision and support by SC/US or to communities assuming full support of school provision, the VBS are likely not sustainable;
- If it means that some school communities will continue to be better off than they were before, the VBS would appear to be sustainable;
- If the term relates to permanent changes in the primary education system as a whole, it is less clear that the pilot would be sustainable;
- The village-based schools appear to have had considerable impact in the geographic proximity of the pilot area, but plans and prospects for systemic impact are as yet unclear;
- The variety of anticipated benefits of the pilot project presented earlier suggest a range of useful potential roles for any NGO that might be interested in a post-pilot involvement with community/village-based schools.

In the context of the conclusions drawn in relation to quality, costs, community participation, and the expressed concerns about sustainability, the pilot project implemented by SC/US has proven very instructive:

- 1) The pilot suggests that the mix of instructional inputs may be an important policy issue in Malawi;
- 2) The pilot envisions a community mobilization and educational support role for organizations functioning closer to rural villages than the central Ministry or its district education offices;
- 3) The pilot begins the process of involving communities in schools, of detailing what it is that communities need to know to participate usefully in the management of schools;
- 4) The pilot suggests ways by which some of the hidden costs of schooling in Malawi (e.g., girls and new pupils) might be shifted from isolated rural villages to the rest of the system;
- 5) The pilot begins to draw the outlines of what a more instructional, field-based approach to managing schools might look like.

Indeed upon its successful completion, the VBS pilot project raised a number of critical issues for Malawi's primary school system. The village-based schools were not deemed to be a panacea to the system's problems and challenges. However, the pilot did provide a concrete symbol of innovation and a practical field-based model for focusing on the instructional needs of rural children. As such, it merited and fortunately earned the attention, interest, and support of the GOM and USAID.

## **THE QUEST PROJECT**

Following the favorable external evaluation of the VBS Pilot Project in 1998, and in the context the GOM's keen interest in a follow-up of the pilot activity successfully carried out in Mangochi, USAID/Malawi provided a second grant to SC/US to take lessons of the VBS pilot to scale at the zone, cluster, and school levels in three target districts: Mangochi, Balaka, and Blantyre Rural all in the southern region of the country. The new project was called "Quality Education through Supporting Teaching (QUEST). The project was a joint activity with the MOEST, the MOGYCS, the Malawi Institute of Education, and communities and targeted decentralizing action down to the school level. The aim of QUEST involved an increasing children's access to a basic education of high quality in a school setting that was conducive to effective learning.

The objectives of the project were to:

1. *Increase Access to Basic Education:*

- Creation of approximately 16,500 new places;
- Establishment of 33 new community schools with 132 classrooms and 33 boreholes/well for safe water; and
- Training of 33 school committees in school management.

2. *Enhance Quality:*

- Support of creative teaching to obtain a 20 percent increase in pupil learning.

3. *Increase Efficiency:*

- Empower the school committees through training to manage, develop, and implement school curricula and monitor pupil dropout and repetition so as to achieve a reduction of 10 percent in the districts involved.

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4. *Test the Impact of an Integrated Curriculum.*

- Test the impact of an integrated curriculum in the District of Balaka so as to influence education policy.

In the context of these project objectives, four indicators were identified and established as measures of positive or negative achievement:

- Increased access for 16,500 pupils in 33 community/village-based school;
- Enhanced pupil learning by 20 percent;
- Decreased pupil repetition by 10 percent, and

- Decreased pupil dropout rate by 10 percent.

The impact of QUEST on the targeted districts in relation to the project objectives has been significant, both in terms of enhancement of access and improvement in school quality and efficiency.

### **Enhancement of Access**

The aim of the construction component of the project was the creation of approximately 16,500 new primary school places through the construction of 33 primary schools, 11 in each target district. All 33 community schools have been established through construction work. Most of the schools have been fully completed while some are in their final stages of completion. These new schools are providing the planned maximum number of new primary school places (16,500). Approximately 69 percent of these places have been filled. This construction of community schools has helped in reducing late entry into the school system. This is due mainly to the reduced walking distances to school, hence students are able to enroll at the official school starting age of six. The schools have also attracted more girls since they are now able to learn close to home. The construction activity has also assisted in developing a spirit of ownership in the community through its involvement in providing bricks, stone, and sand.

### **Improvement in School Quality and Efficiency**

QUEST initiatives for enhancing school quality and efficiency included both teacher professional development and community mobilization for school improvement. The latter program also included a small school/community grant scheme (i.e., QUEST Term Fund), that provided funding to school committees that submitted and obtained approval for school improvements projects. In addition, a focus on building primary system-wide capacity for supporting quality improvements was provided for through the establishment of school cluster networks and a mentor teacher program. Facilitation of regular periodic dialogue at the central, divisional, and district levels concerning systemic reforms and policy development that would promote and sustain quality reforms was also effected.

### **Impact of Direct Teacher Training**

The teacher professional development component focused on practical skills, pupil participation, diverse teaching methodology, utilization of local materials for teaching and learning, teacher awareness of pupil participation and performance, continuous assessment and individual learner support, and effective teacher supervision. The external evaluation of this component of QUEST demonstrated that this development program had produced a very strong impact on the professional activity of the teachers in the classroom.

### **Impact of Supervision Training in Support of Teacher Professional Development**

The project strategy for enhancing quality and efficiency also provided for the establishment of a network of support for teachers through a supervisory training of PEAs and the identification and training of mentor teachers who worked within a school cluster network to provide support to

teachers on-site and through cluster training. Educators agree that improvements in the quality of teaching and learning require regular on-site, school-based supervisory support. The cluster school networks and the mentor teacher program provided this support. Interestingly, the external evaluators of the project found that the establishment of school cluster networks and the mentor teacher program were considered among the most successful achievements of QUEST.

### Impact on Pupil Learning Outcome

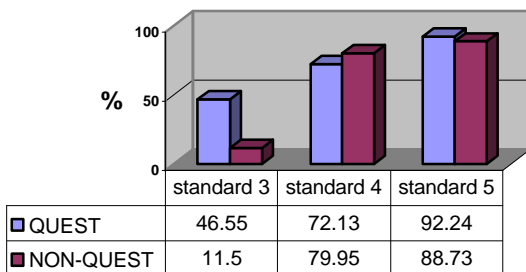
As was pointed out earlier in describing the involvement of MIE and the AIR/IEQ in the project, a partnership was established to design and conduct collaboratively a longitudinal study of the impact of the QUEST project, and of pupil learning in particular in Standards 1-4. The study tracked pupil performance in Mathematics, Chichewa, and English reading using a set of performance-based, curriculum-bound instruments. Baseline data were collected in the three target districts in February 1999 and follow-on data collection occasions included October 1999 and October 2000. The 2001 teacher strike unfortunately precluded data collection in October 2001. In October 2000 data from five matched non-QUEST schools in the Salima District were added to the longitudinal study as a control measure. A cross-sectional comparative study was then conducted to investigate group differences between QUEST and non-QUEST schools. However, due to the 2001 teacher strike only a single year of data was available for cross-sectional comparisons with the treatment schools and districts. The following table and figures present the results from the longitudinal study on pupil performance drawn from the analyses conducted by SC/US, MIE, and AIR/IEQ/Malawi.<sup>17</sup>

Table 3. Performance over time: Chichewa, English, Mathematics				
Class	'Feb-99	'Oct-99	'Oct-00	%Gain
<b>Chichewa Reading Passages (Mean % wds correct)</b>				
Std 2 boys	14.04	32.75	53.67	39.63
Std 2 girls	6.46	16.40	39.43	32.97
Std 3 boys	42.11	60.14	80.08	37.97
Std 3 girls	21.28	45.00	77.49	56.21
Std 4 boys	68.46	83.77	89.61	21.15
Std 4 girls	70.49	85.34	94.86	24.37
<b>English Reading Passages (Mean % wds correct)</b>				
Std 2 boys	6.12	13.80	25.73	19.61
Std 2 girls	3.18	7.21	17.83	14.65
Std 3 boys	13.91	34.72	57.81	43.90
Std 3 girls	4.95	21.37	42.19	37.24
Std 4 boys	44.97	70.04	80.04	35.07
Std 4 girls	41.65	54.81	75.51	33.86
<b>English Reading Comprehension (Mean % correct)</b>				
Std 2				3.45
Std 3			1	12.88
Std 4	1	2	3	20.66
<b>Mathematics (Mean % correct)</b>				
Std 2	40.41	51.58	67.79	27.38
Std 3	62.24	69.12	82.54	20.30
Std 4	72.01	79.04	89.05	17.04

For the Reading Passages studies, pupils in Std 2, for example, read a Std 2 passage at baseline (Feb'99) and read the same Std 2 passage at the end of that school year (Oct'99), then again in the following year when most had been promoted to Std3 (Oct'00). The same procedure was applied for pupils who were in Std 3 and Std 4 at the baseline assessment. The Reading Comprehension Questions were based on the passages read.

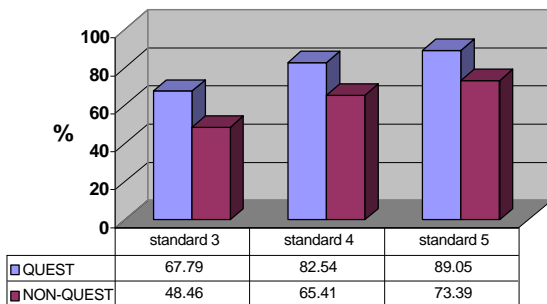
<sup>17</sup> The table and figures have been reproduced from the document "Comprehensive Evaluation of Quality Education through Supporting Teaching (QUEST)" of P. Hebert, E. Randolph, and B.Udedi – 2002.

Figure 2. MEAN PERCENTAGE CHICHEWA READING SCORES IN QUEST AND NON QUEST AREAS



These results represent post-test comparisons of the performance of pupils who were enrolled in QUEST schools for two years compared to the controls. That is, Pupils in Std 3, Std 4, and Std 5 began the program as Std 2, Std 3, and Std 4 pupils, respectively.

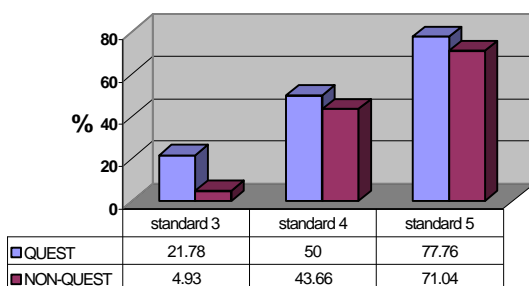
Figure 3. MEAN PERCENTAGE MATHEMATICS SCORE IN QUEST AND NON QUEST AREAS



It can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2 that the advantage in performance is notably greater for the QUEST Schools for Std 3 Chichewa and Std 3 English as compared to the performance advantage shown for Std 4 and Std 5 pupils. It will be important to see if the early learning advantage seen for pupils in QUEST Schools is generalized to the subsequent grades in the following years. For example, the Std 3

For Mathematics, pupils in the QUEST Schools consistently performed, on the average, 17.4 percentage points higher than pupils in non-QUEST schools.

Figure 4. MEAN PERCENTAGE ENGLISH SCORES BETWEENQUEST AND NON QUEST AREAS



It can be seen in Table 3 that with the exception of Standard 2 English passages, Standard 2 and Standard 3 English Comprehension, and Standard 4 Mathematics that the performance indicator of 20% was successfully achieved.

Figures 2, 3, and 4 show that the advantage in performance is notably greater for the QUEST schools.

### Impact on Pupil Dropout and Repetition

Due to the delay and reported unreliability of the National Primary School Census data, SC/US conducted a rigorous pupil tracking system to assess the level of pupil dropout and repetition in the schools of its target districts. These data as displayed in Table 4 were then compared with the national figures given by the Primary School Census from 1999. Although the methods applied by SC/US were somewhat different than those used to calculate pupil dropout and repetition in the Census, the end result of these two calculations are, theoretically, similar and deemed comparable.

District	Standard 1		Standard 2		Standard 3		Standard 4	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Mangochi '98-'99	16.5	16.6	15.1	13.9	11.6	11.5	10.5	10.7
Mangochi '00-'01	11.4	11.0	8.5	7.9	7.7	7.9	8.6	10.1
Balaka '98-'99	13.0	12.3	10.3	9.3	9.0	8.8	7.8	8.5
Balaka '00-'01	3.0	2.3	1.7	1.3	3.7	3.7	2.6	5.1
Blantyre Rural '98-'99	11.7	12.1	10.5	10.4	8.9	9.3	9.0	11.0
Blantyre Rural '00-'01	3.9	3.4	3.4	2.7	5.4	4.9	5.0	7.0

\*Residual dropout from MOEST 1999 statistics were used as baseline comparison.

Table 5 presents the dramatic increases in the percentage of pupils who are being held back one Standard in comparison with the national statistics stated at baseline. The data reflect the needed compromises that take place when increased attention is given to pupil performance and readiness for promotion. Under the QUEST Project teachers have learned ways to monitor pupil progress and to make decisions about promotion through formal assessment at the end of the year. When teachers are aware of and care about pupils' performance they are less likely to promote them to a class where they are assured to fail. This attention to the individual performance levels of pupils is and should be recognized as a very positive outcome of the QUEST Project and should be viewed as such, in spite of increases in pupil repetition. It is also important to note that until the quality of schooling is improved sufficiently enough that pupils attain basic literacy and numeracy at a rate consistent with grade expectations – and the curriculum standards are appropriately aligned with research-based development standards – substantial advances in school efficiency will not be realized.

District	Standard 1		Standard 2		Standard 3		Standard 4	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Mangochi '98-'99	16.5	16.8	14.8	15.4	14.8	14.7	10.0	10.8
Mangochi '00-'01	38.9	41.0	28.8	28.5	26.8	35.5	22.9	22.4
Machinga '97-'98 (Totals Only)**	Total % 18.0		Total % 14.7		Total % 14.2		Total % 10.8	
Balaka '00-01 (Average across sex)	Ave % 33.5		Ave% 21.7		Ave% 30.3		Ave % 16.9	
Blantyre Rural '98-'99	16.7	18.3	16.3	15.6	17.1	18.5	11.3	10.7
Blantyre Rural '00-'01	41.8	41.5	30.3	28.3	38.0	34.7	23.4	22.1

\*MOEST 1999 statistics were used as baseline comparison.

\*\*Repetition Rate for Balaka could not be calculated because of District change between 1998 and 1999. Therefore, the overall repetition rate for Machinga was used as a comparison.

### Impact of the Integrated Curriculum Pilot Study

SC/US developed an integrated approach to implement the curriculum in Standards 1-4 (Junior Primary Standards) during the VBS pilot project from 1994-1998. Basically, this approach integrated the music, creative arts, and physical education into the core subjects of mathematics, Chichewa, English, and General Studies. Subsequently and in partnership with MOEST and MIE, SC/US incorporated a pilot study of the integrated curriculum into the QUEST Project. The teacher of Standards 1-4 in the QUEST schools in the Balaka District were trained to implement the integrated curriculum and post-test results of pupil performance were compared to three sets of comparison schools: QUEST schools in Balaka, Control Schools in Mwanza and Machinga.

The results of the study are shown in Figures 5-7. The impact of the integrated curriculum is demonstrated by higher pupil scores, on the average, for mathematics and Chichewa in the schools where the integrated curriculum was being utilized. On the other hand, English literacy was not enhanced as a result of the integrated curriculum.

### Impact of Community Training and Mobilization for School Improvement

The community support program of QUEST involved the training of PTA members, school committee members, and community leaders in the following areas:

- participation in school management
- participation in implementing the school curriculum
- following-up on absenteeism and dropouts, with particular focus on girls
- holding regular meetings to discuss the quality of schooling for pupils
- providing storage of distributed learning materials as needed
- identifying and prioritizing school improvement priorities through the development of the QUEST Term Plan/Initiative and develop proposals to the QUEST Fund where plans cannot be met by local resources.



The PEAs and CDAs were the primary trainers of school committees and PTAs and are still key in the development of sustained mobilization of community involvement in the school. One critical factor in the ongoing support program for communities is the residency of the PEA within the local zone. This constraint has been alleviated to some degree by the construction of PEA houses within the zone itself. The recent external evaluation of the QUEST determined that the two most frequent responses from community members regarding the benefit of the training was their learning about the roles and responsibilities of the community in improving school quality and their learning about ways to encourage pupil attendance and discourage dropouts. Though communities had varied levels of participation in the school, all community members reported that they valued the training immensely and would like to have more, particularly in the area of planning for school improvement.

Community school relationships were in general viewed as very good and community members had substantial confidence in their teachers and the methods they employed to enhance pupil learning. Community leaders unanimously indicated that they would like to see the teacher training program extended to Standards 5-8, where the school included these Standards. Despite the clear impact of the community training and the mobilization for school improvement programs, more regular community facilitation and support may be necessary from the PEAs and/or CDAs to establish sustained community involvement in school improvement.

#### Impact of QUEST in Relation to the USAID/Malawi Results Framework

The overall strategy for USAID/Malawi's Strategic Objective 4 (SO4) is *to support the development of an education sector wherein schools are providing an environment in which the majority of children are learning*. The QUEST Project addressed this overall goal directly as it has targeted and been successful in achieving improved pupil performance among Junior Primary pupils (Standards 1-4) in the three target districts. The impact of QUEST is herein addressed in the context of the two Immediate Results (IR) under the SO4:

##### IR4.1 Effective schools developed in targeted areas

Effectiveness in education is achieved when teachers are able to translate educational policies and new methodologies into improved student learning in the classroom. It is also determined when the whole school environment is improved to assist teachers.

The QUEST Project, by working simultaneously to build capacity among teachers and education support (e.g., school cluster networks and communities) at the local level and to utilize information gained from interventions to inform and support policy development that will lead to sustained quality improvement, has done remarkably much to support this IR.

Figuc5. PERCENT ENGLISH SCORES BY GROUP AND SEX

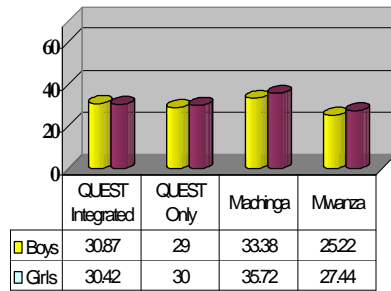
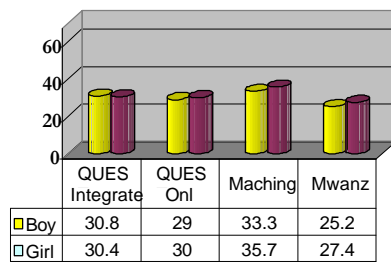


Figure 6. Percent English Score by Group and Sex

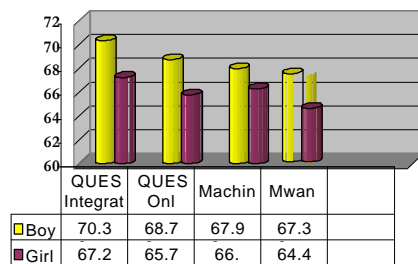


Standard 3 pupil performance in Chichewa, English, and Mathematics for pupils in integrated curriculum classrooms (QUEST, Balaka) are compared to three controls.

In addition to the QUEST-Mangochi both Machinga and Mwanze were used as a control. Machinga is more similar to Balaka in that Yao is spoken by the children in addition to Chichewa. The low scores from Mwanza reflect the constraint that a different home language (Yao in this case) can present to literacy learning in a second language (in this instance, Chichewa).

It is also important to note the large performance gap between girls and boys in Chichewa and Mathematics.

Figure 7. STANDARD 3 MATHEMATICS



The most valuable impacts of QUEST in relation to IR4.1 are:

- facilitation of substantial non-central involvement in primary school quality improvement;

QUEST has been very successful in focusing the attention of the education administrative community at all levels of the system on quality improvement issues and solutions in the primary sub-sector;

- establishing systems for enhancing teacher professionalism and development through school cluster networks and a mentor teacher program;

QUEST has established for the first time in Malawi a system for providing such support to primary school teachers through its school cluster networks and mentor teacher program;

- building capacity of communities to participate in education quality improvement; and

QUEST has successfully engaged communities in education development and management of schools and has provided, through the QUEST Fund, a mechanism for schools to source additional funds to meet school improvement priorities;

- teacher professional development.

The teacher training program of QUEST has resulted in improved pupil performance, particularly in Chichewa literacy and mathematics.

#### IR4.2 Policy Reforms and Investment Strategy Formulated

Decentralization of responsibilities and services is a primary aim of the MOEST sector strategy. A central aim of QUEST was to decentralize the quality improvement initiatives for primary education. To this end the project deliberately worked toward supporting non-central and central decision-makers through provision of opportunities for open dialogue and debate regarding education quality improvement with a common goal of informing policy development via information and data from non-central sources and from results of ongoing research.

QUEST also served to support the sector strategy by addressing many of the major priorities stated in the Policy Investment Framework (PIF) of the MOEST. The following PIF components were directly addressed by the project: decentralization, increased access, gender equity, increased efficiency, and involvement of parents and communities.

#### **Sustainability of the QUEST Project Initiatives**

As has been described, the QUEST Project involved the development and successful establishment of a number of innovative initiatives. A realistic presentation of the sustainability

of the overall QUEST Project interventions must be limited to those activities that have had the most potentially significant impact.

The QUEST Project strategy for enhancing the quality and efficiency of education stressed the need of a strong capacity development program that not only supported teacher professional development, but also provided for the establishment of a network of support for teachers. Such a network was developed through the supervisory training of PEAs and the identification and training of mentor teachers who work within a school cluster system to provide support to teachers on-site and through cluster training.

The establishment of school cluster networks and the mentor teacher program is unanimously considered the most successful achievement of the project. It is generally known and accepted that improvements in the quality teaching and learning require on-site school-based support of the teacher. The school cluster network and the mentor teacher program provide such a solution for Malawi.

At this point in time, the system of local support to teachers through school cluster networks and the mentor teacher program is not sustainable in the three districts targeted by QUEST. To facilitate the sustainability of this system, it should be institutionalized under the MOEST and supported by national policy. In addition, to maximize the benefit and sustainability of the system it should be linked to other teacher education initiatives.

## V. INSTITUTIONAL ROLES & CAPABILITIES

### NON-PROJECT ASSISTANCE

The total funding for GABLE was US\$45.5 million of which US\$35 million was obligated as NPA funding of which 85 percent (US\$29.75 million) went directly to the GOM's Number One Account--more appropriately called the GOM General Fund.<sup>18</sup> . This NPA was provided directly to the GOM as a mechanism to assist supporting improvements directly at the Ministry level rather than at the project level and as leverage for encouraging the GOM and MOEST to carry out educational policy changes. Basically, NPA represents a "carrot and stick" approach--a government is given a tranche of funds to use as it sees fit contingent upon meeting certain conditionalities.

Under GABLE I, US\$14 million was obligated as NPA funds to be released in tranches of US\$4 million in 1992, and US\$5 million in 1993 and 1994 respectively. The conditionalities for GABLE I called for changes in education policy and providing the necessary support to carry out program activities to USAID's satisfaction which were essentially carried over into GABLE II.<sup>19</sup> NPA funds in the amount of US\$21 million were to be released in tranches of US\$7 million subject to USAID approval. However, the Mid-Term Evaluation of GABLE called into question the mix of NPA and PA funds observing that several conditions were not being met by the GOM--especially with respect to GABLE II (i.e., mutually agreed upon performance standards between the GOM and donors regarding a strategy for education, a limited capacity within the Ministry of Education to deliver comprehensive services, and a commitment from the government to support reform of Malawi's education system).<sup>20</sup>

While the evaluation suggested that USAID/Malawi reconsider re-programming a portion of NPA funds to the project (this was not done), the review also stressed the need for the GOM to "develop an adequate policy investment framework (PIF) and a more comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system for the GABLE program." Indeed, the result was that a more stringent set of conditions (i.e., conditionalities) were imposed releasing NPA funds during the GABLE II Extension/Amendment. In short, greater accountability procedures were required to assure the proper use of NPA funds.

### Conditionalities

More specific conditionalities had to be met before USAID could transfer any NPA funds to the GOM--in this case, the remaining two US\$7 million tranches. These conditionalities are listed below calling for the GOM to allocate or ensure:<sup>21</sup>

- Not less than 27.5 percent of its budget to the education sector;

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<sup>18</sup> Personal communication with the USAID/Malawi Education Sector Officer and confirmed with Principal Secretary of Debt and Aid Management at the Malawi Ministry of Finance (MOF). However, during the early years of GABLE I and II, monies went directly to the Ministry of Education rather than the General Fund. These monies are now processed through the Ministry of Finance.

<sup>19</sup> See USAID/Program Assistance Approval Document, September 1991, pps. 1-3.

<sup>20</sup> Refer to the GABLE Mid-term Evaluation, August 12, 1998.

<sup>21</sup> See "Overview of USAID Basic Education Programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, Africa Bureau, USAID, Washington, D.C., June 1998 and GABLE II Amendment, August 1998, pps.13-21; see USAID/Malawi Action Memo dated March 4, 1998 referring to "GABLE Satisfaction of Conditions."

- Not less than 63.5 percent of the education budget to support primary education or alternatively achieve a teacher-pupil ratio of 1 to 64 and four exercise books per pupil per annum;
- That not less than 10 percent of the primary education budget be allocated as a budgetary line item for the purchase of learning materials;
- The establishment and dissemination of new policies on double shifts in urban schools, distribution of teachers and learning materials to the lower standards, and age streaming;
- The adoption of a new age policy for entry into primary school; and
- That gender streaming under the GABLE Project Grant Agreement is being implemented along with increases in girls' achievement scores.

Subsequently, NPA funds during the GABLE II Extension, were to be directed to the Ministry of Finance and not to the Ministry of Education (now referred to as MOEST).

### **Ministry of Finance**

The advantages were that USAID acquired greater leverage by channeling funds through the MOF to effect policy changes while at the same time ensuring that the funds as well as the conditionalities are managed and tracked by the MOF. Thus, in the GABLE II Extension, the MOF is charged with the responsibility of preparing a "Letter of Conditionalities Met" to USAID. Once reviewed and approved by USAID/Malawi, NPA funds were to be released for distribution to the GOM as well as to MOEST for capacity-building activities identified in the GABLE Extension/Amendment. These activities were:

- Creation of a Policy Investment Framework (PIF);
- Improving MOEST's ability to monitor primary education by strengthening its Education Management Information System (EMIS); and
- Ensuring broad stakeholder participation in the policy formulation process designated in MOEST as the development of a Girls Appropriate Curriculum (GAC).

The MOF officials were asked if they track the money that goes into the GOM general fund. They do not--as they put it, "Money is fungible." But the MOF representative also said that these monies were being used in accordance with the stated goals of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The balance of the NPA funds (15%), dedicated to support specific MOEST activities; is managed by the MOF.<sup>22</sup> Discussions with representatives of MOF indicated this was a considerable burden especially since their ability to report to USAID was often held hostage to the legislative budget process. Despite the stated burden, the MOF preferred to directly manage the funds going to MOEST capacity-building activities. They simply felt the MOF had a greater capability for managing funds and that "more cooks in the kitchen" would inevitably create more problems which had been the case in the past. To be sure, this process has achieved greater accountability of tracking the use of NPA by MOEST but delays have often ensued in transferring funds from one Ministry to another due most often to protracted budget discussions in the Malawi Parliament.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> As MOEST capacity-building activities require funds, a request is made to USAID, and if approved, funds are transferred to a GABLE Special Counterpart Account at the Reserve Bank of Malawi for dispersal to MOEST.

<sup>23</sup> Personal communication.

## **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MOEST)**

### **Planning Unit**

MOEST has benefited greatly from GABLE funds over the LOP. In particular, these funds have permitted the establishment of a Planning Unit for implementing planning throughout the Ministry therein permitting a more proactive approach in the allocation of education resources. Planning is now carried out with greater coordination with the MOF and the MOGYCS in recognition of their overlapping roles when it comes to using national resources to address education and community problem. Through GABLE, funds were used to provide international training to ten persons (five at the International Institute of Education Planning; and five individuals receiving short-term training in statistics in the U.S.).<sup>24</sup> Additional training was also carried out using outside consultants for in-country training. Since the advent of the GABLE II Extension/Amendment, MOEST has focused on three fundamental goals with respect to primary education:

- Improving the Long-Term Finance Resource Base;
- Improving the Quality, Availability and Efficiency of Primary Education; and
- Improving the Relevance of Primary Education for Girls.

These goals are being accomplished through the implementation of three fundamental efforts underway in MOEST; 1) the completion of the PIF and its subsequent transition from a policy document into a planning/implementation strategy; 2) the continuing improvement of MOEST's data collection and analysis abilities as articulated through EMIS, and the integration of the GAC into a national integrated curriculum. Each of these efforts is discussed below:

### **Policy Investment Framework**

By the time of the GABLE II Extension/Amendment, USAID included as part of its SO4 Strategy (i.e., Improved Access to and Quality and Efficiency of Basic Education, Especially for Girls) a requirement that a Policy Reform and Investment (PIF) Strategy be formulated. Designated as IR 4.2, the development of a PIF in MOEST was considered of paramount importance if the GOM was to achieve an education program for all of its citizens rather than just a few. There was a pressing need for a coherent set of policies to guide MOEST in its planning and for assisting the Parliament to assign priorities in the budgetary process.

While USAID/ Malawi had requested a policy framework document earlier in the GABLE LOP, the GABLE Extension/Amendment linked all future transfer of NPA funds to demonstrating progress towards completing the PIF. The completed PIF was expected to:<sup>25</sup>

- Develop appropriate policy guidelines and prioritize government programs on education needs;
- Propose strategies for implementing the new policies;

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<sup>24</sup> Of the ten persons trained in the Planning Unit, four were women; personal communication with EMIS Manager.

<sup>25</sup> See USAID/Malawi Implementation Letter #11 dated November 11, 2000.

- Cost-out the new priorities on the activity basis and determine the funding gap so that government can prudently request development partners to assist in closing said gap;
- Use the PIF as an Education Sector Development Plan or Sector Investment Program as an initial stage for an approach to sector-wide funding
- Direct development in this sector;
- Provide a comprehensive analytical perspective of the sector and determine its growth in the next 12-15 years;
- Propose new policies consistent with GOM initiatives contained in the PRSP;
- Audit capacity problems, ministry needs, and proposed solutions;
- Increase access to educational opportunities for Malawi citizens at all levels;
- Ensure that Malawi's education system does not intensify existing inequalities across social groups and regions;
- Maintain and improve the quality and relevance of education and review curriculum appropriateness vis a vis all societal groups;
- Develop an institutional and financial framework for sustaining Malawian schools into the future; and
- Highlight the funding gaps in the education sector while identifying more sources of private and donor assistance.

Furthermore, the creation of a PIF document was expected to be a product produced by a broad range of stakeholders utilizing the best information available on the education sector.

### Accomplishments

In spite of many delays, the MOEST produced a completed PIF that was released for public distribution on February 2001. This document is thorough and addresses all of the aforementioned issues. Now that the PIF is finished, the MOEST Planning Unit is working on developing a Strategic Plan.

### Future Prospects

The PIF is a forward-planning document with designated targets to be achieved during the next 2-5 years. However, despite these targets, the PIF is merely a plan--the Parliament has the final word on the level of spending to be allocated for education. Given the political vicissitudes of the budgetary process, PIF targets must be viewed as flexible rather than fixed benchmarks. As one senior education manager described the PIF, "It is a tremendous accomplishment of the Planning Unit, but it must also be seen as a living document subject to changing social conditions of the nation."

### **Educational Management Information System (EMIS)**

Developing a reliable EMIS is essential for monitoring PIF performance along with ensuring that resources available to education are being allocated to the areas of greatest need. The continuing objective of MOEST is to:

- Further develop the EMIS which is critical for decision-making and for monitoring the PIF;



- Build capacity of local personnel at the division and district levels for the purpose of micro-level analysis and planning;
- Complete school mapping in 34 educational districts; and
- Assist in the preparation of division and district education plans.

According to the current EMIS Director, the EMIS is now capable of serving MOEST needs. The Director has been with the Planning Unit since 1988. Before 1990, MOEST had no computers but RCSA (the Regional Center for Southern Africa) provided units that the UNDP assisted in networking. However, it was increasingly apparent that for MOEST to collect and analyze education information, the Planning Unit needed to develop a full-fledged EMIS. GABLE, as part of its capacity-building efforts, provided computers to the Planning Unit in 1994-95. According to the Director, the Unit's ability has improved considerably over the last five to six years with the EMIS becoming increasingly more complex. MOEST's EMIS has gradually evolved from the early 1990s to the present although not with a lot of attention paid to system integration. The Director noted that the equipment and/software provided were not always compatible with the equipment already on hand. To make the point, the Director noted that his current system was incompatible with data collected before 1997. Nevertheless, MOEST has been able to produce increasingly more detailed and accurate statistics on the Malawi education system.<sup>26</sup>

At this time, the EMIS is using personal computers with Office 2000; with Excel, Access, Word and Powerpoint for presentations. District and division education data (from approximately 5000 primary schools) are entered into the Education Basic Statistics Database (maintained in Access) and analyzed using SPSS/PC--Version 10 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In the 2001 survey to be conducted, all data are being entered into ACCESS via stand-alone PCs but it is anticipated that USAID funds will enable the Planning Unit to become networked, greatly improving the functional capabilities of the EMIS.

GABLE funds have been used to train several of the staff in the Planning Unit in data collection, data entry skill, and data analysis. Unfortunately, the down-side of training is that these personnel often leave for better-paying jobs once they receive training. Staff turnover has had a constraining effect on operational efficiency. The Planning Unit now consists of 1 Director and 4 support staff; during peak periods when questionnaire data are being received, validated, and entered into the EMIS, the office has to borrow planning staff from Division Offices. These offices are also currently understaffed.<sup>27</sup> The Director is optimistic that current vacancies can be filled before the next data-entry cycle. Given the present staffing for managing the EMIS, the office is able to produce the MOEST annual Education Basic Statistics report consisting mainly of summary data tables. A separate data analysis volume is now planned for the 2000 Basic Education Statistics volume.

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<sup>26</sup> The MOEST Education Basic Statistics (1997 through 2000) have been the data sources for the statistics cited in this evaluation. These data are collected annually from the government Division offices usually at the end of the Third School Term (late September, early October). A computer-ready questionnaire has been developed by MOEST. Questionnaire data are processed at MOEST Headquarters with the subsequent publication of the results--usually a year or even two years behind the current education enrollments.

<sup>27</sup> Each division is presently assigned one planner; however, vacancies now exist in four of the six division offices as well as four vacancies in the MOEST central office. USAID, through GABLE, has provided computers to the divisions but lacking trained planners, this equipment is being used for non-EMIS activities.

## Accomplishments

Despite obvious limitation, MOEST has established a viable functioning EMIS using a well-designed questionnaire to conduct annual surveys of the Malawi education system. Data are currently being collected on key variables for answering questions about education access, equity, persistence, the quality of teachers and students, and the basic infrastructure of schools.

## Future Prospects

The Planning Unit still needs support for EMIS (i.e., software and hardware) especially more staff training. Indeed, staff training should be an ongoing process given the staff turnover of this office. The Director is hopeful that more data analysis can be done at the division offices to facilitate better planning. While the Planning Unit is not involved in setting PIF targets, the office will be responsible for determining whether targets are being achieved.

## **Gender Appropriate Curriculum (GAC)**

Adoption of GAC in primary and secondary education has assisted in reducing issues related to education that deter women being on-par with men in development activities. The success of GABLE in incorporating gender into the school curriculum reform, hence making the curriculum gender sensitive, has been a model for other developing countries. The main purpose of the gender appropriate curriculum was to “improve the learning materials and learning environment for girls.” The goals of GAC were to:

- Review the Gender Appropriate Curriculum for Standards 1-8 in primary education and the Junior Certificate curriculum in secondary education;
- Develop relevant teaching materials;
- Conduct orientation courses for the GAC with relevant teachers;
- Conduct monitoring and supervision workshops with PEAs and other MOEST officers, as appropriate; and
- Conduct assessment and formative evaluation courses and seminars, as appropriate.

The GAC Unit became operational at MIE in 1992. GABLE provided the impetus for GAC and the GAC Unit. Cost-sharing was a key element of that project. While salaries were paid by the MOEST, GABLE provided office buildings and supplies, housing for the GAC unit staff (2 women and a man), and supporting workshops and textbook development for training PEAs in their use. The GAC curriculum was implemented in phases, starting in Standards 1 and 2 in 1992 through Standard 8 by 1997/98. All primary school subjects have now been gender-sensitized: Mathematics, English, Chichewa and Science. The work of the GAC Unit and its funding will be completed by June 2002.

## Accomplishments

- The GAC Curriculum for all Standards has been developed and disseminated to the primary schools;
- Training materials have been developed and used in the training of educators, including studies on “Gender Issues in the Classrooms: a Case Study for Teachers in Malawi (1994); A Gender Training Module for School Professionals; a Reference Manual on

Gender Issues in Schools (1997); as well as gender appropriate posters for use in local schools;

- GAC training materials have been provided to PEAs, teachers, school heads and tutors in the teacher training colleges;<sup>28</sup>
- The GAC Curriculum and gender sensitization have been integrated into the MIITEP curriculum; and
- The GAC Unit staff at MIE is carrying out ongoing research on the effectiveness and impact of training on the trainees and on students in the schools.<sup>29</sup>

### Future Prospects

The status of GAC remains unclear. Its mission, as originally envisioned, is finished. Of course, MIE would like maintain the work of this unit as well as its presence on the MIE campus--GAC staff feel that with the turnover of staff (e.g., PEAs and CDSs), continuing training is needed or the gains of GAC might be lost.

### **MINISTRY OF GENDER, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (MOGYCS)**

The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Service, formerly known as the Ministry of Women, Youth and Community Service, has been involved in GABLE program activities from the start. The MOWYCS goals and objectives, including an emphasis on girls' education coincided with Gable's objective. This fostered a collaborative relationship with the MOEST contributing to Gable's achievement.

In the early 1990s when GABLE was designed, the Ministry of Women, and the Minister in particular, through membership in the Federation of African Women Educationalists, contributed to the dialogue on girls' education which informed the GABLE program design. Dialogue was carried out during a conference of leading Malawian women to discuss constraints to girls' education in Malawi held in 1991. Today dialogue continues between GABLE and MOEGYCS with the current Principal Secretary of the MOGYCS (who was interviewed by this GABLE Evaluation Team), on the Governing Board of CRECCOM and supportive of SMC-EQ activities.

MWYCS has supported GABLE at both the policy and operational levels. On the policy level, that Ministry supported the policy reforms instituted by MOEST to increase female access to and persistence in education. Policies endorsed by both ministries were the fee waivers for non-repeating girls, the pregnancy policy and the secondary school scholarship program for qualified female students.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> As of 1999, the GAC Unit had provided gender training to 240 PEAs, nine district education officers, 125 tutors in teacher training colleges, 10,000 serving teachers (who come to MIE for various types of curriculum training); and 10 CDAs.

<sup>29</sup> Malawi Institute of Education, GAC Unit. "A Formative Assessment Study of Gender Issues in Primary Education in Malawi." A report by Fritz Kadyoma, Dora Mwawenje and Duncan Nyirenda, in Collaboration with the Ministry of Education and GABLE PPC, Domasi: Malawi Institute of Education. July 1999 and Mwawenje, Dora, Grace Phiri, and Fritz Kadyoma. "A follow-up Study on the Implementation of Educational Policies in Primary Schools." Domasi: MIE, GAC Unit, February 1998.

<sup>30</sup> This is despite the concern, expressed by the Principal Secretary of MOGYC, during an interview with the GABLE evaluation team, about implementation that made scholarships available to all girls, regardless of need as originally intended by USAID. She felt that scholarships should have been based on need for both girls and boys.

More recently, the MOGYCS, as a key stakeholder, participated in the discussions leading to the formulation of the gender policies incorporated into the PIF issued by the MOEST in February 2001, with support from USAID and other donors. At the same time, the National Gender Policy of the GOM (2000-2005) issued by the MOGYCS has informed the dialogue on gender equity in the PIF.

The most visible role for MOGYCS has been at the implementation level of GABLE through its network of community, youth and social welfare assistants, referred to in this document, as CDAs. These latter came to play a major role in carrying out the SMC and later the SMC-EQ. These field /extension workers represented a viable network and structure to work with in implementing these two social mobilization campaigns. The SMC and SMC-EQ brought these CDAs together with the Primary Education Advisors (PEAs) of the MOEST, trained them and built their capacity to collaborate in sensitizing and mobilizing communities for involvement in their schools, in support of girls' education under SMC and quality education for all under the SMC-EQ.

### **Coordination Activities**

Both MOEST and MOGYCS have GABLE Desk Officers and they take part in workshops in the divisions and districts. Their role is essentially that of liaison with USAID. At the central ministries, there is relatively little collateral coordination. However, at the district levels, the CDAs work closely with PEAs for monitoring and improving local schools and communities.

### **Internalization**

The GOM has clearly taken ownership of many GABLE initiatives as evidenced by the completion of the PIF, the continuing improvement of MOEST's EMIS, and the adoption of a new integrated curriculum which is gender-sensitive. Certainly, during the period of the GABLE II Extension/Amendment, MOEST was very active in its efforts to achieve the conditionalities established in the agreement. Notwithstanding the vagaries of the budget process, MOEST is committed to improving basic primary education and will use the PIF as its guide for the nation's education system for the next 3-5 years.

## VI. MISSION STRATEGIC PLAN AND GABLE

The goal of USAID assistance to Malawi (1995-2000) has been to “achieve broad based sustainable economic growth through five Strategic Objectives (SOs). Following is a brief discussion of the relationship between GABLE and its contributions to achieving these strategic objectives. The relationship of GABLE to the Country Strategic Plan (CSP) and its SOs has been strong for some of the objectives and weak for others. These are discussed briefly below.

SO1 Increased agricultural income on a per capita basis: GABLE’s relationship with this SO has been virtually non-existent.

SO2 Increased sustainable use, conservation and management of renewable natural resources: GABLE’s contribution to this SO2 has also been minimal.

SO3 Increased adoption of measures that reduce fertility and the risk of HIV transmission, improved child health practices:

GABLE’s contribution to achieving this SO is a long-term one, although some short-term results have been achieved. A long-term goal of GABLE was fertility reduction as a result of increased educational opportunities for girls. The association has been established by demographic research throughout the world. School site-visits indicate that mobilization through SMC and SMC-EQ have helped reduce teenage pregnancy among school girls, and reduced the practice of early marriage, both of which are associated with high fertility rates. Furthermore, schools and communities have helped in providing a safe environment for children in the schools by improving sanitary and other health conditions and paying greater attention to child nutrition and health. Social mobilization has encouraged people to discuss sensitive issues, including HIV/AIDS to understand risky practices and adopt protective measures.

SO5 Institutional base for democratic participation strengthened and broadened:

GABLE’s has contributed to this SO as it relates to IR5.1; Civil society strengthened.

Community mobilization through SMC and SMC-EQ has empowered community institutions and structures to increase their role in the management of local schools. By so doing, community mobilization is helping build structures for representative governance and the practice of civic responsibility. These institutions and structures, built to support education quality, should ultimately become channels for solving community problems in other social and economic sectors.

In sum, GABLE’s objectives have been valid, consistent and in line with the CSP.

Following is a brief discussion of the Impact of GABLE on achieving the SO 4 and its IRs 4.1 and 4.2

#### IR 4.1: Effective schools developed in targeted areas.

*IR 4.1.1 Improved Teaching and Learning:* This has been achieved by Quest in three districts: Balaka, Mangochi and Blantye Rural. This pilot project expanded the supply of adequate teachers using improved training techniques, adopted an integrated gender-sensitive curriculum, provided an adequate supply of instructional materials to students, and conducted continuous assessment of students to assure quality.

*IR 4.1.2. Improved Support Systems:* There were two components under this IR: 1) monies were given to MOEST to support the training of PEAs for improving school leadership, supervise teachers, their training and delivery of services; and 2) mobilizing communities by developing a SMC-EQ effort sensitizing communities to support their local schools.

#### IR 4.2. Policy Reforms and Investment Strategy Formulated.

*IR 4.2.1. Policy Investment Framework Developed:* The PIF has been developed and published (February 2001).

*IR 4.2.2. Public and Private Financing for Primary Education Increased:* Public financing has been increased as articulated in PIF, but little has been done to increase the amount of funds for education from the private sector.

*IR 4.2.3. Policy Analysis and Dialogue with Stakeholders Carried Out:* The process has started and is continuing to involve all stakeholders.

## VII. DONOR COORDINATION

When GABLE was designed in 1991, the World Bank (WB) had been supporting education in Malawi since 1967 with several education sector support projects. USAID then became a partner with the WB in supporting basic primary education. With the announcement of free primary education in 1994 donors responded in a major way. The World Bank, (GTZ) DANIDA, CIDA, the EU, Norway committed large sums of money to support basic primary education. Total donor support around that time, including that of USAID, amounted to US \$134.4 million. Later on other donors got involved in supporting education in Malawi: the Department for International Development (DFID), the Japanese International Development Agency (JICA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

A large proportion of donor funds is programmed through the government's development budget, although many of the activities, such as the provision of instructional materials, the training of teachers, and support to district management are actually recurrent activities. This duality created distortions in financial management and analysis that were to be addressed through the Policy Investment Framework (PIF).

The high level of financing and technical assistance provided by donors to Malawi has presented a significant challenge to sustainable reform, and has led to several efforts to promote joint cooperation among all donors. The aim was to ensure coordination on financing and technical support to the education sector, and achieve consensus on principles, procedures, and mechanisms of support to sector analysis and formulation of policy reform. Donors are urging Malawi to continue reform its education system to reflect changes in society, the purpose of universal education, the role of education in a modern Malawi, and the affordability of education for all children.

### ASSESSING DONOR COORDINATION

With respect to USAID's GABLE program and the extent to which its activities have been coordinated with other donors, four basic questions are posed:

#### 1. How effective has donor collaboration been to the primary education sector?

The level of cooperation aimed for in the mid-1990s is yet to be reached. Evidence suggests that donor support for primary education in Malawi has been fragmentary with little or no overall coordination from the MOEST and not much collaboration among the donors. This is due in part to the nature of bilateral support and the lack of a government unit whose responsibility is to coordinate donor support. The result is often duplication of effort and possible waste of scarce resources. Interviews with some donor representatives indicate that some donors know more about other donor support than others. All expressed the desire to have more collaboration.

Yet, coordination is not completely lacking. Several donor representatives interviewed for this GABLE evaluation said, 'we talk to each other and we know what each other is doing.' Some are more aware of USAID support to basic education in Malawi than others. But one cannot deny that a certain level of coordination exists, as evident from the following examples.

- Textbooks developed with USAID support are produced and distributed to the schools by CIDA.
- USAID, the World Bank, the United Kingdom and Denmark provided support to the MOEST for the development of the Policy Investment Framework (PIF), issued in February 2001. They and other donors are working closely with MOEST officials as members of six working Groups dealing with policy implementation issues.
- Various donors, notably the European Union, DANIDA, and MASAF, are supporting community initiatives generated under GABLE's SMC-EQ. These effort consist mainly of constructing school blocks, school libraries and teacher houses, using locally molded bricks. Site visits by the GABLE Evaluation Team confirmed that several donors are contributing to school construction but seemingly each in its own way.
- The Japan International Development Agency (JICA); which has a resident advisor to the Planning Unit at the MOEST, relies on central ministry staff, trained at the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) in Paris with support from USAID, to build the capacity of divisional and district planners and administrators.
- The GAC Unit helped incorporate gender training in the MITTEP, which is funded by GTZ, to enhance the gender knowledge and skills of trained teachers.

## 2. Has GABLE been useful for promoting donor coordination?

Yes; when this question was posed to some donor representatives, the answer was usually positive. Respondent acknowledged the leadership role of USAID, particularly the education team leader and GABLE CTO. Most donor representatives knew about GABLE and felt it had contributed primary education in Malawi. For its part, USAID has sought to promote donor collaboration from the start of GABLE. When donor support intensified in 1994 for primary education, USAID took the lead in organizing the *Development Partners in Education Cooperation Group* and hosted the meetings for several years. This group has played a key role in promoting and facilitating dialogue between the donors and the government, but not necessarily among the donors. Jointly, the donors decided, two years ago, that coordination among donors and with the MOEST would be enhanced if the MOEST assumed the leadership of the Group. This is now the case. Meetings are held at the MOEST and are chaired by the Secretary of Education. The secretariat is handled by one of the partners on a rotating basis annually. The group meets regularly once a month and attendance has been improving. This indicates a change from 1998 when the GABLE mid-term evaluation was conducted. It was noted then that the Group met irregularly and the meetings were poorly attended. How effective these meeting are in promoting donor coordination remains an open question. But this group does provide an ongoing forum for sharing information among donors about their respective activities in support of the education sector and MOEST. Finally, the PIF, developed in collaboration MOEST and the donors, is now considered the main coordinating document. All donor support for the education sector in Malawi is to be guided by the PIF, and all donors are eager to collaborate in its implementation.

## 3. What role, if any, should other donors have played in achieving primary education sector objectives?

Undoubtedly all donors have contributed in one way or another toward achieving the goals of the primary education sector, which are yet to be met. The cumulative gains from this support are numerous, and cannot be attributed to one donor or one program or project.



Donors provide a large proportion of the cost of financing basic primary education. It is impossible to imagine what primary education in Malawi would have been like without donor support of this magnitude. The evaluation team feels, however, that donors could do much more to build upon community-based initiatives for improving education quality. All school communities visited by the evaluation team are clamoring for donor support to help build school blocks and improve the infrastructure, and there is much in the communities to build upon. As school visits indicate, infrastructure improvements are badly needed while community resources are very limited. Furthermore, all donors are talking about community mobilization. Yet it is one thing to mobilize communities yet another to respond to the heightened expectations. Better collaboration and coordination would contribute significantly to improved educational quality, effectiveness and efficiency, and help achieve the goals of the primary education sector.

4. Have there been set backs in the process of promoting donor coordination?

The recent withdrawal of DANIDA from Malawi could have very serious implications for the education sector. DANIDA has provided substantial support to the sector over the past few years. It was expected to provide the main funding for community secondary schools for which the MOEST has made no allocations. This could have serious implications not only on secondary education but also on primary education. No other donor has come forward with an offer to replace DANIDA's contribution to the education sector.

## VIII. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is an important element of any assistance program or project carried out by USAID. In the case of GABLE, the customers were its intended beneficiaries (i.e., pupils, their families, teachers, and education administrators at the local level).

While no formal survey was conducted, all that the evaluation team heard and saw during their site visits indicates a high level of satisfaction with USAID and GABLE's contribution to education in Malawi. This includes high-level government officials in the MOEST, MOGYCS, divisional and district officers, faculty members in Chancellor College's Faculty of Education, the staff of MIE, and community representatives (i.e., chiefs, village headmen, and members of the school committee and PTA). Discussions with community members and teachers revealed that students, especially girls, understand and appreciate what GABLE has done for them. GABLE and SMC-EQ has changed parental and community attitudes toward them and their education. Their chances of access and completion of primary education has improved and enhanced their prospects of success and continuation to secondary education.

For the MOEST officials, the most relevant activities have been:

- Capacity building provided to the Planning Unit; and
- Non-project assistance to the Ministry for the development of EMIS and PIF;

From parents, students and teachers perspective, the following activities are perceived as most relevant to Malawi:

- The SMC which transformed attitudes toward girls and their education;
- Policy changes brought about by GABLE that helped increase girls' access, persistence and completion of primary education (fee waiver for no-repeating girls during GABLE I, not requiring school uniforms, and the pregnancy policy allowing girls who dropped out because of pregnancy to return to school; and
- Making the curriculum more gender sensitive and increasing its relevance to student lives;
- The SMC-EQ ad QUEST which helped bring about major school improvements such as:
  - ✓ Improving teaching practices in the schools;
  - ✓ Making schools safer for children: providing more latrines and safe drinking water, etc; and
  - ✓ Making schools more attractive through the introduction of extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, choirs, debating clubs, gardening, and handicrafts).
- Teachers appreciate the increased availability of housing, improved infrastructure of the schools, availability of textbooks and learning materials; peer support and parental involvement in the education of their children.
- Parents and community members appreciate having a voice in school affairs and being able to work closely with teachers and administrators.

The evaluation team did not hear any criticism of GABLE activities; however, some community members and education officials were assertive in stating that they hoped their efforts to "help themselves" would not be forgotten by the government--eventually leading to assistance either by the GOM or by outside donors.

## **IX. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

With the implementation of its overall strategy “*to support the development of an environment in which the majority of the children were learning*” the GABLE Program, and more particularly the GABLE Extension/Amendment, has successfully achieved its objectives “*of creating a policy environment to develop sustainable and effective schools and classroom practice while putting into wider practice the innovative and effective interventions at the community level that inform policy analysis and system reform strategies.*” The findings of the summative evaluation are described in considerable detail in the body of the report. A summary of the findings of the evaluators is herein presented.

### **Education Quality**

1. Teachers trained under the GABLE program and projects practice what they have learned in classrooms and classroom environments; teaching is characteristically more interactive and more creative as compared to instruction in non-GABLE schools; teachers value their training immensely, have more confidence in their professional activity, and desire to receive more such in-service formation.
2. The school cluster system and the mentor teacher program are among the most successful components of GABLE developed in the QUEST project; support to facilitate the enhancement and institutionalization of these local support systems is necessary for sustained classroom reform.
3. Pupil performance at Standards 1-4 of the GABLE-targeted schools has been enhanced by 20 percent as proposed in mathematics and Chichewa, while less improvement has been achieved in English reading comprehension.
4. The rate of pupil dropout has decreased by approximately 10 percent projected, in every district and at each Standard in the GABLE-associated schools; the targeted 10 percent reduction in the pupil repetition rate was not achieved because of the increased attention given by teachers to pupil adequate performance and readiness for promotion.
5. The institutional partnerships (SC/US, MIE, AIR/IEQ) established within the GABLE program have been highly productive in researching avenues (e.g., integrated curriculum, continuous assessment, gender appropriate curricula and instructional materials) for enhancing the literacy and numeracy teaching strategies at Standards 1-4.

### **Community Involvement**

6. GABLE has responded directly and successfully to the education sector strategy to involve communities and parents in school construction, supervision, and management through its training and support program for school committees, PTAs, and community leaders; the outstanding efforts of CAII and CRECCOM contributed effectively to this process.

7. Community training has been successful, though community participation in school improvement is variable across communities. More systematic support, facilitation, and monitoring of community practices in school involvement are required for this result to be sustained.
8. While mobilization has been widely implemented, there is a risk that if expectations are not met within a reasonable amount of time, local communities will become frustrated and discouraged.
9. strategic plan with measurable performance indicators needs to be developed and implemented for measure the overall effectiveness of CRECCOM activities; moreover, no management information system (MIS) in place for collecting, storing, As a project, CRECCOM has placed too much emphasis on process and inputs; a and analyzing project data.

### **Gender Equity**

10. GABLE has succeeded in enhancing the commitment of the GOM to girls' education and fostered educational policy reforms culminating in the incorporation of gender equity throughout the PIF.
11. GABLE has been successful in creating a conducive and enabling environment for learning among boys and girls via its SMC and SMC-EQ project activities.
12. Major attitudinal changes towards girls and their education under SMC and SMC-EQ have led to increased access for girls, abridging the gender gap in primary education, reducing dropouts, and improving performance.
13. The GAC Unit developed gender-appropriate primary education curriculum for use in Standards; these training materials and the training of educators in their use have all improved the learning environment for girls.
14. Despite positive outcomes achieved under GABLE, some gender disparities remain; there are still fewer girls in the higher Standards of primary education as well as in the secondary schools overall, and there continues to fewer female teachers.

### **Role of Government**

15. The government and its concerned Ministries (MOEST, MOGYCS) at the central, divisional, district, and zonal levels have successfully appropriated to themselves ownership of GABLE.
16. The ongoing awareness, support, and collaboration of the senior administrators and professional staff of the concerned Ministries have greatly facilitated the implementation of the activities of GABLE programs and project activities.

17. The MOEST has successfully developed the PIF, established a Planning Unit, and installed an EMIS for assessing the strategic policies of GABLE.

**USAID/Malawi**

18. GABLE has contributed very positively to achieving of the strategy and objectives of SO4. It has produced a significant impact on the two Intermediate Results of the SO4 Results Framework.

## **IX. LESSONS LEARNED**

The summative evaluation of the ten-year GABLE Program has produced a number of important findings in relation to the goal and objectives that were originally envisioned by the GOM and USAID/Malawi, the two major stakeholders in the Program. The identification of these findings necessarily constitutes the major portion of the assessment process effected by the team of evaluators. The comprehensive determination of such results should also assist in identifying a number of important lessons to be learned from the implementation of the broad scope of activities of the program and varied projects of GABLE. These concrete and practical observations can subsequently serve as important guidelines and *caveats* to the ongoing and future developmental work of the GOM, USAID/Malawi, and other stakeholders engaged in strengthening the education sector, and more particularly the primary education sub-sector in Malawi. The observations presented are the fruit of a comprehensive process of interviews, focus discussions with a broad group of stakeholders, field visits to project activity sites and schools, and an extensive consultation of program-related documentation. The following lessons have been organized and presented under a number of operational categories.

### **Sensitization and Orientation of Stakeholders**

1. Social mobilization is a valuable strategy to sensitize and orient potential beneficiaries to the goals and objectives of a program or project; such a strategy must involve a participatory and “bottom-up” approach and include all concerned and targeted stakeholders at the grass-root level of the urban and/or rural areas.
2. The commitment and ownership of the program/project by the central and decentralized officials and professional staff of the concerned agencies of GOM are critical to maintaining the short- and long-term benefits.
3. The design and planning of a program/project must be developed in a participatory fashion and must address the identified needs as recognized and expressed by the principal interested and concerned stakeholders.
4. GOM and donor funding sources, respective financial commitments, fund disbursement conditionalities and procedures, GOM counterpart funding must be clearly and formally identified and determined before launching a program/project.

### **Participation of Stakeholders**

5. The respective roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders must be stated and agreed upon before the launching a program/project.
6. The training of key stakeholders must be programmed (i.e., short- and long-term, in-service and/or full-time) and funding earmarked accordingly.

7. The maintenance of a gender balance vis-à-vis the beneficiaries of a program/project must be targeted and assured.

### **Program/Project Goals and Objectives**

8. These should reflect the strategies and plans of GOM (e.g., national, divisional, district, community levels) as identified via broad consultation with the intended beneficiaries.
9. A periodic internal review and external evaluation of the program/project is required to determine the viability and relevance of the objectives and to decide on the need to redefine existing priorities in the light of socio-economic, political, and cultural changes.
10. A willingness to adjust and revise goals and objectives and to take the adequate necessary steps to re-design a program/project is appropriate and necessary.

### **Program/Project Activities**

11. The use of a pilot approach or strategy is preferable to initiate a large-scale/nationwide program/project
12. Regular and periodic supervision and oversight of project activities (mechanism and personnel) of activities are critical.
13. Adequate and appropriate logistical support (transportation, communication, office space, etc.) must be assured and budgeted for before the start of the program/project.
14. The involvement of national and local professional institutions (university, institutes, agencies, etc.) can provide vital technical support and assistance (e.g., action research, training programs, facilities, etc.).
15. Gender equity must be promoted and sustained in targeting beneficiaries.
16. The use of external technical assistance (e.g., consultants, advisors, etc.) must include a conditionality of development of local capacity and expertise.
17. The use of international firms as contractors should include the establishment of partnerships with local organizations (e.g., NGOs).
18. Collaboration and coordination with other agencies, groups, donors working in the same sector must be sought and encouraged.
19. The use of various media should be utilized to share and publicize information about program/project activities.

### **Management of the Program/Project**

20. A monitoring and evaluation (M & E) system should be established with the level of sophistication to be determined by the nature and complexity of the program/project activities.
21. The ongoing interest and commitment of the leadership of the program/project is critical (e.g., traditional authority, GOM decentralized authority, etc.) and essential.
22. To the extent possible, the use of full-time local technical expertise should be encouraged and maintained.



## **IX. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Inevitably, a summative evaluation is intended to provide an assessment of a program and its various projects as the execution of the latter two is drawing to a close. In such cases there may or may not be a specific follow-up of either of these. This happens to be the situation in the case of the evaluation of GABLE. The assessment is summative and is expected to serve as wrap-up of the program.

However, given the decade-long span of the program, the number of significant interventions which it has initiated and successfully implemented, the evaluation team believes that there are a number of issues that warrant further attention; hence, the presentation of a number of recommendations that could prove valuable to both USAID, GOM, and various other stakeholders interested in and concerned about strengthening the quality of education at the primary sub-sector level in Malawi.

### **Program/Project Stakeholders**

#### GOM

1. The GOM should seek to model with other Ministries the experience at decentralization that has been developed by the MOEST at the divisional, district, and zonal levels.
2. Given the successful participation of varied stakeholders, especially its officials and professional staff in the development of the PIF at the divisional and district levels, the MOEST should actively insure the involvement of the latter in the implementation of its strategy and plans.
3. MOEST should continue to promote with Parliament in relation to the budgetary review process a respect for the education targets identified in the PIF.
4. Special attention should be given to the importance of the gender equity component incorporated in the PIF, working in collaboration with the MOGYCS.
5. The MOEST should pursue actively with Parliament and the MOF the approval of the budget line item in the district budgets that makes provision for the allocation of funds to the district education office (DEO) for the training of school committees, key PTA members, and local leaders to empower them to carry out their school support roles more efficiently.

#### USAID/MALAWI

6. Consultation with interested and concerned stakeholders should be sought when plans for scaling up a successful pilot intervention are being discussed in order to maximize optimally the experience and expertise of the different players.

7. USAID should share the GABLE experience with other countries (e.g., Uganda, Ghana) by some Malawians via reciprocal visits.
8. In the light of the strong enthusiasm that has been generated in a large number of communities by QUEST and CRECCOM, and the serious need of such communities to obtain financial support for their plans, USAID/Malawi should seek stronger intra-donor collaboration; some of the donors could be encouraged to assist specific communities in the geographical areas in which they are currently involved or plan to be.

#### PARTNERS

9. The involvement of the GABLE program technical partners in the USAID/GOM SOAG program activities should be encouraged so that they share their sound experience and expertise.
10. The involvement of partners, particularly educational institutions, should delineate the tangible long-term institutional development benefits to be derived from the partnership.
11. The strategy of social mobilization should be utilized more broadly to address other societal problems in Malawi related to the education sector (e.g., HIV/AIDS, environment, child labor, sanitation, and nutrition).
12. USAID/Malawi should review funding conditionalities and procedures to reflect the ministry constraints vis-à-vis Parliament's budgetary process and MOF practices and scheduling.

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*The Evaluation Team would like to express its sincere appreciation to the staff members of the USAID Mission/Malawi, the MOEST, the MOGYCS, the MOF, CRECCOM, and other stakeholders for their generous assistance in making this evaluation such an enriching and stimulating experience.*

#### Evaluation Team

Dr. Paul A. Hebert, Education Specialist and Team Leader  
Dr. William Millsap, Evaluation Specialist  
Dr. Nagat El Sanabary, Gender Specialist

## **ANNEXES**

## ANNEX 1

### GABLE STATEMENT OF WORK

#### I. TITLE

Summative Evaluation of USAID/Malawi's Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE) Program (612-0240).\*

#### II. OBJECTIVE

To provide a team to conduct a summative evaluation of the GABLE program, which will assess the overall effectiveness and impact of the GABLE program to the primary education sector in Malawi. This follows a mid-term review of the program in August 1998. Specifically, this summative evaluation will assess the program's objectives and results achieved; measure its impact to date but especially during the GABLE II Amendment when the focus moved from access to quality and not covered by the mid-term evaluation; and identify and analyze any implementation problems. This evaluation will provide USAID an appropriate wrap up of the program and lessons learnt.

#### III. BACKGROUND

GABLE was originally designed and authorized in 1991, with a five-year life-of-program. The original design provided \$14 million in non-project assistance (NPA) and \$6 million in project assistance (PA) totaling \$20 million. Based on achievements during the first phase of the GABLE program, and recognizing the need for greater attention to primary education, USAID/Malawi and the Government of Malawi (GOM) decided in 1994 to expand GABLE's scope. A GABLE Program Grant Agreement Amendment to initiate Phase II of GABLE was signed between the governments of Malawi and the United States on September 30, 1994 to add funds to the program and to extend the life of the program until September 30, 1998 to enable additional activities to be undertaken by the GOM. This agreement provided an additional \$21 million in NPA funds and \$4.5 million PA funds bringing the total to \$35 million in NPA and \$10.4 million in PA.

A mid-term GABLE evaluation was conducted from October to November 1997. The focus was on GABLE II. The evaluation centered on two themes: (i) the extent to which GABLE II accomplished what GABLE design documentation and USAID/Malawi's Country Strategic Plan (CSP) indicated would be done in primary education, and (ii) the extent to which GABLE, taking into consideration the evolution in the political economic and educational context in Malawi had adequately addressed the key challenges to basic education in Malawi. One major recommendation from the evaluation was to extend GABLE II for another two years from October 1998 in order for the Government of Malawi (GOM) to complete its commitments, such as the development of the Policy Investment Framework (PIF).

USAID's GABLE II program was intended to make an impact on primary education quality and efficiency. However, given the massive increase in enrolments from 1994 this did not happen. The overall strategy for the GABLE II extension/amendment, following the evaluation's recommendation, shifted its focus from access to quality. The strategy was to support the development of an environment in which the majority of children were learning. The strategy was to work simultaneously on creating a policy environment to develop sustainable and effective schools and classroom practice, while putting into wider practice innovative and effective interventions at the community level that inform policy analysis and system reform strategies.

\* This Statement of Work has been excepted from the Task Order which included tasks for both the evaluation of GABLE as well as Quest.

The amendment/extension carried no additional funds. The total level of funding under GABLE Phases I and II therefore remained at \$45.5 million, of which \$35 million was provided for NPA and \$10.5 for PA.

Running parallel to this, the Mission was moving from Program Agreements (PROAGS) to Strategic Objective Agreements (SOAGS). In the process, GABLE's Program Agreement Completion Date (PACD) of September 30, 2001 as amended, was adjusted to September 30, 2002 as in all other programs.

Under GABLE II, it was agreed that budget support would be provided in the form of three cash grant tranches of \$7 million each over the three years of the program. This would enable the government to achieve three supporting objectives:

1. to increase the long-term financial resource base;
2. to improve the quality, availability, and efficiency of primary education;
3. to improve the relevance of primary education for girls.

Specifically, under these three supporting objectives, the government would:

- (a) provide increased budgetary resources to the education sector revenue budget, the primary education sub sector revenue budget, and to primary level learning materials;
- (b) improve educational quality by implementing a community school system; increase the number of teachers and their training; increase the supply of learning materials in primary schools, and increase the supply of classrooms;
- (c) increase the efficiency of primary education by reducing repetition and late entry in all standards and improve the analytical and planning capacity of the Ministry of Education (MOE);
- (d) prove the relevance of primary education for girls through gender appropriate teacher training, gender appropriate curricula, a scholarship program for secondary school girls and the introduction of improved classroom techniques to enhance girls' achievement.

Under the NPA component of GABLE, all the three tranches of \$7 million each have been released on satisfactory completion by GOM of agreed upon milestones.

Project support provided technical assistance, training and commodities. Project support during the GABLE extension was also used to help MOE to develop the Policy Investment Framework (PIF). During the same extension, USAID/Malawi also entered into a one-year contract with Creative Associates International Inc. (CAII) firstly for the management and implementation of the GABLE Social Mobilization Campaign for Educational Quality (SMC-EQ), and secondly for the creation of a local NGO to continue with SMC-EQ activities once the contract with CAII came to an end. This led to the birth of the Creative Center for Community Mobilization (CRECCOM).

During the last two years, GABLE has provided support to CRECCOM, the local NGO created out of CAII to implement SMC-EQ activities at the national level. GABLE also continued to provide a grant to Save the Children Federation (SCF/US), an American non-governmental organization, to expand the village-based school project to three districts of Mangochi, Balaka and Blantyre Rural. GABLE policy reforms are primarily being implemented through the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOES&T) and the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE).

#### **IV. STATEMENT OF WORK**

The team shall conduct a summative evaluation of both the GABLE project (PA) and non project assistance (NPA), taking into account the GABLE mid-term evaluation. Particular focus, however, shall be on the GABLE II extension following the recommendation of the mid-term evaluation. Under the project assistance, for example, the impact of SMC-EQ implemented by CRECCOM and the QUEST project implemented by

SCF/US shall be reviewed. The team shall also review the civics curriculum reform activity and the implementation of the PIF.

The evaluation shall:(a) examine the impact and effectiveness of NPA and PA activities implemented under GABLE II;(b) analyze implementation problems; review institutional capacities within the MOES&T and related institutions, and (c) draw out lessons learned. Specifically, the team shall address the following issues for both NPA and PA:

**Program/Project Results and Impact:** The evaluation will examine the program's and project's overall results to date, including a systematic review of all targets, as specified in the GABLE Program Grant Agreement as amended, together with the indicators for measuring results as stated in the SO4 Results Framework and by the three supporting objectives mentioned in section III.

Results-to-date shall be compared with established targets. The team shall assess the performance and achievements for each program and project activity/component and their strengths and weaknesses. If performance is not on target, reasons (positive or negative) shall be identified.

At the program level, the evaluation shall answer the following questions: What has been the impact of GABLE II in the education sector? Has GABLE attained its original goals and objectives? Has GABLE reached its intended beneficiaries? What has been the impact on the beneficiaries? Has GABLE had any impact on economic growth?

For individual project activities, the evaluation shall answer questions such as: What has been the impact of GABLE SMC-EQ? How sustainable are the achievements gained this far? What has been the impact of the QUEST project in the target districts? Are the gains made sustainable? How much impact have research findings through the IEQ project in collaboration with QUEST made on policy reform? What inroads have been made on policy reform with regard to the role communities can play in mobilization of local resources within their own domain to improve the education sector? Have training and technical assistance activities been effective and properly targeted? Is the training being utilized?

**Institutional Roles and Capabilities:** The evaluation team will review the institutional capacities of the MOES&T, particularly if training has had any significant impact on the Planning Unit. In particular, the team will examine progress made in strengthening the Information Management System (EMIS) and if it is sustainable. Finally, the team will examine how effective the role of the MOF, the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services, and MOES&T have been in either implementing GABLE or coordinating, to the extent possible, the various GABLE activities.

**Internalization:** The evaluation team will address the following questions: To what extent has GABLE been owned by the GOM? How has the GOM mobilized itself to respond to milestones/conditionalities?

**Donor Coordination:** The primary donors in education are: the World Bank, the Department for International Development (DFID), Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), the German Development Cooperation (GTZ) and USAID. Other donors include the Japanese International Development Agency (JICA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the European Union (EU). While the evaluation will assess the effectiveness of USAID and the GOM, the team will also, on a more global level, look at the education sector in areas beyond those of USAID support and how well donor collaboration and support has been to the primary education sector. The evaluation team will also address the following questions: Has GABLE been useful for promoting donor coordination? What role, if any, should other donors have played in achieving primary education sector objectives? Have there been set backs in the process of promoting donor coordination?

**Relationship to Mission Strategy Plan:** The evaluation report shall define, in summary, the relationship

between GABLE and the Mission's Country Strategic Plan (CSP). The evaluation report shall establish to what degree the objectives of GABLE have been valid, in line and consistent with the CSP.

**Lessons Learned:** What lessons can be learned from the GABLE program/project? Specifically:

1. What can be learned from the design and implementation of the GABLE program/project?
2. How sustainable are the reforms/activities being undertaken under GABLE?
3. Were the program and project activities well integrated?
4. How committed has the GOM been to the GABLE program?
5. Were the actions/conditions precedent (CPs/milestones) to the release of funds a useful mechanism in the implementation of GABLE?

**Customer Satisfaction:** The team shall determine the degree to which the GABLE program/project has responded to the perceived needs of its beneficiaries: pupils, the families of pupils, teachers, education administrators and the GOM. Which activities are perceived of having been most relevant to Malawi? Which least?

## **V. EVALUATION METHODS**

Data shall be collected from a number of sources, including: GOM budget documents; MOES&T statistics; GOM and USAID reports; field visits; and implementing agencies and actors. It is required that data be disaggregated by gender. Techniques/instruments to be used to acquire data as required shall include structured questionnaires, direct observation, interviews and other rapid appraisal methods. The team shall conduct site visits to interview Divisional Education Officers, District Education Officers, Primary Education Advisors, teachers and pupils at primary schools, trainees and tutors at teacher training colleges (TTCs) and members of the community affected by GABLE activities.

### **I. PERFORMANCE PERIOD**

The evaluation field work will be carried out over a six-week period. The evaluation team will be authorized a six-day week in the field with no premium pay. All team members will be authorized two work days prior to start of field work for document reviews and team meetings.

## **VII. REPORTS & DELIVERABLES**

1. All reports and documents related to program implementation will be supplied to the evaluation team by the SO Team Leader at USAID/Malawi. These will include Project and Program Agreements; the Strategic Objectives Annual Performance Report for the Results Review and Resource Request (R4); USAID/Malawi Country Strategy Plan (CSP) and GABLE consultants' reports.
2. The evaluation team shall provide the SO Team Leader at USAID/Malawi with a work plan at the beginning of the first week of the evaluation that identifies the key work elements, evaluation methodology, and provides a schedule that demonstrates how the work will be accomplished within the period of performance.
3. No later than the beginning of the third week after the submission of the work plan, the team shall provide to the SO Team Leader at USAID/Malawi an annotated outline of their preliminary findings and brief USAID, its partners and stakeholders on the progress of the evaluation.

4. No later than the beginning of the fifth week, the team shall provide to the SO Team Leader at USAID/Malawi and its partners a draft evaluation report for review and comment. The report should not exceed 60 pages. At the beginning of the sixth week following submission of the draft report, a joint review meeting of USAID and its partners will be held to discuss the draft report. The first draft shall follow the general format as follows:

- (a) Executive Summary
- (b) Purpose of Evaluation
- (c) Background
- (d) Body of the report
- (e) Summary of findings
- (f) Lessons learned

Comments on the draft evaluation report shall be provided to the Contractor no later than three days following the review meeting.

5. By the end of week six, the team shall incorporate written and oral comments into the final evaluation report, ten (10) copies of which shall be submitted to the Education SO Team Leader at USAID/Malawi. In addition, the team will submit to USAID/Malawi the final evaluation report on 3.5 inch diskette (s), formatted in Microsoft Word.

The evaluation team will receive direction and assistance from the Education Strategic Objective team and team leader, which will be the primary point of contact for the team. The evaluations will be participatory and collaborative in nature, encouraging and relying on host country personnel.



## ANNEX 2

### DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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## ANNEX 3

### PERSONS CONTACTED

#### **Malawi Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST)**

Mr. Beaton Munthali, Principal Secretary, MOEST  
Dr. Kuthemba Mwale, Director of Planning  
Ms. Bertha Udedi, Planning Unit, MOEST  
Mr. Clive Mchikoma, Planning Unit Statistician, MOEST  
Ms. Matilda Kabuye, Director of Curriculum and Methods

#### **Malawi Ministry of Gender, Youth, and Community Services (MOGYCS)**

Dr. Nowa Meria-Phiri, Principal Secretary  
Dr. Isabel Matenge, Deputy Director  
Ms. Christobel D.M. Chakwanu, GABLE Desk Officer

#### **Malawi Ministry of Finance**

Ms. Colleen Zamba, Principal Secretary (Debt and Aid Management)

#### **CRECCOM**

Mr. Simeon Mawindo, Director of CRECCOM  
Mr. Suzgo Mwanza, Assessment Coordinator  
Mr. George Jobe, CRECCOM Official  
Mr. Ulemu Kusapah, CRECCOM Research Officer

#### **Visit with Zomba MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Ms. Grace Kumvenji, Division Manager  
Mr. Joseph Magereta, Primary Education Advisor, Zomba District  
Olive Msyamboza, District Social Welfare Officer, Zomba District  
Mr. Frackson January Phiri-District Education Manager  
Mr. Stanley Kalindo, Asst. Community Development Officer, Zomba District  
Mr. E.C. Ndalama, District Community Development Officer, Zomba District  
Mr. Francis K. Futu, Social Welfare Assistant, Zomba District

#### **Visit with Thyolo MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Mr. Ephraim Kapulula, District Commissioner-Thyolo District Office  
Mr. L.M. Thomboh, DA, Thyolo District  
Mr. E.A. Chapomba, CPEA, Thyolo District  
Mr. D.M. Gunsauv, Primary Education Advisor, Thyolo District  
Ms. J.K. Mkwaila, Primary Education Advisor, Thyolo District

Mr. F.T. Munde, Community Development Asst., Thyolo District  
Mr. E. Masawauwi, DLO, Thyolo District

**Visit with Mulanje MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Ms. Christine Nguleh, Desk Officer SMC/EQ  
Mr. Aron Khenopa, Primary Education Advisor  
Mr. Oscar D. Mulenga, District Youth Offices  
Mr. James Dzumbira, Social Welfare Assistant  
Ms. Margaret Chilongozi, Community Development Asst.

**Meeting with Chancellor College Faculty of Education**

Dr. Ester Cruzuau, Acting Dean  
Dr. Dixie Banda, Lecturer in Education Psychology & Counseling  
Mr. Robert Chonzi, Lecturer in Education and Curriculum Studies

**Visit with Malawi Institute of Education**

Mr. Simeon Hau, Director of MIE  
Dr. Docks Jere, Director of IEQ  
Mr. Davie Kaambankadzanja, Curriculum Specialist  
Ms. Evelyn Lemani, Asst. Director-School & Teacher Development  
Mr. Peter J. Lhomani, Asst. Director-Curriculum Development & Evaluation

**Visit with Mzuzu MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Mr. Sauko J.J. Ntholo, District Social Welfare Officer  
Mr. Gerald B.C. Gondwe, CPEA  
Mr. Edward Thawi, Development Officer-EDM  
Ms. Kay Jennings, SEMA-EDM  
Mr. Jeffrey J. Nyondo, RSWO  
Mr. Alick K. Kalima, RYO  
Mr. A.B. Mtawlo, RCDO  
Mr. A.M. Chimalino, Education Director  
Mr. M.H. Mwabughwi, Regional Desk Officer

**Visit with Nkhata Bay MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Mr. Victor Peter Mayaystays, District Community Development Officer  
Mr. Austin L. Mzungu, Special Education Advisor  
Mr. Nortone Kangoma Mkandawiri, Education Desk Officer  
Ms. Catherine L. Matayatays, Primary Education Advisor  
Ms. Harriet H. Kondowa, Community Development Asst.

### **Visit with Mzimba South MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Mr. Patson G. Nyironko, District Education Officer  
Mr. Pik Nyondo, District Commissioner, District Officer  
Mr. Joseph Sinkhala, District Youth Officer  
Mr. M. Moyo, District Education Manager (Mzimba North)  
Ms. H. Shawa, Primary Education Advisor  
Ms. M. Zimba, Education Desk Officer (Mzimba North)  
Mr. S. Kamtsitsi, Director of Administration (Mbelwa District Assembly)

### **Visit with Lilongwe Rural West MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Mr. C.C.M. Beshani, District Education Manager  
Ms. A. Mlaviwa, ACDO  
Ms. E. J. Kandaya, PEA  
Ms. T. Chabuka, SWA  
Mr. S. Kasudze, PEA  
Mr. C. Kaprela, Asst. District Education Mgr.

### **Visit with Salima MOEST/MOGYCS District Officials**

Mr. B.R. Mukiwa, District Education Manager  
Mr. L.G. Mordala, Desk Officer  
Mr. B.R. Mukiwa, District Community Development Officer  
Ms. Jane Mandambwe, PEA  
Mr. John Kampano, District Community Development Officer  
Ms. Flora Kenewada, Community Development Asst.  
Mr. Joseph Friday, PEA  
Ms. Lucy F. Utawinga, CPEA

### **Other**

Ms. Dora Mwalwenje, U.S. Peace Corps, APCD-Education (former Director of GAC at MIE)  
Hon. Gillian L. Mlombe, Member of Parliament-Zomba Likangala Constituency<sup>1</sup>  
Mr. Josiah S. Tlou, Director VA Tech/Malawi UPIC Project  
Mr. Lester Namathaka, Senior Program Manager for Education, Save the Children/US  
Mr. Francis Mabeti, Data Officer, Save the Children/US

### **Donor Contacts**

Ms. Saeri Muto, JICA-Resident Advisor to the Planning Unit/MOEST  
Mr. Keichi Okitsu, JICA, Asst. Resident Representative  
Mr. Wilfred Goetler, Team Leader, MIITEP, GTZ

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<sup>1</sup> Met during visit to Pirimiti Primary School

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Mr. William Mvalo, Cognitive Technical Officer (GABLE)  
Dr. Sarah Wright, Education Officer, USAID/Malawi

**Schools Visited**

Pirimiti Primary School for Boys-Zomba District (4/29/02)  
Songani Primary School (Coed)-Zomba District (4/29/02)

Mongola Primary School (Coed)-Thyolo District (4/30/02)  
Chimbeywe Primary School (Coed)-Thyolo District (4/30/02)  
Luchenza Primary School (Coed)-Thyolo District (5-2-02)

Chisitu Catholic Primary School (Coed)-Mulanje District (5-2-02)  
Khobiri Primary School (Coed)-Mulanje District (5-2-02)

Kande Primary School (Coed)-Mzimba South District (5-6-02)  
Kavazi Primary School (Coed)-Mzimba South District (5-6-02)

Karweya Primary School (Coed)-Mzimba South District (5-7-02)  
Mtangatanga Primary School (Coed)-Mzimba South District (5-7-02)

Mulanje Primary School (Coed)-Lilongwe Rural West District (5-13-02)  
Chikanda Primary School (Coed)-Lilongwe Rural West (5-13-02)

Mgoza Primary School (Coed) Salima District (5-14-02)  
Chitala Primary School (Coed) Salima District (5-14-02)