

# EDUCATION FOR ALL GOALS ASSESSMENT REPORT

*WILL MALAWI MEET THE SIX EFA GOALS BY 2015?*



**A report by the Civil Society Coalition  
for Quality Basic Education**

**September 2011**

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A STUDY COMMISSIONED BY  
CIVIL SOCIETY COALITION FOR QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION (CSCQBE)

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## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

This research study was done with financial support from African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA). The Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE) Board and Management wishes to sincerely thank ANCEFA for the support they have rendered towards this study.

The Coalition is also grateful to Development Partners, Government officials and members of the Coalition that participated in the validation meeting of the draft EFA report. The consultants, LEXGEO Consultants, equally deserve recognition for their tireless and vivid leadership and guidance. Last but not least, the Coalition also recognizes the Ministry of Education for the support they offered during the process and all her initiatives to promote quality basic education for all, including girls.

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## *LIST OF ACRONYMS*

AIDS:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ACEM:	Association of Christian Educators in Malawi
CSCBQE:	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education
CBCC:	Community Based Childcare Centres
CDSS:	Community Day Secondary School
CBE:	Curriculum Based Education
CA:	Continuous Assessment
CSR:	Country Status Report
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
DP:	Development Partners
EFA:	Education for All
ECCD:	Early Childhood Care Development
ESIP:	Education Sector Implementation Plan
EMIS:	Education Management Information Services
FBO:	Faith Based Organisation
GoM:	Government of Malawi Goals
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Syndrome Virus
LCE:	Learner Centred Education
LSE:	Life Skills Education
MGDS:	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MDG:	Millennium development
MoYDS:	Ministry of Youth Development and Sports
MoEST:	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
MSCE:	Malawi School Certificate of Education
NAC:	National AIDS Commission
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
NESP:	National Education Sector Plan
PTR:	Pupil Teacher Ratio
PCAR:	Primary Curriculum Assessment and Reform
PLSCE:	Primary Leaving School Certificate of Education
TEVET:	Technical Education and Vocational Training
SADC:	Southern Africa Development Cooperation
SACMEQ:	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
UPE:	Universal Primary Education
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

### **Background Information**

Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE) requested for an assessment of the progress that Malawi has so far made towards the six EFA goals. The request was a fulfilment of its mandate as an advocacy, lobbying and budget tracking institution for education in Malawi. CSCQBE's task originates from agreements made by multilateral and bilateral Development Partners (DPs) in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 during an assessment of progress made in the first decade of EFA (1990-2000). EFA assessment in 2000 revealed that little was done by developing countries to promote basic education for all irrespective of continuous flow of aid from the developed countries.

### ***Aim of the study***

The aim of the study was to inform basic education stakeholders in Malawi on the extent of progress made towards reaching the 2015 targets on the six EFA goals and what needs to be done to speed up where the country is far behind.

### ***Specific Study Objectives***

The specific study objectives were as follows:

1. Examine how the EFA goals have been mainstreamed in Malawi's education policy agenda and the overall national development framework
2. Assess the extent to which each EFA goal has been achieved against the 2015 targets
3. Compare Malawi's performance on the EFA goals with two other socio-economically similar countries within SADC (opting for Zambia and Lesotho)
4. Analyse the challenges that are impeding the achievement of EFA goals and propose strategies that can be adopted to mitigate those challenges
5. Document the specific strides that have been achieved since 2008 towards the EFA goals.

This report therefore provides the progress Malawi has so far made towards achieving the EFA goals. It also provides recommendations on how access to, quality and relevance of basic education for all in Malawi could be promoted cognizant of international parameters governing the EFA goals.

### ***Major Assessment Findings***

#### ***Goal 1: Extent to which requirements for ECD are reflected in relevant policy and programming documents***

Requirements for ECD are adequately reflected in most relevant policy and programming documents in Malawi. Chapter 3, section 13(b) of the constitution of Malawi states that the state is committed to the promotion of welfare and development of the people, more especially the young children. Chapter 4, sections 20, 23, 25, 26, 30, puts emphasis on the rights of the child to life, to equity, to protection from abuse and exploitation, to education, to

culture and language, to development and freedom. Issues pertaining to ECD have also been adequately streamlined and addressed in each of the following documents: Early Childhood Care and Development Policy (2003), Malawi Growth and Development Strategies (MGDS) 1 and 2, National Education Sector Plan (NESP), the Malawi Country Education Status Report (CSR), and Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP). There are clear linkages in vision, mission, agenda, goals, objectives and strategies between macro and micro level plans like the MGDSs and the sector plans. However, there was an omission of ECD issues in the 2010 JSR Aide Memoire. The development is worrisome as it may reflect little attention accorded to ECD by Government, Development Partners and all other stakeholders of the JSR. This may further not reflect well on the national effort to achieve the goal by 2015.

### ***Goal 2: Universal access to quality primary education***

Current national education policy and programming documents in Malawi seem to fairly streamline the requirements of universal access to quality primary education. For example, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi chapter 4, sub-section 25 (1) states that “All persons are entitled to education”. At macro policy and planning level, the MGDS I commits itself to substantial reduction of absenteeism, repetition and dropout rates especially those of girls by 2011. The means for achieving the reduction was through the expansion and improvement of the teaching and learning environment and maximising its use (including overlapping shifts) and reducing primary school cycle to 7 years.

### ***Goal 3: Equitable access to learning needs of youth and adults in Malawi***

Issues pertaining to the learning needs of youth and adults are adequately streamlined especially in the revised national action plan and the MGDSs. However, ESIP has only planned for Complimentary Basic Education. This approach is symptomatic of the narrow perception of the requirements of the goal; a challenge common to this goal as reported by the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report. The 2009-2013 ESIP, properly sees the main strategic priority of Malawi in education to be the improvement of quality, equity, relevance, access and efficiency in Basic Education hence meeting MDGs. ESIP considers MDGs to be the hub of EFA.

### ***Goal 4: Improvement in levels of adult literacy, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults***

Macro planning level documents like the MGDS overlooked issues on EFA goal number 4. However, sector planning documents like the Revised EFA National Action Plan, the NESP and ESIP, adequately reflected the issues. As was the case with ECD, adult literacy and continuing education issues were not prioritised by the JSR Aide Memoire of 2010. This seems to indicate how lowly the education developers in Malawi consider adult literacy and continuing education. The Revised EFA National Action Plan in 2006 planned for increased access to adult literacy programmes and continuing education for both men and women. ESIP recognises that “the provision of Adult Literacy is an important pillar to Education for All”. Irrespective of the fact that the underlying analysis of issues were based on the NESP and ESIP, the JSR Aide Memoire also failed to capture Adult literacy and continuing education issues. This happened even after the department of Adult Literacy Education had just been transferred to the MoEST from Ministry of Women and Children affairs. There seems to be deliberate avoidance of prioritising adult literacy and continuing education.

### ***Goal 5: Gender equity and equality in primary and secondary education***

The MGDS I and II, Revised EFA National Action Plan, NESP, ESIP and 2010 JSR Aide Memoire streamlined issues to do with gender equity and equality in primary and secondary schools. The 2006 Revised EFA National Action Plan, streamlined equity and equality issues as key outcomes of the plan and included reduced gender inequalities in terms of access, participation and performance especially for girls. The NESP fairly streamlined equity and equality issues as its targets. ESIP as a mid-term implementation framework for NESP streamlined equity and equality issues for primary and secondary education.

### **Goal 6: Improving all aspects of quality of education**

Issues on improving all aspect of quality of education were streamlined in most critical documents like MGDS I &II, Revised EFA National Action Plan, NESP, ESIP and the 2010 JSR Aide Memoire. At macro level, in the MGDS I improvement of quality and relevance of education is proposed to be effected through provision of relevant school supplies, training more teachers and upgrading the existing under-qualified teachers. The Revised EFA Action Plan streamlined the reduced Pupil-Teacher Ratios, improved teaching and learning practices and methodologies, availability of adequate teaching and learning materials and institutionalization of an effective M and E system. NESP and ESIP have quality and relevance of education as two of the six planning pillars for all levels of education. The ESIP is actually premised on an ambition to meet the MDGs and the EFA goals by 2015. Within this, the **overarching priority** of MoEST is to improve all aspects of the quality of education in order to achieve excellence as urged by the EFA goals.

## **Evidence on Progress made towards EFA Goals**

### **Goal 2: Children particularly girls and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality (Cont)**

Dropout Rate still remains high especially for girls in Standards 7 and 8 (Standard 7 2010: Boys=8.10%, Girls=14.64%). Dropout Rate has been marginally reduced (12.95% cf.12.72%) at Standard 1, almost tamed at Standard 4 (8.6% Cf. 8.96%) but worsening at Standard 8 (8.15% cf. 11.37%). In other words, while there is some progress in reducing Dropout Rate at entry point of the system, the situation is not improving mid-way and it is getting out of control towards the end. Malawi dropout rates between levels are also high. Lesotho and Zambia are better off in terms of the efficiency index with Zambia at the highest point on the ladder.

### **Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes**

In the formal education area, Government has embarked on a number of programmes to address the learning needs of young people and adults. In TEVET, progress is not yet satisfactory as annual targets though seemingly being met, are set low. TEVET intake from secondary school graduates was estimated at 2% in 2007 compared to 6% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Youth Employment: the formal sector is failing to absorb all the employable youth. Labour participation rate in the formal sector amongst youth aged 15-29 years in 2005 was 9% with more females (10%) than males (8%) being unemployed.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates that Malawi adult (15+ years old) literacy rates are at 69% which is better than the African average (62.9%) but lower than the SADC countries average (75.3%). Comparatively, Lesotho is doing far much better than Zambia and Malawi on

this issue. On gender parity in Africa, projections suggest that only Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe will achieve gender parity 2015. Lesotho and Zambia on the other hand will still be moving towards the gender parity index and hence will not make in 2015.

### **Goal 6: Improving all aspects of quality of education**

Malawi positions itself as a median country in terms of budget priority for education sector. In the SADC region, out of the 12 countries, Malawi is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> on the share of recurrent expenditures devoted to education. Malawi is slightly below the SADC countries average (19.4% versus 20.8%) and the Sub-Saharan Africa average (20.3%) {CSR; 2009}.

## **A Synthesis of the Issues on Progress on EFA and Recommendations on the Way Forward**

### **Goal 1: Expand and improve comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD)**

ECD services improved reasonably between 2000 and 2010 though not at a pace to allow for universal coverage of all services to all ECD age group children by 2015. There has been some consistent decline of factors influencing best start in life for children albeit limited awareness of nutritional issues in the general public, low institutional capacity to handle the issues of nutrition and inadequate mainstreaming of nutrition in sector-based programmes. This makes malnutrition related complications to continue compromising the cognitive and physical development of some children resulting in poor participation in early years of education. The number of ECD centres has increased by 671 % (from 1153 in 2000 to 8,890 in 2009). The enrolment of the rightful age children by has increased by 396.9 % (from 51, 550 in 2000 to 771,666 in 2009), representing 32 % Net Enrolment from 26.4 % Net Enrolment in 2000. However, there continues to be disparities in favour of the urban, male children, the rich and some specific divisions. Unless the approach to providing ECD services radically changes, most of the children in this category will continue suffering discrimination beyond 2015. That will prevent Malawi from achieving EFA goal number 2.

### **Goal 1 Recommendations**

Government needs to genuinely appreciate the significance of ECD in the education agenda and begin to split in some fair shares of education resources. Government needs to take a long-awaited radical move of relocating the whole pre-schooling aspect of ECD to the MoEST which is mandated, experienced in, has all necessary infrastructure and is directly supported to manage formal schooling services.

### **Goal 2: Ensuring access to and complete free and compulsory primary education**

The progress on expanding primary education access leading to universal attendance seems to be on track so much that Malawi may realise the goal by 2015. However, continuation of enrolling under age and over age learners in Standard 1, continuation of entertaining repeaters across Standards and limited accuracy of the enrolment data at school level compromise the degree of accuracy on our progress towards real UPE. Disparities of various types still persist. Girls continue to lag behind boys in both access and learning achievement. The poorest segments of the country who make about 40 % of the population are the ones having the least opportunities to access primary education. They have minimal chances of benefiting from ECD services, poor perception of the entry age into primary, general

economic difficulties, negative gender perceptions, are mostly located in rural areas where schools are far apart and often poorly provided for. They are greater victims of illnesses and have a higher probability for hiding disabilities of their children. There has been an increase in the provision of basic learning resources/materials but one which in most cases is disproportional to the demand and irregular in terms of equitable distribution. Reduced internal efficiency has negatively impacted on efforts to ensure that all children who enter the system complete it.

## **Goal 2 Recommendations**

A particular issue needing improvement is the accuracy and honesty with which data is gathered and processed at school and district levels. The core catalysing factor to the various forms of disparity in accessing primary education seems to be poverty. It is, therefore, important that the implementation of any modalities of supporting learners from poor households including bursaries and social cash transfers be decentralised to zone level to promote fairness. MoEST needs to institutionalise the functions of Mother Groups (MGs) and Girls Education Movements (GEMs) in schools to optimise their recently demonstrated capacity to promote girls' participation and achievement in primary school education. There is need for Government to scale up funding for procurement of teaching and learning materials especially textbooks to reduce the degree of dependence on donors. Government needs to introduce a new primary school textbook policy focusing on promoting local book publishers in Malawi who should be able to make textbooks timely available for private schools and all other education stakeholders without any discrimination. When textbooks are adequately available on the market, Government will need to decentralise procurement and distribution to the Local District Assemblies. Government needs to speed up the implementation of its plans to construct additional TTCs in each division. Civil Society and the private sector need to share the burden with Government by venturing into teacher education. Government should come up with a more credible definition of hard to reach schools whose teachers have to be motivated with hardship allowances without de-motivating those whose schools do not qualify for the rural allowance. Similarly, Government and its partners in education need to thoroughly study challenges faced by urban teachers and design appropriate motivational initiatives to address them. Government and other education partners need to upscale and intensify initiatives which are underway in empowering poor households to send and retain their children especially girls in schools.

## **Goal 3: Ensuring equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes**

Between 2000 and 2011, Government has advanced expansion programmes at secondary school and tertiary education levels. However, access probability to secondary school (Form 1) still remains very low at about 17 % of the secondary school age cohort and 49 % of the primary school graduates. In TEVET, progress between 2000 and 2011 has not been satisfactory as annual targets though seemingly being met, are set low. Consequently, skills training for the youth are underdeveloped and not in tandem with the needs of a changing economy as demonstrated by the current demands in the private sector. Access to sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS services also improved between 2000 and 2011. Establishment of information centres expanded. However, systematisation of the nature and design of materials and modes of delivery of out-of-school youth education programmes remained limited. There has been commendable progress on youth economic empowerment although it continues to be politicised. For purposes of standardising parameters for provision



of basic education in SADC, the Government needs to take a long-awaited-for decision to extend basic education to at least the first two Forms in secondary school. Following this, junior secondary education as part of basic education should also become tuition free. This will automatically increase the transition rate from primary to secondary. There is need for stronger cooperation between Government, the private sector, Civil Society, local politicians and businessmen to vigilantly improve the status of CDSSs so that they become attractive, learner-friendly and effective in the delivery of secondary education. Government and all other stakeholders in TEVET need to engage in a holistic programme of rejuvenating the education system from primary to tertiary with quality and relevant TEVET programmes commensurate with the contemporary demands for blue collar jobs. TEVETA in collaboration with the Department of Technical and Vocational Education at the MoEST, needs to strengthen its coordination role of service delivery. This will ensure that standards of services from the private sector and civil society match the local and international labour demands. There is need to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports in planning, managing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating out-of-school youth non-formal education programmes. A core part of the capacity building needs to focus on streamlining roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Education to iron out negative overlaps and wasteful role conflict. The Civil Society Organisations need to play a proactively vigilant role in ensuring participation of male learners in non-formal programmes as well as in condemning politicisation of youth economic empowerment programmes.

#### **Goal 4: Achieving an improvement in levels of adult literacy**

Government provision of equitable access to adult literacy and continuing education for all adults in Malawi has to a greater extent remained a story of little progress perpetually lagging behind set targets. Cause of failure: Limited political will by Government and its partners to adequately fund programmes. Limited political will is compounded by an ever-expanding pool of clients emerging from the shortfalls in ECD, primary and secondary education. Consequently, Government and its partners face a genuine dilemma on how best to split limited educational resources between addressing gaps at foundational level and gaps at the adult level. Education policy makers in Malawi seem to deliberately choose to put their focus more on the foundational levels than on adult literacy. Coverage of all the adult literacy and continuing education programmes provided by all stakeholders rose from 20.8 % in 1998. to 31.3 % in 1999. Despite this, the country remains with 1 million illiterates annually at any one moment signifying that the reduction of illiterates to half of the number of 2000 by 2015 may be remote. The best that may be achieved (all factors held constant) is reducing the national illiteracy level to 31.8 %, that of women may be reduced to 34.4 % while that of men to 27.5 %. All are above 50 % of the 1998/2000 rates. Regional disparities in literacy rates still stand with the Northern Region being the most literate while the Central Region is the least literate. The best strategic approach to deal with endemic adult illiteracy and continuing education is to appreciate the impact of early investment in education in order to curb future challenges. Government needs to seriously consider appropriate investments in pre-school, primary and secondary education in order to do away with heavy excess baggage at adult level.

#### **Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education**

Malawi achieved gender parity in lower primary about five years before the dead line and has better chances for achieving the same in secondary schools if plans set in the NESP and ESIP are effectively and timely implemented. In overall terms, the ratio of girls to boys in primary

school has improved from 0.94 in 2000, to 0.99 in 2010 and NESP targets a ratio of 1 in 2015. Complete achievement of gender parity in primary education seems to be compromised by low completion rate for girls orchestrated by their high dropout rate in senior Standards especially 7-8. Over a seven year period: 2000 to 2007, the effectiveness of the primary education system in Malawi in teaching Reading and Mathematics at Standard 6 level improved only slightly. Gender disparity persisted in learner performance at Reading and Mathematics. In both subjects, boys outperformed girls. Disparities according to rural-urban location also persisted. Urban pupils performed slightly better in Reading than rural ones. There were also divisional disparities in learner performance with the Northern Education Division performing better in overall terms than the rest of the divisions in both Reading and Mathematics. The South West Division performed consistently poorly. The growth rate of girls sitting for the PSLCE rose by almost twice that of boys (63.06% compared to 32.36%). However, for both boys and girls, an increase in candidacy seemed to induce a decline in pass rates. The whole school system up to Secondary School Form 4 seems to experience little improvement in learner achievement.

### **Recommendation**

There is need for Government and its partners in education to invest more in innovative initiatives for promoting girls' participation and achievement in primary and secondary education like the Mother Groups (MGs), Girls Education Movements (GEMs) Role Modelling, social cash transfers to poor households and zone-based bursaries. There is need for the MoEST to speed up the establishment of the national system for cohort-based assessment of learning achievement at primary school level with a focus on girls' achievement to build teachers' capacity to effectively manage Learner Centred Education and Continuous Assessment methodologies. The MoEST needs to promote the establishment and functionality of gender-sensitive national, divisional, district, zone-based subject teachers associations beginning with Mathematics, Languages and Science and Technology. Civil Society Organisations and the private sector need to be proactively encouraged to venture into and or support this initiative. MoEST needs to facilitate the establishment of a primary school Science and Mathematics teacher's in-service training programme on lines of the secondary school SMASE programme. Focus here should also be on gender-sensitive methodologies. MoEST needs to commission a consultancy on how best Malawi can benefit from the proliferating ICT to come up with a less expensive approach to make our CDSSs attractive to capable and youthful teachers.

### **Goal 6: Improving all aspects of quality of education**

The work of improving all aspects of quality of education and ensuring excellence of all has not made much progress due to a number of factors including low funding. Since 2000, the sector has been receiving third largest budgetary allocations behind agriculture and health sectors. However, this funding has not been proportional to the expansion of primary and secondary education which occurred following the FPE policy of 1994. Until 2008, the growth rate of Other Recurrent Transactions (ORT) funding lagged behind the growth rate of enrolment in primary and secondary. While primary education has been getting 44 % of the total recurrent education expenditure, pre-school, literacy, TEVET and teacher training shares have not exceeded 7 % in total. Due to dropouts and repeaters, the Internal Efficiency Coefficient at primary level declined from 39 % to 35 % between 1999 and 2007. PTR worsened between 2000 and 2010 while PQTR had some temporary improvement between

2000 and 2004 but took a worsening trend from 2004 to 2010. Most rural schools have fewer teachers and hence have higher PTR and PQTR than urban schools. There are fewer female teachers than male ones and most of them are deployed in urban schools. This deployment trend of teachers compromise the quality of learning outcomes for rural learners just as it also compromises relevance of education especially for the girl child. Inadequate availability of teaching and learning materials and resources is an issue which cuts across all basic education sub-sectors: pre-school, primary, secondary, out-of-school youth and adult literacy and continuing education. There is effort to increase the provision of basic learning resources/materials and improve their relevance, which is often disproportional to the demand and inequitably distributed. Decentralisation initiatives have been heavily compromised by lack of political will to allow fully fledged implementation. This has resulted in ineffective and efficient delivery of services. Although there are recent developments in the area of M and E and inspectorate structures, there continues to be on-going reporting gaps which are evidence that serious challenges still remain in the area of PM&E.

### **Recommendation**

Government needs to increase funding to the education sector in proportion to the sector's growth. Government needs to improve the effectiveness in managing rural teacher allowances as a motivating factor for attracting and retaining teachers in rural schools. In addition to the on-going pre-service teacher training programmes which include Open Distance Learning, Government needs to proactively encourage private sector participation in primary school teacher training in order to reach targeted figures of teachers by 2015 while at the same time address attrition. There is need to develop a new textbook development, procurement and distribution policy which should equitably address the needs and aspirations of all potential textbook developers and distributors while maintaining quality and relevance. The recently established M and E Section at MoEST needs requisite human resource capacity to effectively play a linking and coordination role of all other M and E elements in the Ministry and the sector without necessarily being seen conflicting with those other elements.

### **Conclusion**

The results show that EFA goals and their requirements have been adequately addressed in most of the macro and micro policy and programming documents of Malawi. What is lacking is the capacity to translate the plans into action. Two major factors seem to continue compromising speedy realisation of EFA. The first is limited political will to abandon ineffective service delivery approaches like in ECD and Adult literacy and continuing education. The second factor is ineffective governance structures and practices in the departments responsible for delivery of basic education services. In summary, the report on progress towards Education for All in Malawi, Zambia and Lesotho, puts on the table some preliminary recommendations for the future of EFA. The report highlights the critical need for a greater focus on quality and equity in the light of a large number of learners who are excluded from educational opportunities. Enhancing better transitions in education is another priority to enable learners to advance to higher levels of education and from school to work. The report calls for greater attention to earlier and more comprehensive assessments on learning achievements and character development; improving the quality of teachers, reforming secondary education and exploring alternative forms of education delivery.

## ***1. INTRODUCTION***

### ***1.1. Background Information***

The report emanates from a desk review in a quest to fulfil Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (CSCQBE) mandate as an advocacy, lobbying and budget tracking institution for education in Malawi. The task originates from agreements made by multilateral and bilateral Development Partners (DPs) in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 during an assessment of progress made in the first decade of EFA (1990-2000). EFA assessment in the year 2000 revealed that little was done by developing countries to promote basic education for all irrespective of continuous flow of aid from the developed countries. Among key challenges identified were limited political willingness to spend on education and corrupt practices which compromised impact of the aid. Following the assessment, the six EFA goals were refocused as follows:

**Goal 1:** Expansion and improving comprehensive Early Childhood Care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children;

**Goal 2:** Ensuring that by 2015 all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality;

**Goal 3:** Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes;

**Goal 4:** Achieving a 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults;

**Goal 5:** Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;

**Goal 6:** Improve the quality of education and learning achievement

During the assessment the DPs and the developing countries agreed to continue developing basic education on the basis of the Six EFA goals but for a longer timeframe (2000-2015) before another global evaluation was done. Developing countries were also urged to create enabling laws for the flourishing of Civil Society Coalitions on education which could operate as watchdogs of Government performance in financing and utilisation of external aid.

In Malawi, the CSCQBE was formed in 2002. As such, 11 years down the timeframe and four years to the deadline, the Malawi Coalition wanted to analyse the extent to which Malawi has attained the EFA goals. This assessment report therefore provides the progress Malawi has so far made towards achieving the EFA goal. It also provides recommendations on how access to, quality and relevance of basic education for all boys, girls, the youth and adults in Malawi could be promoted cognizant of international parameters governing the EFA goals.

## **1.2. Aims of the study**

The aim of the study was to inform basic education stakeholders in Malawi on the extent of progress made towards reaching the 2015 targets on the six EFA goals and what needs to be done to speed up where the country is far behind.

## **1.3. Specific Study Objectives**

The specific study objectives were as follows:

1. Examine how the EFA goals have been mainstreamed in Malawi's education policy agenda and the overall national development framework
2. Assess the extent to which each EFA goal has been achieved against the 2015 targets
3. Compare Malawi's performance on the EFA goals with two other socio-economically similar countries within SADC (opting for Zambia and Lesotho)
4. Analyse the challenges that are impeding the achievement of EFA goals and propose strategies that can be adopted to mitigate those challenges
5. Document the specific strides that have been achieved since 2008 towards the EFA goals.

## **1.4. Study Limitation**

Since the study was basically a desktop research, its major challenge was access to vital documents especially those from other countries. So while it was a little easier to access relevant documents on the issues of EFA in Malawi, it was a big challenge to access similar rich documents from Lesotho and Zambia. As such the comparisons in the report have only been done on indicators which had adequate information from the three countries. To enable the reader have a broader view and of course overcome the challenge of access to specific country information, an effort has been made in some cases in the report to draw conclusions after comparing the local situation of Malawi to a general sub-Saharan situation.

## **2. STUDY METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter summarizes the methodology of the study from design to data analysis. It includes description of the methodology, sources of data, data collection methods, instruments and techniques used for data collection and data analysis. The study used a dual methodology which included documentary review and a field survey interviews in which Principal Researchers verified critical information from key stakeholders.

### **2.2. Research design**

As desk-top research, the study basically involved mobilizing and analyzing basic education documents supported by small scale interviews of key basic education stakeholders. Basic Education in this context meant a combination of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Primary school, youth development and adult literacy education programmes.

### **2.3. Development of data collection tools**

Two data collection tools were developed and used in the study. One was a documentary review guide sheet and the other was a structured interview schedule. The documentary review guide sheet was simply a table with five columns capturing source of data and four spaces where summarised key issues were captured. Issues to go into the interview schedule were determined by the preliminary findings of the documentary analysis. The advantage of the simple documentary analysis guide sheet was that it was easy to convert its contents into a report.

### **2.4. Document analysis**

The study mainly reviewed the following documents: the Malawi Republican Constitution, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategies (MGDS) I and II, departmental policies, education sector plans like the National Education Sector Plan (NESP), Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP), Revised EFA National Action Plan (2006), Malawi Country Status Report (CSR) on education (2008), the 2010 Joint Sector Review Aide Memoire and many others.

The documents were reviewed and analysed at three different levels. The first level established the extent to which the requirements of each goal were reflected (streamlined) in all relevant policy and programming documents. The results of the analysis at this level formed section three of this report. The second level of analysis identified and documented evidence of strides made towards achieving set targets in each goal. This level focused on indicators of access and equity, relevance and quality and management and financing. The third level focused on identifying and documenting evidence of challenges impeding progress on each indicator. Table 1.1 below gives a summary of the indicators the study explored under this level. Wherever data was available, the study attempted to compare progress in Malawi with that of Lesotho and Zambia. Suffice to confess that the comparison was heavily challenged due to limited data availability from the other two countries.

Table 1. 1: Questions and indicators for the six EFA Goals
Questions and indicators for assessing Goal 1: ECD progress

S/n	Question	Indicator/s
1	How much has equitable access to ECD services expanded between 2008 and 2011?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number and distribution of Community Based Child Care Centres (CBCCs)/pre-schools by region and rural urban locations;</li> <li>2. Enrolment rates of children of the rightful age for pre-schooling by region and rural-urban location, economic class and level of vulnerability;</li> <li>3. Proportion of pre-schools upgraded (including sanitary facilities and kitchen utensils) by region and urban-rural location;</li> <li>4. Level of promotion of the best start in life for all children;</li> <li>5. Level of promotion of early detection, prevention, intervention, integration and parent education for children with disabilities ;</li> <li>6. Extent to which the protection of children against any forms of abuse and exploitation has been strengthened;</li> <li>7. The degree to which the profile and visibility of ECD is raised to increase its demand from parents of the right age.</li> </ul>
2	How much improvement has been realised in quality and relevance of ECD services between 2008 and 2011?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Child to Care Giver ratio by region and rural-urban locations;</li> <li>9. Proportion of qualified Care Givers by region and rural-urban locations ;</li> <li>10. Extent to which ECD caregivers, helpers and advisors have been motivated, including issues of remuneration ;</li> <li>11. Extent to which ECD curriculum is improved and standardised across the country including scaling up of School Health and nutrition issues;</li> <li>12. Extent to which monitoring capacity of MOWCD is improved to ensure quality monitoring of services at ECD centres;</li> <li>13. The degree to which professional capacity of Care Givers is developed to design and implement ECD programmes;</li> </ul>
3	To what extent have governance and management of ECD services improved between 2008 and 2011?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. The degree to which coordination of ECD services is strengthened (M&amp;G);</li> <li>15. The extent to which institutional framework for the delivery of ECD services has been strengthened (M&amp;G);</li> <li>16. Level of funding for ECD as percentage of national budget, education budget and GDP (M&amp;G)</li> </ul>
4	How close are we to achieving the requirements of the ECD goal by 2015 basing on the progress in 1-4?	17. A synthesis indicator
<b>Questions and indicators for Goal 2: Universal access to quality primary education</b>		
S/n	Question	Indicator/s
1	To what extent has equitable access to primary school education in Malawi expanded from 2000 to 2011? (Special focus will be put on 2008 to 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Net Enrolment Ratio by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children</li> <li>2- Pupil-Classroom ratio by rural-urban location and division</li> <li>3- Availability of teaching and learning materials and facilities in schools by rural-urban location</li> <li>4- Proportion of under and over-age pupils</li> </ul>
2	What percentage of learners enrolling in Standard 1 is able to complete the eight years of the primary school cycle and at what cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Survival Rate to Standard 5 by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children</li> <li>2- Completion Rate to Standard 8 by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children</li> <li>3- Dropout Rate by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children</li> <li>4- Repetition Rate by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children</li> </ul>
3	How better is the quality of primary education in 2011 compared to 2008 and what efforts have been made to improve the quality?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1- Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) by urban-rural location and division</li> <li>2- Pupil-Qualified Teacher Ratio (PQTR) by urban-rural location and division</li> <li>3- The degree of relevance of the curriculum to the learning needs of children and demands of the post primary education and the job world</li> <li>4- percentage of learners able to acquire desirable levels of core competencies for lifelong education</li> </ul>
4	To what extent have access and quality disparities been reduced between 2008 and 2011?	Synthesis
5	What challenges have education providers faced and continue to face in the	Synthesis

	work of expanding equitable access to primary school education?	
<b>Questions and indicators for Goal 3</b>		
1	Is there a match between level of mainstreaming issues of youth and adult education in documents and implementation /provision of the same?	Extent of match between level of mainstreaming learning needs of the youth and adults in documents and implementation/provision of the same
2	Is there equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills education (LSE) programmes?	Access to appropriate learning and life skills education (LSE) programmes by urban-rural location, gender, division and economic status
3	Do our national youth education plans show that we understand the full requirements of the goal?	Degree of conformity between national plans on youth education and the requirements of goal 3
	5. To what extent are we on course to achieving the goal by 2015?	Synthesis indicator
1	What progress has Malawi made in providing equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults between 2000 and 2011?	3. Degree of progress in providing equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults between 2000 and 2011
2	What progress has Malawi made in halving the illiteracy levels of all adults especially women between 2000 and 2011?	2. Degree of progress in reducing illiteracy levels of all adults, especially women, by 50 % by 2015
3	Is Malawi on track to achieve EFA Goal 4 by 2015?	Synthesis indicator
<b>Key questions and indicators for EFA Goal 5</b>		
1	How much progress has been made towards ensuring gender parity and equality in primary and secondary education in Malawi between 2000 and 2011?	2. Gender parity in primary and secondary education between 2000 and 2011; 3. Proportion of boys and girls reaching desirable levels of competencies in core skills of core subjects in primary education as assessed by SACMEQ studies 2000-2011; 4. Proportion of boys and girls passing the PSLCE 2000-2011; 5. Proportion of boys and girls passing the Malawi School Leaving Certificate 2000-2011; and 6. Proportion of boys and girls transiting to University or other tertiary level institutions to study Sciences and engineering 2000-2011.
2	To what extent are we on track to achieving the 2015 target under EFA goal 5?	Synthesis indicator
<b>Questions and indicators for EFA Goal 6</b>		
1	How much progress has been made in management and governance of basic education to ensure better quality?	2. Education budget as percentage of total national budget 3. Education budget as percentage of GDP 4. Primary or basic education budget as a percentage of the education budget 5. Degree of internal efficiency in the use of financial and other resources 6. Pupil Teacher Ratio by rural-urban locations and division 7. Pupil Qualified Teacher Ratio by rural-urban location and division 8. Availability of teaching and learning materials 9. Degree of decentralisation of basic education services 10. Availability and functionality of monitoring and evaluation systems including inspection and advisory services 11. Availability of educational support programmes for vulnerable children
2	To what extent is Malawi on track to achieving EFA Goal 6 by 2015?	Synthesis indicator



## **2.5. *Small scale interviews***

Small scale interviews were conducted for purposes of verifying some critical information and results from the documentary reviews. The interviews covered Directors of Sub-Sectors in the Basic Education Section as targeted by the EFA indicators. In the same vein the Chairperson of the DPs on Basic Education was interviewed. Specifically, the following sections were targeted for the interviews: Basic Education including teacher education, Early Childhood Care and Development, Youth development and education, Adult Literacy/continuing education, Planning and financing and Chairperson of DPs on basic education.

Data from the two sources outlined above (documents; local and international and interviews with policy drivers) was thoroughly triangulated before arriving at conclusions on each indicator.

### ***3. MAINSTREAMING OF THE SIX EFA GOALS REQUIREMENTS IN POLICY AND PROGRAMME PLANNING DOCUMENTS***

This chapter analyses the extent to which requirements for each EFA goal have been mainstreamed in policy and programme planning documents in governance and education. The third section discusses the challenges that impede on the proper realisation of the EFA goals. Thereafter the section provides recommendations on the way forward to enable Malawi achieve some core issues within the EFA goals. Each section begins with a background for each goal which covers some key global and Malawian perspectives about the goal between 2008 and 2011. It proceeds with brief qualitative analysis on the level of reflection or mainstreaming of the issues under the goal in the documents reviewed and ends with a summative conclusion.

#### ***3.1. EFA Goal 1: Expansion and improving comprehensive Early Childhood Care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.***

According to the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report, ECD is the foundation of the EFA agenda. The health and nutrition status of children, especially during the first two years of life, has a significant influence on their cognitive development and learning achievements in school. Early childhood malnutrition affects brain development and diminishes prospects for success in school and beyond. When a child is nurtured and cared for, receiving proper nutrition and health care, stimulated and loved from the onset of birth, the child begins to flourish and develops to the fullest potentials. Several studies done in child development have shown that children exposed to Early Childhood Development (ECD) are more likely to succeed in their formal education. Good quality ECD programmes have a strong track record in reducing dropout rates in primary school, improving learning achievements and narrowing inequalities [See page 8 and Malawi Education for All-MEFA Dossier: 2008; p16].

There are four crucial requirements under this ECD goal which are provision of a comprehensive programme which is expanded improved and accommodating a majority of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Comprehensive ECD is a challenging affair in Malawi and world over as it is a multi-sectoral programme. It involves all services for children from birth to age eight. The services are aimed at children's survival and growth, stimulation and full cognitive, emotional, social and physical development; protection and participation. ECD services include early learning and stimulation, health, education, nutrition, water, hygiene and sanitation.

In Malawi ECD services are categorised into two levels: the first level (Baby care centres), for children aged 0-2 years, is usually offered by the private sector. The second level, for children aged 2-5 years, is either provided by the private sector (Preschools/Nurseries) or the Public sector (Community based Child care Centres) where the Government contribution is through training of caregivers and sometimes provision of instructional materials [CSR:2008; p25; GoM: ECD Annual Report for 2010; p7]].

Recognising the importance and extensiveness of ECD, the 2006 revised EFA National Action Plan for Malawi, prioritised two core outcomes to drive the national efforts to achieve the goal by 2015. The two outcomes are (1) expanded infrastructure for centres and for pre-schools and (2) increased access to pre-school by children of the right age [Revised EFA National Action Plan: 2006; pp xii & xiv)]. Linking up to the revised national action plan and

the requirements of the ECD goal; the three pillars of the 2008-2017 National Education Sector Plan (NESP) focus on equitable access, quality and relevance and management and governance. Equitable access addresses the expansion of learning space and the vulnerability/disadvantagedness of children. Quality and relevance address the improvement aspect of the goal. Governance and management, addresses the comprehensiveness aspects of the goal [NESP: 2008; p6]. The 2009-2013 Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) derived from the NESP offers a comprehensive ECD improvement plan which also aims at achieving three goals of equitable access, capacity development for ECD teachers and service delivery improvement [ESIP:2009; pp35-38].

Requirements for ECD are adequately reflected in most relevant policy and programming documents in Malawi. Chapter 3, section 13(b) of the constitution of Malawi states that the state is committed to the promotion of welfare and development of the people, more especially the young children. In chapter 4, sections 20, 23, 25, 26, 30, the constitution puts emphasis on the rights of the child to life, to equity, to protection from abuse and exploitation, to education, to culture and language, to development and freedom [Malawi constitution: 2000; pp13-18]. Further to the Republican Constitution, this assessment reviewed seven policy/programme documents which included the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy (2003), Malawi Growth and Development Strategies (MGDS) 1 and 2 (2006-2011 and 2011-2016-Draft), National Education Sector Plan (NESP) 2008-2017, the Malawi Country Education Status Report (CSR) (2008), Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP) 2009-2013 and the Education Joint Sector Review (JSR) Aide Memoir 2010. From the review and the discussion in the background to this sub-section of the report, it has been noted that in all the documents except the 2010 JSR Aide Memoire, issues pertaining to ECD have been adequately streamlined and addressed.

There are clear linkages in vision, mission, agenda, goals, objectives and strategies between macro and micro level plans like the MGDSs and the sector plans. For instance while the ECD policy caters for all aspects of a child's life including care, survival, growth, and development, MGDS 1 focused on "expanded infrastructure and increased access" to ECD as its Medium Term expected Outcome and the NESP and ESIP detailed priority equitable access, quality and relevance and governance and management issues to be addressed by the ECD sub-sector between 2008 and 2017 [ECD Policy: 2008; p2, MGDS 1: 2006; p51 and NESP: 2008; p14].

However, it is noteworthy that while adequate recognition is accorded to ECD in both macro and micro policy and programming documents, there was almost an omission of ECD issues in the 2010 JSR Aide Memoire. The development is worrisome as it may reflect little attention accorded to ECD by Government, Development Partners and all other stakeholders of the JSR. This may further not reflect well on the national effort to achieve the goal by 2015.

### ***3.2. EFA Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality***

It is a globally accepted fact that education is a major instrument for economic and social development. It is central to efforts at helping countries reduce poverty and improve living standards through growth. Investment in education leads to the accumulation of human capital which is key to sustained economic growth and increasing incomes [1995 World Bank

“Priorities and strategies” quoted in MEFA Dossier 2008]. It is apparently clear that the Malawi Government subscribes to this fact 100 %.

Apart from being one of the countries which have ratified the requirements of the EFA movement right from the Jomtien 1990 agreements through to the Dakar Declaration in 2000; the vision, mission and mandate of the education sector in Malawi clearly testify to this. The education sector vision is “to be catalyst for socio-economic development and industrial growth” [NESP: Op.cit; p iv].

Policy evidence also testifies that the Malawi Government fully subscribes to the requirements of universal, equitable quality primary education which is considered a facilitator for achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 2. MDG 2 calls countries to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike are able to complete a full course of primary schooling. The Education Sector mission in this respect is “to provide quality and relevant education to the Malawi nation” while the mandate is “to promote education---irrespective of race, gender, ethnicity, religion or any other discriminatory characters” [NESP: Op.cit.].

Current national education policy and programming documents in Malawi seem to fairly streamline the requirements of universal access to quality primary education. The first evidence is the declaration by the constitution of the Republic of Malawi chapter 4, sub-section 25 (1) that “All persons are entitled to education” [See page 18]. Inspired by the constitution, at macro policy and planning level, the MGDS I also address issues of primary education. In this document, the Specified Medium Term Expected Outcome for primary education between 2006 and 2011 was substantial reduction of absenteeism, repetition and dropout rates especially those of girls. The means for achieving the reduction was through the expansion and improvement of the teaching and learning environment and maximising its use (including overlapping shifts) and reducing primary school cycle to 7 years. Key strategies included rehabilitation of existing schools and building additional school infrastructure including teachers houses; social awareness campaigns, whole school development, school health and nutrition; and providing conducive environment for girls and students with special education needs to embrace equity.

MGDS I included direct measures/targets of the medium term expected outcomes. These included reduction of absenteeism to 5 % and dropout by 50 % by 2012; increasing private primary school enrolment to 2 % by 2015; improving completion rate of girls from 41 % in 2004 and reducing repetition rate of girls from 18.8 % in 2004. Indicators to measure progress were also covered and these included increased Net Enrolment to 95 % by 2012 from the erroneous 115 % in 2005 and increasing proportion of girls in school to 50 % in 2005. The other dimension included was means for achieving equity. These included review of policies to do with girls’, special needs, orphans and other vulnerable children; establishment of a college for SNE teachers, designing and standardising sign language for the deaf and blind and provision of block grants to schools to address equity issues. The only limitation to MGDS I was that basic education was not one of its six key priority areas. Achievement of EFA (Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was envisioned to be a by-product of the six priority areas which did not include education [See pages 51 & 95].

Unlike the MGDS I, NESP and the Revised EFA National Action Plan, fairly streamlined universal quality primary education issues. In the NESP access and equity targets are covered: “increased net enrolment and completion rates especially for those disadvantaged by gender, poverty, special needs and geographical location, encouraging all children to complete the eight years of the primary education”. However, the NESP falls short of declaring universal compulsory primary education; it only encourages completion [See page 12]. The Revised EFA National Action plan streamlined expected outcomes which included substantial reduction in absenteeism, repetition and dropout rates, and high quality and relevant education. However, objectives were not identified and costed [See pages xii & xv].

It is only the ESIP which excellently streamlined universal quality primary education issues. It covers all the six goals and has a specific section dedicated to the discussion of Education for All (EFA) movement (p20). It gives the main strategic priority of Malawi in education which is the improvement of quality, equity, relevance, access and efficiency in Basic Education, working to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Dakar World Education Forum for Action, promoting Education for All by 2015 (pp20-25). ESIP directly addresses EFA goal 2 through strategic priority 2: Quote: “The Government of Malawi is committed to ensuring access to education for all its citizens, and the NESP consequently aims to “ensure that all children have access to, and complete, free and quality primary education” in line with EFA Goals of free and compulsory education of good quality for all by 2015” (p28). For primary education, ESIP deliberately puts quality and relevance as priority one instead of access and equity as the issue is with the other EFA goals [See page 47].

### ***3.3. EFA Goal 3: Providing learning needs of all young people and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes***

The 2009 UNESCO’s EFA Global Monitoring Report noted that the first three goals of EFA will create the conditions under which future generations can realise their potential. The report further highlighted the fact that Governments across the world have to address an immense backlog of unmet need as millions of teen agers have never attended primary school while many millions more have left school lacking the skills they need to earn a livelihood and participate fully in society. This is reminiscent of what the assessment in goals 1 and 2 above has yielded. To address the unmet need, so the report observes, Governments have to provide learning activities which are found in a myriad of formal, informal and non-formal programmes aimed at youth or adults who wish to return to school (equivalency education or second chance programmes). The report further argues that many Governments have given little if any priority to youths and adults learning needs in their education strategies and policies. Inadequate public funding hampers provision and inadequate monitoring obscures other problems, so argues the report.

No clear quantitative targets to the goal were set in Dakar, apart from the main literacy target, thereby contributing to lack of urgency. Further to that, the report contends that the language of the commitment in the goal is ambiguous. Some read it as calling for universal access to learning and life-skills programmes, but others including the drafters of the Dakar Framework understood no such intent [See page 91].

The analysis covered eight documents including the national youth policy of 2010, MGDS 1 and II of 2006-2011, Revised EFA National Action Plan of 2006, NESP of 2008, ESIP of 2009 and JSR Aide Memoire of 2010. From the analysis it would appear that issues pertaining to the

learning needs of youth and adults are adequately streamlined especially in the policy, revised national action plan and the MGDSs. However, the approach which has been used in the section of ESIP which addresses youth education tends to be symptomatic of the narrow perception of the requirements of the goal as is reported by the EFA Global Monitoring Report.

The national policy defines youth as all persons, female and male, from age 10 to 29 years regardless of their sex, race, education, culture, and religion, economic, marital and physical status. According to it, Youth Development and Empowerment is among the Nine Priorities within Priorities on the national development agenda for 2009 to 2014. It is informed by provisions that government has made for the youth in the MGDS, EFA, and MDG goals; the National TVET Policy; and the National Education Policy [See pages iv, 1 & 2]. The vision of the National Youth Policy is an educated, healthy, well trained, vibrant and productive young people. Four of the roles of adults in the implementation of this policy are to ensure provision of quality education to youth; promoting and supporting youth creativity, innovation and initiatives; assisting, encouraging and motivating young women and men in reaching their goals and full potential and promote access to quality education and training for young females and males. Education and youth economic empowerment are two of the six priority areas of the policy and education is priority number one as per the following quote:

*“The personal development of the individual young person, along with the development of local communities and the country as a whole is inextricably linked to the provision of quality, relevant and well-managed education.”*

The policy objective for education is to improve both formal and non-formal education and training for young people in the country. The policy also focuses on Science, the environment and technology. The goal for this area is to Increase number of young women and men studying and taking an active role in science, technology and environmental conservation. The policy also focuses on youth economic empowerment whose goal is to improve socio-economic status of youths through increased incomes. The objective for this is to create a conducive environment for youth employment both in the formal and informal sectors. Within the realm of macro-level planning, the MGDS 1 mainly focused on mainstreaming formal secondary and tertiary education. The goals were to provide the academic basis for gainful employment in the informal, private and public sectors and to produce high quality professionals with relevant knowledge and skills in relevant fields [See pages 50-51].

However, the expected medium term outcome for secondary and tertiary education within MGDS 1 gives little emphasis on Life Skills programmes. It focuses more on increasing access to and improving quality and relevance of education for both sexes and students with special needs and implementing affirmative policies relating to selection of pupils and students to secondary and tertiary levels [See page 51]. Linking the macro-level planning to micro-level service delivery, the 2006 Revised EFA National Action Plan identified two priority outcomes. These were (1) increased access to formal education of out-of-school youths through development of relevant curriculum and appropriate programmes for non-formal education and (2) increased opportunity for accessing technical, entrepreneurial, and vocational education and training by the youths through the formal primary and secondary education curriculum [See page pxii]. The priority outcomes were to be achieved through six key

activities which included; provision of alternative form of technical, entrepreneurial, vocational education and training; provision of an alternative form of education to out of school youth; improving the service delivery of out of school youth clubs; development of a relevant curriculum for out of school youth; strengthening dialogue among youth clubs and between the youth service providers/policy makers; and increasing access to formal education for out-of-school youth. The activities were to be spearheaded by the Ministries of Labour and Structural Development and Youth, Sports and Culture [See pages xv-xvi]. Down to the education sector itself, the 2009-2013 ESIP, properly sees the main strategic priority of Malawi in education to be the improvement of quality, equity, relevance, access and efficiency in Basic Education, working to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). ESIP considers MDGs to be the hub of EFA [See page 20]. However, on issues of education for out-of-school youth, the ESIP has dwelt so much on a single programme, Complementary Basic Education (CBE), at the expense of comprehensively planning for the implementation of the myriad programmes and activities falling within the concept of **“learning needs of all young people and adults to be met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes”**. According to the ESIP which is a mid-term implementation plan of the National Education Sector Plan (NESP), the whole EFA goal 3 collapses into CBE.

#### **Plans in the formal and non-formal education areas**

As usual, Government plans are quite ambitious in this area. In the formal education area there is a deliberate and proactive plan to double enrolment, upgrade quality and promote girls’ retention at secondary school level. At Technical and Vocational Education level there are plans to expand access to and rehabilitate Technical and Vocational Colleges between 2008 and 2017 [ESIP: Po.cit; p20]. In the non-formal education area, there are a number of education programmes for youth covering civic education, human rights and responsibilities, business development and HIV and AIDS. Far and above the designed programmes, there is a fully costed improvement plan for education of out of school youth which aims at achieving eight clear objectives.

Nevertheless, the challenge remains that the myriad of programmes and activities under the goal remain scattered across plans of a number of Government departments without a clear strategy for coordinating their resource mobilisation, programme implementation and results monitoring and evaluation. In this case, allowing the section of goal three in the ESIP to replace all the requirements of goal 3 with CBE risks narrowing of the perception of the goal as observed by the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report. This way of planning has a great potential for compromising national efforts in effectively and efficiently addressing the needs of the youth and adults which may lead into failure to achieve the goal by 2015.

#### ***3.4. EFA Goal 4: Improving levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.***

Reading and writing are essential skills for today’s world. Literacy expands people’s choices, gives them more control over their lives, increases their ability to participate in society and enhances self-esteem. It is a key to education that also opens the way to better health, improved employment opportunities and lower child mortality. Despite these advantages for individuals, and wider benefits in terms of broader social and economic development, literacy remains a neglected goal. Illiteracy is receiving minimal political attention and remains a

global disgrace, keeping one in five adults (one in four women) on the margins of society [EFA Global Monitoring Report: 2009; p93]

In a bid to ensure that adults in Malawi do not lose out on the benefits of literacy, Government established the National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education (NALP) in 1986. The aim of NALP was to provide literacy education to 2.5 million people in 10 years time. NAP was also created to provide continuing education consisting mainly of post-literacy activities to prevent graduates from relapsing into illiteracy.

NALP is implemented through District Community Development Officers (DCDOs) and Community Development Assistants (CDAs). At grassroots level, NALP services are implemented by locally based volunteer Instructors identified and selected by communities through Literacy Committees (LCs). The Instructors are paid an honorarium of MK500.00 per month. The LCs are also responsible for the management of NALP at village level.

After selection, Instructors undergo training in adult education teaching methods for about two weeks. The training is conducted by CDAs. Each literacy class is supposed to comprise at least 15 learners and is conducted for 10 months or the equivalence of 365 instructional hours. Learners cover two primers namely *Chuma ndi Moyo* and *Tigawane Nzeru* for six and four months respectively. At the end of 10 months learners are assessed. Successful learners are declared literates and awarded certificates [MEFA Dossier: Op.cit; pp35-36].

Teaching methodologies in NALP are influenced by the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT). REFLECT follow Paolo Freire's theory of raising awareness among disadvantaged people through empowerment leading to self-emancipation from oppression.

The content used in the REFLECT approach is developed from input of both learners and instructors with accompanying learning materials that include charts, images, pictures and other graphs depicting learners' life experiences and realities. Examples may include household diagrams, maps, gender disaggregated incomes etc. Flash cards containing words are then used to promote vocabulary development and deepen conceptual understanding. These activities provide great opportunity to stimulate thinking and dialogue among learners [MEFA Dossier: Op.cit; p37].

The assessment reveals that in sections discussing education in macro planning documents like the MGDSs issues of EFA goal 4 are almost omitted. However, in education sector planning documents like the Revised EFA National Action Plan, the NESP and ESIP, issues of the goal are adequately reflected. Nevertheless, as was the case with ECD, adult literacy and continuing education issues were not among priority material captured by the JSR Aide Memoire of 2010. This is already an indication of how lowly the education developers in Malawi consider adult literacy and continuing education. This confirms one of the conclusions made by the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report as cited in the background to this section.

The Revised EFA National Action Plan in 2006 planned for increased access to adult literacy programmes and continuing education for both men and women through (1) redefinition of adult literacy programmes and National Adult Literacy Policy within the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) and (2) re-designing of the curriculum, curriculum materials and programme interventions in line with the re-defined meaning of adult literacy



ESIP drawing from the spirit of the NESP, recognises that “the provision of Adult Literacy is an important pillar to Education for All” and as such provides detailed and costed plans on how to address the needs of the goal up to 2013. It plans to (1) Increase number of Adult Literacy Centres, (2) Develop Adult Literacy Curriculum, (3) Strengthen capacity of the Adult Literacy training institutions and (4) Provide incentives to Adult Literacy instructors and advisors [See pages 44-46]. This is why it sounds strange that the JSR Aide Memoire, of December 2010, is almost silent on this goal. Irrespective of the fact that the underlying analysis of issues were based on the NESP and ESIP, the JSR Aide Memoire only captured issues to do with primary and secondary schools, teacher education, higher education and TEVETA. Adult literacy and continuing education failed to attract the attention of the education developers at the JSR even after the department of Adult Literacy Education had just been transferred to the MoEST from Ministry of Women and Children affairs. The impression created is that of deliberate avoidance of prioritising adult literacy and continuing education, a situation which is likely to compromise possibility for achieving goal 4 by 2015.

### ***3.5. Goal 5: Degree to which issues of gender equity and equality n are streamlined in policy and programming documents in education in Malawi between 2000 and 2011***

MEFA Dossier 2008 ably explains the importance of education for a woman or the girl child. It argues that education of a woman has positive effects on national development. It increases women’s chance to enter paid employment and gainful self-employment, thereby bringing about economic self reliance. Thus educating a girl has a direct effect on her age at first marriage. This, in turn, affects her fertility rate, the status of her children’s health as well as her capacity to participate effectively in national development [See page 38].

According to the 2000 Dakar Framework on EFA, the first part of Goal 5 aims at gender parity in school participation and the second part aims at wider progress towards equality between girls and boys in educational opportunities and outcomes. While the world has made sustained progress towards gender parity, deficits still remain large. Of the 176 countries with data in 2006, fifty nine had achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education. However, over half the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where Malawi is situated, have yet to achieve parity at primary level [EFA Global Monitoring Report: Op.cit; p11]. Since Dakar 2000, expansion of secondary school enrolment has led to reductions in gender disparities in most regions. However, gender disparities remain larger in secondary education than primary. Gender disparities are unequally distributed across societies. Being born into a household that is poor, rural, or indigenous; or speaking a minority language, reinforces gender disadvantage in many countries [EFA Global Monitoring Report: Op.cit]. Gender equality is more difficult to measure than parity. Learning achievements provide one benchmark. Four broad themes emerge from international assessments. First girls often outperform boys in reading and literacy. Second, boys outperform girls in Mathematics, though the gap is closing. Third, boys maintain a small advantage in Science. Fourth, at the tertiary level, more women remain under-represented in Science and engineering and over-represented in areas such as education and health [EFA Global Monitoring Report: Op.cit].

Five key documents were reviewed in relation to EFA Goal five streamlining of issues. The assessment established that though at different levels of comprehensiveness, the five documents cumulatively streamlined the issues to do with gender equity and equality in primary and secondary education adequately. The five documents are the MGDS I and II, Revised EFA National Action Plan, NESP, ESIP and 2010 JSR Aide Memoire. The 2006 Revised EFA National Action Plan, excellently streamlined equity and equality issues as key outcomes of the plan included reduced gender inequalities in terms of access, participation and performance especially for girls. Three key activities for achieving the outcomes included enhancing implementation of equity policies, creating conducive gender sensitive learning environment and promoting higher achievement levels especially for girls. These activities were comprehensively costed [See pages xiii-xvii].

The NESP fairly streamlined equity and equality issues as its targets include increased net enrolment and completion rates for primary education targeting those disadvantaged by gender, special needs, geographical location, and encouraging children to complete all years of primary education; improving enrolment especially for girls in senior standards; expanding infrastructure development programmes; promoting involvement of private sector and provision of complementary basic education including Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI). It further advocates for provision of secondary education which is biased towards girls [See pages 12 & 15]. ESIP as a mid-term implementation framework for NESP excellently streamlined equity and equality issues for primary and secondary education. It sets policy targets and priority actions for equitable access. The target for equitable access is gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment. Priority activities for reaching the target include improving retention of girls in Standards 6-8 and transition of girls into secondary education; rolling out “mother groups in all schools; increasing recruitment and training of female teachers, increasing provision of teaching and learning materials and encouraging growth of ECD and CBE centres [See page 26]. The impression created by the level of streamlining of equity and equality issues for primary and secondary education just like the other preceding goals is that Malawi is advanced on planning level. The planners seem to know all the challenges haunting the education system and have also identified possible solutions to the challenges. What could probably be at stake is action. The following subsections look at exactly that.

### ***3.6. Goal 6: Extent to which issues to do with improving all aspects of quality of education have been streamlined in policy and programming documents between 2000 and 2011***

This goal addresses the ultimate purpose of education which is to equip children with knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to realise their potential and participate in social and political life. Many education systems are failing to achieve this purpose. Getting children into school and through a full cycle of basic education remains their major priority. But evidence from many countries suggests that, once in school, many children are acquiring only the most rudimentary skills. In other words, there is great learning achievement deficit in many countries [EFA Global Monitoring Report: Op.cit; pp11&12]. In trying to zero down to the most significant factors behind this learning achievement deficit, Barbara Bruns recently put across the following revealing and challenging questions to education authorities: How can it be that a teacher sleeps in a classroom in the middle of a school day while students wait patiently outside? That grants intended for schools arrive with most of the funds siphoned off

by intermediate layers of administration? That classrooms in slum areas team with students, graffiti, and broken windows while schools in richer districts enjoy ample resources? That national school systems function without the periodic tests that would reveal how little students are learning over time and across districts? [Bruns et al (2011): Making Schools Work; pp1-2]. Bruns's questions imply that among the factors compromising all aspects of quality of education is management of resources and support services including teachers, finances and other teaching and learning materials and monitoring and evaluation of the education systems. She concludes that weaknesses in management result in lack of accountability:

*"a root cause of low quality and inequitable public services not only in education is the weak "accountability" of providers to both their supervisors and their clients" [Bruns et al: Op.cit].*

EFA Global Monitoring Report for 2009 agrees with Bruns. It also faults governance of financing; voice, participation and choice; teachers, monitoring of learning and integration of EFA and poverty reduction strategies. Weak governance systems fail to put in place fair balance among student, school and system factors influencing learning achievement levels. It creates and promotes heavy inequalities which aggravate differences in achievement [See pages 14-21].

As is the case with the above discussed five EFA goals, six documents were reviewed under this goal and these are: MGDS I &II, Revised EFA National Action Plan, NESP, ESIP and the 2010 JSR Aide Memoire. The assessment observes that issues of improving all aspect of quality of education have been excellently streamlined in these documents. At macro level, in the MGDS I improvement of quality and relevance of education is one of the priority issues. Improvement is proposed to be effected through provision of relevant school supplies, training more teachers and upgrading the existing under-qualified teachers.

Direct measure of medium term expected outcome for primary education in MGDS I is improved learning outcomes especially proficient reading and writing skills at higher level. Indicators for measuring progress for primary education quality include reduced Pupil to Qualified Teacher Ratio from 73 in 2004, increased relevance of school curriculum and improved management and planning of primary education. Planned means for realising improvements in quality and relevance of primary education include the following:

1. Training of more teachers, providing them with attractive conditions of work especially to go to rural areas and develop them professionally;
2. Providing adequate supply of teaching and learning materials and creating child-friendly environment;
3. Improving overall management and monitoring of inspection, supervision and advisory;
4. Mobilising communities for participation in primary school management;
5. Continuously revising and improving the relevance of the curriculum to include academic and non-academic needs of pupils-introducing PCAR;
6. Providing in-service training and incentives to school managers, inspectors and senior teachers and

7. Equipping school planners with appropriate knowledge and skills in micro-planning, monitoring and data management [See pages 50 and 95]

At sector level planning, the Revised EFA Action Plan in 2006 streamlined the following key outcomes: reduced Pupil-Teacher Ratios, improved teaching and learning practices and methodologies, availability of adequate teaching and learning materials and institutionalization of an effective monitoring and evaluation system of education quality. Special needs education and HIV and AIDS were included as cross-cutting issues [See pages xiii-xix]. NESP and ESIP have quality and relevance of education as two of the six planning pillars for all levels of education. The ESIP is actually premised on an ambition to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Dakar World Education Forum for Action, promoting Education for All by 2015. Within this, the **overarching priority** of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is to improve all aspects of the quality of education in order to achieve excellence as urged by the EFA goals [See pages 20-25 & 27]. As such, the ESIP policy targets also include the following:

1. reduced Pupil-Teacher Ratios in primary schools (especially in Standards 1-3);
2. measurement and monitoring of learning outcomes;
3. systemic and regular inspection of all schools;

ESIP plans to trigger quality improvements through the following:

1. reducing wastage and inefficiency in the system;
2. implementing drastic measures to reduce pupil-qualified teacher ratios;
3. better management of the allocation of teaching staff and other resources in schools;
4. scaling up classroom construction;
5. Increasing the role for the private sector and private financing and
6. Putting much more focus on In-Service Training (INSET) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among others.

ESIP also offers comprehensive plans for improving governance and management of education delivery for efficiency and effectiveness as is reflected in this quote: "Implicit in all EFA goals is the requisite efficient and effective administrative functioning of the education delivery system. Through the Sector Wide Approach Programme (SWAP), development of annual Programmes of Work (POW) and the Joint Financing Agreement, Government is expected to be able to promote community participation, public private partnerships, decentralisation, capacity building and monitoring and inspection" [See pages 25-29].

### ***3.7. Conclusion***

This section has assessed the extent to which requirements of EFA Goals have been mainstreamed or are reflected in policy and programme planning documents in the country between 2000 and 2011. The assessment has established that except in few cases, policy and programme planning has excellently advanced to an extent that planners and education providers know exactly what is working, what is not working, what needs to be done and at what cost. If there are any challenges to be established in the realisation of EFA goals by 2015, lack of knowledge on what to do and lack of plans and vision on how much education development may cost the country are out of question.

#### **4. PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS THE SIX EFA GOALS BETWEEN 2008-2011**

This section analyses the degree to which Malawi has managed to practically fulfil the requirements of the internationally agreed indicators of progress under each EFA goal. Under each goal, the analysis begins with highlighting the central issues and then proceeds with exploring the progress made through responding to specific indicators as outlined in Table 1.1 in chapter 1. This section also closes with a summative conclusion.

##### **4.1. Goal 1: Expand and improve comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.**

As noted in section 3 above, there are four crucial requirements under this ECD Goal which are provision of a comprehensive programme which is expanded improved and accommodating a majority of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The analysis is, therefore, done through four key questions and 17 indicators which are combined in some cases.

###### *4.1.1. How much has access to comprehensive ECD services expanded especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children between 2008 and 2011?*

Due to the extensiveness and multi-sectoral nature of the ECD sub-sector, assessing access to its services is a challenging exercise as different reports tend to use different age desegregations within the bracket of 0-8. ECD centres are also of various categories or rather service-based including Antenatal and Postnatal Care and Baby Day Care (0-1 year) and Pre-schools level 1 and 2 (2-3 and 4-5), but when reporting on numbers they are often lumped. When reporting on access coverage there is often limited effort to disaggregate the centres according to the age-specific services. It is often not very clear whether focus is put on pre-schooling centres for ages 3-5 or a combination of that and all other services offered from 0-5. For example, the World Bank CSR presents “Past trends and projections of pre-school age population in Malawi for 1998-2018” quoted from UN population Statistics using age-bracket 3-5 (CSR: Op.cit; p11]. However, the rest of the analyses in the report are done using age brackets 0-1 and 2-5. Similarly, the 2008 MEFA Dossier discusses access to ECD using data for age-brackets 0-1 and 2-5 and no focus on the 3-5 age-brackets. For lack of clearer data, this analysis may be seen perpetuating the challenge. This is an area wanting more research attention if a comprehensive evaluation on progress made towards the 2015 target on ECD is to be realised.

###### *4.1.2. Number and distribution of Community Based Child Care Centres (CBCCs)/pre-schools by region and rural urban locations*

Table 3.1 shows that the number of ECD centres progressively increased from 1153 in 2000 to 8,890 in 2009, representing 671 %. The increase between 2008 and 2009 is about 6%. However, the NESP notes that urban-rural disparity in distribution of centres favouring urban and semi-urban locations still remains a major challenge [NESP: Op.cit; p5]. The ESIP complementing the NESP notes that most of 4-5 year old children in rural communities lack opportunities for school readiness preparation due to an absence of ECD centres, while the urban-based children face difficulties to access the private ECD centres which are not

affordable to the majority of the urban population. The situation is worse for girls, children with special needs, children on the street and other vulnerable children [NESP: 2008; p5 and ESIP: 2009; p34]. In other words, there is progressive increase of the supply of ECD infrastructure, but there continues to be disparity in the supply on the basis of urban-rural location, gender, economic status and other vulnerability aspects of the children of the right age. Unless greater effort is put in addressing these disparities, it may be difficult for Malawi to succeed to achieve ECD for all children by 2015.

**Table 3.1: Number of ECD Centres and enrolment by level : 2000 to 2011\***

YEAR	CENTERS	CHILDREN	LEVEL 1 (0-1)	LEVEL 2 (2-5)	COVERAGE
2000	1,155	51,550	15465	36085	2.63
2001	1,645	72,760	21828	50932	2.91
2002	2,602	127,036	38111	88925	4.88
2003	3,207	135,436	40604	94742	5.64
2004	4,529	229,823	68947	160876	9.70
2005	5,945	582,407	174722	407685	22.46
2006	6,240	615,478	184643	430835	26.76
2007	7,801	683,825	205148	478678	29.77
2008	8,388	720,292			30.21
2009	8,890	771,666			32

Source: Ministry of Gender Children, and Community Development (2009 January) & MEFA Dossier: 2008

*4.1.3. Enrolment rates of children of the rightful age for pre-schooling by region and rural-urban location, economic class and level of vulnerability*

According to Table 3.1, the enrolment of the rightful age children for pre-schooling has increased from 51, 550 in 2000 to 771,666 in 2009, representing 1396.9% growth. There is an increase of 51, 394 learners between 2008 and 2009 representing a 7.1% growth rate. 771,666 learners represent a Net Enrolment in pre-schooling of 32%. The implication is that although there is significant growth in enrolment in terms of absolute numbers, the in-take of the rightful age is still far below half as 68% is still not covered. According to the CSR the annual growth rate for pre-school children would be 1.6% for a period of 10 years from 2009. With that projection, in 2011 there would be 1.5 million children and in 2015 the number would reach about 1.7 million [CSR: Op.cit; p 11].

The 2008 EFA Dossier established that there was disparity in enrolment by location whereby the urban centres enrolled more learners (39%) than rural centres (6%) [MEFA Dossier: op. cit; p17]. ESIP indicates further that the emerging issues of HIV and AIDS and orphanhood are also negatively impacting on the issue of equity in ECD services [ESIP: Op.Cit; p34]].

*4.1.4. Proportion of pre-schools upgraded (including sanitary facilities and kitchen utensils) by region and urban-rural location*

The 2006 Revised EFA National Action Plan assumed that up-grading of pre-school infrastructure including sanitary facilities and kitchen utensils would attract more learners to pre-schools just as it would contribute towards improvement of quality of teaching and learning. Despite this assumption and prioritisation of infrastructural upgrading in subsequent planning documents, not much has been done so far. ESIP still notes that Most ECD centres currently lack adequate facilities and their infrastructure is generally poor. Only 20% of the infrastructure is purpose-built for ECD and as such may be inappropriate for young children leading to low demand for the service. The limited access to ECD education leads to parents sending under-age children into Standard 1. For example, between 2004 and 2006 the percentage of pre-school graduates entering primary school at age 4 rose from 3 to 10 while

that of those entering at 5 rose from 15% to 22%. In this way, the ECD challenge spills over to primary school where it affects efficiency as the under-aged children contribute to high repetition and dropout rates in Standard 1 [ESIP: Op.cit; pp34-35 & ECD Report:2010; p33 ].

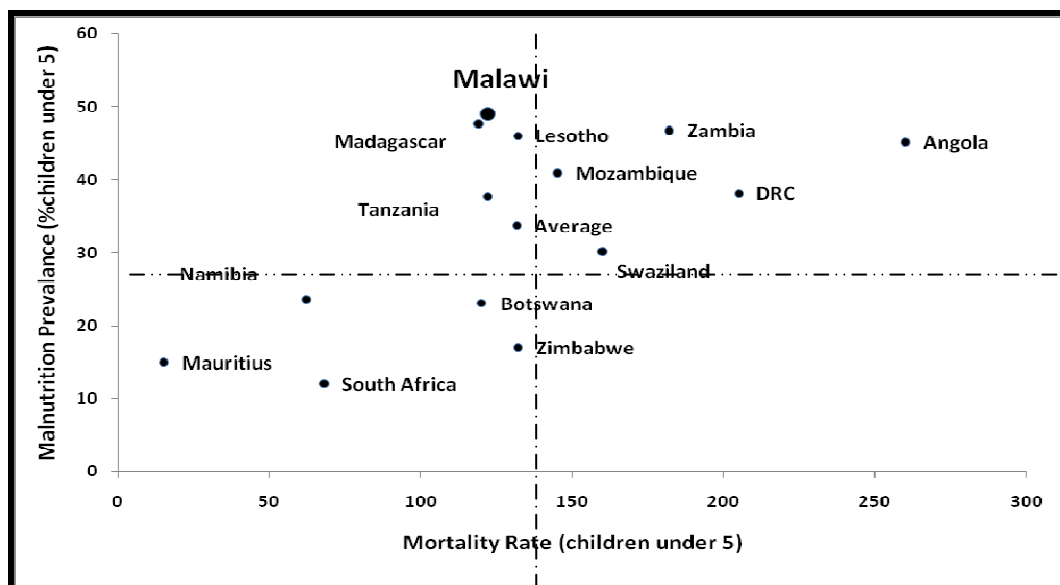
#### *4.1.5. Malnutrition and child mortality rate*

From EFA Global Monitoring Report (2011), it is acknowledged that children's education opportunities are shaped long before they enter primary school. The linguistic, cognitive and social skills they develop through early childhood care and education (ECCE) are the foundations for expanded life chances and for lifelong learning. Notably in Sub-Saharan Africa indicators of child well-being are very low, although disparities exist between and within countries. On average, 149 of every 1,000 children born in the region will not reach age 5. For example, from 17‰ in Mauritius and 31‰ in Cape Verde to above 200‰ in Angola and Chad. On a more positive note though, child mortality rates in Sub-Saharan Africa are falling although they still remain high. On the other hand, child mortality still remains a sensitive barometer of progress towards goal 1. Sub-Saharan Africa has one-fifth of the world's children and the region accounts for half of childhood mortality yet the share is rising.

In Malawi malnutrition is extensive and is a major social development challenge (CSR; 2009). The malnutrition prevalence (calculated using the height according to the age of children under 5 years old) is estimated at 49%. Both average caloric ingestion and dietary diversity are low across the country (for instance, rural people eat mainly maize meals). As an example, nationwide in 2008, an overwhelming 44% of pre-scholars were stunted (of which 18% are severely stunted). These figures have remained more or less constant over the past decade and a half. Since malnutrition diminishes potential future output, such high levels of malnutrition cause enduring adverse impacts on education efforts.

Figure 3.1 shows the position of Malawi compared to the other SADC countries both in terms of malnutrition prevalence and in terms of mortality rate. Malawi has the highest malnutrition prevalence in the region with 49% of children under five, which is 16 percentage points higher than the SADC average (33%). Despite Malawi's very high malnutrition prevalence, its mortality rate for children below the age of five was 122 children per every 1000 which is similar to the SADC average of 131. This suggests that most children below the age of five do not die due to malnutrition related illnesses. Zambia on the other hand has almost a similar situation in terms of malnutrition but her situation worsens on the mortality rate suggesting that most under fives in Zambia die of malnutrition. The situation of Lesotho is almost similar to that of Malawi in the two aspects under assessment. It can therefore be concluded that all the three countries under assessment have the same challenges in as far as Goal 1 is concerned. Despite all the other efforts towards achieving Goal 1, the countries might need to improve on their malnutrition and mortality rates if they are to realise Goal 1 to its full potential. Specifically while Malawi has been focusing on infrastructure development and access to achieve this goal malnutrition and mortality are critical facets of the goal. Figure 3.1 has further details for reference.

**Figure 3.1: Malnutrition rate and Infant Mortality rate, SADC countries, 2005 or close**

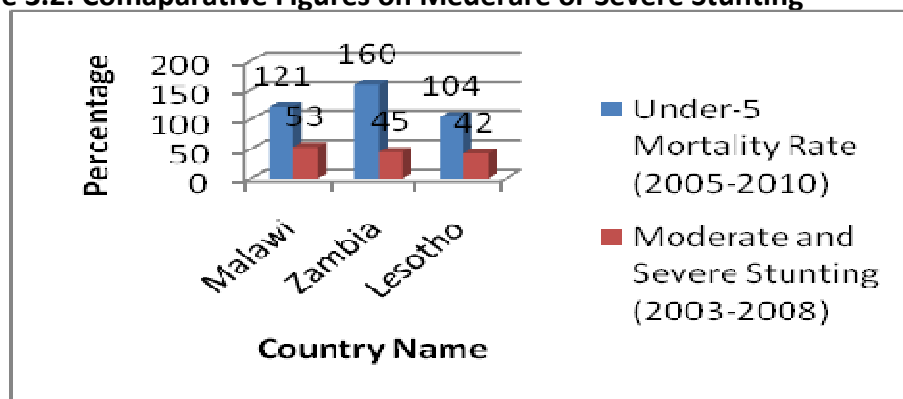


Source: World Health Organization data as captured from CSR (2009)

#### 4.1.6. Level of promotion of the best start in life for all children

As stated earlier from the Global Monitoring Report (2011), malnutrition is a major barrier to achieving Education for All. A sharp rise in food prices in 2008 combined with the global recession continues to undermine efforts to combat hunger in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly 40% of children under age 5 in the region are affected by stunting (short for their age). The prevalence is particularly high in poor countries such as Burundi, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, the Niger and Rwanda, where more than half of children suffer from moderate or severe stunting. Comparative Details are presented in Figure 3.2 below.

**Figure 3.2: Comparative Figures on Moderate or Severe Stunting**



#### 4.1.7. Level of promotion of the best start in life for all children

Suffice to state it that Malawi seems to be taking some impressive efforts in addressing underlying factors towards the promotion of best start in life for all children. ESIP and MGDS II note that there has been some consistent decline of factors like poverty as a basic cause for slow progress in the improvements in ECD, Under-Five Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Rate and HIV prevalence Rate among 15-24 year old pregnant women [ESIP: Op.cit; p20]. MGDS II further notes decreasing trends of Child Mortality and Infant Mortality Rates, Nutritional indicator of (child) stunting, Child underweight and Wasting [See Table 3.2]. MGDS II indicates that there also has been impressive efforts in the improvement of iodine



status among school aged children and women, provision of vitamin A supplementations and nutritional support programmes and early case detection and timely treatment of severely malnourished children. However, the major obstacle to more successful accomplishments in this area is limited advocacy for prioritisation of ECD services. One unfortunate consequence has been limited awareness of nutritional issues in the general public, low institutional capacity to handle the issues of nutrition and inadequate mainstreaming of nutrition in sectoral programmes [MGDS II: Op.cit; p32 & ECD 2010 Annual Report; p34].

**Table 3.2: Progress Trends on indicators of Best Start for Life in Children: 1990-2010**

Indicator	1990	1999/2000	2005	2007	2009	Target for 2015
Poverty	54%			40%		27%
Under-Five Mortality Rate		23%		10%		8%
Maternal Mortality Rate		0.62%		0.70%		0.16%
HIV/AIDS Prevalence Rate among 15-24 year old pregnant women		17%		11%		0%
Child Stunting			48%		35.8%	
Child Under Weight			22%		14%	
Child Wasting			5%		1.3%	

Source: ESIP: 2009 & MGDS II: 2011

*4.1.8. Level of promotion of early detection, prevention, intervention, integration and parent education for children with disabilities*

The baseline context to the ECD policy in 2003 indicates that there were limited educational opportunities for children with special needs in rural and urban areas due to lack of resources to address the issue. Consequently, one of the policy objectives was to strengthen the protection and safeguarding of children in difficult circumstances [ECD policy: 2003; pp6-11]. In 2006, the Revised EFA national Action Plan put the promotion of early detection, prevention, intervention; integration and parent education for children with disabilities as one of its priority objectives signifying that there were still challenges in this area [See pages xii and xiv]. The NESP in 2008 considered lack of integration of special needs as one of the challenges in ECD provision. The Government of Malawi 2010 annual report on ECD reports that none of the activities planned for this indicator in 2009 was implemented due to lack of funds [See page 34]. All these signify that apart from planning, there is little real action leading into substantive progress in this area over the years. Such a trend of progress does not seem to give hope of achievement of ECD for all by 2015.

*4.1.9. Extent to which the protection of children against any forms of abuse and exploitation has been strengthened*

Since the Dakar World Education Forum (2000) there have been increased advocacy campaigns against abuse of children. The campaigns have been in forms of electronic and print media and open theatre. The Ministry of Gender, Women and Community development successfully advocated for the enactment of the Child Protection Act and the development of an associated policy. About 1.4 million children in rehabilitation centres are fed on vita meal and about 50 % of paraprofessional staff providing child protection services were trained by 2009. However, the 2010 ECD Annual report considers these achievements far below expectations. Failure to reach targets is blamed on lack of funding [See page 34]. It is not

surprising that the 2011 MGDS II contends that “Children still face a number of challenges which are social, economic, political and cultural in nature” [See page 31].

*4.1.10. The degree to which the profile and visibility of ECD is raised to increase its demand from parents of the right age.*

The MEFA 2008 Dossier established that in Malawi there was lack of awareness at family, community and national levels of the importance of early learning in the psychosocial and cognitive development of children [See page 18]. The ESIP 2009 still considered lack of visibility for ECD and as a result, planned the implementation of four sensitisation meetings annually for the same to the general public, policy makers and technocrats and creation of a website [See page 36]. As a result of this, the 2010 ECD annual report indicates plans of an extensive advocacy programme called M'mera Mpoyamba but does not include it on its list of successes in the year. This may imply that even with M'mera Mpoyamba campaign, not much progress has been realised in this area. If that is the case, we may continue to have limited demand for ECD services from those who are seriously deprived of the service and fail to offer it for all by 2015.

*4.1.11. How much improvement has been realised in quality and relevance of ECD services between 2000 and 2011?*

Despite elegant and comprehensive plans for quality improvement for ECD contained in the 2003 ECD policy, 2006 Revised National Action Plan, 2008-2017 NESP and 2009 ESIP, the situation on the ground indicates frustrating progress. Amongst the challenges to ECD which the 2008 Dossier identified, four were related to quality and these were: most ECD centres were operating under poor conditions due to lack of support by Government and communities; most ECD centres lacked standard instructional materials and operational guidelines; there was no systematic monitoring and evaluation tools and there was acute shortage of trained teachers for ECD.

According to CSR, NESP and ESIP not much progress has been made over the 2008 situation. ECD centres in Malawi still remain of various quality levels, lacking standardisation and improvement. There are no standardised instructional materials and teaching guidelines. The available ECD standards and tools intended to promote quality of services are not adequately reinforced. Most of the ECD centres are community-based and as such they are run by volunteers who only dedicate (volunteer) part of their time to take care of the children. There would be no justification for asking them to offer more time than what they can volunteer. Further to that, the capacity of the Government training institutions for ECD is limited and as a result, there continues to be acute shortage of trained teachers in ECD. The current ECD curriculum lacks adequate substance for equipping the ECD graduates with relevant competencies to make them fit for primary school education. This is partly due to poor training given to the ECD teachers or care givers. The training is considered inadequate to prepare the teachers to handle children in transition to primary school. In 2007, Government tried to address the pre-school-primary transition deficiency by introducing a one term ECD class in Standard 1 in primary school. However, ECD specialists feel that term one alone is not enough, better the whole one year. The specialists also note that their involvement in and contribution to the development of standard one teaching and learning materials are limited

and that further compromises proper transition of learners and complementarily of teaching and learning materials. Further to that, the current setting does not provide enough help to children who are under-aged to find accessible ECD centres, as well as the over aged to have access to proper and well prepared standard one places [NESP:p5, ESIP: pp 32-35 & ECD 2010 Annual Report: p30]. Unless all the factors discussed here which are compromising quality and relevance of ECD services are adequately addressed, quite a god proportion of rightful age learners will be missed while within the system; making hopes of achieving ECD for all by 2015 an illusion.

#### *4.1.12. To what extent have governance and management of ECD services improved?*

The 2010 ECD Annual Report highlights three key success stories of governance and management. Department of Child Development was set to coordinate the implementation of child care, protection and development services. A 50-member National Network of ECD providers from a cross-section of the society was established. Community Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (C-IMCI) was successfully implemented all over the country [See page 34]. However, according to NESP 2008 and ESIP 2009, management and planning of ECD programmes still remains relatively weak. The factors behind limited progress include inadequate skilled professionals, the absence of ECD tutors, supervisors and advisors, lack of remuneration for ECD teachers, and the lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Lack of M&E is aggravated by lack of Information Management Service. Lack of remuneration causes a high turnover of ECD teachers [NESP: Op.Cit; p5 & ESIP: Op.Cit; p35]. Lack of remuneration seems to be perpetuated mainly by failure to review the relevance of a community based approach in provision of ECD in a country where the majority of rural people live below poverty line and do not have the necessary skills to manage the ECD centres adequately. The community-based approach seems to be a continued justification for the limited funding to ECD which is one of the major causes for poor infrastructure in centres and poor coordination and regulation of responsible departments and service providers. Current evidence indicates that there has not been much improvement in the financing levels of ECD services. For instance, the 2008 Dossier noted that the MoWCD allocated only 1.25 % of its annual budget to child development in the 2007/08 financial year expecting donors and other well wishing organisations to top up the allocation. Aware of the inadequacy of the allocation, the department strategized to lobby for more funding from Government in the following years [MEFA Dossier: Op. Cit; p18]. However, this has not changed much as evidenced by the NESP's quoting of insufficient public funding as one of the challenges to effective management of ECD [See page 5].

#### ***4.2. Goal 2: Ensuring that girls, children in difficult circumstances, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality***

There are two central issues in this goal which are expanding equitable access to primary schooling and ensuring that learners of primary school age are completing the primary school cycle. The two issues are analysed through five questions and 13 indicators.

4.2.1. *To what extent has equitable access to primary school education in Malawi expanded from 2000 to 2011?*

4.2.1.1. *Net Enrolment Ratio by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children*

According to the 2009 Country Status Report, the education system in Malawi has to develop itself within a heavier demographic context than in its neighbouring countries. The country's population, estimated at 13 million inhabitants in 2008, is increasing at the rate of 2.4 % per year. The 5 to 16 age group represents 37 of the total population which is largely the highest proportion for this age group compared to the entire SADC region. While the population growth rate is expected to decrease slowly, the primary school age-group (6 to 13 years old) is expected to increase by 20% between 2008 and 2018 [See page 8]. As indicated by Table 3.3 below, the primary school age population grew by almost a million learners in six years time (2004 and 2010). The primary school age population for girls grew slightly faster than that of boys with an average 1.39 percentage points.

The 2010 Ministry of Education EMIS defines Net Enrolment Rate (NER) as the enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population. This rate shows the extent of coverage in a given level of children and youth belonging to the official age group [EMIS: 2010; p10].

Year	Both sexes	Male	percentage	Female	percentage
2004	2,397,857	1,182,490	49.3	1,215,367	50.7
2005	2,543,076	1,256,456	49.4	1,286,620	50.6
2006	2,693,009	1,332,943	49.5	1,360,066	50.5
2007	2,857,643	1,415,656	49.5	1,441,987	50.5
2008	3,013,948	1,497,452	49.68%	1,516,496	51.2
2009	3,150,722	1,544,972	49.03	1,605,750	51.0
2010	3,368,420	1,680,078	49.2%	1,688,342	50.8%

Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS): 2004- 2010

The visual picture created by EMIS 2009 and 2010 data is that Malawi has succeeded to offer primary school education to almost all its primary school age population. However, the exact extent of success is set back by the persistence of over age and under age learners in the system. This is evidenced by the Net Enrolment rates of more than 100 % in some of the years and the discussion on transition of pre-school graduates to primary school done earlier in this report [See Table 3.4 below].

2004		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
116	115	108	107	103	104	98	101	102	104	97	101	99	102
115*		108		104		100		103		99		100	

\*NER for both boys and girls. Source: EMIS 2004-2010

From the MGDS II plan and ESIP it is becoming evident that while Gross Enrolment is decreasing since 2000, NER is increasing. For example, NER is reported to have increased from 58 % in 1999 to 75 % in 2007 and to 83 % in 2009 leading to a target of 100 % in 2015 [ESIP: p20].

According to ESIP, it is only in Standard 1 where NER is close to UPE. However, the 2010 Joint Sector Review Aide Memoir contends that although access to Standard 1 is close to universal,

only 40% of those enrolled in the Standard are aged 6. It argued further that although there has been a steady progress on reducing primary Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) and increasing NERs towards 100% between 2007 and 2010, there are no set targets to guide progress to 2015, survival remains unsatisfactory, with completion rate of only 35%. The 2009 CSR estimates that 4% of the primary school age population never attends school due to demand related factors linked to poverty. It argues that under-intake concerns mainly the 40% poorest of the country. Reasons such as official age perception to attend school, economic difficulties, illnesses and disabilities are mainly mentioned to explain non attendance. ESIP estimates that 600,000 primary age children are not enrolled in primary schools and contends that gender, location and income disparities are more pronounced in access trends to primary education.

Table 3.4 indicates an aggregate picture of a Malawi that has almost achieved gender parity in provision of access to the primary school age population whether cases of overage and underage learners are included or excluded. Further to this, the trend between 2009 and 2010 shows that the schools system is enrolling slightly more girls of the official primary school age than boys. This shows that Malawi is responding positively to the higher growth rate of primary school age girls which is demonstrated by Table 4.4 above. However, this rosy picture hides differences which emerge across the Standards. ESIP notes that Gender parity index is 1.04 in the first four Standards of primary but decreases as one goes up the standards and education levels. According to ESIP, in 2009 access to Standard 8 differed by 14 % between boys and girls, being in favour of boys. It differed by 34% between urban and rural, being in favour of the urban. The difference between the richest quintile and the poorest quintile of the population was 44% in favour of the richest quintile. CSR notes that differences between regions are a little bit more important: access probability in the southern region significant 2.2 % lower than in the northern while the same figure for central region is 1.2 % lower than in the northern region [See page 43]. Summing up the situation in December 2010, the Aide Memoire doubted the possibility of Malawi achieving UPE as an MDG by 2015. For ESIP, the situation can only improve after investing considerable resources [CSR: Op.cit; p23; ESIP: Op.cit; p17; MGDS II: Op.cit; p30 & JSR Aide Memoire: Op.cit; pp3-5]. The encouraging news though is that overage and underage children are on the decrease as demonstrated by the trend between 2004 and 2010 [See Table 3.5].

#### *4.2.1.2. Availability of teaching and learning resources in schools by rural-urban location*

The allocation of textbooks in primary schools in Malawi is guided by the guidelines on Teaching and Learning Materials [formerly Draft National School Textbook Policy (2006)] which states in its foreword that “The education system must have a continuous supply of quality, relevant and accessible teaching and learning materials to a ratio of 1:1.” As such, the intention is to allocate one textbook per learner for each subject taught. Replacement of textbooks is planned every three years. Textbooks are distributed free of cost to all public schools. There is no official policy on the distribution of textbooks to private schools, which represent a little over 4 % of primary schools in Malawi. The current practice is for private schools to take textbooks from public schools. This results in a negative skewing of the public distribution figures. There are, however, plans underway to supply textbooks to private schools in the future based on a cost recovery mechanism.

A critical problem facing the distribution of textbooks to schools is the reliance on donors. There is indeed a severe lack of government funds for textbooks, more especially at the secondary level where local school initiatives such as the Textbook Revolving Fund represent the primary source of funds for textbooks [CSR: Op.cit; p110]. However, the assessment in this section is based on the concept used by the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) III studies and EMIS data. The SACMEQ assessment was based on availability of four variables which were basic learning materials (at least one exercise book, a pencil, or pen/ball point and a ruler) Mathematics textbook ownership, average Standard 6 Pupil-Teacher Ratio and average number of Standard 6 pupils per class. SACMEQ III noted that in 2007 the percentage of pupils having basic learning materials increased to 73 from 55 in SACMEQ II (2000). However, this is still below the SACMEQ mean of 97%. There were more basic learning materials in urban (81%) than in rural areas (70%). The percentage of pupils having their own Mathematics textbooks dropped from 57 in 2000 to 24 in 2007. The average percentage for SACMEQ countries was 41. The percentage of pupils having sole use of Mathematics textbooks was higher in rural schools than urban schools. Pupil-Teacher Ratio worsened between SACMEQ II in 2000 and SACMEQ III in 2007. It moved from 70:1 to 88:1 which is much higher than the SACMEQ mean of 43:1. The average Pupil-Teacher Ratio in rural schools was even higher (97:1) as compared to urban schools (60:1). The average number of Standard 6 pupils per class increased from 57:1 in SACMEQ I (2000) to 66:1 in SACMEQ III (2007). This was above the SACMEQ mean of 46:1 and national benchmark of 60:1. The Standard 6 Pupil-Classroom ration was higher in urban schools (92:1) than in rural schools (58:1) [ SACMEQ III Policy Brief Number 2: 2011; pp ]. Table 3.5 complements the SACMEQ data with EMIS data. From this table it can be noted that, five years to 2015, Malawi is still teaching 41 more pupils in a class than is required. In five years time, Malawi has only reduced the number of pupils it is teaching in class by seven.

Division	2006	2007	2008	2010
Northern	85	82	106	69
Central East	99	101	118	96
Central West	125	121	134	118
South East	110	107	116	114
South West	113	108	114	108
Shire Highlands	111	109	116	117
National	107	104	117	101

Source: EMIS 2005-2010

While only two of the six divisions (the Northern and Central East) have ratios below the national. Only the Northern Region is close to hitting the benchmark of 60:1 by 2015. Central West, Shire Highlands and South East divisions in that order are the most backward with the ratio of pupils per class as close to double the benchmark. Among the districts, Lilongwe Rural East is the most backward, followed by Mulanje, Thyolo and Mchinji in that order. Intra-division comparison between urban and rural districts shows that urban districts tend to have higher Pupil-Classroom Ratios than rural districts. However, Government capacity to construct new classrooms and rehabilitate old ones is not adequate enough to cope with the challenge. The 2010 JSR Aide Memoir reported poor progress on expanding access through construction and rehabilitation of school infrastructure. It observed that by 2010, the country needed more than 27,000 additional classrooms, yet the annual target of 1000-2000 was never met. The country only managed to build 544 classrooms out of the targeted 1430 a year, which was 38% of the target. Further to that, 10,901 existing classrooms were found to be unusable [See pages 3-5]. Thus according to the MGDS II, inadequate and inferior learning structures is one of the major challenges to the provision of adequate equitable access to primary education in Malawi [See page 30]. The picture given here is one of an increase in the provision of basic

learning resources/materials but one which in most cases is disproportional to the demand and irregular in terms of equitable distribution. Unless Government and other education stakeholders find means of improving the bottlenecks to low and irregular supply and low capacity in construction, Malawi may not be able to provide adequate access to primary school in terms of availability of adequate teaching and learning resources by 2015. The consequence will be failure to offer primary education of good quality to all.

*4.2.2. What percentage of learners enrolling in Standard 1 is able to complete the eight years of the primary school cycle and at what cost?*

*4.2.2.1. Survival Rate to Standards 5 and 8 by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children*

The 2010 EMIS report defines Survival Rate as the proportion of a cohort of pupils who reach each successive Standard expressed as percentage of pupils enrolled in the first Standard of a given cycle in a given school year. The indicator is used to measure the extent to which the school system can retain pupils, with or without repetition, and it measures the magnitude of dropouts [See page 23]. According to Table 3.6 below, the Survival Rate for Standard 1 to five increased from 47.4 % to 73.5 % between 2004 and 2010 but there was a decline between 2008 and 2010. The same trend appears in the Survival Rate to Standard 8 which almost doubled between 2004 and 2010 but show a decline of 3.3 percentage points between 2008 and 2010. While the difference between the Survival Rate of boys and girls from Standard 1 to 5 fluctuates and is not much, the one to Standard 8 is systematically in favour of boys and it is greater. The MGDS II testifies to this trend of growth of the Survival Rate to Standard 8 [See page 30].

**Table 3.6: Survival Rate to Standards 5 and 8 in Malawi primary schools by gender**

Year	Standard 5			Standard 8		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2004	44.8	50.5	47.4	26.9	22.6	24.6
2005	51.8	47.6	49.8	30.1	22.9	26.1
2006	53.3	52.9	53.0	31.9	27.2	29.6
2007	53.6	50.7	51.8	34.9	26.1	30.7
2008	78.0	73.6	76.2	58.7	49.9	52.1
2009	62.7	65.2	62.7	41.1	37.9	38.8
2010	74.7	72.0	73.5	53.1	45.0	48.8

As noted above, Survival Rates of an education system reflects on the capacity to which the system retains learners and this is influenced by various factors. The 2009 CSR notes that low retention in primary schools in Malawi is mainly influenced by demand factors concerning the poorest, and is further worsened by gender disparities that could be explained by economic difficulties and behaviour such as early marriage, pregnancy or family responsibilities. Some supply issues also seem to have some negative marginal effect on retention. These include high repetition, crowded classrooms, open air or temporary classrooms. The CSR further states that educational continuity is an issue as in 2006, 13 % of Standard 1 pupils were in school not providing educational continuity, making them more likely to dropout. The reports notes that retention on schools that provide educational continuity is much higher at the national level (42%), giving sense to a policy that would target generalisation of educational continuity. The report further notes that School life expectancy is 7 years, considering either children who never attended school and on the other hand pupils who have reached higher education. Considering global amount of public resources dedicated to education, this places

Malawi on an average situation of efficiency, compared to other low income countries [See page 23]. This means there is need to tremendously improve on the level of efficiency of the system if Malawi is to retain all the learners in the primary school system to the end of the eighth Standard and hence achieve education for all by 2015.

#### 4.2.2.2. Dropout Rate by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children

The primary education in Malawi is organised in such a way that from Standards 1 to 4 the medium of instruction is the local language while from Standard 5 the medium of instruction is English. The underlying principle is to promote literacy in local language before addressing issues of literacy in the official language which is also second language, English. With the introduction of a reformed curriculum in 2007, learners are supposed to be continuously assessed by their teachers in the eight years of learning and sit for a national examination in Standard 8 for purposes of certifying completion of the cycle and qualification for selection to secondary school. In this system, three Standards are critical. These are 1, 4 and 8. Standard 1 is critical for entry and setting foundation for continuity. Standard 4 is for demonstrating acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills in the local language to help adapt to the second language. Standard 8 is critical for demonstration of acquisition of adequate skills commensurate with a primary school graduate. Dropping at Standard 1 is almost the same as not attending primary school education at all. Dropping at Standard 4 is like leaving the system at the time one has only started acquiring basic literacy and numeracy in the local language and is not enough to sustain one's lifelong literacy and numeracy competencies. Dropping at Standard 7 is tantamount to non-completion of the cycle and does not qualify one for certification which is a requirement for post-primary education. Dropping out at any of the three Standards cannot help Malawi achieve education for all by 2015. The analysis in this section focuses on the three Standards.

Table 3.7 indicates that there is just marginal progress in reducing dropout rate at Standard 1 between 2000 (12.95%) and 2010 (12.72%). However, the rate dropped significantly between 2005 and 2010. It almost halved, moving from 23.09% to 12.72%. The aggregate progress though remains that we have reduced the Dropout Rate for the Standard by less than 1 percentage point (0.23%) in 10 years. At this rate, it is doubtful that we can completely eliminate dropout at Standard 1 in the remaining five years. This could be a contributing factor for failing to realise EFA by 2015.

Year	Division	Standard 1		Standard 4		Standard 7	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
2000	North	9.6	8.5	5.2	5.0	5.7	9.0
	C. East	12.0	11.1	7.9	8.3	6.4	10.2
	C. West	13.5	11.8	8.9	8.7	6.8	9.1
	S. East	16.4	15.6	10.5	10.9	6.5	11.3
	S. West	14.4	13.8	8.6	8.3	5.8	7.7
	S. Highlands	15.7	14.8	10.8	11.1	7.9	12.7
	National	13.5	12.4	8.6	8.6	6.5	9.8
	National aggregate	12.95		8.6		8.15	
2005	North	16.01	18.87	8.43	8.92	6.83	17.41
	C. East	22.83	22.29	16.8	16.16	8.27	18.62
	C. West	23.01	26.89	18.19	18.6	18.48	23.46
	S. East	21.39	30.24	18.19	17.71	17.08	26.1
	S. West	20.48	21.31	6.92	8.28	11.42	20.46
	S. Highlands	22.8	27.67	14.08	13.4	19.08	20.07



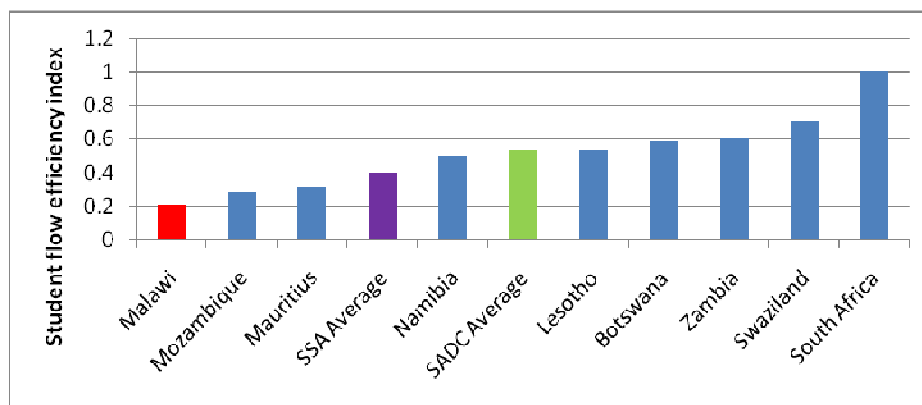
	National	21.32	24.86	13.06	13.33	12.79	20.92
	National aggregate	23.09		13.20		16.86	
2010	North	10.09	11.28	8.67	7.89	4.51	11.18
	C. East	15.29	15.82	7.67	6.10	1.88	9.43
	C. West	12.81	15.71	10.58	9.87	15.00	19.03
	S. East	3.81	9.09	14.06	10.39	12.81	17.86
	S. West	12.92	13.72	4.59	6.45	6.01	16.49
	S. Highlands	14.76	15.07	10.59	8.46	5.57	12.31
	National	11.71	13.73	9.54	8.39	8.10	14.64
	National aggregate	12.72		8.96		11.37	

Dropout Rate at Standards 4 seems to have stagnated between 2000 and 2010 while that of Standard 8 tend to show a rising trend although with some fluctuations. Standard 4 rates slightly moved from 8.6% in 2000 to 8.96% in 2010. Standard 8 rates worsened from 8.15% to 11.37%. In other words, while there is some progress in reducing Dropout Rate at entry point of the system, the situation is not improving mid-way and it is getting out of control towards the end. And as already noted by the CSR above, dropout rate is related to issues of poverty and gender. As such, more female learners and those from poor households, dropout from school than male and those from rich households. The 2010 JSR Aide Memoire points to the same “Dropout Rate is also high especially for girls in Standards 7 and 8” [See page 6]. Similarly, EMIS data tends to show higher Dropout Rates in rural districts than urban ones of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu especially in lower Standards (at least 1-6). It is apparent therefore that unless some effort is made to improve the internal efficiency of the system in the remaining three years, we may not be able to realise universal education for all including learners from poor households, rural districts and the females by 2015.

#### 4.2.2.3. Student flow efficiency index in various SADC countries

According to CSR (2009), the student flow efficiency index, based on survival rates within and between cycles (primary and secondary), helps to assess where dropping out issues are more at stake: within cycles, or between cycles. While dropouts within cycles tend to be endured by the system (which is not ideal as each cycle corresponds to a bloc of competencies that are fully acquired by completing the given cycle), dropouts between cycles are usually influenced by education policy decisions such as the number of places available at the next education level. A well-managed education system – in terms of student flows- would have a majority of dropouts occurring between cycles instead of within cycles. Computation for 2007 provides an index of 0.21: this means that 21% of student dropouts occur between cycles while 79% occur within cycles. Problems of dropout are thus particularly striking within cycles. This pattern is generally less skewed in other countries: in SADC countries (with an index averaging 0.54) as the figure 3.3 below illustrates.

Figure 3.3: Student flow efficiency index in various SADC countries, year 2006 or closest



Source: World Bank data, 2009

From the data in the table, Lesotho and Zambia are better off in terms of the efficiency index with Zambia at the highest point on the ladder. Malawi will need to improve on her dropout rate between levels through implementation of deliberate policies that will offer such opportunities to more learners.

#### 4.2.2.4. Repetition Rate by gender, rural-urban location, division, economic status and vulnerability of children

Repetition Rate is an indicator of internal efficiency of the system but has direct impact on access. Repeaters in Standard 1 occupy space intended for those to enrol from the enrolment age pool. They contribute to classroom crowdedness which may cause and worsen dropout. In Standards 2 to 6, they mainly contribute to classroom crowdedness. Far and above all, repetition makes education stakeholders spend more resources on the repeaters thereby compromising their efforts in addressing other critical areas of expansion of access for other deserving learners. Table 3.8 indicates that Repetition Rates of the first four Standards increased between 2000 and 2004, but started a declining trail from 2005. The trend between 2005 and 2010 almost gives an impression that we are beginning to tame Repetition Rate at this level. In other words, the system is becoming more efficient in maintaining requisite spaces for the eligible learners in each Standard. However, the trend is slightly different in the last three Standards (6-8). Repetition Rates in these Standards are on increasing trail implying that the system's efficiency at this level still remains weak and is making stakeholders spend more than is expected. Summing up the situation, the 2010 JSR Aide Memoir noted that there is poor progress on improving internal efficiency to reduce repetition rates which remain high. It captured the Repetition Rate in Standards 1-3 which is over 20 % and further noted that the whole primary sub-sector had 660,000 repeaters costing MK2billion a year [See page 6].

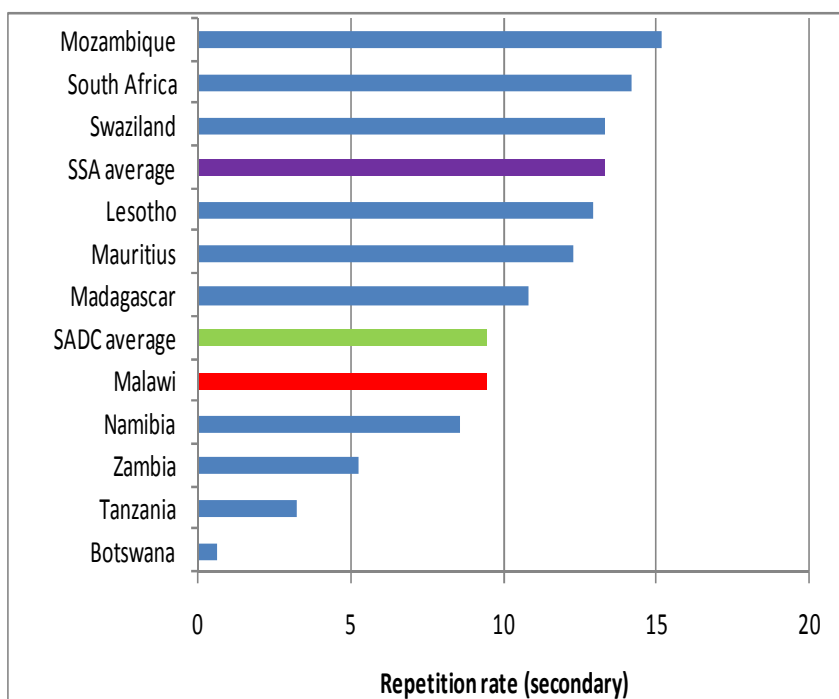
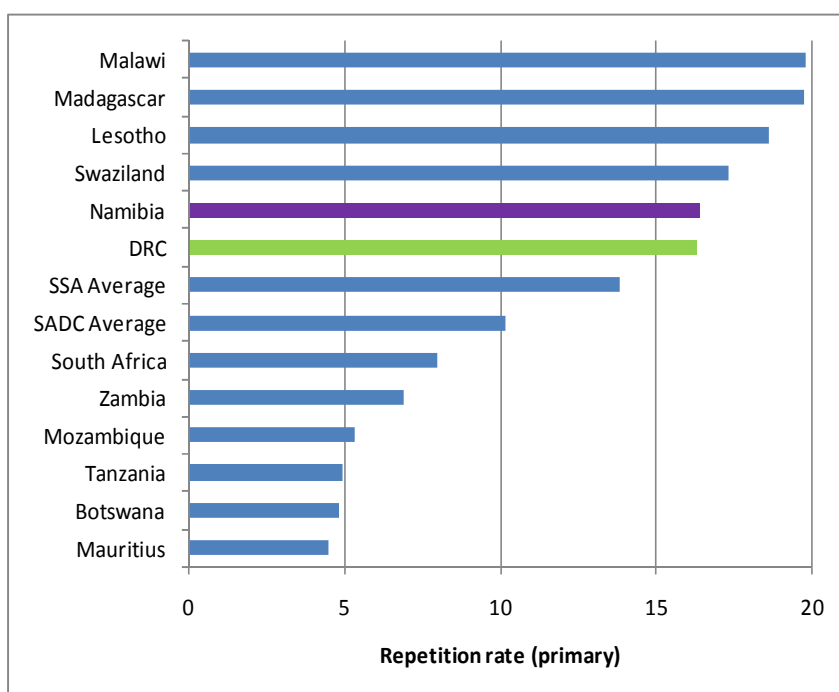
Year	Division	Std. 1	Std. 2	Std. 3	Std. 4	Std. 5	Std. 6	Std. 7	Std. 8
2000	North	19.55	17.1	16.05	14.25	11.5	21.8	10.25	24.1
	C. East	17.7	15.25	29.1	12.45	9.7	9.05	7.55	12.6
	C. West	18.5	16.55	16.65	13.6	12	11.65	9.95	8.15
	S. East	18.7	18.35	17.7	14.45	13.5	11.5	11.2	11.4
	S. West	16.35	15.1	15.35	12.75	10.55	10.75	9.8	8.5
	Shire Highlands	16.15	16.05	15.85	12.7	11.1	11.25	10.15	11.0
	<b>National</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>16.05</b>	<b>13.35</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>10.85</b>	<b>9.75</b>	<b>13.7</b>
2005	North	27.83	23.77	21.38	17.92	16.77	13.43	12.83	24.04
	C. East	24.0	18.26	21.86	18.84	13.32	10.68	8.83	18.88
	C. West	23.84	18.88	21.29	16.44	14.48	11.89	8.84	7.88
	S. East	28.99	22.27	22.12	17.33	18.08	12.78	10.86	9.47

	S. West	21.88	18.83	20.81	14.9	16.78	12	8.68	8.66
	Shire Highlands	23.8	20.7	23.27	17.32	16.88	13.17	10.13	12.77
	<b>National</b>	<b>24.71</b>	<b>20.86</b>	<b>21.73</b>	<b>18.66</b>	<b>16.11</b>	<b>12.29</b>	<b>10.46</b>	<b>14.3</b>
2010	North	24.56	19.05	19.21	18.55	16.16	14.42	14.79	25.78
	C. East	25.42	21.58	22.48	18.61	15.40	13.33	12.80	19.81
	C. West	23.41	18.31	18.83	16.12	14.41	12.13	10.93	7.21
	S. East	27.60	23.09	23.79	18.73	18.60	15.06	13.91	9.82
	S. West	20.71	19.41	20.28	16.12	16.42	15.06	13.25	9.71
	Shire Highlands	25.37	20.75	23.91	18.48	17.81	13.76	11.81	13.72
	<b>National</b>	<b>24.56</b>	<b>20.23</b>	<b>21.20</b>	<b>17.63</b>	<b>16.22</b>	<b>13.80</b>	<b>12.85</b>	<b>15.12</b>

Source: MoEST EMIS

How does Malawi fare compared to other countries? As shown in the figure below, Malawi shows the highest repetition rate at primary level in the region, with a rate twice as high as the SADC one. In secondary level, Malawi fares as the average SADC countries.

**Figure 3.4: Repetition rate at primary and secondary level in SADC countries, year 2006 or closest**



4.2.3. *How better is the quality of primary education in 2011 compared to 2000 and what efforts have been made to improve the quality?*

4.2.3.1. *Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) by urban-rural location and division/Pupil-Qualified Teacher Ratio (PQTR) by urban-rural location and division*

According to Table 3.9, PTR has worsened between 2000 and 2010 while PQTR improved between 2000 and 2004 but started a rising trend from 2004 to 2010. PTR rose from 63:1 in 2000 to 71:1 in 2005. It rose further from 71:1 in 2005 to 80:1 in 2010. QPTR improved from 123:1 in 2000 to 82:1 in 2003. It then started an increasing trail from 2005 to 2010 during which it has risen from 83:1 to 91:1. Almost all literature on teacher deployment in Malawi testifies to the fact that rural schools have higher PTR and PQTR than urban schools. Similarly, it is an indisputable fact that there are fewer female teachers than male ones and most of them are deployed in urban schools. This deployment trend of female teachers deprives rural girls of female models of educated people to encourage them to remain in school. As a result most of the girls dropout before completing primary school thereby compromising national efforts for achieving EFA by 2015 [Ndalama and Chidalengwa (2010).

Year	Pupil Teacher Ratio	Pupil Qualified Teacher Ratio
2004	72	82
2005	71	83
2006	76	84
2007	78	88
2008	78	90
2009	81	92
2010	80	91

Source: MoEST EMIS

4.2.3.2. *The degree of relevance of the curriculum to the learning needs of children and demands of the post primary education and the job world*

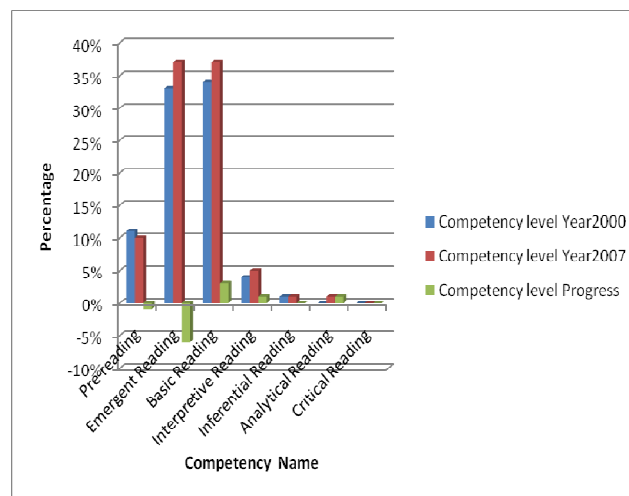
Following the Dakar declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 2000, Malawi embarked on a reform of the primary school curriculum to make it relevant to a democratisation process which commenced in 1994. The content had to adapt itself to the new dispensation of political pluralism and commercial liberalism. Teaching methodologies had to adapt to rights-based approaches of learner-centred education (LCE) supported by continuous assessment (CA). A study commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in 2010 to assess the performance of Teacher Training Lecturers and primary school teachers and teacher trainees in implementing the reformed curriculum revealed that an appreciation by all respondents that LCE and CA are good approaches for effective teaching and learning. However, most of them doubted the level of practical effectiveness of the approaches considering the [contextual] challenges that the primary school education system in Malawi was and is grappling with; limited support of pupils with other teaching and learning materials by teachers, going parallel with pupils' limited use of other teaching and learning materials, justifying the shortage of teaching and learning materials; and extensive use of group work by teachers as a means to varying teaching methodologies, going parallel with almost no use of pair and individual work. This trend seemed to demonstrate limited understanding of LCE just as it also justified complaints of shortage of time allocated to lessons for teachers to fully practice LCE.

The impression created by the findings of the study was that PCAR was a good curriculum but not in tandem with the challenged context in which it was being implemented in Malawi. There were a lot of critical things that needed to be addressed before the LCE and CA as prescribed in PCAR could be effective in the Malawian context. The manner in which LCE and CA were being implemented would not guarantee the intended focus on each learner's weaknesses and strengths [Ndalama and Chidalengwa: 2010; p12].

*4.2.3.3. Percentage of learners able to acquire desirable levels of core competencies for lifelong education*

The SACMEQ III study of 2007 shows that the effectiveness of the primary education system in Malawi in teaching Reading and Mathematics at Standard 6 level has only improved slightly in seven years time: 2000 to 2007. The Reading mean score improved with only 4.4 percentage points, moving from 428.9 to 433.9. The Mathematics mean score improved with 14.1 percentage points, moving 432.9 to 447.0. The Standard 6 pupils in Malawi were below the means of SACMEQ countries which were 511.8 for Reading and 509.5 for Mathematics. In Reading the Standard 6 pupils in Malawi performed the least amongst SACMEQ countries, whilst in Mathematics they were second to the country which performed the least [SACMEQ III Policy Brief No.1: 2011; p5]. According to Table 4.10 the majority of pupils in Malawi operated under basic skills in Reading in SACMEQ II (2000) and SACMEQ III (2007). Only about 2 % of the pupils reached advanced level in 2007, a slight improvement from about 1 % in 2000. Over 70 % of Standard 6 pupils did not acquire acceptable reading skills.

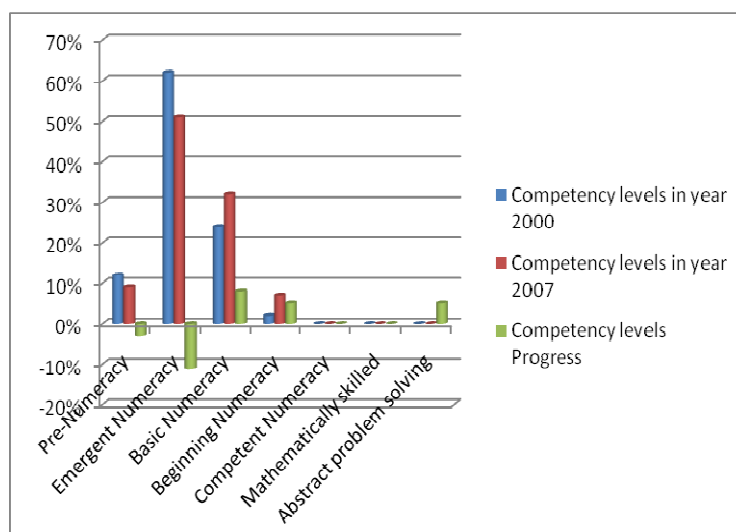
**Figure 3.5: percentage of Standard 6 pupils in various reading competency levels**



In Mathematics, only 1% operated at advanced level. 99% of the pupils were at basic. This implies that despite the many other efforts which Government and other education stakeholders are putting in improving the sector, seven out of every 10 pupils are missing learning while in class. Such learners will weigh down our coverage of EFA by 2015. In both Reading and Mathematics boys performed better than girls in 2000 and 2007. Urban pupils performed slightly better in Reading than rural pupils. But in Mathematics, rural pupils performed better than urban ones. There were no differences in performance of pupils based on socio-economic status in Reading while in Mathematics pupils from low socio-economic status performed slightly better than those from higher socio-economic status. In terms of performance by education divisions, the Northern Education Division performed better in

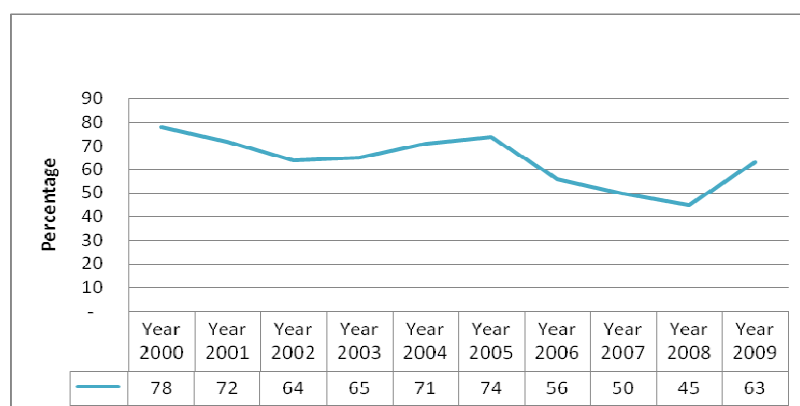
overall terms than the rest of the divisions in both Reading and Mathematics. The South West Division performed consistently poorly [SACMEQ III Policy Brief 1: 2011; p5].

**Figure 3.6: percentage of Standard 6 pupils in various Mathematics competency levels in Malawi**



According to Figure 3.6, the numbers of candidates sitting for the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE) has increased from 139,152 in 2000 to 201,055 in 2009, representing 44.49 % growth. The growth rate of girls sitting for the PSLCE has risen by almost twice that of boys (34,662, representing 63.06) compared to 27,241, representing 32.36 %. However, while the number of candidates is on the increase, the percentage pass rate is on the decline. The Pass Rate for both boys and girls declined by 15.86 percentage-points. Within this, the Pass Rate for girls declined more (22.66%) than that of boys (9.46%). This means that the more the primary system expands in access, the more its efficiency is weakening. The more the number of pupils completing the cycle is increasing, the more the quality of teaching is declining. This trend casts doubt on whether education for all will translate into learning for all. If education for all may not translate into learning for all, there could be good reason for considering the whole concept an illusion.

**Figure 3.7: Trend of Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination Pass rates: 2000-2009**



### ***4.3. Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes***

The observations of the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report on learning needs of young people and adults as discussed in section three above define the parameters of assessment to be taken by this section.

#### *4.3.1. Progress made in the formal and non-formal education areas*

There is noticeable progress in trying to equitably address some of the learning needs of the youth and adults as outlined in section three above. In the formal education area, government has embarked on a number of programmes to address the plans. These include construction of secondary school boarding facilities for girls, effective deployment of teachers at secondary school level where 72% of teachers are allocated to public schools based on school enrolment and expansion of University student intake. However, access probability to secondary school (Form 1) still remains very low at about 17% of the secondary school age cohort but 49% of the primary school graduates. The average for Sub-Saharan Africa for primary graduates transiting to secondary being 74%. There is disparity in resourcing of secondary schools between conventional and Community Day Secondary Schools (CDSS). CDSS enrol half of the students but they are under-funded, have under-qualified teachers, poorer learning environments and lack appropriate teaching and learning materials and equipment.

In TEVET, progress is not yet satisfactory as annual targets though seemingly being met, are set low. TEVET intake from secondary school graduates was estimated at 2% in 2007 compared to 6% in Sub-Saharan Africa. The other tertiary professional institutions accommodated only 52 students per every 100,000 inhabitants compared to 538 students for Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondary schools are not offering adequate and relevant TEVET generic skills while technical and vocational institutions are not offering adequate and relevant specialist skills. Consequently, skills training for the youth are underdeveloped and not in tandem with the needs of a changing economy as demonstrated by the current demands in the private sector (commerce and industry). [CSR: Op.cit; pp40-41, ESIP: pp17, 19, JSR-Aide Memoire: pp6-7 & MGDS II; p31]. In the non-formal education area, the 2008 MEFA Dossier noted the existence of over 3000 out-of-school Youth Clubs, 50 Youth Organisations and 35 Youth Centres being functional in providing pertinent knowledge and skills to the youth and adults on various aspects of their learning needs. The Dossier further noted that a number of institutions were offering technical courses and Government had in 2006 introduced Complementary Basic Education (CBE) in 15 centres across three of the 36 Education Districts. The Dossier notes that CBE is designed to offer over-age children an alternative form of five years of primary education in three years. It is relatively cost-effective and inclusive with smaller classes located close to the homes of learners. Its para-professional teachers are recruited locally, timing of classes is flexible to learners' needs, teaching methods are participatory and management of learning centres is community based. About 680 learners had enrolled by 2008 and demand was on the increase. Learners were acquiring positive attitude towards education and were becoming competent in reading, writing, numeracy and other skills [See pages 32-34]. ESIP in 2009 augmented the Dossier by noting that completers of CBE programme acquire sufficient literacy, numeracy and other basic skills to return to primary school at Standard 6. It further observed that CBE also addresses issues of equity.

Those in CBE programme comprise a higher proportion of orphans and other vulnerable and hard-to-reach children than in primary school. However, gender equity is compromised by boys' reluctance to enrol as girls are 5.5 times more likely to be enrolled in non-formal education than boys. Furthermore, lack of an appropriately staffed and resourced unit in the Ministry of Education to manage the scaling up of CBE compromises efforts to improve and expand the programme nationwide [See pages 17 & 39]. Government and its partners in youth education are also reported to have improved access to sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS services and expanded the establishment of information centres. However, there seems to be limited systematisation of the nature and design of materials and modes of delivery of out-of-school youth education programmes. Similarly, the youth education programmes coordinated by MoYDS lacks a unit with both management and monitoring capacities to make the programmes more systematic [ESIP: Op.cit; pp39-40 & MGDS II; p31&34]. In terms of youth economic empowerment, MGDS II reports increased access to capital through the establishment of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF). The proportion of the disadvantaged receiving conditional and unconditional cash transfers increased from 4% in 2005 to 37% in 2010 [See page 34]. However, the progress outlined above does not match the expectations created by the plans. This is reflected in a number of indicators. On literacy levels by 2010, persons aged 10 to 29 years constituted 40% of the 13.1 million population in Malawi. Literacy rate within this age bracket was estimated at 78% with slightly more males (81%) than females (74%) being literate. This means that about 22% of the youth in their prime age remained illiterate. A number of factors continue to militate against promotion of youth functional literacy. One of them is early marriage and teenage pregnancy. 53% of 15-24 years adolescents will already have begun child bearing, making themselves more vulnerable to maternal deaths. The second is HIV and AIDS and STIs. 46 % of all new HIV infections are occurring in the 10-29 year age group and National Aids Commission (NAC) reports further show that 69 % of sexually-active young people have multiple partners. Adults are compounding the youth challenges through adding orphanhood. The Primary Health Care (PHC) report of 2008 quoted in the National Youth Policy estimates that of the 6,793,986 persons aged below 18 years, 837,300 (12.4%) were orphans. Smoking, drug and alcohol abuse is another obstacle. More than 50% of the drug and alcohol related cases that come before the courts involve young people. The education and training sectors have contributed through failure to provide adequate technical and vocational training centres. TEVETA reports that out of the 300,000 applications for training it receives every year, it is only able to process 3000 an indication that it is unable to absorb all the qualified applicants. Further to that, provision of technical education is highly diverse, fragmented and uncoordinated with multiple private and public provider systems. Gender equity in provision of technical and vocational education is compromised by the decreasing rate of girls' participation in education as we ascend beyond primary education. As noted in the discussion under goal 2, the ratio of females to males in the lower primary school grades (1 to 3) is nearly 50:50. However, from grades 4 to 8 the ratio begins to drop so much so that in secondary school the male: female ratio is estimated at 72:28 while in the university or at tertiary levels it is estimated to be 74:26. As such, participation of the youth in science and technology initiatives especially for girls is on the lower side [ESIP: p15 & Youth Policy: 2010; pp 2, 3, 9 & 10]. According to ESIP, the failure of the education and training sectors to provide adequately for the learning needs of the youth and adults is caused by a number of factors. They include the following: lack of advocacy for out-of-school youth education resulting into limited community and parental awareness over the importance of attaining basic education



and literacy; limited alternative approaches to out-of-school youth education; lack of relevant curriculum for out-of-school youth clubs; poor access for children with special needs; limited access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services; high prevalence of HIV and AIDS; and weak linkages among youth clubs and between the youth service providers/policy makers [See pages 8-9 &40].

For ESIP, the basic cause for the poor state of out-of-school youth education is the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy of 1994, which was implemented with little planning and resulted in the education system becoming funnel-like in nature: great numbers entered at primary level, but few progressed to secondary and beyond. As noted in goal 2 primary school completion rate is only at 35% resulting in a very high proportion of children (600,000) being out of school comprising dropouts and those who never enrolled. Those accommodated in the limited secondary sector spaces do not receive education of high quality because of inadequate infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and qualified teachers. All these have to find a second-chance education through provisions of goal 3 [See pages 15&39]. In terms of employment, the formal sector is failing to absorb all the employable youth. Labour participation rate in the formal sector amongst youth aged 15-29 years in 2005 was 9 % with more females (10%) than males (8%) being unemployed. The formal employment sector was only able to create about 30,000 jobs per year against 300, 000 (educated and semi-educated) new entrants into the job market. Poverty and deprivation, limited access to credit facilities and marginalisation of the youth and adults in decision making processes are some of the factors compromising progress in this area [MGDS II: p31& National Policy p2].

#### ***4.4. Goal 4: Achieving a 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults***

An assessment of progress on EFA goal 4 in Malawi is almost the same as an assessment of achievements of the NALP with its associated REFLECT approaches. As is the case in the preceding three goals, the assessment will be responding to specific questions and exploring specific indicators as provided in Table 1.1 in chapter one.

##### ***4.4.1. Degree of progress in providing equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults between 2000 and 2011***

Provision of equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults in Malawi though beginning to make some progress, it has remained a story of perpetual dismal failure to meet targets. Perpetual failure is caused by limited political will by Government and its partners to promote the area. It is further perpetuated by the ever-expanding pool of adult literacy and continuing education learners continually emerging from the limited access to, poor quality and low efficiency in ECD, primary and secondary education. As such, Government and its partners in education have and will continue to have a dilemma in prioritisation of use of limited resources in education: a dilemma on where to invest more of the scarce resources between the education of children who are dependent right-holders still prime and with full potential for productivity and adults who are independent and have already lost part of their productive life. To be realistic, these two factors have and seem to continue to haunt any successful efforts to progress in this goal thereby casting doubts if Malawi is going to achieve it by 2015. Not surprising, therefore, right from the Malawi EFA Assessment report of 2000 presented at the Dakar Conference through to the 2008 MEFA

Dossier, the story of NALP is of dismal failure to meet targets. However, irrespective of failure to meet targets, there has been a trend of growth in coverage though with some fluctuations.

As noted in the background to this section, NALP was established in 1986 to provide literacy education to 2.5 million people in 10 years time. Thirteen years later (1998), only 520,000 people were covered, representing 20.8 % coverage. This translated into coverage of 40,000 learners in a year. This occurred within a context of an inverse trend of progress from 1986 to 2006. The number of illiterate adults was increasing while coverage of adult literacy and continuing education programmes was declining. As a result, the adult literacy programme failed to reach its 1995 target by 2006. It had cumulatively covered 860,000 learners adding only 340,000 to the 520,000 of 1998 [MEFA Dossier: p 36 & NESP: p7]. In other words, the coverage increased by 65.3 % in 21 years which represented 3.1 % annual growth rate of the intake. But, between the two periods (1986-1998 and 1998-2006), the average annual intake declined from 40,000 to 16,190. This could probably be due to over concentration on the challenges which were brought by the 1994 FPE policy which might have overshadowed any concerns about adult literacy and continuing education.

By 2009, effective illiteracy levels remained high in Malawi at around 4.6 million illiterates. 50 % of the illiterates (about 2.3 million) lay within the productive age-group of 15-60 [ESIP: Op.cit; p44]. This implies that the number of adults above 15 who are illiterate has not changed much from that of 1986 cited above (2.5 million). This is another evidence of slow progress. However, by 2009 coverage of the adult literacy and continuing education had in terms of absolute figures expanded tremendously (44.4 times more) covering 720,000 illiterates annually. This improved coverage rate to 31.3% from 20.8% in 1998, two years before 2000. This translates into coverage improvement of 10.5% in 11 years.

By 2009, NALP alone was reaching 100,000 adult learners while Civil Society Organisations including Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) were reaching 160,000. Efforts by CBE and other out-of-school youth initiatives reached about 20 % of the pool of illiterates which is about 460,000. Despite these efforts however, the country remains with 1 million illiterates annually at any one moment [ESIP: Op.cit]. Table 3.10 tries to illustrate the trend.

**Table 3.10: Trend of coverage of adult literacy and continuing education**

Period/year	Estimated number of illiterate adults	Number of learners covered by literacy and continuing education	percentage of the illiterates	Average Annual Coverage/Intake
1986-1998	2.5 million	520,000	20.8	40,000
1998-2006	2.5 million	340,000	13.6	16,190
2009	2.3 million	720,000	31.3	720,000

The above scenario shows that though there is some tremendous improvements in coverage of adult literacy and continuing education, achieving adult literacy and continuing education for all by 2015 remains a tall order. It would require changing the trend in the next three years. This sounds remote considering the established low level of political will and the prioritisation dilemma.

#### *4.4.2. Degree of progress in reducing illiteracy levels of all adults, especially women, by 50 % by 2015*

The 2008 national population and housing census indicates that over a decade, between 1998 and 2008 the literacy rate for both sexes in Malawi improved by 6 percentage points. It rose

from 58 % to 64 %. In other words, almost half way to 2015, we still had 36 % of people of five years and over, illiterate. Malawi managed to reduce illiteracy rate from 42% to 36%. Literacy rate for females improved by 8%, by moving from 51% to 59%. Illiteracy for females was reduced from 49 % to 41 % [Population and housing census: 2008; p39]. This means that 41 % of the women were still illiterate compared to 31 % males in 2008 [See Table 3.11].

Region	1998			2008		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
Northern	72	76	68	77	79	74
Central	55	61	48	62	67	58
Southern	57	64	49	62	68	56
National	58	65	51	64	69	59

On the basis of the 1998 data, meeting the EFA target would imply reducing national illiteracy rate to 21 % by 2015. For women it means reducing it to at least 25 % while for men it would mean reducing it to 17.5 by 2015. At this pace, the best that may be achieved all factors remaining constant is reducing the national illiteracy level to 31.8 %, that of women may be reduced to 34.4 % while that of men to 27.5 %. And all are above 50 % of the 1998/2000 rates. The Northern Region was the most literate while the Central Region was the least literate. But even the Northern Region would only be able to reduce its illiteracy level to 21.8 % if all factors are held constant by 2015 which is not 50 % of its 1998/2000 illiteracy rate. This means that using either the NALP approach or the National Population Census approach, Malawi is likely going to fail to achieve the reduction of adult illiterates by half in 2015.

#### 4.4.3. *Challenges compromising progress to adult literacy and continuing education for all by 2015*

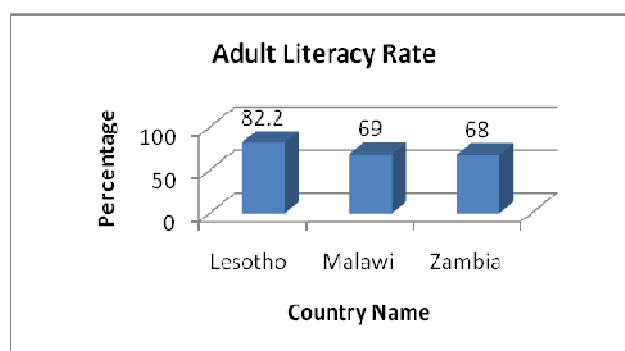
Challenges compromising steady progress in the provision of adult literacy and continuing education, emerging from the low political will and the prioritisation dilemma include the following: inadequate human and material resources to facilitate adult literacy and continuing education; limited capacity to train and retain qualified instructors for continuing education; lack of comprehensive policy, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and Information Management Systems; limited human and material resources and poor motivation strategies; ineffective management epitomised in poor coordination of programmes; limited integration of special needs; poor male participation; outdated curriculum being implemented by untrained instructors and misconception of adult literacy due to poor publicity and advocacy; All the preceding factors lead to limited demand for non-formal education by the targeted population [ESIP: Op.cit; p44, MGDS II: Op.cit; p30 & NESP: Op.cit; p7].

The above list of challenges as identified by NESP in 2008, ESIP in 2009 and MGDS II in 2011 is almost a replica of the challenges identified by the MEFA Dossier in 2008. This is clear evidence that little effort has been made between 2008 and 2011 to address the challenges and improve the provision of adult literacy and continuing education. This trend confirms the fears that adult literacy and continuing education for all by 2015 may be a farfetched dream for Malawi.

#### 4.4.4. Adult Literacy Situation in Africa

Despite the efforts in many African countries, the Sub-Saharan Africa is unlikely to reach the Education for All literacy target set for 2015. Numbers of adult illiterates continue to rise. In 2008 for example, more than 167 million adults were illiterate in sub-Saharan Africa, reflecting 38% of the region's adult population. While the average adult literacy rate increased from 53% in 1985–1994 to 62% in 2005–2008, it rose too slowly to counteract the effects of population growth. However, country specific projections based on demographic and school participation data suggest that some countries like Angola, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among others, will fall short of the literacy goal in 2015. Kenya, on the other hand, is on track to achieve the goal of halving adult illiteracy levels. The recent experiences of Burundi and Malawi also show that literacy policy can be effective: both countries have increased their adult literacy rates by over twenty percentage points in the past fifteen to twenty years. In Malawi adult (15+ years old) literacy rate is estimated at 69% (UNESCO Institute for Statistics) which is better the African average (62.9%) but lower than the SADC countries average (75.3%). Comparatively, Lesotho is doing far much better than Zambia and Malawi on this issue.

Figure 3.7: Adult Literacy Rate across countries



On a larger scale, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Sierra Leone and Somalia report adult literacy rates at or below 40%. By contrast, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Seychelles and Zimbabwe have adult literacy rates at or above 90% (EFA Global Monitoring Report; 2011). While it can be acknowledged that the regional averages mask important disparities between countries, in general most countries in Africa need a decisive action by governments to raise the region's literacy profile, in particular for women.

#### ***4.5. Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality***

This section seeks to analyse Malawi's progress between 2000 and 2011 over gender equity and equality in primary and secondary school with regard to the benchmarks outlined by the EFA Global Monitoring Report as discussed in section three above. As has been the case with

the preceding four goals, the analysis responds to key questions and explores progress in some specific indicators. There are three questions and seven indicators.

#### 4.5.1. Gender parity in primary and secondary education between 2000 and 2011

As already discussed under goal 2 above, between 2000 and 2011, number of girls accessing primary level education has increased to almost achieving gender parity [See also MGDS II: p30]. The ratio of girls to boys in primary school has improved from 0.94 in 2000, to 0.99 in 2010 and NESP targets a ratio of 1 in 2015 [NESP: Op.cit; p20]. Table 3.12 below gives detailed empirical evidence.

Year	Primary school			Secondary school		
	Total enrolment	Girls	percentage Girls	Total enrolment	Girls	percentage Girls
2004	3,166,786	1,576,593	49.8	180,157	77,470	43.0
2005	3,200,646	1,593,558	49.8	183,854	78,181	42.52
2006	3,280,714	1,641,830	50.0	218,310	95,998	43.97
2007	3,306,926	1,653,032	50.0	210,325	91,052	43.29
2008	3,600,771	1,794,483	49.8	233,573	101,743	43.56
2009	3,671,481	1,842,017	50.2	243,838	107,844	44.23
2010	3,868,643	1,942,924	50.2	241,918	108,120	44.69

Source: Calculated from MoEST EMIS data

This means that Malawi already almost reached the target of gender parity in primary school education about five years before the dead line. However, it has been observed that the achievement of gender parity in primary education seems to be a misleading picture portrayed by aggregation of enrolment data for the whole primary cycle. Detailed analysis of the system level by level shows that there is partial satisfactory progress as gender parity targets are met only in lower Standards up to Standard 6. Disparity increases from standards 7-8 through to secondary, tertiary and teacher training. The discussion under goal 2 above has clearly indicated that more boys (53.1%) survived up to Standard 8 in 2010 than girls (45.0%). This means that while there are almost 50-50 chances for younger boys and girls to attend lower primary, older girls have lesser chances to continue in the last three Standards than older boys. If this continues, there cannot be surety for education for all older girls in Malawi. For details on proportion of girls by Standard in primary schools in Malawi, see Table 3.12 below.

Year	Std.1	Std. 2	Std. 3	Std. 4	Std. 5	Std. 6	Std. 7	Std. 8
2004	51.2	50.5	50.2	49.7	49.4	48.6	47.1	43.4
2005	50.9	50.6	49.9	50	52.9	48.9	47.7	43.8
2006	51	50.6	50.2	50.1	50.2	49.6	48.4	44.2
2007	51	50.6	50.1	50.1	50.1	49.9	48.1	44.2
2008	50.5	59.9	49.9	50.1	50.3	49.8	48.7	44.5
2009	50.8	50.6	50.3	50.1	50.7	50.4	49.6	45.3
2010	50.7	50.3	50.4	50.3	50.4	50.4	49.8	47.1

Source: Calculated from MoEST EMIS data

Similarly, 50:50 enrolment ratio in Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) is becoming difficult to achieve mainly because many female applicants do not meet the requirement for a credit in English [2010 JSR Aide Memoire: Op.cit; p5]. This implies that unlike the global trend where women are overrepresented in education, in Malawi the situation is so bad that even in education women are underrepresented. The proportion of girls entering junior secondary school (Form 1) rose with four points from about 43% in 2000 to about 47% in 2010 leaving a

3 percentage point gap to meet the targeted 50:50 situation. That of those entering senior secondary school (Form 3) rose with eight points from 39% in 2000 to 47% in 2010. However, the challenge is with the transition to Form 3 from Form 2 where there is a loss of between 4 to 5% of the girls who entered secondary. This may be associated with failure to pass Junior Certificate Examinations (JCE). This loss becomes explicit in the enrolment composition of Form 4. Between 2008 and 2010 the proportion of girls entering junior secondary school rose with only 0.7 while that of those entering senior secondary rose with about 2 points (1.9)[See Table 3.13 below]. There is, therefore, a possibility of reaching the gender parity in secondary education by 2015 if the plans set in the NESP and ESIP as discussed above are effectively and timely implemented.

Year	Junior Secondary		Senior Secondary	
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4
2004	44.6	44.4	41.1	40.4
2005	44.5	43.7	40.6	40.1
2006	45.5	47.7	39.8	40.5
2007	45.5	45.7	39.8	40.1
2008	45.8	46	41.3	39.3
2009	46.4	46.8	41.8	40.1
2010	46.5	47	43.2	41.3

Source: MoEST EMIS

#### 4.5.2. *Proportion of boys and girls reaching desirable levels of competencies in core skills of core subjects in primary education as assessed by SACMEQ studies 2000-2011*

In our discussion on access and quality of primary school education in EFA Goal 2 we noted that according to SACMEQ III study the effectiveness of the primary education system in Malawi in teaching Reading and Mathematics at Standard 6 level has only improved slightly in seven years time: 2000 to 2007. The Reading mean score improved with only 4.4 percentage points, moving from 428.9 to 433.9. The Mathematics mean score improved with 14.1 percentage points, moving 432.9 to 447.0. The Standard 6 pupils in Malawi were below the means of SACMEQ countries which were 511.8 for Reading and 509.5 for Mathematics. In Reading the Standard 6 pupils in Malawi performed the least amongst SACMEQ countries, whilst in Mathematics they were second to the country which performed the least [SACMEQ III Policy Brief No.1: 2011; p5]. Under Goal 2 it has also been noted that between 2000 and 2007, the majority of pupils in Malawi operated under basic skills in Reading. Only about 2 % of the pupils reached advanced level in 2007, a slight improvement from about 1 % in 2000. Over 70 % of Standard 6 pupils did not acquire acceptable reading skills In Mathematics, only 1 % operated at advanced level. 99 % of the pupils were at basic. In both Reading and Mathematics boys performed better than girls in 2000 and 2007. This trend leaves Malawian girls not as advantaged as the others elsewhere in the world who are reported to outperform boys in reading and literacy as reported by the global monitoring report. Similarly, Malawian girls seem not to be part of a trend which is competing favourably with boys at Mathematics as is the case elsewhere in the world as reported by the 2009 global monitoring report.

Urban pupils performed slightly better in Reading than rural pupils. But in Mathematics, rural pupils performed better than urban ones. There were no differences in performance of pupils based on socio-economic status in Reading while in Mathematics pupils from low socio-economic status performed slightly better than those from higher socio-economic status. In terms of performance by education divisions, the Northern Education Division performed better in overall terms than the rest of the divisions in both Reading and Mathematics. The South West Division performed consistently poorly [See Tables 4.10 and 4.11 under Goal 2 above].

#### *4.5.2.1. Findings from the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE)*

It has also been noted under Goal 2 that the growth rate of girls sitting for the PSLCE has risen by almost twice that of boys between 2000 and 2010 (34,662, representing 63.06%) compared to 27,241, representing 32.36 %. However, while the number of candidates is on the increase, the percentage pass rate is on the decline. The Pass Rate for girls declined more by (22.66%) than that of boys (9.46%). This means that the more the primary system expands in access, the more its efficiency is weakening. The more the number of pupils completing the cycle is increasing, the more the quality of teaching is declining. In the decline, the girl child seems to be a worse victim than the boy child. This trend casts doubt on whether education for all will translate into learning for all or more also better learning for girls. If education for all may not translate into learning for all and especially the girls, there could be good reason for considering the whole concept an illusion.

#### *4.5.2.2. Findings from Junior Certificate (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE)*

The assessment could not access readily available data for compiling pass rates for JCE and MSCE disaggregated by gender beyond 2003. However, the 2009 CSR noted that failure rates at national examination vary from 74% for Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLCE) to 62% for Junior Certificate of Education (JCE) and to 44% for Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). The low achievement at MSCE is striking and raises serious issues on the level skills acquired throughout the schooling system. At secondary level, poorer outcomes are associated mainly with CDSSs whose plight was highlighted under quality issues above. Keeping with the trend which starts in ECD, girls remain behind boys making it difficult for the country to achieve equalisation of education opportunities and outcomes between the two sexes [See page 76].

#### *4.5.2.3. Key challenges compromising progress in promoting gender parity and equality in primary and secondary school education*

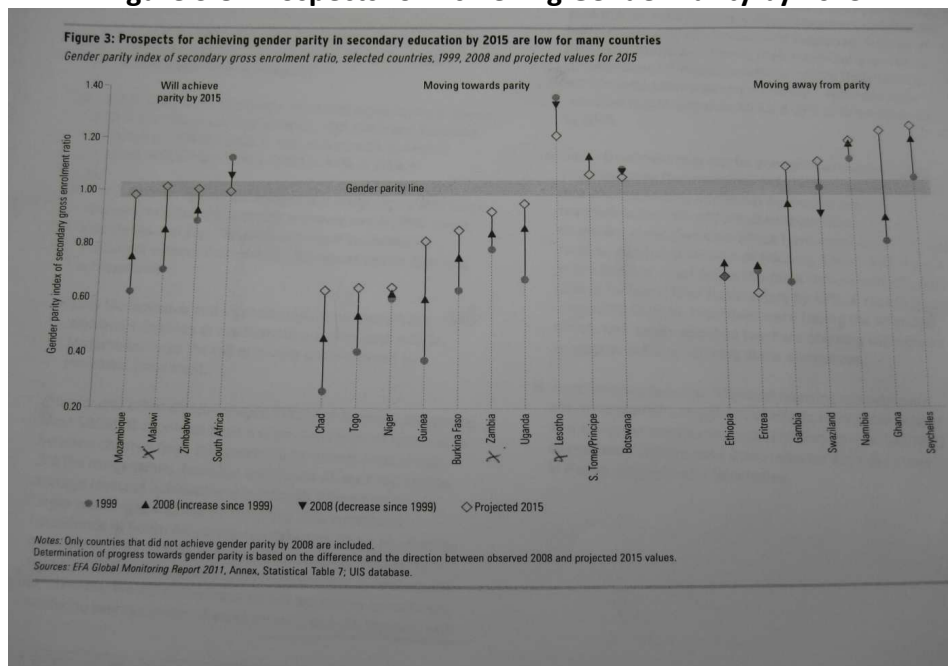
According to NESP the following could be the major challenges compromising progress in the promotion of gender parity and equality in primary and secondary school education: inadequate access to primary and secondary education especially for needy girls including those with special needs and orphans; inadequate supply of qualified secondary school teachers especially in CDSS worsened by shortage of female teachers to work as models for girls; inadequate basic infrastructure and teaching and learning materials at secondary school level; low funding to secondary schools, especially CDSSs; poor learner retention especially for girls (primary 5-8 and secondary) due to long distances to schools and unfavourable

gender environment ; partial implementation of the curriculum at secondary which in turn affects negatively results of public examinations especially in Science and technology and negative impact of HIV and AIDS on teachers and students in primary and secondary and lack of financial prudence, management and information systems at secondary level.

#### 4.5.2.4. Gender Parity in Africa

From EFA Global Monitoring Report (2011) it is documented that in the past decade, sub-Saharan Africa has seen modest progress towards parity between girls and boys in primary education. Nevertheless, challenges still remain at secondary school level. At secondary school level, the sub-Saharan Africa has moved further away from gender parity, reporting a decline in the regional secondary Gender Parity Index (GPI) from 0.82 in 1999 to 0.79 in 2008. Projections suggest that only Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe will do so by 2015. Lesotho and Zambia on the other hand will still be moving towards the gender parity index and hence will not make in 2015. Refer to figure 3 for details.

**Figure 3.8: Prospects for Achieving Gender Parity by 2015**



#### **4.6. Goal 6: Improving all aspects of quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills**

This section, therefore, assesses the extent to which Malawi has progressed between 2000 and 2011 in improving all aspects of education quality. It focuses on efforts made to improve on the governance variables which impact on the quality as discussed in section three above and the consequent impact on some key quality indicators.



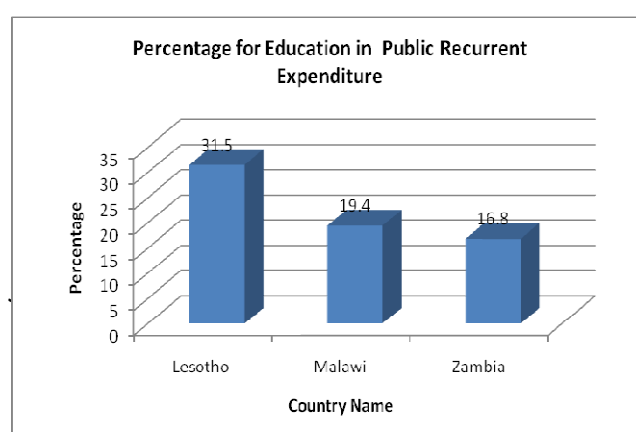
*4.6.1. Education budget as percentage of total national budget and as a percentage of GDP// Primary or basic education budget as a percentage of the education budget*

According to NESP, in overall terms, the sector has been receiving third largest budgetary allocation behind agriculture and health sectors. However, there has not been proportionate increase in funding to the education system to accommodate the expansion of primary and secondary education which has occurred following the introduction of the FPE policy of 1994. In 2001/2 total education public recurrent expenditure was 16% of total Government recurrent expenditure. It rose to 18% in 2007 and 19% in 2009. In 2008/9 there were indications of a decrease. This trend was below the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) average of 20.8% and below the recommended EFA-FTI benchmark of 20% .While primary education has so far been getting 44% of the total recurrent education expenditure, pre-school, literacy, TEVET and teacher training shares do not exceed 7 % in total [See pages 16 & 21]. In other words, in real terms the increases in Government funding to the education sector have been negligible. Why? Because on average, between 2000 and 2008 the growth rate in primary and secondary enrolment exceeded the growth rate in Other Recurrent Transactions (ORT) funding. The only years when growth rate in ORT funding surpassed the growth rate in enrolment for primary education were two: 2005/6 and 2007/8 [See pages 16 & 21]. It may not be surprising therefore that quite a number of resources are inadequately available thereby compromising progress towards achieving the 2015 quality targets in most of the goals.

*4.6.1.1. Commitment to Education Funding in Su-Saharan Region*

In the Sub Saharan region commitment to education varies considerably. From the EFA Global monitoring Report (2011), there were just above 40% of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that had data that reflected that they spent more than 5.0% of gross national product on education in 2008. But there were large variations across countries, with percentages ranging from 1.3% in the Central African Republic to 9.9% in Lesotho. When compared to other two countries, Malawi positions itself as a median country in terms of budget priority for education sector (figure 3.9). In the SADC region, out of the 12 countries with recent available data, Malawi is ranked 6th for the share of recurrent expenditures devoted to education. Malawi is slightly below the SADC countries average (19.4% versus 20.8%) and the Sub-Saharan Africa average (20.3%) {CSR; 2009}. The budget priority for education in Malawi is still much smaller than what is observed in countries like Madagascar, Tanzania, Lesotho, or Kenya where the share for education is around 30% or above.

**Table 3.9: Share of education in public recurrent expenditure, SADC countries, 2008**



#### 4.6.1.2. *Degree of internal efficiency in the use of financial and other resources*

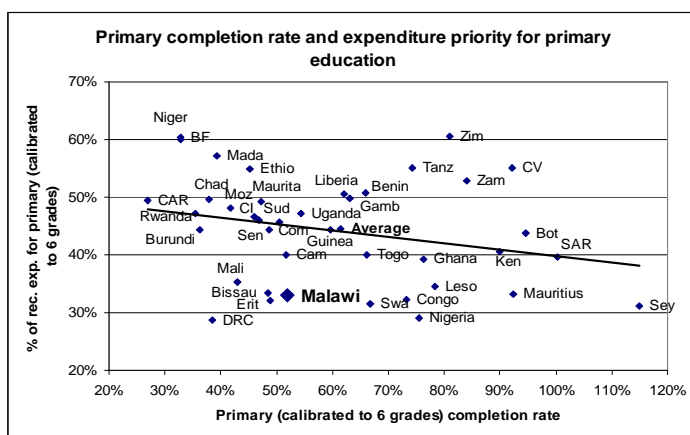
Internal efficiency is an indicator which assesses the level to which an education system is optimising the available inputs provided to meet intended outputs and outcomes. High dropouts and repetitions are evidence of low internal efficiency. Low internal efficiency has direct impact on quality of education outputs and outcomes as it compromises the impact inputs have on the quality of the outputs and outcomes. According to ESIP, Internal Efficiency Coefficient, (an indicator of aggregate efficiency in the use of resources by the education system) at primary level declined between 1999 and 2007 due to dropouts and repeaters. It declined from 39% to 35%. This means that in 2007, 65% of public resources were used for repeated years or years of dropouts who never completed the cycle. The system required 23 student years to produce one graduate instead of 8 student years.

Wastage of resources induced by pupil repetition of Standards rose from 20% in 1999 to 29% in 2007. In other words, partial Internal Efficiency Coefficient of the primary school system declined from 80% in 1999 to 71% in 2007. Dropout also remained a major issue in 2009, inducing 50% waste of resources. Thus high dropout alone has the greatest adverse effect on the efficiency of the Malawian education system [See page 18]. It sounds obvious that unless some extra-ordinary measures are taken, a primary system which is experiencing 50% wastage of resources from one variable alone may not be in a position to offer quality outputs and outcomes in all aspects of education in the next four years.

#### 4.6.1.3. *Recurrent Expenditure at Primary School Level in SADC Countries*

Figure 3.10 below shows the relationship between the primary completion rate (calibrated to six grades for comparative purpose) and the share of primary education in education expenditure (calibrated to six grades as well). Globally one can see the negative correlation as described above: countries less advanced in terms of primary education puts on average a higher share of their spending on primary education. Nevertheless, there are a lot of disparities around this global average relationship and the position of Malawi is particularly is worth noting (CSR; 2009). Compared to countries with similar primary completion rate (52% when calibrated to six grades), the share of expenditure devoted to primary education is particularly low in Malawi.

**Figure 3.10: Recurrent Expenditure by Level of Schooling in SADC countries, 2008**



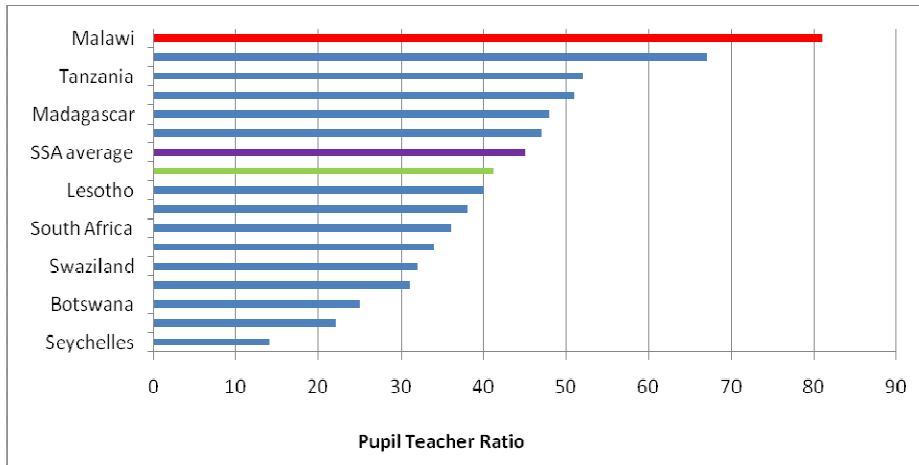
Compared to Zambia and Lesotho, Malawi has the lowest recurrent expenditure seconded by Lesotho although both fall below the SADC average. Zambia on the other hand expends more money on education than the two countries and its expenditure is slightly above the SADC region average. Malawi will need to find ways of increasing future resources for investing in primary education (more resources for the other levels of education would be useful).

#### 4.6.2. Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) by rural-urban locations and division/Pupil Qualified Teacher Ratio (PQTR) by rural-urban location and division

It has already been observed under goal 2 that PTR worsened between 2000 and 2010 while PQTR had some temporary improvement between 2000 and 2004 but took a worsening trend from 2004 to 2010 [See Table 4.9 under goal 2]. It has also been observed under goal 2 that almost all literature on teacher deployment in Malawi testifies to the fact that most rural schools have fewer teachers and hence have higher PTR and PQTR than urban schools. Similarly, there are also fewer female teachers than male ones and most of them are deployed in urban schools. This deployment trend of teachers compromise the quality of learning outcomes for rural learners just as it also compromises relevance of education especially for the girl child. The results of the SACMEQ II & III studies quoted above testify to this argument as in Reading girls were outperformed by boys in both 2000 and 2007 contrary to what is happening in other parts of the world where girls are reported to outperform boys. Similarly, Malawian girls were found not to be competing favourably with boys at Mathematics as is the case elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, urban pupils performed slightly better in Reading than rural pupils. The strange happening being that in Mathematics, rural pupils performed better than urban ones an issue attributed to availability of Mathematics books at 1:1 ratio.

In terms of performance by education divisions, it is also noteworthy that the Northern Education Division which according to EMIS data has the best PTR and PQTR, performed better in overall terms than the rest of the divisions in both Reading and Mathematics. The South West Division which is among the divisions with the worst PTR and PQTR performed consistently poorly. At a national level, Malawi displays the highest Pupil Teacher Ratio amongst the SADC countries, and is well above the SADC average PTR of 40:1. Refer to figure for more details.

**Figure 3.11: PTR at Primary level among SADC countries in 2009 or Closest**



Source: Adapted from World Bank data, 2009.

The Pupil per Qualified Teacher Ratio (PQTR) trend tends to show an improvement in the situation in Malawi, as indicated by the decrease in the ratio from 118:1 in 1999 to 91:1 in 2007 (or 88:1 with volunteers). This improvement stems from the continuous training efforts deployed by the Ministry of Education in Malawi.

#### 4.6.3. Availability of teaching and learning materials

In the discussion of the quality aspect under goal 2 it has been established that in 2007 the percentage of pupils having basic learning materials in primary school Standard 6 increased to 73 from 55 in 2000. But this was still below the SACMEQ mean of 97%. It has also been established that there were more basic learning materials in urban (81%) than in rural areas (70%). The percentage of pupils having their own Mathematics textbooks dropped from 57 in 2000 to 24 in 2007 when the average percentage for SACMEQ countries was 41. The percentage of pupils having sole use of Mathematics textbooks was higher in rural schools than urban schools.

Table 3.14: Book allocation by standards in government aided schools, 2007

Subject	Description	Std1	Std2	Std3	Std4	Std5	Std6	Std7	Std8
Chichewa	Books / students	0.05	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7
	Students book ratio	18.3:1	2.1:1	2.6:1	2.4:1	2.2:1	1.9:1	1.7:1	1.5:1
	% students without book	94	52	62	58	54	49	43	32
	% of schools with < 1 book/2 students	95	45	39	46	52	61	68	75
English	Books / students	0.06	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7
	Students book ratio	17.4:1	1.9:1	2.4:1	2.3:1	2.2:1	1.9:1	1.6:1	1.4:1
	% students without book	94	46	58	56	54	46	37	28
	% of schools with < 1 book/2 students	95	51	41	47	51	59	68	74
Mathematics	Books / students	0.06	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7
	Students book ratio	17.2:1	1.6:1	2:1	2.1:1	2:1	1.7:1	1.5:1	1.4:1
	% students without book	94	30	51	52	49	40	34	29
	% of schools with < 1 book/2 students	95	58	47	49	55	65	70	75

The 2009 CSR also established that the degree of coherence of books allocation at school level (the R2) tended to rise up to standard 5, and decreased thereafter. General book allocation consistency remained low, varying between 20 % (Mathematics, standard 2)<sup>1</sup> to 38 % (Chichewa, standard 5). In the best case, 38 % of the books were being allocated according to the number of students enrolled in the school; the allocation process in most case depended on factors other than the number of students. At division level there was great variation in book allocation. There was somewhat more consistent allocation process in the South Western division (higher R2 values for all standards) but a poor one in the Central Eastern and Shire Highlands divisions [See Table 3.14]. It has also been established under goal 2 that Pupil-Teacher Ratio worsened between 2000 and 2007. It moved from 70:1 to 88:1 which is much higher than the SACMEQ mean of 43:1. The average Pupil-Teacher Ratio in rural schools was even higher (97:1) as compared to urban schools (60:1). Similarly, the average number of Standard 6 pupils per class increased from 57:1 in 2000 to 66:1 in 2007. This was above the SACMEQ mean of 46:1 and national benchmark of 60:1. The Standard 6 Pupil-Classroom ration was higher in urban schools (92:1) than in rural schools (58:1)[ SACMEQ III Policy Brief Number 2: 2011; pp ]. Goal 2 has established through analysis of EMIS data that by 2010, five years to 2015, classrooms were still highly inadequately available as Malawi was still teaching 41 more pupils in a class than is required. In five years time, Malawi has only reduced the number of pupils it is teaching in class by seven. Only two of the six divisions (the Northern and Central East) have Pupil-Classroom ratios below the national. Between the two regions, only the Northern is close to hitting the national benchmark of 60:1 by 2015. Central West, Shire Highlands and South East divisions in that order are the most backward with the ratio of pupils per class as close to double the national benchmark. Among the districts, Lilongwe Rural East is the most backward, followed by Mulanje, Thyolo and Mchinji in that order. Intra-division comparison between urban and rural districts shows that urban districts tend to have higher Pupil-Classroom Ratios than rural districts.

In Goal 2 it was also observed that Government capacity to construct new classrooms and rehabilitate old ones is not adequate enough to cope with the challenge. By end 2010 there was poor progress on expanding access through construction and rehabilitation of school

<sup>1</sup> The analysis at Standard 1 level does is not relevant as most students do not have books.

infrastructure. The country only managed to build 38 % of its annual target. It had also a large number of existing classrooms (10,901) which were unusable.

The analyses in goals 1, 3 and 4 above have also shown that inadequate availability of teaching and learning materials and resources is also an issue in the other educational areas like ECD, education of out-of-school youth and adult literacy and continuing education. The picture given is that of available effort to increase the provision of basic learning resources/materials and improve their relevance but the effort in most cases being disproportional to the demand and irregular in terms of equitable distribution. Unless Government and other education stakeholders find means of improving the bottlenecks to low and irregular supply of teaching and learning materials/resources and their limited relevance; Malawi may not be able to improve the quality of all aspects of education by 2015 as required by this EFA Goal 6.

#### *4.6.4. Degree of decentralisation of basic education services*

Literature claims that Malawi government has had a decentralised system of service delivery since the 1933 Native Administrative Ordinance going through to 1953, 1962 District Council Acts, 1967 District Development Committees and 1993 District Focus for Rural Development initiative. The service was only compromised by the governance style of the one party dictatorship of 1964 to 1994. After acquiring multi-party democracy in 1994, the national Decentralisation Policy of October 1998 and the consequent Local Government Act of December 1998 attempted to align decentralisation to the ideals of a democratic state. In the spirit of government of the people, by the people, for the people, the Decentralisation Policy transferred all functions and responsibilities of governing education to District Assemblies except policy formulation, policy enforcement, inspectorate, establishment of standards, training, curriculum development and international representation [Decentralisation Secretariat Paper: MIM 2000; pp1-8]. In an attempt to fulfil the requirements of the Act and policy, Ministry of Education has moved a number of steps including the following:

1. Placing appropriate staff in various positions at District Education Offices including the upgrading of the District Education Officer to District Education Manager;
2. Developing and disseminating devolution guidelines for use by education functionaries,
3. Developing a National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management (NSCPPSM)
4. Supporting and promoting development of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and District Education Plans (DEPs). SIP development process actually involves and consults the rural masses and
5. Piloting direct financial support to schools, an initiative which is due up scaling to national level.

The above initiatives are nevertheless being heavily compromised by some limitation by the political governance to allow fully fledged decentralisation. This is evidenced by Government failure to sustain some of the pertinent requirements of an effective devolution as specified by both the policy and the Act. Good examples are Government reluctance since 2005 to have Local Government Elections to provide for a central feature of the District Assembly Governance: elected Chairperson/Mayor and Ward Councillors and failure to timely review the Education Act to make it relevant to the new decentralisation policy and Act [Decentralisation Secretariat: Op.cit; pp6&10]. As a result of the above and other factors, a

capacity gap analysis for the effective implementation of plans in the national education sector of 2008, found the level of decentralisation in the sector too low to allow for effective and efficient delivery of services. The analysis established that “while there have been functional reviews of all ministries to align institutional roles and functions and facilitate the implementation of the national decentralisation policy, not much has changed in the manner business is conducted. Ministries and departments are increasingly involved in implementation of activities of the devolved functions and programmes on the argument of inadequate capacities at the district” [Capacity Gap Analysis, Primary Education: 2008; p18]. Confirming the Gap Analysis finding, the December 2010 JSR Aide Memoire states that there is still lack of capacity to deliver reform partly due to unfilled key posts and delays in adopting change management strategy in the education sector [See page 6]. ESIP reports of poor management of resources demonstrated by random deployment of teachers which is not based on school enrolment. In 2007 as many as 42 % of primary school teachers were randomly allocated. This was above SADC average of 31 %. And MGDS II refers to poor participation of School Committees and their communities in school management [See page 30]. Thus, just like in many other issues assessed above, it can be safely concluded that in decentralisation of the education system, there are quite impressive plans on paper which are failing to comprehensively translate into real action. As a result, efforts to improve quality of education outcomes through grassroots stakeholders’ participation are compromised. Unless extra-ordinary effort is made in the remaining four years to have fully fledged devolution, Malawi will continue missing opportunities to promote all aspects of basic education quality and hence fail to fulfil goal six of EFA.

#### *4.6.5. Availability and functionality of monitoring and evaluation systems including inspection and advisory services*

Current evidence indicates that there have been recent developments in the area of monitoring and evaluation and inspectorate structures. A new section of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) was set in 2010 within the Education Planning Department and the Methods and Advisory Section (EMAS) underwent a review. The review has seen strong movement of School Inspectors from the Ministry Headquarters to the district level. As a result there has been recent satisfactory progress on school inspection as larger numbers of primary, secondary schools, technical and teacher colleges were inspected in 2010. However, no statistics are given on how large the numbers and no reports were published to give feedback to education planners and other education stakeholders [JSR Aide Memoire: op.cit; p5]. The shortfalls of the 2010 inspection is an indication that serious challenges still remain in the area of PM&E as was established by the Gap Analysis report in 2008. The report found out that planning, budgeting and monitoring at the de-central level were characterised by a number of challenges that impacted on capacity to effectively deliver services and implement programmes. Worsening the challenges was the fact that planning, budgeting and monitoring remained highly centralised and yet with limited human resources. At the central level, the report established weak linkages between the different functional areas within the Ministry of Education and between the Ministry and central agencies such as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Planning and Development. There was also lack of an integrated approach for all sub-units with responsibility to plan including Human Resource planning [See pp 28-30].

It is in line with the above that ESIP in 2009 noted that many targets for monitoring and evaluation are not set; data collected for indicators is often unreliable or reported differently from different sources. When targets have been met, it is mostly because they were set very low and often not in tandem with the needs of the sector. An example was given in the construction targets for primary, TEVET and higher education in 2009-2010 [See page 6]. The JSR Aide Memoire notes that there is lack of progress on measurement and monitoring of learning outcomes as evidenced by no progress on development of national assessment tests to measure real learning outcomes and the consequent reliance on regional assessment like SACMEQ which may have their own weaknesses [See page 4].

#### 4.6.6. Availability of educational support programmes for vulnerable children

Vulnerable children are those who are severely deprived of a number of necessities to allow them effectively participate in social activities like education. The 1010 ECD Report lists down the following as some categories of vulnerable children in Malawi: orphans, children with special education needs, child labourers, children on the street, children abandoned and deserted by parents, child drug abusers, trafficked children, girls in general, emotionally and psychologically traumatised children, children in prisons, children in refugee camps, children from poor and food insecure households (malnourished and undernourished), and children in broken families [See pages 41-42]. While there is no readily available organised data for the participation of the other categories of vulnerable children in all the other levels of education, there is data available for participation of girls, orphans and special needs education children in primary school education. This data can be used as an indication of the level to which such vulnerable groups of children are supported to participate in basic education. Trends of girls' participation in education and disparity of learning outcomes have been discussed under goals 2 and 5.

#### 4.6.7. Support for children to participate in special needs education (SNE)

Table 3.15 below indicates that there has been consistent increase of access to primary school by children of special needs education (SNE) from 2000 to 2010. Total enrolment has increased by almost 14 times from 6, 053 to 83,627, and making 1381.5 %. The increase of girls' enrolment is almost at par with the enrolment of boys. The enrolment of boys has increased by 13.9 times while that of girls has increased by 13.7 times [See Table 3.15].

year	Boys	Girls	Total
<b>2000</b>	3,143	2,910	6,053
<b>2005</b>	22,527	20,059	42,586
<b>2008</b>	36,065	31,670	67,736
<b>2010</b>	43,787	39,840	83,627

This is an indication that there also has been constant expansion of space and facilities to accommodate children with special needs education in the primary school system. However, in 2008, Catholic University established that there were 90,000 special needs children to be offered opportunity for primary education in Malawi. If we may work on the basis of this number then it means by this year, we could only manage to provide for 75.3 % of the need. Despite this access, in the same year ACEM established that Government grants to Special Needs Institutions was only adequate to cater for 17.5 % of the running costs of the



institutions. In other words Special Needs Education institutions are not adequately funded to run efficiently and effectively to produce quality learning outcomes.

#### 4.6.8. Support for orphans to participate in primary school education

Table 3.16 indicates that there has been consistent increase on orphans accessing primary school education from 2003 to 2010. The total orphan enrolment has increased 1.3 times within seven years. Both the enrolment of girls and boys increased by 1.3 times. This implies that there has been consistent increase for support for orphans to access primary school education.

Year	Single Orphaned		Double Orphaned		Total by sex		Total both sexes
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
2003	-	-	-	-	183,581	175,567	359,148
2005	149,080	146,165	73,640	70,520	222,720	216,685	439,405
2008	172,499	164,445	74,614	70,085	247,113	234,530	481,643
2010	165,117	155,179	67,376	63,894	232,493	219,073	451,566

However, the 2010 ECD Annual Report estimated number of orphans to 1,150,000. This implies that irrespective of the consistent rise in enrolment, by 2010 we were only able to provide access to 39.3 % of the orphans. Of course the challenge is that we do not know whether all the orphans were of primary school age. If we assume that all orphans were of primary school age, then it means Malawi still has a long way supporting all its orphans to access education.

#### 4.7. Conclusion

This section has assessed the progress Malawi has made towards achieving Education for All (EFA) goals between 2000 and 2011. The results show that while Malawi is far behind in achieving targets of ECD and out-of-school youth, it has achieved gender parity in lower primary, is on track to achieve the same in secondary schools if there is no disturbance to the current efforts and has made commendable efforts in reducing adult illiteracy. However, issues of quality and relevance of education and disparity between rural and urban locations, divisions, poor and rich and gender especially at tertiary levels remain a big challenge and may continue to be so beyond 2015. Two major factors seem to continue compromising speedy educational development. The first is limited political will to abandon ineffective service delivery approaches like in ECD and Adult literacy and continuing education. Limited political will is also manifested in unwillingness to fund key sectors of education as adequately as has demonstrated to work at international level. The second factor is ineffective governance structures and practices of the departments responsible for delivery of basic education services. Governance weaknesses may continue to frustrate speedy education progress even after Malawi puts to use the Fast Track Initiative funds for which she qualified in 2010.

## ***5. A SYNTHESIS OF THE ISSUES ON THE PROGRESS MADE ON EFA AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD***

This section responds to the question “how close is Malawi to achieving the EFA goals, four years to 2015 and what next should she do to ensure that she achieves the goals wherever she is still behind? The section does so through synthesising the findings of sections 3 and 4 and making recommendations on the key findings as a way forward to possible achievement of the EFA goals by 2015. The section closes with an overall conclusion to the whole assessment.

### ***5.1. Mainstreaming of EFA goals in policy and programme planning in governance and education documents***

The assessment shows that tremendous progress has been made in mainstreaming EFA Goals and their requirements in both macro and micro planning documents in governance and education in Malawi. Seven key documents including the Republican Constitution, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategies I & II, the NESP, ESIP, Revised EFA National Action Plan, CSR and others all had adequate reflection of all the six EFA Goals. ESIP and the Revised EFA Plan have detailed budgets for activities with targets set. As such, it can safely be argued that failure to achieve the goals may no longer be blamed of poor planning or lack of credible plans. However, the ESIP which is the mid-term implementation plan for the education sector only focused on Complementary Basic Education in its three-year plan for development of education for out-of-school youth. This limited planning for out-of-school youth education has a great potential to undermine comprehensive approach to addressing the learning needs of all young people and adults which have to be acquired through equitable access and appropriate learning and life skills programmes. It may signify lack of proper coordination between stakeholders responsible for this aspect of education

#### ***5.1.1. Recommendation:***

It is important that any forthcoming review of the NESP should have a comprehensive plan of out-of-school youth covering all available programmes by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture and its affiliates. Such an approach will promote effective and efficient coordination and monitoring and evaluation for quality learning outcomes.

### ***5.2. Goal 1: Expand and improve comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.***

#### ***5.2.1. Extent of progress in ECD: 2000-2011***

The study has established that access to comprehensive ECD services improved reasonably between 2000 and 2010 though not at a pace to allow for universal coverage of all services to all ECD age group children by 2015.

### *5.2.2. ECD Progress and Best Start in life for children*

There has been some consistent decline of factors influencing best start in life for children like poverty, HIV prevalence Rate among 15-24 year old pregnant women, Under-Five Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Rate, Child Mortality and Infant Mortality Rates, stunting, Child underweight and Wasting. There has been impressive efforts in the improvement of iodine status among school aged children and women, provision of vitamin A supplementations, nutritional support programmes and early case detection and timely treatment of severely malnourished children. Nevertheless, there is still limited awareness of nutritional issues in the general public, low institutional capacity to handle the issues of nutrition and inadequate mainstreaming of nutrition in sector-based programmes. This makes malnutrition related complications to continue compromising the cognitive and physical development of some children resulting in poor participation in early years of education.

### *5.2.3. ECD Progress and number of ECD Centres*

The number of ECD centres has progressively increased from 1153 in 2000 to 8,890 in 2009, representing growth by 671 %. The enrolment of the rightful age children for pre-schooling has increased from 51, 550 in 2000 to 771,666 in 2009, representing 1396.9 % growth and 32 % Net Enrolment from 26.4 % Net Enrolment in 2000. However, there continues to be disparities in favour of the urban, male children, the rich and some specific divisions. For example, in 2008 urban pre-school centres enrolled 39 % of the learners while rural centres enrolled only 6 %. Integration of children of special needs education in ECD remains overly neglected. HIV and AIDS and orphanhood are reported impacting negatively on the issue of equity in ECD services. The trend means that the majority of the missed 68 % of the ECD age children are the intended vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Access, infrastructure and quality of services still remain limited due to over-dependence on a community-based approach to service delivery which does not seem to have adequately helped the country to meet its ECD targets over the years. A community-based approach is being heavily compromised by high poverty and illiteracy levels of the rural masses and limited capacity by the public, private and civil society service providers to effectively advocate for ECD. As such, most ECD centres currently lack adequate facilities and their infrastructure is generally poor. Only 20 % of the infrastructure is purpose-built for ECD and as such may be inappropriate for young children. This contributes to low demand for the service.

The limited access to ECD education leads to parents sending under-age children into Standard 1. In this way, the ECD challenge spills over to primary school where it affects efficiency as the under-aged children contribute to high repetition and dropout rates in the first four Standards.

Once they drop from school most of the children are living unprotected life. They continue to face a number of challenges which are social, economic, political and cultural in nature. Those suffering most are the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. Unless the approach to providing ECD services radically changes, most of the children in this category will continue suffering discrimination till 2015. That will prevent Malawi from achieving EFA goal number 2.

#### *5.2.4. Key challenges to improvement of ECD*

At the heart of the challenges seems to be limited political will to adequately fund the pre-school aspect of ECD. For example, the NESP reports that in 2008 the total recurrent education expenditure for pre-school did not exceed 7 % in total. Low funding has contributed towards the persistence of three challenges which are (1) low professional skills for Care Givers and instructors in public pre-schools accompanied by low remuneration (2) failure to timely standardise teaching and learning materials including the curriculum and (3) failure to supply adequate teaching and learning materials to learning centres.

At governance level limited coordination among the Government departments across which issues of ECD are spread is obvious and it seems to heavily compromise efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Affected most is management of advocacy and monitoring and evaluation of ECD services especially pre-schooling. As such comprehensive analysis of the progress in ECD continues to be limited by lack of comprehensively recorded and disaggregated data by the departments responsible for the various services comprising ECD.

#### *5.2.5. Recommendations*

Three critical factors need to be urgently and seriously considered by Government and its partners if Malawi is to fast-track progress in ECD especially the pre-schooling aspect and in the whole EFA agenda.

(1) Government needs to genuinely appreciate the significance of ECD in the education agenda and begin to split in some fair shares education resources available for primary education with pre-schooling. It does not make much sense to continue piling resources at a second level of an education system knowing pretty well that the efficiency of the level is heavily compromised by a poorly resourced and hence inefficient and ineffective first level.

(2) To facilitate meaningful application of fair sharing of primary school education resources with pre-schooling services, Government needs to take a long-awaited radical move of relocating the whole pre-schooling aspect of ECD to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology which is mandated, experienced in, has all necessary infrastructure and is directly supported to manage formal schooling services.

(3) Implementing the first two recommendations will imply that in one way or the other, Malawi will be reducing the community responsibility to run pre-schooling services. There will be need to start moving towards the manner in which Government and communities share responsibility in funding and managing primary schools.

It is the conviction of this assessment that failure to move in the direction of the three recommendations above may be a choice to continue heavily financing primary and secondary education for no spectacular progress in the education sector than we have experienced so far.

### ***5.3. Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality***

There are two central issues in this goal which are expanding equitable access to quality primary schooling and ensuring that learners of primary school age are completing the primary school cycle.

### *5.3.1. Extent of progress in expanding access to primary school education*

The progress on expanding primary education access leading to universal attendance seems to be on track so much that if things continue at the pace presented by the official NER, Malawi may realise the goal by 2015. Since the introduction of the FPE policy in 1994, there has been highly commendable progress in expanding access to primary school to ensure that all children of primary school age participate. NER has increased from 58 % in 1999 to 75 % in 2007 and to 83 % in 2009. The 2015 target for ESIP is 100 %. Since 2000, GER is slowly declining while NER is constantly on the rise, indicating some success by the system to reduce enrolment of under and over age children at entry point. According to this trend, only 4 % of the primary school age children (around 600,000 in 2010) fail to enrol.

However, other aspects of the success story in this area seem to counter the picture created by the official NER. For example, it is apparent that it is only in Standard 1 where NER is close to UPE. And even at Standard 1, only 40 % of those enrolled are of the official entry age of 6. This side of the access story creates doubt as to whether the success is as substantive as to lead us into real Universal Primary Education by 2015. There seems to be something wrong with the way the data is handled.

#### *5.3.1.1. Recommendations*

While commending efforts made in recent years in improving the quality and timely availability of EMIS data, it seems there is still need for further improvement. A particular issue needing improvement is the accuracy and honesty with which data is gathered and processed at all levels from the school to headquarters through districts. In so doing we would reach a point where the trends that are portrayed by the NER would reflect realities on the ground. It is therefore time now that our EMIS data and the data from other credible sources are handled with more caution so that they should be telling one clear and realistic story.

### *5.3.2. Disparities in expansion of access*

Disparities of various types still persist. For example, although the trend between 2009 and 2010 shows that the schools system is enrolling slightly more girls of the official primary school age than boys; girls continue to be under-represented in senior Standards. Gender Parity Index was reported to be at 1.04 in the first four Standards but decreased as one went up the standards and education levels. Access to Standard 8 differed by 14 % between boys and girls, being in favour of boys. It differed by 34 % between urban and rural, being in favour of the urban. The difference between the richest quintile and the poorest quintile of the population was 44 % in favour of the richest quintile. In the same year access probability was highest in the Northern Region. In the Southern Region it was 2.2 % lower than in the northern while in the central region it was 1.2 % lower than in the northern region.

The poorest segments of the country who make about 40 % of the population are the ones having the least opportunities to access primary education. They have minimal chances of benefiting from ECD services, poor perception of the entry age into primary, general economic difficulties, negative gender perceptions, are mostly located in rural areas where schools are far apart and often poorly provided for. They are greater victims of illnesses and have a higher probability for hiding disabilities of their children.

#### *5.3.2.1. Recommendation*

(1) The core catalysing factor to the various forms of disparity in accessing primary education seems to be poverty. It is, therefore, important that the implementation of any existing modalities of supporting learners from poor households including bursaries and social cash transfers be decentralised to zone level to promote transparency, accountability and fairness in disbursements.

(2) Ministry of Education, Science and Technology needs to institutionalise the functions of Mother Groups (MGs) and Girls Education Movements (GEMs) in schools to optimise their recently demonstrated capacity to promote girls' participation and achievement in primary school education.

#### *5.3.3. Expansion of access and provision of teaching and learning materials*

There is also clear evidence that between 2000 and 2011 there has been an increase in the provision of basic learning resources/materials but one which in most cases is disproportional to the demand and inequitably distributed. Secondly, expanded access to primary schools has exerted enormous pressure on the teaching and learning infrastructure, resources and materials thereby undermining the provision efforts and reducing the internal efficiency of the system. The supply of some pertinent resources like textbooks, teachers and classrooms improved in some respects but worsened in others. Where there were improvements, the improvements have not been adequate enough to cover demand. For example, the percentage of pupils having basic learning materials increased to 73 in 2007 from 55 in 2000. But in the same period, the percentage of pupils having Mathematics textbooks dropped from 57 to 24 %. The percentage of pupils having sole use of Mathematics textbooks was higher in rural schools than urban schools. There were more basic learning materials in urban (81%) than in rural areas (70%). The assessment has also noted that textbook shortage is not only confined to Reading and Mathematics. The general textbook availability did not improve much between 2000 and 2011. The data implies that 27 learners in every 100 in 2007 did not fully access primary education while attending school. Similarly, over three quarters of primary school learners in 2007 did not fully access Mathematics lessons while attending the lessons. This may be a more dangerous deprivation of access to education to the concerned children as it is difficult to discern and address. The children suffer a loss in silence. Unless serious efforts are taken to address such inhibitors of access, reaching goal 2 by 2015 may not be possible. Factors blamed for this include use of a distribution policy which discriminates against private schools while favouring public ones. Free textbooks are distributed freely only to public schools with no official policy on the distribution to private schools. As a result, private schools take textbooks from public schools causing a negative skewing of the public distribution figures. In addition to discriminatory distribution policy, there is heavy reliance on donors in purchasing and distributing textbooks. Government does not fund the procurement and distribution of textbooks. Government dependence on donors and procedures involved often delay supplies of the textbooks thereby worsening the limitation of children's access to education while in school. This is also compromising efforts to fully achieve EFA goal 2.

#### *5.3.3.1. Recommendation*

(1) There is need for Government to scale up funding for procurement of teaching and learning materials especially textbooks to reduce the degree of dependence on donors.

Government may as well take advantage of the positive response by a number of local enterprises to engage in corporate responsibility and enact a deliberate policy on local enterprise contribution towards purchase or production of textbooks.

(2) Government needs to introduce a new primary school textbook policy focusing on promoting local book publishers in Malawi who should be able to make textbooks timely available for private schools and all other education stakeholders without any discrimination.

(3) When textbooks are adequately available on the market due to (1) and (2), Government will need to decentralise procurement and distribution to the Local District Assemblies. This will ensure that distribution will not only be timely, but demand and supply information will be clearer and addressed correctly.

#### *5.3.4. Expansion of access and teacher supply*

Supply of teachers has also remained severely inadequate despite extensive efforts to expand production capacity of TTCs and diversification of training modes including introduction of Open Distance Learning. As such, teacher inadequacy continues to be one of the significant factors compromising the efforts to create universal access to primary education. Both independent studies like SACMEQ III and EMIS data show that Pupil-Teacher Ratio worsened between 2000 and 2010. EMIS shows that while PTR has consistently worsened in the period of study, PQTR fluctuated. It improved between 2000 and 2004 but started a worsening trend from 2004 to 2010. PTR rose from 63:1 in 2000 to 71:1 in 2005. It rose further from 71:1 in 2005 to 80:1 in 2010. QPTR improved from 123:1 in 2000 to 82:1 in 2003. It then started an increasing trail from 2005 to 2010 during which it has risen from 83:1 to 91:1. Only two of the six divisions (the Northern and Central East) have PTRs below the national ratio. And only the Northern Region is close to hitting the benchmark of 60:1 by 2015. Almost all literature on teacher deployment in Malawi indicates that rural schools have higher PTR and PQTR than urban schools. Similarly, there are fewer female teachers than male ones and most of them are deployed in urban schools. This deployment trend deprives rural girls of female models of educated people to encourage them to remain in school. This contributes to high dropout amongst girls which compromises national efforts for achieving UPE by 2015.

##### *5.3.4.1. Recommendations*

(1) Government needs to speed up the implementation of its plans to construct additional TTCs in each division. Civil Society and the private sector need to share the burden with Government by venturing into teacher education.

(2) Government needs to come up with a more credible definition of hard to reach schools whose teachers have to be motivated with hardship allowances without de-motivating those whose schools do not qualify for the allowance. This will go along way reducing the urban-rural disparity in teacher availability. Similarly, Government and its partners in education need to thoroughly study challenges faced by urban teachers and design appropriate motivational initiatives to address them.

(3) Following recommendations 1 and 2, Government needs to introduce a higher certificate for primary school teacher education beginning with a Diploma in Primary School teaching to make the career attractive to academically competent school leavers especially females.

### *5.3.5. Expansion of access and provision of classrooms*

Inadequate supply of classrooms has also persisted between 2000 and 2011 amidst efforts by an extensive number of stakeholders to reduce the shortage. The national benchmark is 60 pupils per class. But the SACMEQ III study found out that the average number of Standard 6 pupils per class increased from 57:1 in 2000 to 66:1 in 2007. The Standard 6 Pupil-Classroom ratio was higher in urban schools (92:1) than in rural schools (58:1). Ministry of Education, EMIS data for 2010 indicates that five years to 2015, Malawi was still teaching 41 more pupils in a class than is required. Half of the divisions: Central West, Shire Highlands and South East divisions in that order are the most backward with the ratio of pupils per class as close to double the benchmark. Lilongwe Rural East district is the most backward, followed by Mulanje, Thyolo and Mchinji in that order.

Intra-division comparison between urban and rural districts shows that urban districts tend to have higher Pupil-Classroom Ratios than rural districts. The progress made between 2005 and 2010 to reduce classroom shortage does not give hope that come 2015 the shortage of classrooms will have been eradicated. Although resources are available for reducing the classroom shortage from various sources including the Fast Track Initiative funds, Government has limited capacity to construct new classrooms and rehabilitate old ones. As a result, in 2010 the country had a backlog of 27,000 classrooms to be constructed at a rate of between 1000-2000 classrooms per annum. The country only afforded 38 % of the annual target. The limited construction capacity is also compromising renovation speed for old classrooms thereby perpetuating shortage and limiting access to schooling by the primary school age children.

#### *5.3.5.1. Recommendation*

- (1) Government needs to revisit its construction contract policies to consider including sub-contracting credible civil society organisations with a track record in construction especially the Faith-Based Organisations to participate in the construction and renovation of buildings. The involvement of civil society will ensure that the country meets the annual targets and have the required number of classrooms to facilitate UPE by 2015.
- (2) Government needs to revisit its school mapping exercise with more focus on urban schools to facilitate construction of more schools to accommodate rightful pupil-classroom ratios within reasonable number of streams per Standard.

### *5.3.6. Access challenges and internal efficiency of the primary education system*

It has further been established that the above cited access challenges are thwarting impact of efforts to improve internal efficiency of the primary education system. As a result, Survival Rates have remained unsatisfactory leading into a completion rate of as low as 35 % in 2010. The Survival Rate for Standard 1 to five increased from 47.4 % to 73.5 % between 2004 and 2007 but took a declining trend between 2008 and 2010. The same trend appears in the Survival Rate to Standard 8 which almost doubled between 2004 and 2010 but declined by 3.3 percentage points between 2008 and 2010. While the difference between the Survival Rate of boys and girls from Standard 1 to 5 fluctuates and is not much, the one to Standard 8 is systematically in favour of boys and it is greater. Efforts to expand access to primary education have also been compromised by high dropout rates between 2000 and 2011. It has been observed that while there has been some progress in reducing Dropout Rate at entry point of the system, the situation is not improving mid-way and it is getting out of control



towards the end. Efforts to reduce dropout rate at Standard 1 yielded marginal returns as the rate only declined by 0.23 percentage points, stagnating at 12 %. Out of every hundred enrolled children, twelve dropped out before acquiring any basic skills and may become as illiterate as those who never enrolled. Dropout Rate at Standards 4 seems to have been successfully tamed as it has only shifted upwards by 0.36 percentage points between 2000 and 2010. Eight children out of every hundred drop out of school before acquiring desirable level of numeracy and reading skills in the national language (Chichewa) and official language (English). However, there has been less success at Standard 8 where Dropout Rate shows a rising trend although with some fluctuations. Here, out of 100 children, 11 drop out of the primary school system uncertified for completion thereby risking loss of opportunities for formal post-primary education and training.

It has also been observed that educational continuity is an issue as in 2006, 13 % of Standard 1 pupils were in school not providing educational continuity, making them more likely to dropout. Retention on schools that provide educational continuity is much higher at the national level (42%), giving sense to a policy that would target generalisation of educational continuity. The study has also established that efforts to expanding access to primary education have been negatively impacted by high repetition rates. While Repetition Rates of the first four Standards took a declining trend from 2005, those of the last three Standards assumed an increasing trend. Thus, the system is becoming more efficient in maintaining requisite spaces for the eligible learners in each Standard at the lower level but it is failing to do the same at the senior level.

Dropout rate has been related to issues of poverty and gender. More female learners dropout from school than male ones just as more learners from poor households dropout from school than those from rich households. There are higher Dropout Rates in rural districts than urban ones of Blantyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu especially in lower Standards (at least 1-6). In general, School Life Expectancy (SLE) is 7 years, placing Malawi on an average situation of efficiency, compared to other low income countries. There seems to be a relationship at senior primary level between high repetition rates and high dropout rates tempting a conclusion that repetition due to bottlenecks to accessing secondary education fuels dropout in the senior primary section. As a result of limited efficiency, Education stakeholders are spending more than expected to educate children especially in senior primary school. For example, by end of 2010, primary school sub-sector had 660,000 repeaters costing MK2 billion a year. Resources are wasted thereby reducing our potential to reach the universal access target of 2015. In this context of wastage, it is doubtful that Malawi can achieve UPE as an MDG by 2015 even after considerable resources are made available as wished by the NESP. It is apparent therefore that unless some wonderful effort is made to improve the internal efficiency of the system and expand chances for secondary school education in the remaining three years, we may not be able to realise universal education for all including learners from poor households, rural districts and the females by 2015.

#### *5.3.6.1. Recommendation*

(1) Government and other education partners need to upscale and intensify initiatives which are underway in empowering poor households to send and retain their children especially girls in schools.

(2) At school level, a policy of automatic promotion needs to be introduced to do away with repetition. This policy needs to be accompanied by an additional certificate of attendance at Standard 8. The PSCLE certificate needs to be offered to those who have passed while the attendance one to those who have just completed without passing. The attendance certificate will be relevant for participation in future informal and non-formal youth programmes while the PSLCE certificate will be used for consideration in formal post-primary school education. Arguments of automatic promotion diluting standards do not hold water as even with the current system a considerable proportion of learners are graduating at primary 8 with less knowledge and skills than desired.

#### *5.3.7. Expansion of access versus improvement of quality of learning outcomes*

The study has further established that between 2000 and 2011 weak internal efficiency continued to compromise quality of education. School and home factors have continued influencing and perpetuating learning outcome disparities between boys and girls and between privileged children and those in difficult circumstances. The SACMEQ III study of 2007 shows that in seven years time extending 2000 to 2007 the quality of learning outcomes in Malawi in Reading and Mathematics at Standard 6 level has only improved slightly. Despite the efforts which Government and other education stakeholders made in improving the quality of learning outcomes, seven out of every 10 pupils continue to leave school with almost no skills for life-long learning and general livelihood. Such learners contribute to scaling down of our ability to achieve universal provision of quality basic education by 2015. The Reading mean score improved with only 4.4 percentage points while the Mathematics mean score improved with 14.1 percentage points. 98 % of pupils operated under basic skills in Reading while 99 % did so in Mathematics. The Standard 6 pupils in Malawi were below the means of SACMEQ countries. In Reading they performed the least amongst SACMEQ countries, whilst in Mathematics they were second to the country which performed the least.

Some strange trends of disparities in learning outcomes emerged between 2000 and 2007 which need verification through further studies. Gender disparity persisted with boys continuing to outperform girls in both Reading and Mathematics. New trends beating traditional education theory are that in Mathematics, rural pupils performed better than urban ones and pupils from low socio-economic status performed slightly better than those from higher socio-economic status. In Reading, there were no differences in performance of pupils based on socio-economic status.

Disparities on divisional levels in quality of learning outcomes also persisted between 2000 and 2007. The Northern Education Division performed better in overall terms than the rest of the divisions in both Reading and Mathematics. The South West Division performed consistently poorly. This shows a positive relationship between adequate provision of teaching and learning resources and quality of learning outcomes as the Northern Region has proved in this assessment to be the best provided for while the South West is one of the worst provided for.

Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations results for 2000 to 2010 show a trend of expansion in participation compromising volume of outputs and quality of learning outcomes. This casts doubt on whether education for all will translate into learning for all. This is because the trend shows that the more the number of pupils completing the cycle is increasing, the more the internal efficiency is weakening and the more the quality of teaching

is declining. The numbers of candidates sitting for the PSLCE grew by 44.5 % between 2000 and 2009. Participation of girls within the same period grew by 32.36 %. However, the national Pass Rate declined by 15.86 percentage-points. Within this, the Pass Rate for girls declined more (by 22.66%) than that of boys (9.46%). If education for all may not translate into learning for all, there could be good reason for considering the whole concept an illusion.

Quality of learning outcomes would not make much sense if what the children are taught in class and how they are taught is not relevant to job requirements and needs of the society at large. The study has established that Malawi reformed its primary school curriculum following the Dakar World Education Forum of 2000.

A reform process dubbed Primary Curriculum and Assessment Reform PCAR which commenced in 2001 and concluded in 2007 refocused content to contemporary socio-economic ideals. Teaching methodologies embraced democratic rights-based approach of Learner Centred Education (LCE) and Continuous Assessment (CA). However, it would appear that while the design of the curriculum is excellent, the teaching approaches it propagates are not in tandem with a context as challenging as has been described in this section.

The subject areas in PCAR have been found seriously lacking in areas of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills development including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which are critical in the contemporary world. These shortfalls in the curriculum may partly explain the continued declining of pass rates at PSLCE irrespective of the introduction of the reformed curriculum. LCE and CA approaches in crowded classes with high PTRs have proved to limit participation of many slow learners in class. Similarly, omission of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial content seems to discriminate children whose learning potential lies therein. Such a curriculum may not help the country realise UPE of good quality by 2015.

#### *5.3.7.1. Recommendations*

(1) There is need for more coordinated and participatory approach in the implementation of LCE and CA through up scaled daily involvement of Teacher Assistants, regular teacher mentoring through school-based Mentors and regular advisory services as stipulated by the advisory policy. This will require holistic recruitment and deployment of Teacher Assistants and designation of School-based Teacher Mentors, reduction of Teacher-Primary Education Advisor (PEA) Ratio and provision of regular refresher courses for PEAs based best practices drawn from action research on what is going on in schools. For this to succeed there is need to strengthen the whole management and governance culture in the primary school system, an issue to be discussed further under Goal 6.

(2) There is need to strengthen the school-community cooperation in supporting children in their school work by promoting checking of school work by parents/guardians and assistance in homework by the same. This cooperation may be promoted by mobilising communities into setting homework support groups. Existing structures like MGs can take this role. Education stakeholders may take advantage of the proliferation of ICT services like cell phones, computers and community radios to create a vibrant communications system between schools, households and communities at large to improve joint learner support on academic work.

#### ***5.4. Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes***

There is noticeable progress in trying to equitably address some of the learning needs of the youth and adults between 2000 and 2011. But the progress has not occurred at a pace ensuring us achievement of the goal by 2015.

##### *5.4.1. Meeting learning needs of all young people and adults in the formal education area*

Between 2000 and 2011, Government has advanced expansion programmes at secondary school and tertiary education levels. Programmes include construction of secondary school boarding facilities for girls, effective deployment of teachers at secondary school level where 72 % of teachers are allocated to public schools based on school enrolment and expansion of University students' intake. However, access probability to secondary school (Form 1) still remains very low at about 17 % of the secondary school age cohort and 49 % of the primary school graduates. This primary-secondary school transition rate is below the average for Sub-Saharan Africa which is 74 %. There is disparity in resourcing of secondary schools between conventional and CDSS. CDSS enrol half of the students but they are under-funded, have under-qualified teachers, poorer learning environments and lack appropriate teaching and learning materials and equipment.

##### *5.4.1.1. Recommendation*

Firstly, for purposes of standardising parameters for provision of basic education in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to which Malawi belongs, Government needs to take a long-awaited-for decision to extend basic education to at least the first two Forms in secondary school. Following this, junior secondary education as part of basic education should also become tuition free. This will automatically increase the transition rate from primary to secondary. It will be one best way for promoting a greater number of girls coming from poor households to access secondary education at least up to junior level. This will also have positive impact on promoting adult literacy and continuing education.

Secondly, there is need for stronger cooperation between Government, the private sector, Civil Society, local politicians and businessmen to vigilantly improve the status of CDSSs so that they become attractive, learner-friendly and effective in the delivery of secondary education. One way for making this feasible would be deliberate Government directive to have the Local Development Fund focus on the improvement of CDSSs in a certain prescribed period of say five years.

##### *5.4.2. Meeting learning needs of all young people and adults in TEVET*

In TEVET, progress between 2000 and 2011 has not been satisfactory as annual targets though seemingly being met, are set low. TEVET intake from secondary school graduates was estimated at 2 % in 2007 compared to 6 % in Sub-Saharan Africa. The other tertiary professional institutions accommodated only 52 students per every 100,000 inhabitants compared to 538 students for Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondary schools are not offering adequate and relevant TEVET generic skills while technical and vocational institutions are not offering adequate and relevant specialist skills. Consequently, skills training for the youth are

underdeveloped and not in tandem with the needs of a changing economy as demonstrated by the current demands in the private sector (commerce and industry).

#### *5.4.2.1. Recommendation*

(1) Government and all other stakeholders in TEVET need to engage in a holistic programme of rejuvenating the education system from primary to tertiary with quality and relevant TEVET programmes commensurate with the contemporary demands for blue collar jobs.

(2) TEVETA in collaboration with the Department of Technical and Vocational Education at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, needs to strengthen its coordination role of service delivery. This will ensure that standards of services from the private sector and civil society match the local and international labour demands.

#### *5.4.3. Meeting learning needs of all young people and adults through non-formal education*

There has been some progress also reported in the improvement of non-formal education. However, the improvement has not been at a pace to allow for complete elimination of youth illiteracy by 2015. This was evidenced by the fact that by 2010, 22 youth in every 100 still remained illiterate. In every 100 male youths, 19 were illiterate while in every 100 females, 26 were illiterate.

The youth illiteracy levels remained this high despite that by 2008 over 3000 out-of-school Youth Clubs, 50 Youth Organisations and 35 Youth Centres were functional in providing pertinent knowledge and skills to the youth and adults on various aspects of their needs. In addition, a number of institutions were offering technical courses and Government was in its second year of piloting Complementary Basic Education (CBE) in 15 centres across three of the 36 Education Districts. About 680 learners had enrolled in CBE and demand was on the increase. Learners were acquiring positive attitude towards education and were becoming competent in reading, writing, numeracy and other skills. Graduates of CBE qualified for re-entry at primary school in Standard 6. CBE helped to address disparity issues as it enrolls higher proportions of orphans and other vulnerable and hard-to-reach children than primary school. However, gender equity is compromised by boys' reluctance to enrol. Further to that the impact of CBE was being compromised by lack of an appropriately staffed and resourced unit in the Ministry of Education to manage its scaling up. Access to sexual and reproductive health, HIV and AIDS services also improved between 2000 and 2011. Similarly, establishment of information centres expanded. However, systematisation of the nature and design of materials and modes of delivery of out-of-school youth education programmes remained limited. The Ministry of Youth Development and Sports continue to lack the requisite managerial and monitoring capacities. There also has been commendable progress on youth economic empowerment although it continues to be politicised. The proportion of the disadvantaged receiving conditional and unconditional cash transfers increased from 4 % in 2005 to 37 % in 2010. There has been relatively increased access to capital through the establishment of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDEF) although the identification of beneficiaries to the facility has been marred by political controversy.

#### *5.4.3.1. Recommendations*

There is need to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports in planning, managing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating out-of-school youth non-formal

education programmes. A core part of the capacity building needs to focus on streamlining roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Education to iron out negative overlaps and wasteful role conflict.

The Civil Society Organisations need to play a proactively vigilant role in ensuring participation of male learners in non-formal programmes as well as in condemning politicisation of youth economic empowerment programmes.

#### *5.4.4. Key challenges to meeting learning needs of all young people and adults*

A number of factors continue to militate against promotion of the learning needs of all young people and adults. The major challenge has been the provision of equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. Failure has been caused by a combined influence of the following youth and system propelled factors:

1. Early marriage and teenage pregnancy. 53 % of 15-24 years adolescents will already have begun child bearing, making themselves more vulnerable to maternal deaths.
2. HIV and AIDS and STIs whereby 46 % of all new HIV infections are occurring in the 10-29 year age group and 69 % of sexually-active young people in 2010 had multiple partners.
3. Orphanage, whereby in 2008, twelve out of every 100 youths aged 18 and below were orphans.
4. Smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, whereby more than 50 % of the drug and alcohol related cases that came before the courts in 2010 involved young people.
5. Failure by the education and training sectors to provide adequate technical and vocational training centres. By 2010, TEVETA was only able to process 1 % (3000/300,000) of the training applications it received. Provision of technical education remains highly diverse, fragmented and uncoordinated with multiple private and public provider systems. Gender equity is compromised by the decreasing rate of girls' participation in education beginning at senior primary and worsening at secondary and tertiary levels. Gender disparity is not only pervasive in TEVET; it extends to the whole area of science and technology.
6. Failure by the formal sector to offer employment to all the employable youth which is working as a disincentive. Labour participation rate in the formal sector amongst youth aged 15-29 years in 2005 was 9 % with more females (10%) than males (8%) being unemployed. The formal employment sector was only able to create about 30,000 jobs per year against 300, 000 new entrants into the job market. Poverty and deprivation, limited access to credit facilities and marginalisation of the youth and adults in decision making processes tended to worsen the employability of the youth.

#### *5.4.5. Recommendations*

The most critical factor here seems to be youth frustration due to some deprivation of educational opportunities which begins right away from ECD running across primary to tertiary. A lasting solution to issues in this section is a holistic approach to minimising deprivation of effective and efficient participation in education programmes by children right from pre-school to tertiary levels. It is only youth with sound and relevant skills who can either employ themselves or be employed.

#### *5.4.6. Why weak and ineffective youth education and training sector?*

The assessment established that the root cause of the state of affairs in youth education and training is the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy of 1994. It was implemented with little planning and resulted in the education system becoming funnel-like in nature. Large numbers of learners entered at primary level, few progressed to secondary and beyond.

A primary school completion rate of 35 % is resulting in about 600,000 learners being out of school comprising dropouts and those who never enrolled. Those accommodated in the limited secondary sector spaces do not receive education of high quality because of inadequate infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and qualified teachers. All those neglected by the primary and secondary schools have to find a second-chance education through services under goal 3. It is not an easy task.

The task is compounded by inherent management and governance weaknesses of the Government departments providing and coordinating youth education and training manifested through the following:

1. lack of advocacy for out-of-school youth education resulting into limited community and parental awareness over the importance of attaining basic education and literacy ;
2. limited alternative approaches to out-of-school youth education;
3. lack of relevant curriculum for out-of-school youth clubs;
4. failure to offer adequate access for children with special needs and
5. Weak linkages among youth clubs and between the youth service providers/policy makers.

##### *5.4.6.1. Recommendation*

As recommended in (5.5.5), there is need to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Youth Development and Sports in planning, managing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating out-of-school youth non-formal education programmes. A core part of the capacity building needs to focus on streamlining roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Youth and the Ministry of Education to iron out negative overlaps and wasteful role conflict.

#### ***5.5. Goal 4: Achieving a 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults***

##### *5.5.1. Degree of progress in providing equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults between 2000 and 2011*

Government provision of equitable access to adult literacy and continuing education for all adults in Malawi has to a greater extent remained a story of little progress perpetually lagging behind set targets. Failure to meet targets is caused by limited political will by Government and its partners to adequately fund programmes. Limited political will is compounded by an ever-expanding pool of clients continually emerging from the shortfalls in ECD, primary and secondary education. The two factors have put Government and its partners in education in a genuine dilemma on how best to split limited educational resources between addressing gaps at foundational level (ECD and primary) and gaps at the end of the pendulum (adult literacy). Results of the assessment tend to indicate that as a way of salvaging the dilemma, education stakeholders in Malawi deliberately choose to put their focus more on the foundational levels than on adult literacy.

Government established the NALP in 1986 to provide literacy education to 2.5 million people in 10 years time. Thirteen years later (1998), only 20.8 % of the target was covered, creating an inverse trend of progress. The number of illiterate adults was increasing while coverage of adult literacy and continuing education programmes was declining. The average annual intake for NALP between 1986-1998 and 1998-2006 declined from 40,000 to 16,190. This could probably be due to over concentration on the challenges which were brought by the 1994 FPE policy which might have overshadowed concerns about adult literacy and continuing education. As a result, by 2009 the number of adults above 15 who were illiterate had not changed much from that of 1986 (2.3 million versus 2.5 million). Good news though is that by 2009 coverage of all the adult literacy and continuing education programmes provided by all stakeholders NALP inclusive, had in terms of absolute figures expanded tremendously. 720,000 illiterates were being covered annually improving coverage rate to 31.3 % from 20.8 % in 1998. NALP alone was reaching 100,000 adult learners while Civil Society Organisations including Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) were reaching 160,000. Efforts by CBE and other out-of-school youth initiatives reached about 460,000. Despite these efforts however, the country remains with 1 million illiterates annually at any one moment signifying that from the coverage point of view the reduction of illiterates to half of the number of 2000 by 2015 may be remote. Reaching the goal sounds remote considering the established low level of political will and the prioritisation dilemma.

*5.5.2. Degree of progress in reducing illiteracy levels of all adults, especially women, by 50 % by 2015*

The assessment has established that Malawi is likely going to fail to achieve the reduction of adult illiterates by half in 2015 whether the age group considered begins from age five as is done by the National Population Census or begins with 15 as is the case with NALP approach. The 2008 national population and housing census indicates that over a decade, between 1998 and 2008 the literacy rate for both sexes in Malawi improved by 6 percentage points. Almost half way to 2015, 36 % of people of five years and over were illiterate. More women (41%) were still illiterate compared to men (31%) in 2008. On the basis of the 1998 and 2008 population data, meeting the EFA target would imply reducing national illiteracy rate to 21 % by 2015. For women it means reducing it to at least 25 % while for men it would mean reducing it to 17.5. At the pace we are going, the best that may be achieved all factors remaining constant is reducing the national illiteracy level to 31.8 %, that of women may be reduced to 34.4 % while that of men to 27.5 %. And all are above 50 % of the 1998/2000 rates.

Regional disparities in literacy rates still stand with the Northern Region being the most literate while the Central Region is the least literate. However, even the Northern Region would only be able to reduce its illiteracy level to 21.8 % by 2015 if all factors are held constant. And that is not 50 % of its 1998/2000 illiteracy rate.

*5.5.3. Challenges compromising progress to adult literacy and continuing education for all by 2015*

The assessment has established that limited political will and the dilemma on which extreme of the educational pendulum to prioritise as discussed in 5.6.1 have resulted in multiple effects which include the following:



1. Inadequate human and material resources to facilitate adult literacy and continuing education;
2. Limited capacity to train and retain qualified instructors for continuing education;
3. Lack of comprehensive policy, monitoring and evaluation frameworks and Information Management Systems;
4. Limited human and material resources and poor motivation strategies;
5. Ineffective management epitomised in poor coordination of programmes;
6. Limited integration of special needs;
7. Poor male participation;
8. Outdated curriculum being implemented by untrained instructors;
9. Misconception of adult literacy due to poor publicity and advocacy;
10. Limited demand for non-formal education by the targeted population

This list of secondary challenges only works to confirm the fears that adult literacy and continuing education for all by 2015 may be a farfetched dream for Malawi.

#### *5.5.4. Recommendation*

(1) The best strategic approach to deal with endemic adult illiteracy and continuing education is to appreciate the impact of early investment in education in order to curb future challenges. Government needs to seriously consider appropriate investments in pre-school, primary and secondary education in order to do away with heavy excess baggage at adult level. At the adult literacy and continuing education level Government may limit its attention to policy and capacity development and standards control. To achieve this without completely neglecting the adults, Government may need to promote public private sector partnerships (PPP) approach. Civil Society Organisations and the private sector should be proactively and vigilantly encouraged to support Government in this area with innovative livelihood-related literacy and continuing education programmes supported by the now proliferating Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

### ***5.6. Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality***

#### *5.6.1. Progress made in achieving Gender parity in primary, secondary and teacher education*

The assessment established that Malawi achieved gender parity in lower primary about five years before the dead line and has better chances for achieving the same in secondary schools if plans set in the NESP and ESIP are effectively and timely implemented. In overall terms, the ratio of girls to boys in primary school has improved from 0.94 in 2000, to 0.99 in 2010 and NESP targets a ratio of 1 in 2015. However, complete achievement of gender parity in primary education seems to be compromised by low completion rate for girls orchestrated by their high dropout rate in senior Standards especially 7-8. High dropout rate for girls in senior primary is further compounded by low achievement rates at PSLCE, JCE and MSCE which in the end perpetrate gender disparity through secondary, tertiary and teacher training. However, a deliberate empowerment policy for selecting girls to secondary school

has succeeded to close the secondary school parity gap by 3 percentage points in 2010. 50:50 enrolments in TTCs have remained difficult to achieve mainly because many female applicants do not meet requirement for a credit in English. Thus, unlike in the global trend where women are overrepresented in education, in Malawi women are still severely underrepresented.

#### *5.6.2. Proportion of boys and girls reaching desirable levels of competencies in core skills of core subjects in primary education: SACMEQ*

According to SACMEQ III study, over a seven year period: 2000 to 2007, the effectiveness of the primary education system in Malawi in teaching Reading and Mathematics at Standard 6 level improved only slightly. The Reading mean score improved with only 4.4 percentage points while the Mathematics mean score improved with 14.1 percentage points. The majority of the pupils operated under basic skills in Reading as only about 2 % reached advanced level, a slight improvement from about 1 % in 2000. In Mathematics, only 1 % operated at advanced level. 99 % of the pupils were at basic.

Gender disparity persisted in learner performance at Reading and Mathematics. In both subjects, boys outperformed girls. Malawian girls proved to be not as advantaged as the others elsewhere in the world who are reported to outperform boys in reading and literacy. Similarly, Malawian girls seem not to be part of an emerging global trend where girls are beginning to compete favourably with boys at Mathematics.

Disparities according to rural-urban location also persisted. Urban pupils performed slightly better in Reading than rural ones. In Mathematics, rural pupils performed better than urban ones. The difference was accredited to solo use of Mathematics textbooks in rural areas, a thing which was difficult in urban areas due to larger enrolments. There were no differences in performance based on socio-economic status in Reading while in Mathematics pupils from low socio-economic status performed slightly better than those from higher socio-economic status.

There were also divisional disparities in learner performance with the Northern Education Division performing better in overall terms than the rest of the divisions in both Reading and Mathematics. The South West Division performed consistently poorly. The disparity tended to be in line with levels of resourcing.. The Northern Region is in many variables best resourced per unit population of learners while the South West Division is one of the most poorly resourced per unit population of learners.

#### *5.6.3. Quality of learning outcomes: Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (PSLCE), 2000 to 2010*

The growth rate of girls sitting for the PSLCE rose by almost twice that of boys (63.06% compared to 32.36%). However, for both boys and girls, an increase in candidacy seemed to induce a decline in pass rates. Within this trend, the pass rate for girls declined more (22.66%) than that of boys (9.46%). The more the primary system expands in access, the more its efficiency is weakening. The more the number of pupils completing the cycle is increasing, the more the quality of teaching is declining. In the decline, the girl child seems to be a worse victim than the boy child. This trend casts doubt on whether education for all will translate into learning for all or more also better learning for girls. If EFA may not translate into

learning for all and especially the girls, there could be good reason for considering the whole concept an illusion.

#### *5.6.4. Quality of learning outcomes at secondary school level: Junior Certificate (JCE) and Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE)*

The assessment data for compiling pass rates for JCE and MSCE disaggregated by gender beyond 2003 was not readily available. However, from other existing reports it appears that there is a strikingly low achievement rate at the end of the schooling system (MSCE). Low achievement signifies that the system experiences little improvement in learner achievement across its levels. There is poor achievement at Standard 6 and the same poor achievement manifests itself at the end of secondary school level. Failure rates at national examinations vary from 74 % for PSLCE to 62 % for JCE and to 44 % for MSCE. Poorer outcomes at secondary level are mainly blamed on CDSSs which are poorly resourced in almost all variables.

Keeping with the trend which starts in ECD, girls continue to remain behind boys in access and achievement making it difficult for the country to achieve equalisation of education opportunities and outcomes between the two sexes.

#### *5.6.5. Key challenges compromising progress in promoting gender parity and equality in primary and secondary school education*

The assessment noted that dire household poverty, negative traditional gender stereotypes, HIV and AIDS and some management and governance issues are the core challenges compromising progress in promoting gender parity and equalisation of opportunities in education. Poor management and governance decisions over the years have induced second level challenges like

1. Inadequate supply of qualified primary and secondary school teachers especially in CDSS worsened by shortage of female teachers to work as models for girls.
2. Inadequate water and sanitation facilities in most primary schools which scare away girls from regular participation thereby compromising their achievement
3. Partial implementation of the curriculum at secondary which in turn negatively affects results of public examinations especially in Science and technology where girls already remain behind
4. Low funding to secondary schools, especially CDSSs resulting in inadequate basic infrastructure and teaching and learning materials compromising availability of space and degree of attractiveness of learning environment for girls.
5. Long distances to schools especially CDSSs which create unfavourable gender environment.

#### *5.6.6. Recommendations*

(1) There is need for Government and its partners in education to invest more in innovative initiatives for promoting girls' participation and achievement in primary and secondary education like the Mother Groups (MGs), Girls Education Movements (GEMs) Role Modelling, social cash transfers to poor households and zone-based bursaries. The way MGs and GEMs have performed in primary schools so far, proves that they can do well at CDSS level as well. Devolving bursary disbursement to zone level will improve transparency and efficiency in the

coverage of all the needy girls as it will also promote level of monitoring participation and achievements.

(2) There is need for the MoEST to speed up the establishment of the national system for cohort-based assessment of learning achievement at primary school level with a focus on girls' achievement. The focus in this system should not be on cutting and pasting what other regional and global assessment institutions or programmes are doing but rather building teachers' capacity to effectively manage Learner Centred Education and Continuous Assessment methodologies. This needs to be informed by results of zone-based action research on the practical challenges experienced in the course of PCAR implementation. The Malawi National Assessment framework and system should have direct impact on teacher performance in implementing PCAR in a gender-sensitive and learner-centred approach. This requires that Technical Teams designing the assessment framework should include gender experts.

(3) The MoEST needs to promote the establishment and functionality of gender-sensitive national, divisional, district, zone-based subject teachers associations beginning with Mathematics, Languages and Science and Technology. Civil Society Organisations and the private sector need to be proactively encouraged to venture into and or support this initiative. Ministry of Youth and Sports Development should also be encouraged to adapt activities of such associations at its Youth Centres. This will go along way promoting learner achievement in core subjects and closing the gender gap in performance.

(4) The MoEST needs to facilitate the establishment of a primary school Science and Mathematics teacher's in-service training programme on lines of the secondary school SMASE programme. Focus here should also be on gender-sensitive methodologies. This will promote efficiency and effectiveness in the teaching of these subjects at an early stage and offer girls opportunity for better achievement.

(5) The MoEST needs to commission a consultancy on how best Malawi can benefit from the proliferating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to come up with a less expensive approach to make our CDSSs attractive to capable and youthful teachers. The consultancy needs to assess among other things use of solar energy for lighting, portable laboratories, use of libraries on line or DVDs for accessing information etc. This will go a long way in improving availability of competent teachers of both sexes, gender-sensitive teaching of Mathematics and Sciences and general availability of teaching and learning materials. It will be a viable complementary effort to the on-going but slow upgrading process of CDSSs.

(6) Using the devolution policy, Local Government Authorities need to be encouraged to adopt more responsibilities in supporting community-driven initiatives in improving the water and sanitation situation in primary and CDSSs and construction of additional CDSSs. Additional CDSSs will reduce walking distances by students especially the girl child thereby promoting regular attendance and better achievement. It will be a reasonable complementary effort to the on-going but slow construction of hostels.

**5.7. Goal 6: Improving all aspects of quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills**

*5.7.1. Education budget as percentage of total national budget and as a percentage of GDP// Primary or basic education budget as a percentage of the education budget*

The assessment has established that since 2000, the sector has been receiving third largest budgetary allocations behind agriculture and health sectors. However, this funding has not been proportional to the expansion of primary and secondary education which occurred following the FPE policy of 1994. Until 2008, the growth rate of Other Recurrent Transactions (ORT) funding lagged behind the growth rate of enrolment in primary and secondary. While primary education has been getting 44 % of the total recurrent education expenditure, pre-school, literacy, TEVET and teacher training shares have not exceeded 7 % in total. The increases in Government funding to education have in real terms remained negligible. Thus, despite an increase from 16 % in 2001 to 19 % in 2009, the public recurrent expenditure remained below the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) average of 20.8 % and below the recommended EFA-FTI benchmark of 20 %. It may not be surprising therefore that quite a number of resources are inadequately available thereby compromising progress towards achieving the 2015 quality targets in most of the goals.

*5.7.1.1. Recommendations*

Government needs to increase funding to the education sector in proportion to the sector's growth. Of particular importance in the context of findings in this report is the area of pre-schooling for basic quality and TEVET for alleviating youth unemployment.

*5.7.2. Degree of internal efficiency in the use of financial and other resources*

The assessment established that due to dropouts and repeaters, the Internal Efficiency Coefficient at primary level declined from 39 % to 35 % between 1999 and 2007. In 2007 alone, 65 % of public resources were used for repeated years or years of dropouts who never completed the cycle. Wastage of resources induced by pupil repetition rose from 20 % in 1999 to 29 % in 2007. Dropout induced 50 % waste of resources in 2009. Thus, low efficiency is currently causing the primary education system to spend 23 student years to produce one graduate instead of 8 student years. It sounds obvious that unless some extra-ordinary measures are taken, a primary system which is experiencing 50 % wastage of resources from one variable alone may not be in a position to offer quality outputs and outcomes in all aspects of education in the next five to six years.

*5.7.3. Teacher availability/qualification/gender and quality of learning outcomes*

As has been discussed under goal 2, the assessment has established that PTR worsened between 2000 and 2010 while PQTR had some temporary improvement between 2000 and 2004 but took a worsening trend from 2004 to 2010. Most rural schools have fewer teachers and hence have higher PTR and PQTR than urban schools. There are fewer female teachers than male ones and most of them are deployed in urban schools. This deployment trend of teachers compromise the quality of learning outcomes for rural learners just as it also compromises relevance of education especially for the girl child. The results of SACMEQ II & III

studies confirm this. In Reading girls were outperformed by boys in both 2000 and 2007 contrary to what is happening in other parts of the world where girls are reported to outperform boys. Similarly, Malawian girls were found not to be competing favourably with boys at Mathematics as is the case elsewhere in the world. Furthermore, urban pupils performed slightly better in Reading than rural pupils. Northern Education Division which according to EMIS data has the best PTR and PQTR, performed better in overall terms than the rest of the divisions in both Reading and Mathematics. The South West Division which is among the divisions with the worst PTR and PQTR performed consistently poorly.

#### *5.7.3.1. Recommendations*

(1) Government needs to improve the effectiveness in managing rural teacher allowances as a motivating factor for attracting and retaining teachers in rural schools. Since Malawi is predominantly rural a rural allowance is bound to be impractical as it will end up being every teacher's allowance. A compensation for teaching in isolated and difficult to reach or staff schools will be easy to manage as it is much easier to develop benchmarks for difficult to reach just as it is very easy to identify schools which are difficult to staff. Efforts should be made to avoid politicising such compensation. Choice of qualifying schools needs to be purely based on the benchmarks of difficult to reach and staff factors.

(2) In addition to the on-going pre-service teacher training programmes which include Open Distance Learning, Government needs to proactively encourage private sector participation in primary school teacher training in order to reach targeted figures of teachers by 2015 while at the same time address attrition.

#### *5.7.4. Availability of teaching and learning materials*

The assessment has established that inadequate availability of teaching and learning materials and resources is an issue which cuts across all basic education sub-sectors: pre-school, primary, secondary, out-of-school youth and adult literacy and continuing education. While there is effort to increase the provision of basic learning resources/materials and improve their relevance, the effort in most cases is being disproportional to the demand and inequitably distributed. It has been noted for instance that there has not been adequate improvement on the percentage of pupils having basic learning materials in primary school Standard 6 between 2000 and 2007. Similarly, the degree of coherence of books allocation at school level tends to rise up to standard 5, and decreases thereafter. General book allocation is consistently low with more than two thirds of the books not allocated according to school enrolment. Divisional disparity in book allocation persists with more consistent allocation process in the South Western division but a poor one in the Central Eastern and Shire Highlands divisions. Classrooms were by 2010 highly inadequately available. Malawi was still teaching 41 more pupils in a class than is locally required. Greater disparities in classroom availability persisted as only two of the six divisions (the Northern and Central East) had Pupil-Classroom ratios below the national. Yet Government capacity to construct new classrooms and rehabilitate old ones was not adequate enough to cope with the challenge. Unless Government and other education stakeholders find means of improving the bottlenecks to low and irregular supply of teaching and learning materials/resources and their limited relevance; Malawi may not be able to improve the quality of all aspects of education by 2015 as required by EFA Goal 6.

#### *5.7.4.1. Recommendations*

There is need to develop a new textbook development, procurement and distribution policy which should equitably address the needs and aspirations of all potential textbook developers and distributors while maintaining quality, relevance and timeliness. Local textbook publishers need to be given an opportunity to participate in the production and shelving the textbooks for open sale to all education stakeholders without any unnecessary restrictions. Procurement and distribution of textbooks needs to be devolved to District Assemblies and later to individual schools. Management of resources for classroom construction need to be devolved to District Assemblies but with a strong monitoring mechanism from Central Government. Government needs to encourage its partners involved in classroom construction including Civil Society Organisations and the private sector to be strictly guided by data on disparity of classroom availability in the country. Otherwise scarce resources will continue to be used in providing more classrooms where they may not be desperately needed.

#### *5.7.5. Degree of decentralisation of basic education services*

The assessment established that Malawi government has experimented with various forms of education decentralisation since 1933 which culminated in the most comprehensive Decentralisation Act and Policy of 1998. Following this, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology took almost another decade to begin proactive facilitation of the decentralisation process, after which the following key developments have at least taken place:

1. Placing appropriate staff in various positions at District Education Offices including the upgrading of the District Education Officer to District Education Manager;
2. Developing and disseminating devolution guidelines for use by education functionaries,
3. Developing a National Strategy for Community Participation in Primary School Management (NSCPPSM)
4. Supporting and promoting development of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and District Education Plans (DEPs). SIP development process actually involves and consults the rural masses and
5. Piloting direct financial support to schools, an initiative which is due up scaling to national level.

However, the above initiatives have been heavily compromised by lack of political will to allow fully fledged decentralisation. This is evidenced by Government failure to sustain some of the pertinent requirements of effective devolution as specified by both the policy and the Act. Government has since 2005 been reluctant to have Local Government Elections to provide for a central feature of the District Assembly Governance: elected Chairperson/Mayor and Ward Councillors. Government has also been at the centre of failure to timely finalise the review process of the 1962 Education Act to make it relevant to the new decentralisation policy and Act. As a result of the above and other factors, the level of decentralisation in the sector is too low to allow for effective and efficient delivery of services. Functional reviews of the civil service to align institutional roles and functions and facilitate the implementation of the national decentralisation policy have not yielded much change in the manner business is conducted. Ministries and departments are increasingly involved in implementation of activities of the devolved functions and programmes on the argument of inadequate capacities at the district level. There is still lack of capacity to deliver reform partly due to unfilled key posts and delays in adopting change management strategy in the education

sector. There is poor management of resources demonstrated by random deployment of teachers which is not based on school enrolment as noted above. In 2007 as many as 42 % of primary school teachers were randomly allocated. This was above SADC average of 31 %. And there is poor participation of School Committees and their communities in school management. Thus, just like in many other issues assessed above, it can be safely concluded that in decentralisation of the education system, there are quite impressive plans on paper which are failing to comprehensively translate into real action. As a result, efforts to improve quality of education outcomes through grassroots stakeholders' participation are compromised. Unless extra-ordinary effort is made in the remaining four years to have fully fledged devolution, Malawi will continue missing opportunities to promote all aspects of basic education quality and hence fail to fulfil goal six of EFA.

#### *5.7.5.1. Recommendations*

- (1) There is need for Government to facilitate complete provision of all the necessary institutional structures of decentralisation especially the elections of City Mayors, District Chairpersons and Ward Counsellors to strengthen the grassroots functionality of devolved educational functions. The presence of Ward Counsellors is bound to have a positive impact on the functionality of Village Development Committees, SMCs and GEMs.
- (2) There is also need for Government, in particular Ministry of Justice and the Legislature to speed up the review of the Education Act to ensure that it becomes in tandem with the current democratic environment.

#### *5.7.6. Availability and functionality of monitoring and evaluation systems including inspection and advisory services*

There are recent developments in the area of monitoring and evaluation and inspectorate structures. A new section of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) was set in 2010 within the Education Planning Department and the Methods and Advisory Section (EMAS) underwent a review. School Inspectors have moved from the Ministry Headquarters to the district level. Some satisfactory progress on school inspection has been reported where larger numbers of primary, secondary schools, technical and teacher colleges were inspected in 2010. However, reporting on details of the findings of the inspections and dissemination of the same reports to key stakeholders still remains a problem. The on-going reporting gaps are evidence that serious challenges still remain in the area of PM&E. Planning, budgeting and monitoring still remain highly centralised but without adequate human resources. Weak linkages between the different functional areas within the Ministry of Education and between the Ministry and central agencies such as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economic Planning and Development persist. There is also lack of an integrated approach for all sub-units with responsibility to plan including Human Resource planning. As a result, many targets for monitoring and evaluation are not set; data collected for indicators is often unreliable or reported differently from different sources. In some cases, when targets have been met, it is mostly because they were set very low and often not in tandem with the needs of the sector as has been exemplified by the construction targets for primary, TEVET and higher education. There is slow progress on development of national assessment tests to measure real learning outcomes and consequently the country relies on regional assessment like SACMEQ which may have their own weaknesses.



#### *5.7.6.1. Recommendations*

The recently established Monitoring and Evaluation Section at MoEST needs requisite human resource capacity to effectively play a linking and coordination role of all other monitoring and evaluation elements in the Ministry and the sector without necessarily being seen conflicting with those other elements. Funds allowing, there is need that similar units be established at division and district levels. Within that framework, there should be a clear line of hierarchy for reporting monitoring and evaluation information from within the Ministry and the sector at large. This will promote the synergy and order which has lacked in the past thereby providing conducive environment for effective reporting, organisation, recording, dissemination and use of monitoring and evaluation data.

#### *5.7.7. Availability of educational support programmes for vulnerable children*

The assessment has established that while there has been constant expansion of space and facilities to accommodate children with special needs education in the primary school system, Special Needs Education institutions are not adequately funded to run efficiently and effectively to produce quality learning outcomes. Similarly, while there has been consistent increase on orphans accessing primary school education from 2003 to 2010, only a small proportion (39.3%) is participating in education. This implies that there is limited support for all orphans to access primary school education, and as such chances of having UPE of good quality by 2015 may be slim.

#### *5.7.7.1. Recommendations*

There is need for Government to promote public private sector partnerships (PPP) in the support of vulnerable children to access primary education of good quality. On its own part Government needs to speed up the adoption to its own pay roll the support staff in all grant-aided Special Education Needs Institutions so as to subsidise proprietors' expenses on running these institutions. This is important as it will greatly improve the effectiveness of management of the institutions most of which are currently operating in dire financial stress.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This study assessed the progress Malawi has made towards achieving Education for All (EFA) goals between 2000 and 2011. The results show that EFA goals and their requirements have been adequately addressed in most of the macro and micro policy and programming documents of Malawi. In most of the concerned sub-sectors of basic education comprehensive plans of what is working and is not and how to progress to 2015 are available. What has lacked is the capacity to translate the plans into action. The major exception to this is youth education.

Malawi is far behind in achieving targets of ECD and out-of-school youth, it has achieved gender parity in lower primary, is on track to achieve the same in secondary schools if there is no disturbance to the current plans and efforts and has made commendable efforts in reducing adult illiteracy. Malawi may also be close to reaching UPE if serious attention is paid to reducing dropouts and repetitions. However, issues of quality and relevance of education and disparity between rural and urban locations, divisions, poor and rich and gender remain a big challenge and may continue to be so beyond 2015. Gender disparity is worst at teacher education level.

Two major factors seem to continue compromising speedy realisation of EFA. The first is limited political will to abandon ineffective service delivery approaches like in ECD and Adult literacy and continuing education. Limited political will is also manifested in unwillingness to fund key sub-sectors of education as adequately as has demonstrated to work at international level. The second factor is ineffective governance structures and practices of the departments responsible for delivery of basic education services. Governance weaknesses may continue to frustrate speedy education progress even after Malawi puts to use the Fast Track Initiative funds for which she qualified in 2010. Within governance there are issues of limited human resources, limited professional skills, inter-departmental service provision without requisite efficiency in coordination, weak coordination and networking systems, ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems, lack of credible information management systems, availability of unsystematic data on critical indicators, outdated and cumbersome procurement procedures and Government's reluctance to engage in comprehensive decentralisation. For the situation to improve quickly between 2011 and 2015 there is need for some sort of radical paradigm shift in the provision, governance and financing of basic education. Serious consideration of a fair share of basic education resources between pre-school and primary education would give hope for the future. Strong Public, Private Sector Partnerships (PPPs) for youth and adult education would allow Government to focus more on the foundational levels which should reduce the residual effect which is being perpetually pushed into the adult side of the education pendulum. A strong drive on comprehensive devolution of the services with adequate provision of de-central capacities would go a long way in strengthening management and governance.

In summary, the report on progress towards Education for All in Malawi, Zambia and Lesotho, puts on the table some preliminary recommendations for the future of EFA. The report highlights the critical need for a greater focus on quality and equity in the light of a large number of learners who are excluded from educational opportunities. Enhancing better

transitions in education should be another priority to enable learners to advance to higher levels of education and from school to work. Also highlighted is the importance of focusing on earlier stages of learning, notably ECCE as well as the first two years of primary school. The report calls for greater attention to earlier and more comprehensive assessments on learning achievements and character development; improving the quality of teachers, reforming secondary education and exploring alternative forms of education delivery.

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