

**CLASSROOM, SCHOOL AND HOME FACTORS
THAT NEGATIVELY AFFECT GIRLS EDUCATION
IN MALAWI**

A Report Submitted To UNICEF

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

The study being reported here was undertaken at the request of UNICEF to examine the impact of home, school and classrooms factors, which negatively impact on the education of girls in selected districts in Malawi. The selected districts were where there were UNICEF funded projects in Mangochi, Mchinji, Kasungu and Nkhata-bay. It was hoped that such a study would provide a better understanding of the nature of the problem of girls' education and enable the targeting of girls' needs in subsequent UNICEF programs.

When the newly democratically elected government of Malawi declared Free Primary Education (FPE) in 1994, UNICEF was one of the first organisations to come forward to assist the government with teaching/learning materials. UNICEF has also assisted government to implement; among other things; two projects- "keeping kids in school" and "closing the gender gap". The major objective of these community-based school projects was to improve the quality of primary education and ensure access to educational facilities within walking distance, especially for girls in close collaboration with communities.

This report is the result of a study that had attempted to find out what was happening in these areas. This introductory chapter of the report provides the objectives of the study and its significance to the promotion of girls' education in Malawi. In order to understand better the issues surrounding girls' education, the chapter also presents the structure of education in Malawi and the socio-economic context in which education is operating. These are intended to provide a basis for the better understanding of the results of the study.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study was aimed at shedding more light on the problems of girls' education in Malawi. Specifically, the study had the following five objectives:

- 1) To provide sound analysis on the various practices at home, classroom and school that have negative impact of girls' education and consequently make recommendations through which the negative practices can be addressed;

- 2) To reconstruct life histories of children, both girls and boys, in and out of school, within the context of their homes, schools and communities;
- 3) To mobilise the communities through interactive and participatory research methods, and in the process empower them to think through the problems related to girls' education and formulate solutions to solve these problems;
- 4) To generate action plan together with school personnel, school committees and parents at school level;
- 5) To ensure that findings of the study are disseminated to all the zones in the study districts.

1.3 Significance of the Study

With the introduction of FPE in 1994, the Malawi primary education system has expanded rapidly from approximately 1.9million pupils in 1993/94 to nearly 2.9 million pupils in the 1997 academic year. Despite these impressive enrolment gains, the primary education system continues to be beset by serious problems. The most pressing of these problems is low internal efficiency, manifested through high dropout and repetition rates and low school quality. The primary education system also suffers from high degrees of inequity particularly between socio-economic groups, geographical areas and administrative regions (Castrol-Leal 1996). Within each of these categories, gender inequalities are widespread.

Elsewhere, Chimombo (1999) demonstrated that the most disturbing feature of primary schools in Malawi is the thinning down of enrolment as pupils progress to upper standards. Chimombo observed that while the enrolment of boys and girls are almost the same in the first two standards, boys have a higher propensity to persist in school than girls and that where there are more schooling problems, it is the girls who are affected more by those problems. A pertinent question then becomes why should this be so despite the massive efforts to improve girls' education in Malawi?

The purpose of this research was to gather data and develop solutions to the problems of why girls are not attending as much as boys and why they are dropping out more than boys. The study employed a wide range of methods to tackle this problem. By attempting

to provide a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationship of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour (Goetz and Le Compte, 1984), the study went beyond the mere listing of causes for not going to school. The methods used took the problems into the hands of those who faced them for their solutions. To properly tackle the problem, the study was guided by the following research questions:

Why do some children, particularly girls, fail to enroll and/or drop out of primary schools?

What are the contextual and educational factors responsible for non-enrolment or dropout?

How far do the life histories and the participatory research approach help to explain and provide solutions to the problem being studied?

To what extent are the problems essentially different among the different areas of the country and what are the implications for policy and planning?

What intervention strategies and agents of change can we identify at school and community levels to solve the problems?

These were the questions, it was hoped, which would help in understanding the problems better. The study should help in providing better assessment of enrolment in the areas visited. It also helped in assessing through participatory learning and action, focus group discussion, participant observation and interviews how well the major contributing factors are understood by the key actors in the locality of the study. The use of PLA facilitated the development of solutions to peoples' problems (in the home, school and classrooms) from their own understanding of the problems. The results of the study will be widely disseminated to all the zones in the study districts and this should indeed go a long way towards improving the quality of education in Malawi.

1.4 Organisation and Structure of the Education System

The formal structure of education system in Malawi follows an 8-4-4 pattern of education comprising three levels. The primary level, which is an eight-year cycle, runs from standard one through to standard eight. This level is divided into three sections; infant section which comprises standards 1 and 2; junior section comprising standards three, four and five and senior section comprising standards six, seven and eight. Primary education has been free since the democratic change of 1994. The secondary level education lasts

four years and consists of two cycles- junior (forms one and two) and senior (forms three and four) with a national examination at the end of each cycle. The last level is the tertiary education, which also includes technical and vocational and teacher education. The number of years for this level varies depending on the course being pursued and ranges from one year to five years.

The Ministry of Education has administrative, financial and academic control over primary, secondary, tertiary and distance education as well as the training of primary school teachers. The system of education is organised in four tiers. At the top of the national structure, is the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MOESC) which is headed by the minister of education. While MOESC plans and administers the system as a whole, the responsibility of managing and administering the three levels above is assigned to separate Principal Secretaries (basic and higher education) and all these are under the overall responsibility of a Secretary for Education.

The second tier is the division administration. Under recent efforts to decentralise education services, previous regions (three) have been split into six and renamed divisions each headed by a division manager. The divisions are organised into 31 education districts, which include four urban districts. At the bottom of the tier, are the schools. According to the 1996 education statistics, there were 4018 primary schools, 96 formal secondary schools, 43 private secondary schools and 202 Malawi College of Distance Education centres (MCDEs), 6 TTCs, 4 technical colleges and two universities (including the new Mzuzu University) in the country. There are also two autonomous institutions, which greatly contribute to education in the country. The Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB), which oversees examinations and the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE), which has in recent years played a leading role in curriculum and material development and in-service teacher education.

1.5 Socio-Economic Context

Malawi is one of the highly populated countries in Africa. The high population growth is exerting extreme pressure on land, employment, education and health and hence on the most basic of human needs. Other areas which also face the same pressure from rapid population growth are urbanization, forestry, wood energy resources and the environment,

housing, transport and water and sanitation. With an estimated 1995 GNP per capita of US\$170 (UNDP 1997), the average Malawian lives at barely subsistence level. GOM /UNDP (1993) estimated rural poverty to be at 60% while urban poverty was reported to be a growing phenomenon affecting 65% of the urban population. Road infrastructure and public transportation are poor and the most common mode of travel for most Malawians is by foot.

Malawi's economy is primarily agriculture based. In 1994, agriculture accounted for 31% of GDP and 90% of export revenue (World Bank, 1995). Almost 70% of all agriculture produce come from smallholder farmers. Thus, while some of the poorest people in Malawi live and work as labourers in the estates, the vast majority of poor people are smallholders farmers. However, small-scale agriculture which sustained over 85% of the population stagnated throughout the 1980s. The estate sector was the main source of the economy growth during this period. Its share in the GDP increased steadily from 7% in 1980 to 9.25% in 1990, while there was a corresponding decline in the share of small-scale agriculture from 30.4% to 24.1% of GDP, (GOM, 1998) reflecting a major structural weakness of the economy.

Since 1980, a series of internal and external economic shocks have weakened economic growth and retarded Malawi's social progress. The internal problems included poor weather and poor agricultural pricing policies which favoured the estate sector against the smallholder farmers. The external factors included the increase of the price for oil in the late 1970s, which sharply raised foreign exchange expenditure for energy. The weakening of tobacco and tea prices in 1979, 1980 and 1981 slashed export earnings by nearly a third. A drought in 1981-82 reduced farm output sharply and forced the country to import supplies of its staple food, maize, for the first time in its history. The civil war in neighbouring Mozambique halted rail shipment of goods to the Indian Ocean port of Beira in 1984; which increased transport costs for imports and exports substantially. All these resulted in a rapid escalation of import prices, severe foreign exchange shortage and deteriorating terms of trade.

To address the above problems the government, among other things, agreed to implement Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). This was the 'pill' believed by the IMF and the World Bank to have the cure for the problems facing the economies of many developing

countries of that time. The thrust of SAP was to raise the economic growth, reduce government expenditure and stabilise the economy. SAPs were designed to alter the structure of the production and reduce the dependency of the economy on agriculture, while aiming at the efficient production in that sector. Several policy reforms were implemented including: periodic adjustment and liberalisation of producer prices, liberalisation of input marketing, deregulation of agriculture produce marketing activities, decontrol of prices on agricultural inputs and deregulation of smallholder burley tobacco production.

This was the context in which our study was undertaken. Schooling is influenced by several factors within the environment in which it takes place. It interacts with the needs of all systems from the macro-level to the school level. The input-throughput-output mechanisms in our schools all take place in this milieu.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on girls' education. There has been quite a considerable amount of literature on girls' education both in Malawi on the international scene. The chapter attempts to shade some light on what has been said on girls' education.

2.1.0 Demand for Education

One of the critical factors that can affect the demand for education is the socio-economic status of the clients of the education system (Stromquist 1989, Coclough & Lewin 1993, Lockheed et al 1994). Central in this point of view is the issue of poverty. Parents or guardians are at times unable to meet both the direct and indirect costs of schooling which results in their being forced to withdraw their wards from the school system. Heneveld (1996) argued that direct costs of schooling have actually become more pronounced with the advent of structural adjustment programmes, which among other things have advocated cost sharing policies which are tantamount to the shifting of education costs to parents. Thus for example, the introduction of school fees in Nigeria between 1982 and 1986 resulted in the decline in enrolment from 92% to 75%. It has to be stressed that even if school fees are abolished like in the case of Malawi and numerous other countries, the household is by no means relieved of education expenditures.

Schooling costs can be quite high and thus households at times have to make harsh decisions on who should benefit from the little that they have. The literature elsewhere has argued that in such instances households will tend to fall back on established cultural and social beliefs. Davison and Kanyuka (1990) observed that cultural factors in Malawi and gender-specific attitudes about the division of labour also shape the decisions about whether a child should or should not be in school. Anderson (1988) also argued that the disadvantage of girls' education is mediated through gender-based divisions of labour and social roles. Thus, there are in most societies, gender-based divisions of labour in both the production of goods and services and in household-based production, which affect access

to schooling. In most instances boys tend to be favoured. It is one of the aims of this study to establish the extent of this problem in Malawi.

It is worth noting that the decision to enrol and remain in school is also a function of the perceived benefits of schooling both by the parents and the pupils. A lot of the literature especially that influenced by the human capital school of thought have pointed out that education especially at the primary level has both social and private benefits. It has been argued that education especially basic education, also contributes to poverty reduction by increasing the productivity of the poor's labour, by reducing fertility and improving health, and by equipping people to participate fully in the economy and society (World Bank 1996:19). These benefits have also been espoused in a lot of literature (see Colclough 1996 etc). However, do individuals at the household level perceive similar net benefits as those making calculation of rate of returns to education? This seems not to be the case.

First, it seems evident that education at the household level is associated with formal employment and social mobility. This is, among other things, due to the fact that most families cannot sufficiently appraise social gains that are accrued as a result of education. Thus for example, efficiency gains in child care, health or even the conduct of daily life are much more difficult to anticipate than is the impact of schooling upon likely wage earnings in the market economy (Colclough with Lewin 1996: 36). In this vein, one of the potential attractions of primary education is to move to and acquire secondary education and thus raise the probability of getting formal employment. Primary education is therefore transitory and hence the perceived probability of gaining entry to secondary schooling has an increasingly important influence upon the decision to send children to primary school (Colclough 1996: 595)

The most obvious reason that may undermine enrolment and increase school dropout rate is the actual availability of schools themselves. Secondly the proximity of the schools to primary school-age children is also vital. Herz (1995) quoted a study by Robinson done in Egypt in 1987, which showed that the enrolment and the persistence of boys and girls were a function of distance to the available schools. Thus for instance the location of a school within 1 km of a community resulted in an enrolment rate of 94 percent for boys and 74 percent for girls; when the distance was increased to 2 km., boys enrolment fell only slightly to 90 percent, but girls enrolment plummeted to 64 percent.

Expanding on the effects of distance to persistence in school, Odaga and Heneveld (1995) isolated two issues: the first relates to the length of distance and energy, which the children have to expend to cover the distance, often on an empty stomach. The other relates to the concern and apprehension parents have for the sexual safety of their daughters (Odaga 1995: 30). The above argument clearly indicates that the problem of distance to schools will affect both boys and girls but girls are, however, more likely to be affected than boys.

2.2.0. Opportunity Cost

Another critical aspect that comes into play when making decisions about schooling is the opportunity cost of sending children to school. It has been argued in the literature that in most societies, child labour is indispensable to the survival of some households, and schooling represents a high opportunity cost to those sending children to school (Heneveld 1996: 17). One reason for this is that child labour has got immediate and visible financial rewards especially in the unskilled informal sector and hence nullifying the case for education (Odaga and Heneveld 1995, Tembon et al 1997). What has led to this scenario? In Tanzania for example it has been argued that the declines in real wages in the late 1970s and 1980 combined with the deterioration of social services and infrastructure led to families having to include their children in survival strategies (Peasgood et al 1997: 25). The labour referred to above can be for agriculture, domestic or for market tasks. The Tanzania case clearly demonstrates that the opportunity cost for child labour has risen. What may be of interest here is how this opportunity cost can be quantified or measured.

Child labour is a source of income in a family. Boys become cow and goat herders in rural areas where farmers keep cattle. Along the lakeshore absenteeism from class and eventually dropout is caused by demands for income generation through fishing. Children are used for agricultural labour since most farmers are females and depend heavily on their children for food and crop production. Likewise, Bryant (1990) noted that many children in Malawi began work at very early stages and were not enrolled in school at all. Girls spent their time child minding their siblings. Both boys and girls spend their time working on estate farms, or in family fields. Cultural factors in Malawi and gender-specific attitudes about the division of labour also shape the decisions about whether a child should or should not be in school Davison and Kanyuka (1990). There are differential parental expectations

of female and male children in the performance of household chores with the female children carrying the larger bulk of the duties. Further, they more often become housemaids in various houses while boys become houseboys later in life.

Others however have argued that the opportunity costs of girls' education are generally higher given the prevailing sexual divisions of labour that assigns women reproductive and domestic tasks (Stromquist 1989: 150). The assertion by Stromquist has also been supported by other recent studies. Tembon et al (1997) and Rose et al (1997) documented the tasks that were assigned to school pupils and reached the same finding that girls tended to have heavier workloads than boys do. These assertions however need to be reviewed - does this hold all the time? Does it vary between cultures or is there an urban/rural dichotomy? How much time do pupils spend doing these chores? Certainly these questions can be tackled and the most effective way would be to study their work patterns over a period of time. The importance of this cannot be overemphasised; if children are spending too much of their time offering their labour at the household, it is likely that their school attendance will be poor resulting in low achievement or high repetition and eventual dropping out of school.

Secondly, one can also argue that the opportunity cost of schooling is certainly going to rise with age. That is as both boys and girls get older the opportunity cost of attending school increases. This is inevitable; they both become more able to contribute towards the survival of their families through, among other things, their labour on the farms and even in other forms of income generating activities. This has implications on the age at which children are enrolled in school and late entry could therefore be closely linked with school dropout.

In dealing with both opportunity cost and the perceived net benefits of education it has to be stressed that cultural values and the attitudes of parents who are the principal decision-making unit at the household level play a major role. At the cultural level, there seems to be strong bias against female education. Most societies still look at females in terms of their reproductive roles and thus the importance of education is diminished. In case of parents, studies have shown that parental background especially their level of education significantly influences their decision to enrol and retain the child in the system. Other

studies have even gone further to argue that such parents also tend to be more aware of the benefits that accrue to the education of girls (Ross 1997).

2.3.0. School Environments

There are arguments that school environments are at times not conducive to effective learning and this may ultimately lead to underachievement which results in repetition; a precursor for dropout. Arguments against repetition basically stress that repetition has potentially harmful effects on students' self esteem and attitudes towards schooling and [this] increases the likelihood of dropping out of school (Cuadra 1992). Indeed some studies have actually shown that this relationship does exist

School environments also seem to affect the two sexes differently. Others have argued that the school environment especially the teachers' attitudes, behaviour and teaching practices have perhaps the most significant implications for female persistence and academic achievement (Odaga 1995: 31). This problem is rooted in societal beliefs which teachers bring into the classroom scenario. This can therefore be linked to the cultural beliefs (discussed earlier) which tend to look at females as having less ability than males and hence leads to the marginalisation of girls in the classroom and further de-motivates girls in their academic pursuits.

In tackling the issue of school environments it has also become popular to investigate the presence and conditions of such school facilities as toilets. This is especially in view of the potentially negative effects that the absence of such facilities may have on girls' persistence in schools (Tembon 1997 et al, Rose et al 1997, Herz 1995).

Given the arguments that underachievement contributes to school drop out, one would wish to question the way societies prepare their children for academic life. This is in view of the fact that there is evidence in the scholarship which suggests that the quality of experience and stimulation in the early years of life is a powerful determinant of subsequent educational performance (Lewin 1996: 8). In light of this institutions such as pre-school ought to be encouraged. This is because such institutions would stimulate intellectual development and hence make children more ready to enter grade one of the primary cycle and thus reduce the risks of repetition and eventual dropout (Ibid).

Kuthemba Mwale (1988) summarises school related factors to school dropout as irrelevant curriculum, teacher shortage, and lack of teaching and learning resources. These school related factors for school dropout in Malawi extend to overcrowding in classrooms as evidenced by a pupil/teacher ratio of 1:87 (Education Statistics 1992), distance to school and gender streaming by subject.

Malawi adopted an educational system, which selects and places pupils from primary schools to secondary schools. However Form one places are not adequate when compared with pupils successfully completing the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examinations (P.S.L.C.E.). In 1983/84 for example, Malawi had 56,728 passes in std 8 (representing a 71.1% pass rate) but only 10.7% obtained form one places, Ngwira (1986). The situation had not changed much by 1993; the pupils entering exams were 97,600 with 65,535 passes (67.1%) and a transition rate to form one of 11.55% (Education Statistics 1993).

Another set of factors that have been found to influence decisions about enrolment and persistence are those that relate to teaching and the organisation and structure of the school and its environment. Both male and female teachers have been found to have lower expectations of girls' academic ability. Boys are perceived to be intelligent, hardworking, motivated and co-operative whilst girls are perceived to be easy to control, passive, calm and submissive (Kainja and Mkandawire 1990). In addition, teaching practices have been observed to have negative consequences for girls' education. Boys are called more often than girls to answer questions in a class (Davison and Kanyuka 1990, Sey 1997). It can be noted that teachers' low expectation of girls reflect the views held by the wide society and a question of interest is whether community schools have helped to solve this problem.

A number of studies have also shown that parents are reluctant to send girls to school if the school environment is not safe and secure for girls. These studies have mentioned teachers proposing, impregnating and marrying girls and flirtations between girls and boys as constraints to girls' education. Another related factor is distance to school. A study conducted under GABLE SMC reported that long distance to school was frequently mentioned as the reason why girls were not enrolled in school (Burchfield and Kadzamira 1996). Lewis et al (1990) suggested that the time taken to walk to and from school might

be prohibitive in the case of girls, whose availability for school activities might be more constraining to girls than boys because of competing demands on girls' time at home. Another question worth asking is whether community schools have made any difference in this respect. This is what the proposed study here intends to explore.

2.4.0. Relevance of Education

Policy makers have been preoccupied in seeking ways of making the content of primary education more meaningful and the methods of delivery more cost-effective within the context of nation building and economic development. The attention has been on the role of education in preparing children to participate actively and productively in national building. The literature is full of such attempts at making education more relevant (Thompson 1981, Watson 1988). The most famous being Julius Nyerere's education for self-reliance which he advanced by emphasising the establishment of a system of education whose cost and impact on agriculture and attitudes towards farming were to be appropriate to the country's needs.

The literature is also full of many reasons as to why such attempts have not succeeded. Dodd's (1969) analysis of Nyerere's programme alluded to the non-examinability of the subjects and the desire of parents to see their children progress into the educational ladder. In their analysis of innovations in developing countries, Havelock and Huberman (1977) concluded that inadequate planning and failure to take into account the systems into which the innovation is being introduced was the most important dimension of these. In a similar vein, Watson (1988:155) observed:

the main reasons for failure would appear to be ... the fact that ruralising or vocationalising the curriculum fails to take into account of the economic realities of the society, the existing power structures, the attraction of the urban areas,... as well as lack of employment opportunities. The biggest cause of failure however would appear to be the inability to recognise the limitations of schooling and the costs involved.

Others have alluded to the fact that the lack of social demand for education is related to the fact that families and communities do not value or are ambivalent about formal education. Serpell (1993) pointed to the parental disillusionment with the present education systems and expressed support for more relevant curricula; more closely related to the daily lives of students and providing practical skills for students. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) contended that the problem is even more acute with girls where gender bias in subject choices

together with cultural factors limit girls' chances of progress. Serpell (1993) extended his argument with reference to limited chances of progression in schools as he observed :

People are reacting to a situation where they see nothing good coming out of school. Local schools are in the business of producing failures. And so they ask themselves; what is the benefit of sending children to school? (:12).

And in the same vein, Samoff (1998) observed that instead of considering the supply and demand side factor to schooling, studies of internal efficiency should proceed to consider the ways in which the education system pushes students out.

'There is little attention to the magnitude and consequence of various eviction rules and that while the apparent proximate cause for attrition may have to do with test results or family circumstances or distance to school, underlying context is one of discouragement.... By ignoring the systemic sources of attrition, this approach makes it difficult to conceive of, let alone discuss coherently the sorts of policies required to transform an exclusive education system into an inclusive system whose guiding principles is genuinely education for all (: 15).

It would appear then that there could be a paradox for Malawi. Despite its success in improving access to schooling, FPE in Malawi, widely heralded as part of the democratisation process, was likely to aggravate the crisis of the credibility of education. This is because in the absence of appropriate expansion in secondary education, the more people are herded into primary education, the smaller the percentage that are selected into the secondary level. This was what was happening in Zambia as Serpell (1993) observed, '*presently, it appears that schooling can only vindicate its deeper education objectives by articulating a concrete relevance to the socio-cultural and politico-economic opportunities existing within the communities it aspires to serve*' (:108). And Hoppers (1998:242) observed that in Africa, the inheritance of the Western system of schooling itself forms the key problem. This system is characterised as highly pyramidal and selective, designed to socialise children into Western values and orientations, and rewarding only a few with positions of status in the modern society. 'Rather than being organically linked with the African society, the system stands opposed to any profound inputs from it and instead laying the basis for a mental and spiritual subjugation of the African child to Western interests and their manifestations in the modern sector of society'. Is the education system in Malawi able to stimulate growth and move towards higher levels of system completion?

2.5.0. Government Policies

It has to be mentioned here that whilst most research have looked at the demand and supply factors that may influence school dropout, they have fallen short of interrogating the ways in which the education system itself pushes its students out of the system. The argument is that there is need to critically focus on the design of the education system itself, which in most countries is explicitly structured to screen and filter students out of the system (Samoff 1996: 256). The impact of such typical pyramid education structures needs to be questioned. Are such systems not sending negative messages to the masses? The main problem here is the common observation that was pointed out in our discussion of the net benefits of primary schooling above. Since primary schooling no longer reliably delivers access to regular paid employment, policies which reduce access [to secondary education] may well reduce demand for primary schooling (Coclough 1996: 595).

While efforts are being made to address problems of educational inequality, interventions for retention of pupils in the Malawian educational system have been geared towards females. Strategies which were employed to increase female attendance in school included free education for girls under the Girls Attainment in Basic Literacy and Education (GABLE). Since October, 1994, the democratic Government of Malawi has offered free primary education to children of both sexes. Some efforts to increase enrolment for girls in Malawi began more than twenty years ago. There has been a modest steady increase in girls' gross enrolment in primary school from 40.5% in 1977/78 to 44.3% in 1987/88 to 47% in 1993 (Ministry of Education Statistics, 1993).

Even though girls enter primary school in the same proportions as boys, dropout rates are higher among girls than boys particularly in standard 1 and in the upper standards of primary school (Ministry of Education and Culture and USAID/Malawi 1990). In this study, repetition rates were seen to be high and multiple repetition being more prevalent among boys, reducing the efficiency of the entire system. Girls would not benefit from multiple repetition since the onset of adolescence would put them at risk of early pregnancy, pressure of marriage and initiation practices precipitating exit before completion of the education cycle.

The Malawi Government strategy for increasing access at primary school level involved

vigorous awareness campaign soon after independence (in 1964) in order to persuade parents to send their children to school and increasing the provision of physical school facilities. The tremendous response of parents was demonstrated through their participation in the construction of schools on a self-help basis. Whatever the underlying reasons, 90% of the children who did not start school or dropped out of school gave direct or indirect fees as an excuse (Lamba and Gondwe, 1990). The Government therefore thought it logical to remove the excuse. A number of projects were launched: the GABLE project mentioned above began to offer free primary education to all non-repeating girls from standard 2 to standard 8. The Ministry of Education and Culture in 1992 started to offer free primary education to std 1 boys and girls and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also took a lead in offering bursaries to needy but deserving pupils through a grant of MK864,848. In this project girls were to benefit more than boys in the ratio 3:1. This increased the proportion of girls from 42% in 1983 to 47% in 1993.

2.6.0. Cultural Attitudes and Practices

Parental attitudes determine a child's chances of education. Parents control the initial decision of a child to attend school and often influence the nature of a child's participation in education. The Malawi Primary School Study (1989) found that boys received more parent-supplied exercise books than girls did. Support for children's schooling may influence persistence with school and achievement. Likewise Davison (1993) found that very few mothers in Malawi thought it was more important to educate girls than boys. The reason most cited was that girls got married or conceived during the school cycle resulting in wastage and loss of the educational investment. Yet Kenyan mothers preferred to invest in daughters' education because daughters were seen to be more responsible than sons by providing financial assistance to the family. None of the fathers in both Kenya and Malawi gave any preference to educating girls. The same observations about mothers were made by Thawe and Sagawa (1991).

Cultural factors have been seen to contribute considerably to school dropout for both females and males. Kapakasa (1992) in her study on determinants of girls participation and persistence in school, found that initiation ceremonies contributed significantly to school dropout as parents demonstrated willingness to pay more for initiation of their daughters than for regular schooling. Since initiation prepares young girls for married

life, the girls choose to put into practice what they learn at the initiation ceremonies rather than continue with schooling. Kainja and Mkandawire (1989) also contended that while girls as well as boys experience multiple repetition, girls are at a disadvantage because the onset of adolescence brings competing demands in school, at home and in the community with the risk of pregnancy and early marriage. However, the influence of initiation on schooling is countered by Hyde and Kadzamira (1994).

Culturally determined ways of defining women and men and their roles in a given society shape gender-specific opportunities and constraints. Thus, the existence of discriminatory attitudes towards the schooling of girls is informed by customs and culture. Mobility restrictions arise in many societies when girls reach puberty and this makes the effect to be more on girls retention than on entry (Lloyd and Blanc 1996). In some tribes in Malawi, as soon as a girl reaches puberty, she is taught the wisdom and knowledge of her society in order to maintain and develop it. These instructions are considered directly relevant to a girl, preparing her for life as a wife and mother in a village. 'Sometimes conflict arises between what is taught at home (in initiation ceremonies) and at school which may lead to parents opposing girls' continued attendance at school' (ODA, 1996:8). Indeed, girls' behaviour is often directly related to the many tribal and traditional taboos which dictate what and what not to do at the various stages of their development which may conflict with the demands of schooling.

And as Davison and Kanyuka (1990) observed, cultural factors in Malawi and gender-specific attitudes about the division of labour also shape the decisions about whether a child should or should not be in school. Anderson (1988) also argued that the disadvantage of girls' education is mediated through gender-based divisions of labour and social roles. Thus, there are in most societies, gender-based divisions of labour in both the production of goods and services and in household-based production which affect access to schooling. In addition, parents in Malawi, show a strong preference for educating sons than daughter (Kainja and Mkandawire 1990, Davison and Kanyuka 1990, Chimombo 1999). The most common reason given for preferring to educate sons was that girls often married or became pregnant and therefore failed to complete schooling (GABLE SMC 1997, Chimombo 1999).

Another factor which also acts together with attitude is religion. Religious privileges of access have often been restricted to certain classes and to males. And this pattern of

transmitting and gaining of religious knowledge and power have been influential in determining access and exclusion to formal public education. King (1987) found that religion, along with gender, social class and regional location were important determinants of schooling. With the efforts in recent years to change the attitudes about girls' education, one would have hoped that more girls enrol and persist in school to higher levels. This study explores the extent to which such efforts have resulted in improvements in the education of girls.

2.7.0 Socio-Economic Constraints

These are factors related to the direct and indirect costs of sending children to school as well as the overall poverty of the family and the employment prospects available. Before the elimination of school fees, lack of school fees was the most common reason for non-enrolment and dropout in a number of surveys (Maganga and Mkandawire 1988, Kadzombe 1988, Kainja and Mkandawire 1990, Davison and Kanyuka 1990). Recent government policies (under GABLE and FPE) however have greatly reduced the direct cost of schooling for the parents. Despite these efforts however, studies have shown that there are still other direct costs to schooling which are acting as constraints to enrolling and keeping children in school (Burchfield and Kadzamira 1996, Chimombo 1999 and Kadzamira et al. 1999 Chimombo and Chonzi 1999). These studies have identified inadequate clothing, and lack of money to buy school supplies as the reasons for non-enrolment and lack of participation of girls in classroom activities. This demonstrates the complexity of the issue at hand, in the context of pervasive poverty in rural Malawi. What other strategies are necessary in Malawi in order to have every child in Malawi enrolled and stay in school? This is one of the questions to be addressed in this study.

Many studies have found that the necessity for children to perform economically important tasks that support household survival limits participation, especially in rural and urban squatter groups (Anderson, 1988, Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991). For Malawi, Bryant (1990) noted that many children in Malawi began working at very early ages and were not enrolled in school at all. He noted that they spent their time child minding their siblings, working on the estate farms, in family fields and with herds or on the lake. Other studies have showed that girls on average spend more time on domestic chores than boys (Davison and Kanyuka 1990, Kaunda 1995, Sey 1997). Sey (1997) observed that the

division of labour at home meant that girls in rural areas had little time for studying at home.

There is also the question of the relevance of education. Women are under-represented in the formal economic sector. In 1990, for example, women constituted about 15% of paid employment (Lewis et al. 1990). The majority of the people in Malawi live in the rural areas and according to a study by Hyde and Kadzamira, (1994), there are few job opportunities available for girls. Parents in these areas tend to see little utility in educating their daughters. It would appear then that there could be a paradox, for Malawi in that despite its success in improving access to schooling, FPE in Malawi, widely heralded as part of the democratisation process, was likely to aggravate the crisis of the credibility of education. This is because in the absence of appropriate expansion in secondary education, the more people are herded into primary education, the smaller the percentage that is selected into the secondary level.

2.9.0 Gender

Colclough and Lewin (1993) showed that the ratio of female to male primary enrolments was significantly lower in countries with low GER than in other countries. The World Bank (1995) also noted that the gender gap in school enrolment is of course not just a matter of access. In addition to lack of school places for girls, in many countries, parents' demand for education of their daughters is low reflecting both cultural norms and girls' work in and around the home. 'Literate parents are more likely than illiterate ones to enrol their daughters in school, and the regions with the highest proportions of illiterate adults are therefore those with the widest gender gaps' (:44). Overcoming the gender gap will therefore require not only providing more school places for girls but also overcoming many parents' ignorance of the gains that will result from enrolling their female children.

In an attempt to conceptualise the problems associated with female education, Wamachiu and Njau (1995), noted that the survival or non-survival of girls in the education systems is influenced by a complex interplay between macro-level policy and micro-level practices, beliefs and attitudes. 'Together they determine whether households feel it profitable to educate their daughters; whether sending girls to school is a wise or poor investment for the future' (:2). Anderson (1988) argued along similar lines and said that prospects for life long economic activity affects girls and boys differently. He observed

that since education is often thought to be most useful in the formal sector and because girls/women often have less access to this sector than boys/men, parents decide that schooling is not relevant for the economic roles of their female children. In addition to low expectations about future employment, Lockheed and Jamison (1979) also argued that in many cultures parents decide that education is not worthwhile for their daughters who will move into their husbands' families when they marry and that gains in productivity or income due to education will accrue to the families of their sons-in-law rather than to them.

In India, the low value attached to female education is said to be linked with some rooted features of gender relations. Dreze and Saran (1994) noted that gender division of labour combined with patrilineal property rights, the norms of patrilocal residence and village exogamy tend to reduce the perceived benefits of female education. It seems that culture defines the economic worth of educating girls vis-à-vis boys. As Summers (1992) summed it up, under-investment in girls is an economic problem that results from a vicious cycle caused by distorted incentives. The speculation that girls will grow to do things other than serve their husbands, reduces the parents' motivation to invest in their daughters as human capital. 'Uneducated women have few alternatives and so the expectation becomes self-fulfilling, trapping women in a continuous cycle of neglect' (:1). Colclough (1994) however urged that there is little systematic evidence to show that private returns to education of girls are, in general, lower than those for boys.

What goes on in the classroom also affects female access to education. Teaching methods, curriculum content, classroom and other facilities are all found to affect female entry and retention (Anderson 1988:12). The sex of the teacher is even more important. Anderson said that it affects teacher-pupil interaction with female teachers acting as role models and thereby providing more encouragement to girls than male teachers. Other in-school effects on female access include tracking by sex into certain courses. Finn et al. (1980) observed that within a classroom, socio-cultural expectations are transmitted through modelling of sex-appropriate behaviour, teacher responses to their pupils and the academic support they provide them. They argued that even when course content appears the same for boys and girls, there are subtle and important differences in curricula exposure by gender with girls actually being taught to prepare themselves for marriage and motherhood. Little research has been done on classroom interactions in Malawi, but Malewezi (1990), in her study on why girls fail to continue with their education,

observed that teachers treated girls differently from boys both in terms of academic expectations and gender-specific forms of discipline (:2). Although Davison and Kanyuka (1990) tried to examine this, their conclusions were not very clear on this issue.

Gender differences are particularly acute when desegregated by urban-rural residence. In a study on the determinants of inequality in participation in school in Java, Pearse (1985) found that the urban-rural distinction, parental income, sex differences and demographic characteristics of the households were related to levels of participation. Further, Anderson (1988) observed that female attendance at school is more sensitive to distance, and the number of under five children in the household than male attendance. This was also supported by Ashby (1985) who found that the presence of other siblings influence who is and who is not sent to school and for girls it was particularly important whether or not they had brothers. However, Lloyd and Blanc (1996) found no supporting evidence that family support systems operate systematically to the benefits of boys relative to girls. 'Instead, girls are more slightly favoured in female headed households, whereas boys are slightly better off in high income households' (:267). This study therefore explores whether decisions made on who goes and who does not go to school have such differential effects by sex.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.0 Introduction

In order to address the questions posed in this study a number of methods both qualitative and quantitative were used. The qualitative methods were meant to establish what the communities believed and perceived as the underlying reasons for the poor performance and limited participation of girls in their localities. The use of a number of approaches enabled the verification and triangulation of ideas generally held by the rural people regarding education of girls in particular. Quantitative methods allowed the study to establish the extent of the problems and how wide they manifested themselves in specific circumstances. To capture fine points in this complex problem, a diverse sample of respondents and participants from a wide spectrum of the society was used. The major reason for doing so was to enable the study to target particular groups of people in subsequent mobilisation campaigns aimed at addressing issues that have negative impact on girls' performance and participation in education especially in the rural areas.

3.1.0 Sample of schools and communities

The study used UNICEF supported schools in Mangochi, Mchinji, Kasungu and Nkhata-Bay Districts. Schools in Dedza were used for piloting. The communities around the schools, identified as being the catchment area of the schools, participated in the study.

The selection of the schools was convenient and purposeful. Firstly, the schools had to be accessible and secondly, they would present a diverse setting. Therefore the sample consisted of 4 schools in Mangochi and 2 schools in each of the remaining 3 districts. They represented 3 different main cultures namely Yao, Chewa and Tonga. They also represented two kinds of locations namely a lakeshore setting and an inland setting. Table 1 below shows the sample schools' location.

Table 1: Schools and Location

District	Schools	Culture	Location	Community
Mangochi	Chipereka Sungusya Mdala- Makumba Taliya	Yao	Lakeshore	T/A Chowe
Mchinji	Chapakama Mbachundu	Chewa	Inland	Dambe Zulu
Kasungu	Champhemvu Tchesa	Chewa	Inland	Mwase Wimbe
Nkhata-Bay	Chivumu Chapeta	Tonga	Lakeshore	Mankhambira Fukamapiri

3.2.0 Instruments.

The following instruments were used in the study

1. Household questionnaire
2. School Information questionnaire
3. Focus group discussions
4. Classroom observation schedule
5. Seasonal calendar
6. Problem preference ranking
7. Problem solution matrix
8. Life histories
9. Home observation schedule

The Household questionnaire: This was designed to capture the socio-economic status of households in particular communities. It elicited the economic and social activities as they relate to the education of the girl child. These included household composition and socio-economic status, schooling histories work distribution, attitudes towards schooling and parental aspirations. (See appendix i)

The School Information Questionnaire: This questionnaire was designed to provide information about the schools' profile. It revealed school and classroom aspects including enrolments, teacher availability, equipment, pass rates, dropout rates and support systems (see appendix ii). As observed above, the communities involved were spread in seven traditional authorities which had specific cultural practices and leanings.

Focus Group Discussion Guideline: These guidelines provided a means of facilitating discussions with specific groups of participants on the education of girls. The focus was on home and school factors that impacted negatively on girls' education. It dwelt on

social, cultural and economic activities which were thought to affect the schooling of girls (see appendix iii).

Classroom Observation Schedule: The observation schedule was designed to capture classroom activities which included interaction patterns and tasks distributed to children while learning. It enabled the tracking of the exchange that took place between teachers and children as well as between the children themselves (see appendix iv).

Seasonal Calendar: This calendar showed the main activities problems and opportunities that occur throughout the annual cycle. It helped to identify the months of greatest difficulty and food availability, gender differentiated work loads, income and expenditure patterns and social activities as they relate to girls education (see appendix v).

Problem Preference Ranking: Individual communities were asked to indicate the main problems for boys and girls and rank them according to priority. This also enabled the comparison of priorities for different groups of people in the communities (see appendix vi).

Problem Solution Matrix: This was used to confirm the factors that affect the teaching and learning process and discuss ways to respond to the problems. This interactive and participatory approach empowered the community to think through the problems related to girls' education and formulate solutions (see appendix vii).

Life Histories: Life histories helped to define the schooling histories of children in the communities. They provided individual children's lives in relation to immediate social environment and the problems that severely affected their schooling (see appendix viii).

Home Observation Schedule: This information was collected through participant observation. The strategies involved were observing, interviewing and participating. From such a combination of strategies the study captured the environment at home as it relates to school. It captured the learning environment, school attendance, workloads and daily activities of school children (see appendix ix).

These interactive and participatory research instruments provided a way of sensitising and mobilising communities to fathom their socio-cultural-economic status and relate them to the problems of girls' education. In this way mobilising communities to solve

the identified problems was facilitated since the communities themselves generated both the problems and the solutions. One major task which now remains is to instil and sustain the will power to effect the suggested changes.

3.3.0 Procedure

The research team consisted of 6 researchers, 2 supervisors, 3 participant observation supervisors, 10 research assistants and 10 local research assistants. While the original idea was to use the local assistants only for the home observations, we decided to make use of GABLE trained personnel for these observations in order to increase the reliability of the data from the observations.

3.3.1 Site Identification

First the researchers visited the schools to identify the sites. During this visit the head teachers, school committees and village headmen were contacted to alert them of the impending research activities. In addition, the research team also identified suitable local researchers who were to participate in home observation.

3.3.2 Training

After interviews 10 research assistants, 2 supervisors and 3 participant observation supervisors were trained in the use of the various instruments for one week. Supervisors were trained to check the work of research assistants and how to facilitate focus group discussions. Research assistants were trained to administer questionnaires and to facilitate the participatory learning approach methods. Participant observation supervisors were shown how to use the home observation sheet and how to conduct interviews. Most important of all the assistants and supervisors were shown how to report their work. Research ethics were also emphasised in the training especially in dealing with rural communities.

3.3.3 Piloting

A pilot phase was started immediately after training and was carried out in two UNICEF assisted schools in Dedza District. The purpose was to orientate the research assistants and supervisors on the use of the instruments and the methods which were introduced to them. The second purpose was to allow the researchers to ascertain the validity and reliability of the instruments. Questions and methods which seemed to be vague and

difficult to administer were noted and refined. In addition, the logistics of the whole data collection exercise were reviewed and a better procedure was adopted.

3.3.4 Main data collection

The research team was divided into two groups each consisting of 3 researchers, 1 supervisor, 1 participatory observation supervisor, and 5 research assistants. For the first three days of the main data collection, the two teams visited Kasungu District with one team visiting Champhemvu school and the other visiting Tchesa school. The idea was for the two teams to compare experiences in data collection so that a common ground of operation could be established. Then the teams split, one worked in Mangochi schools while the other worked in Mchinji and Nkhata Bay schools.

The data collection lasted three days per site. On the first day at a school the team leader worked with the head teacher and the village headmen around the school to ask for permission to work in the area and to identify groups of participants and households. At the school level the leader selected two classes to be observed preferably Mathematics, English or Chichewa. Two separate groups of boys and girls for focus group discussions were also selected. Attempt was made to make sure that there were pupils of different types in the groups to ensure balanced discussions and relevant contributions. The teachers also provided information on girls with interesting schooling histories who were to be interviewed for life histories.

Supervisors used class attendance registers to identify and select households which were to be visited. In all there were 120 households per site.

At the community level the researchers mobilised different groups of men and women to participate in focus group discussions, problem preference ranking, and seasonal calendar. There were three groups of men and three groups of women at every research site.

In the classroom the three researchers observed the teaching and learning patterns using the classroom observation sheet. Each individual was assigned a particular task on the instrument. In all, the two teams observed 20 classes.

In the case of home observations, the participant observation supervisor worked at one household with the local assistant for three days. The idea behind this was to show the

local assistant how to conduct and report what was observed in the home which was related to the education of girls. After the three days, the local assistant was left to observe four other households. In all there were five household observations from each site over a period of one month. The researchers went back to the areas to collect the observation schedules after the one month period.

On the third day at each site key stakeholders in the village were assembled for a wrap-up meeting. The participants included village headmen, school committee members, teachers and head teachers and other change agents in the community. This meeting provided a forum for using the problem solution matrix. This sensitised the key informers and change agents to the need to mobilise the community in efforts to mitigate the elements which negatively affect girls' education. Table 2 below gives a summary of the instruments and the targeted participants.

Table 2: Instruments and Participants

Approach	Boys	Girls	Men	Women	Change Agents	Teachers	house holds
Questionnaire							✓
FGD	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Seasonal calendar			✓	✓			
Problem ranking			✓	✓			
Household observation							✓
Life histories		✓					
Problem solution					✓		
Total	1	2	3	3	1	2	2

3.3.5 Data Analysis

As pointed out earlier both qualitative and quantitative data were used in this analysis to provide findings which are, on the one hand, statistically reliable and on the other, which allowed a depth of interpretation that would not be possible from the use of one method (Laurie in Branmen, 1992). A descriptive analysis of the quantitative data in the form of simple frequencies and percentages, mathematical computations of enrolment figures and other indicators were employed. Cross-tabulations were also used where necessary. Graphical presentations also helped in the analysis. Qualitative data was treated thematically to represent important overarching issues.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESEARCH STUDY SITES

4.0 Introduction

This chapter briefly describes the schools and the locations in which the study was undertaken and raises the major issues emerging from them. This is intended to give an overview of the characteristics of the schools and the communities in which the schools are located.

4.1.0 Overview:

Practically all the 10 sample schools are located in rural settings. However, townships or trading centres are not too far away and there is considerable interaction between the communities around the schools and semi-urban communities. There are two distinct settings in the sample. Schools in Mangochi and Nkhata Bay are along the lakeshore and the activities of the communities are greatly influenced by the fishing industry as well as subsistence farming on the main land. Schools in Kasungu and Mchinji are influenced mainly by the farming estates prevalent in these areas. Culturally there are three distinct differences. In Mangochi the schools are situated in a predominantly Yao milieu, mostly of Islamic leanings. Schools in Nkhata Bay on the other hand are in Tonga land while those in Mchinji and Kasungu are in Chewa culture with Christian leanings. These settings are important in trying to discern and tease out those factors that impinge upon girls' education. The complexity of the problems in the schooling of girls requires that the analysis be done in its context and as such considerable caution should be exercised in trying to extrapolate the findings to the wider community.

4.2.0 SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS

This section looks at the various school characteristics. These include the siting, school features, school facilities and teachers.

4.2.1 Siting

In general all the schools are accessible by road during the dry season if the road work system is maintained. Except in Kasungu, it is probable that reaching the schools in the rainy season is problematic in the other areas considering the poor state of bridges and

the rugged terrain where most schools are located. Either the schools are in low lying sites which are most likely water logged during the wet season or are on high ground where water filled gullies and flooding make them difficult to access. It would seem then that the location of a school is also crucial in attracting girls where natural barriers to access exist. For example, Chivumu School in Nkhatabay is along the lake in the sand and the school grounds are inundated with water during the rainy season and as a result classes are abandoned during that period. Mdala-Makumba School in Mangochi is located along a river which overflows on to the school grounds and this necessitates the cancellation of classes over the period. Other schools suffer from similar problems arising from poor siting.

During the focus group discussions, several people did mention to us about the need for other social services in these areas such as clinics, markets and postal services. They argued that a school does not operate in isolation. It requires the presence of these other institutions. They observed that it made a difference when a pupil got sick and there was a clinic nearby where they could be attended to and when there was none. Indeed it was observed that the absence of these and many more were causing a lot of absenteeism among pupils especially girls since they are the ones to go to the grinding mill and take care of siblings for example.

4.2.2 School features

There are two contrasting features of schools in the sample. Schools in Mangochi are weather-beaten though they are less than 10 years old. They are one-block affairs with two classrooms only and no offices or storerooms yet the schools have classes up to Std. 4 or 5. At the time of the visit two schools in the district had cracked walls and blown-off roofs to the extent that classes had to be conducted out doors to prevent any accidents. It was also noteworthy that no effort had been shown by the communities to provide shelter or makeshift structures to ward off the harsh weather in this district.

In contrast, schools in Nkhata Bay, Kasungu and Mchinji are relatively of solid construction but seemed to need perpetual repair work mostly because of lack of good workmanship or lack of adequate construction materials. In Kasungu a new school was still under construction and the second one still needed finishing touches. At Chapeta the

floor was cracked and needed re-flooring and the school was the only one in the sample with three classroom blocks and which did not seem to have many problems with classrooms except for the bad flooring. The other two blocks were provided by MASAF. Makeshift sheds at Chivumu and Tchesa were always in need of repair to adequately shelter pupils from the harsh weather. Another important point to note on the design of the school blocks was that all except one had no verandas or corridors. They were simply blocks which provided rooms which were then used as classrooms. No other additions were provided to give shelter or resting places for the children. In the absence of verandas the children must brave the weather as it comes.

It is then important to document the weather in these locations because the majority of the children learn outdoors. In Mangochi the schools are located along the eastern lakeshore. This area experiences extremely high temperatures and scorching sunshine during the day. From early morning to mid-morning there is a cold strong wind called Mvuma which raises and blows gusts of dust. As it does this it sprays highly irritating plant prickles. Learning under such conditions is not possible, the portable blackboards get blown away, notebooks are afloat and women and girls need to hold on to their dresses lest the wind embarrasses them. There are very few trees or man made shelters to offer a conducive learning environment in such weather. As a result, classes start late and the chaos that ensues negatively affects the learning and teaching.

At Chivumu the hot sun renders the sand around the school too hot to step on and in the rainy season the place is flooded. The number of effective days of learning are drastically reduced as pupils tend to excuse themselves due to the harsh weather. At Tchesa gusty winds wreck havoc amongst outdoors classes just like in Mangochi. The area at Chapakama is also very windy and the wind frequently disturbed classes.

It has been observed that all schools had extended the standards beyond the two standards as per the UNICEF design. However one thing for sure is that UNICEF should be commended for locating schools where they were really needed. The distance to school had been reduced in these areas. But the fact that all the areas had extended the standards give as the message that these communities don't like complete schools. And as discussed later, there are negative effects associated with the provision of these incomplete schools.

What seems to emerge here is that school siting was not done with other factors taken into account. In addition to this, very little is done to ease the effects of weather although some effort is displayed in some communities. Key points in this section are:-

- There are more standards than classrooms
- Harsh weather in the school sites disturbs the smooth running of schools
- There are no adequate shelters and not enough trees around most of the schools to provide temporary learning zones
- Classroom blocks of poor workmanship are a hazard
- Classroom blocks have no verandas/corridors for resting during break periods
- School siting left a lot to be desired

4.2.3 School facilities:

Facilities at the schools are divided into two categories. The first category consists of classroom facilities and the second category are school wide facilities. It has been shown in many studies that classroom effectiveness is increased significantly with increased inputs such as books, desks and learning and teaching aids (Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda 1987). The provision of conducive school environments is also crucial in attracting children who would otherwise choose more homely atmospheres elsewhere other than the school.

The classrooms of the study schools seemed to vary from poorly resourced schools to adequately resourced schools. Schools which have poor security arrangement seemed to have poor and sparse classroom resources. For example at Chipereka in Mangochi the school has no office and no secure doors to the classrooms. As a result the classrooms are mere rooms with a blackboard but nothing else. Teachers have to carry whatever material they need to and from their homes. All the 60 desks supplied are kept in people's homes because they would not be safe at the school. The classrooms are bare and there is nothing to attract a pupil. In contrast, in the same area, Sungusya school has secure doors and the two classrooms are inundated with desks, cartons of books, and a multitude of teaching aids displayed in strategic points. In fact there are more materials available than the number of pupils available at Sungusya. On the whole the school has adequate books, desks and other teaching aids for standards 1 to 4. On the other hand, there were also other schools which were poorly resourced. For example, Mbachundu school had only two

teachers tables and two teachers' chairs, 3 Chichewa pupils' books for Std 2 one mathematics pupils' book for Std 2. At Champmhemvu there are only 60 desks but no books from Std 1 to Std 4. Table 3 below shows the distinction between the schools.

Table 3: Classroom facilities in schools.

School	Desks	Table	Chair	Chichewa books	Maths Books	English books	G/Studies books
Mbachundu	30	1	1	134	142	130	0
Sungusya	30	1	1	341	878	174	83
Champmhemvu	30	1	1	0	0	30	0
Chipereka	60	2	3	291	358	446	145
Chapakama	57	2	2	35	41	35	0
Taliya	60	3	3	341	356	485	268
Chivumu	60	2	2	199	258	204	123
Mdala Makumba	60	3	3	603	619	589	277
Chapeta	90	4	4	161	195	167	86

The poorly resourced schools are in such a plight either because the supply was not made available or because there isn't enough security at the school to warrant such a risk. In terms of school facilities, the overall picture is that of poor resourcing. Two of the schools did not have a water source nearby.

It was also noted that sport fields if identifiable were rugged, uneven and of dubious dimensions. At Chapeta and Sungusya unsuccessful attempts were made to carve-out sports fields in rolling and rugged terrain. Even under such circumstances footballs and netball were not always available. At Chivumu, the so called playgrounds were so dusty that play is cumbersome.

One feature which was glaringly absent was teachers' houses. In all the ten schools, there were only three permanent houses for head teachers. All schools in Mangochi did not have habitable teachers' houses. All the available houses were of the temporary type. Most teachers were living in rented ramshackle dwellings in the surrounding villages and in some cases quite a distance from the schools. Table 4 below shows the overall school facilities in the ten schools.

Table 4: School Facilities in the 10 schools

Item	Total Number
Classroom blocks	12
Classrooms	24
Staff rooms	5
Store rooms	1
Permanent teachers' houses	3
Bore holes/tap	7
Staff toilets	9
Boys' toilets	21
Girls' toilets	25

The key issues noted on school facilities are:-

- Almost all schools have only two classrooms even when there are more than two standards
- Classroom materials are available in most schools. A few are in dire need.
- Security arrangements are seen as crucial in the storage of classroom facilities.
- Some schools have no water nearby.
- Appropriate sports fields and equipment are either not available or not in good condition.
- Schools do not have permanent teachers' houses nearby. Most teachers are living in ramshackle huts far from the schools.

4.2.4 Teachers:

In the 10 sample schools there is a diverse range of teacher availability and qualifications. Table 5 shows the distribution of teachers and their qualification.

Table 5: Teacher distribution in the sample schools

School	No. of males	No. of Females	No. of QT *	No. of UQT**	No. of Stds	No. of Steams
Chivumu	7	1	2	6	7	7
Chapeta	5	2	3	4	7	7
Champhemvu	6	1	1	6	5	5
Tchesa	3	3	4	2	6	6
Mbachundu	8	1	4	5	4	4
Chapakama	3	2	2	3	6	6
Mdala	2	1	1	2	5	5
Sungusya	2	4	2	4	4	6
Chipereka	2	2	1	3	4	4
Taliya	3	0	0	3	5	5
Total (%)	41 (70.7%)	17(29%)	20 (34.5%)	38 (65.5%)	53	55

*QT is qualified teacher

**UQT is unqualified teacher

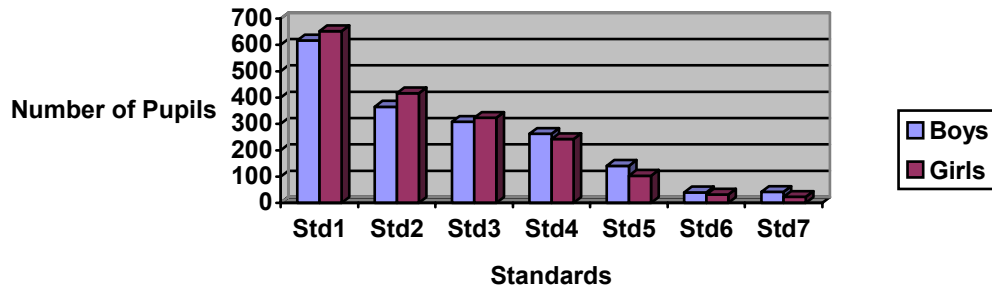
As can be seen from the table above the schools offer classes up to as high as Std 7. The teachers are predominantly male (70.7%) and predominantly unqualified (65.5%). The cases of Taliya, Mdala-Makumba and Chapakama show that there are more classes to be taught than the number of teachers. There are other cases too where there are more teachers than the total number of streams; Mbachundu for example had nine teachers with only four standards. These configurations also show that there are differences in teacher allocation across the schools and across the Standards which have their own impact on learning as well as on how girls are receptive to the various classroom and school settings. The major issues arising in this section are:-

- Most teachers in schools are not trained
- Most teachers are male
- Schools are understaffed – there is no coherent staffing in schools

4.2.5 Enrolment:

Overall enrolment figures for the schools indicate high enrolment in standard 1, which dramatically decrease even as early as Standard 2. Figure 4.1 shows this trend.

Figure 4.1 Enrolment in Schools by Sex and Standard



This figure echoes what previous analyses (Kadzamira et al 1999, Chimombo 1999 and Chimombo and Chonzi 200,) have shown that girls seem to register less persistence in school than boys. While both boys and girls drop in large numbers between standards 1 and 4, girls drop more than boys after standard 4. With a mean school starting age of almost 13.9 years, girls have reached marrying ages by the time that reach standard 4. However such a trend should not mask the prevalence of boys dropping out more than girls in some locations and more girls than boys dropping out in other locations as evidenced from Table 6 below.

Table 6: Schools with low Participation of Boys or Girls

School	Std	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chipereka	Boys	75	24	48	18			
	Girls	90	47	35	30			
Chapeta	Boys	34	26	24	28	12	15	21
	Girls	40	15	11	16	12	15	13
Chivumu	Boys	40	35	40	37	30	17	20
	Girls	45	28	38	39	34	13	10
Mbachundu	Boys	76	52	49	49			
	Girls	84	68	63	55			
Chapakama	Boys	101	74	50	51	46	8	
	Girls	120	91	62	42	35	4	
Mdala Makumba	Boys	53	29	18	14	11		
	Girls	61	49	26	16	9		
Taliya	Boys	69	32	25	17	17		
	Girls	56	34	37	13	13		

These contrasting trends in different locations provide opportunity to fathom the real underlying factors that negatively affect access and participation of girls in early primary school. Emerging issues in this section are:-

- Schools are offering more classes than originally planned
- Enrolments drop drastically as early as Std 2

- In some schools boys' participation is lower than that of girls
- In other schools girls' participation is lower than that of boys.

4.2.6 Absenteeism:

Across all the sites it was observed that absenteeism was quite a problem reaching peak levels in locations where initiation ceremonies were in session. As shown in Table 7 below, attendance for boys ranged from 50% to 90% across the standards while the attendance for girls ranged from 59% to 81% in the same standards.

Table 7: Attendance in the schools

Std	Boys Enrolled	Present	%	Girls Enrolled	Present	%
1	616	425	69	652	446	68
2	365	285	78	416	274	66
3	308	194	63	323	240	74
4	262	190	73	247	189	77
5	141	79	56	103	61	59
6	40	36	90	32	26	81
7	42	35	83	23	18	78

These figures indicate the serious classroom situations where large proportions of pupils continually miss their classes. In this section the highlight is that:

- Daily attendance is low in comparison to enrolment
- Girls tend to absent themselves from than boys

4.2.7 Performance:

An indication of the performance of boys and girls was given by the end of previous terms results. As shown in Table 8 in almost all standards, less than half the pupils passed in mathematics and English tests. This points to a serious problem in the teaching as well the learning that goes on in the schools.

Table 8: Passes in English and mathematics in 2nd. Term

Std	No. of Boys and % pass			No. of Girls and % pass		
	Sat	Eng. (%)	Maths(%)	Sat	Eng. (%)	Maths (%)
1	352	135 (38)	122 (35)	388	112 (29)	110 (28)
2	246	105 (42)	113 (46)	208	71 (34)	71 (34)
3	198	90 (45)	65 (33)	219	72 (33)	66 (30)
4	193	51 (26)	57 (30)	164	36 (22)	42 (26)
5	83	33 (39)	32 (39)	59	22 (37)	16 (19)
6	42	24 (57)	18 (43)	33	13 (39)	9 (27)
7	39	16 (41)	9 (23)	16	11 (69)	6 (38)

Table 8 above indicates that even after two terms of teaching and learning the schools still do not register acceptable pass rates. This indeed underscores the need to verify the causes of such a calamity considering that there is a massive campaign on the political platform to interest parents, teachers and children in raising education standards. These results indicate that although we may be complaisant that the FPE policy had succeeded in drawing many children into schools, many of these children are not receiving adequate education. As it will be noted in one of the life histories, many of them drop out of school with little appreciation of the education acquired. The key issues in this section are:-

- Pass rates in key subjects are very low mostly less than 50%
- What are the factors that are leading to this state of affairs?

In sum it is apparent that there are numerous school and classroom factors which could account for the poor attendance and low pass rates in the sample schools. However the setting of the schools in diverse socio-cultural backgrounds provided an opportunity to isolate the roots of the problems that have hitherto been alluded to in previous studies. This background allows the interrogation of multiple scenarios which give rise to the same symptoms and therefore makes it possible to pinpoint the factors that impinge negatively on girls' education especially in the infant section at the primary school level.

CHAPTER FIVE
MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This study looked at the home, school and classroom factors that impinge on girls' education in the UNICEF funded schools. The preceding chapter has presented a brief description of the basic characteristics of the schools and their surrounding areas. In this chapter, the major findings factors are presented in relation to the factors in the above three domains as they affect girls' education. Specifically, the chapter presents classroom, school, home and socio-cultural factors that relate to girls education.

5.1.0 HOME BASED FACTORS

This section analyses the factors from the home that have an impact on the education of girls. The information used for this section is from two sources. The household questionnaires and the household observation questionnaires.

5.1.1 BASIC HOME CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 979 households had responded to the household questionnaire. Table 9 gives the distribution of the respondents by district, sex and marital status.

Table 9: Respondents by District , Sex and Marital Status

District	Never married		Widowed		Separated		Divorced		Married	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Mangochi	2	1	4	34	1	15	-	40	82	252
Mchinji	1	-	2	10	-	5	-	4	88	92
Kasungu	3	-	-	19	-	6	1	07	82	91
Nkhatabay	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	11	40	69
Total	6	1	6	75	1	26	1	62	292	504

From the table above, most of the respondents were female 668 (68.6%) and the majority of them were married. Mangochi had the largest number of women who were widowed (34)

and who were also divorced (40). It must be pointed out that the largest numbers from Mangochi was because we visited four schools instead of two as was the case in the other districts. When asked who the heads of the household in families were, it was observed that the majority of the household heads (795) were male.

Table 10 below shows the level of education of the respondents to the household questionnaire.

Table 10: Educational Level of the Respondents by District and Sex

District	Never	Non formal	Primary 1 – 4	Primary 5 - 8	Secondary 1 – 2	Secondary 3 – 4	Tertiary	Total
Mangochi								
M	34	4	23	25	3	-	-	86
F	258	12	36	31	3	2	-	342
Mchinji								
M	14	-	36	34	4	3	-	91
F	41	1	48	20	1	-	-	111
Nkhatabay								
M	2	-	9	22	2	3	2	40
F	30	-	36	29	1	3	-	99
Kasungu								
M	16	1	24	38	2	4	-	85
F	46	2	38	29	1	-	-	116

It can be observed from above that in absolute terms, the largest number of the respondents who had never been to school came from Mangochi and that the majority of them were female. Even in percentage terms, Mangochi had the largest percentage (68%) of those who had never been to school seconded by Kasungu with 30%. Nkhata-bay registered the least number of uneducated respondents. With the exception of Mangochi, the majority of the respondents in the other districts had primary level education. Only two men from NkhataBay had some kind of tertiary education.

In terms of the economic activities of the respondents it was observed that the main activity of the respondents was smallholder farming. Irrespective of district, the majority of these (377) were females. The second main activity was vending or small scale trading. There were more women vendors in Mangochi and Nkhatabay (43 out of 64 and 28 out of 40 respectively). A good number of respondents (113), were also engaged in unskilled jobs as their second activity.

For all household members, aged 6 – 19 years, we obtained information on their age, sex, school status and their main activity. Table 11 gives information on whether the 6 – 19 years olds in the households had ever enrolled in school or not:

Table 11: Schooling History of 6-19 Year Olds

Sex in the HH Composition		District									
		Mangochi		Mchinji		Nkhata-Bay		Kasungu		Total	
		Ever Enrolled	Yes	N	%	Yes	N	%	Yes		N
Male	Ever Enrolled	Yes	334	91.7	276	95.1	204	99	160	94	974
		No	30	8.3	14	4.9	3	1	10	6	57
	Total		364		290		207		170		1031
Female	Ever Enrolled	Yes	307	91.9	249	95	207	95	149	95	912
		No	27	8.1	13	5	10	5	8	5	58
	Total		334		262		217		157		970

This table shows that Mangochi registered the largest proportion of children who had never been to school (8.3% boys and 8.1% for girls). With the exception of Nkhata Bay, more boys than girls had not started school in the other districts. It is possible that the campaigns for girls' education are paying dividends in encouraging parents to send their children especially girls to school. It is possible that long distances in the Nkhata Bay district is making girls start school late as depicted below:

Table 12: Age at Entry Pupils into School

Sex of Pupil	District Name	Mean	N
Male	Mangochi	17.96	359
	Mchinji	12.87	290
	Nkhata-bay	8.94	207
	Kasungu	15.55	170
	Total	14.30	1026
Female	Mangochi	15.99	327
	Mchinji	12.67	262
	Nkhata-Bay	12.25	215
	Kasungu	14.36	157
	Total	13.98	961
Total	Mangochi	17.02	686
	Mchinji	12.77	552
	Nkhata-bay	10.62	422
	Kasungu	14.98	327
	Total	14.15	1987

Table 12 shows the mean age at which those who had ever been to school had started school. With the exception of Nkhata Bay district, boys registered higher mean school starting age than girls in all the other districts. Boys in Nkhata-Bay registered a much early starting age (8.9) than girls (12.3). Clearly, Mangochi had the worst school starting age for both sexes seconded by Kasungu. In fact the mean starting age for girls in Mangochi was higher than those of both boys and girls in the other districts. This has implications on the ability of girls in Mangochi to persist in school and complete the primary school cycle and this is a reflection of the overall schooling problems for girls in these districts (especially Mangochi). No wonder, a life history in one area showed that girls choose to drop out when they see that they are the eldest in class.

The 6 – 19 year olds were also asked whether they were in school or not. Table 13 shows this information.

Table 13: Schooling History by, District, and Sex

Sex				District								
				Mangochi		Mchinji		Nkhata-Bay		Kasungu		Total
				N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Male	In School	Yes		285	82	254	88	189	91	150	88	878
		No		79	18	36	12	18	9	20	12	153
	Total			364		290		207		170		1031
Female	In School	Yes		268	80	230	88	188	89	140	89	826
		No		66	20	32	12	29	11	17	11	144
	Total			334		262		217		157		970

Both in terms of numbers and proportions, Mangochi had the worst schooling status for both sexes. Again, the proportion of girls not in school was higher than the proportion of boys not in school in the other districts. Nkhata-Bay registered the least proportion of boys not in school while the proportion of girls not in school was the second largest in the sample.

The household questionnaire also solicited information on the respondents' views or perception on the education of boys and girls. Table 14 displays the information on some key issues on this subject.

Table 14: Attitudes towards Girls' and Boys' Education.

Issues	Boys	percentage	Girls	percentage	Both	percentage
Who needs more encouragement to attend school	263	26.9	217	22.2	496	50.8
Who are more interested in school	563	57.7	190	19.5	222	22.8
Who are more intelligent	649	66.6	95	9.7	231	23.7
Who has more financial contribution	528	54.2	162	16.6	285	29.2
Who has more time to do school work	806	82.8	74	7.6	94	9.7
Who needs more disciplining	105	10.9	542	56.2	317	32.9

It can be observed that according to these respondents, who were mainly women, boys need more encouragement to go to school than girls although the majority of them (50.8%) said that both boys and girls need encouragement to go to school. However 563 (57.7%) of the respondents thought that boys are more intelligent, while only 19.5% thought that girls are more intelligent than boys. Admittedly, the majority of the respondents (806) also said that boys have more time to do school work after school than girls. The majority (542) of the respondents also thought that more girls need disciplining than boys (105). But when asked about who should the family expect more financial support from in future between boys and girls, 54.2% of the respondents associated the schooling of boys with more financial support to the family while only 16.6% thought so for girls. It is not surprising therefore that when asked what the highest educational level that they would want their children to attain, most of the respondents had a slight preference for boys than girls' higher education as indicated in table 15 below.

Table 15: Parents' Preference of Level of Education for their Children

Level of Education	Boys		Girls	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	percent
Primary 1 – 4	5	.5	4	.4
Primary 5 – 8	37	3.8	81	8.3
Secondary 1 – 2	16	1.6	26	2.7
Secondary 3 – 4	520	53.3	511	52.4
Post secondary	397	40.7	354	36.3
Total	975	100.0	976	100.0

It can be seen from the above table that more respondents had favoured boys for both the upper secondary and post secondary education. However, more respondents thought that girls needed only primary education (85) than boys do (45).

Respondents to the household questionnaire were asked to say what the main constraint towards girls' education in their areas was. Table 16 below displays the responses to this question.

Table 16: Main Constraints to Girls' Education

Reason	Mangochi	Mchinji	Nkhata-Bay	Kasungu	Total
Poverty	61	51	26	41	179
Lack of interest of child	127	35	28	41	231
Lack of parental encouragement	126	26	9	37	198
Early marriages	70	75	61	66	272
Prostitution among girls	15	3	1	6	27
Unplanned pregnancies	20	3	12	4	39
Distance to school	3	10	-	5	18

It is clear from this table that early marriages remain the main constraint towards girls' education in the areas. A related main problem to girls' education was lack of interest in education on the part of the children themselves. A good number of the respondents (198) also thought that lack of parental encouragement was one of the main constraints towards girls' education while 179 said that poverty was the main constraint to girls' education. Only 18 of the respondents said that distance was the main constraint; an indication that the establishment of the UNICEF schools has indeed reduced the distance to school in these areas.

The issues arising from this section are:

- Where there are schooling problems, children have a tendency to start school late
- Mangochi has more schooling problems than the other districts
- Girls in Mangochi start school at a much later age than other sites visited.
- Early marriages still remain the main constraint to girls education
- Parents still have an inclination towards favouring boys education than girls education because the education of boys is associated with more financial returns

5.1.2 HOME OBSERVATIONS

The home is an important agent of socialisation. Before children enter school, they would have already learnt specific cultural norms and expectations from their homes and

communities. In this study direct observations of homes were made in order to identify factors within the home that may impact on girls education. In particular we were interested in investigating how resources necessary for schooling were distributed between boys and girls, the division of labour in the homes and how it impacted on school attendance of girls relative to boys and finally cultural practices and values within the homes that affected girls schooling.

Learning Environment Within the Homes

The environment at home can have a significant impact on the schooling of children both positively or negatively. The environment at home can reinforce what children learn at school. Materials and resources found in the home can promote the learning of children at home. The presence of reading materials in the home for example, reinforces reading skills acquired at school. In addition, several research studies have found that educational attainment level of parents is an important determinant of schooling particularly for girls (e.g. Davison and Kanyuka (1990), Kadzamira and Chibwana 2000). Furthermore, resources within the home tend to be unequally distributed between men and women, boys and girls. In most cases this unequal distribution of resources favours the male members of a household. The sleeping arrangements at home have also been found to impact on children learning (see GABLE SMC 1997). In particular the system of ‘gowelo’ or ‘mphala’ where older and adolescent children sleep in their own huts can lead to loss of parental control over the children especially at night as they are largely unsupervised.

The home observations revealed that although most of the homes had an environment that was conducive to learning, not in all the homes were school children observed performing school related activities such as doing homework, reading and other school related activities. Even in homes where school activities were performed not much time was spent on such activities. This implies that either the school and teachers failed to inculcate in the children a culture of reading and studying by giving them homework or that the children were not being given adequate support to study within the homes. Given the low levels of education of parents in most of the households covered in this study the main responsibility for inculcating the culture of learning will remain with the school and also the larger community. Girls were observed to spend less time on school related activities in the home particularly because they

were in most of the cases observed to be carrying out the bulk of the household chores before and after school an issue which will be dealt with in more detail later.

Availability of Resources Favourable to Learning

The households observed had a variety of places that were used by the school children for studying and during the observations we were interested in assessing whether these were used equally by boys and girls. The most frequently used items for studying were chairs, tables, verandas and beds. Less frequently used items were mats, stools, trees and open space. It was observed that in most of the homes both boys and girls used these facilities for studying. However, in a few cases it was observed that boys had more access to these facilities than girls. A number of reasons were advanced for this. First, cultural values which place higher premium on boys than girls. In one household it was observed that boys were using a stool for studying whilst girls sat on the floor. In yet another household, chairs and tables were used by the boys for studying and the girl sat on the floor. Second, because of the heavy workloads that girls have in the homes they do not find the time to use these resources for studying. In one household it was observed that though there were adequate resources and space for studying in the home for both boys and girls, it was only the boys who used them again because of the heavy workload of girls relative to boys which deprived them of the opportunity to study.

In about a quarter of the households observed, it was observed that there were no suitable places and also facilities which could be used for studying by both boys and girls. The environment within these homes was observed to be less favourable to promoting learning amongst the children at home. Some of the homes did not have suitable physical space for studying, in other homes it was observed that too many children slept in one tiny room making it difficult for school children to find the space to study.

In the majority of households observed resources for studying such exercise books and writing materials were readily available to both boys and girls. For example, learning resources such as exercise books and pens/pencils were found in over 80% of the households. These had been supplied either by the school or bought by the parents. Parental support for children in school related activities varied from household to household. In one of the households for example, a girl's exercise book had nothing written on it and yet her mother

(who was illiterate) was not aware of it. Thus children living with illiterate parents may not receive adequate support they need to practice what they have learnt in school. In a number of households however, parents and sometimes older siblings were observed assisting children with their homework or studies. This was only possible in those households where the parents had a reasonable amount of education to enable them provide such support.

Reading materials were observed less frequently with 37% of the households possessing books of various sorts and even fewer households had resources like, newspapers, magazines, Bible etc. In most of the households no reading materials were available including school textbooks. One of the parents commented that he is unable to buy prescribed textbooks because he does not know which books to buy as he is illiterate and thought that the school should be responsible for acquiring books for children.

Though learning resources like exercise books and writing materials were present in most of the households, as will be discussed later, not many of the school children were observed in school related activities in the home. For example in a third of the households with learning resources no observations were made of children using the resources in school related activities. In some households only boys were observed reading books, magazines, newspapers or Bible an indications that resources are not equally distributed amongst boys and girls in some households.

Other Aspects of the Home Environment that affected Schooling

In other areas particularly in Mangochi it was observed that a lot of night activities such as dances and initiation ceremonies contributed to absenteeism from school. It was noted that some girls and boys as young as 15 years would spend the whole night out with little interference from the parents. This supports the perception that there was lack of parental control and encouragement towards school related activities in some of the households visited. Some types of sleeping arrangements were not favourable to schooling particularly for girls, as children were allowed to sleep in their own huts largely unsupervised or sleep in the same hut with other members of the households such as siblings or grandparents who may not necessarily encourage schooling nor create a favourable environment for learning. The observations revealed that while many children were sleeping in the same hut as their parents, other children had different types of the sleeping arrangements. It was not uncommon in most of the households visited to find members of same household having

different sleeping arrangements which depended largely on their age and sex. Children under five years were more likely to sleep in the same hut as parents. As Table nn3 shows all the female children and 80% of the male children between 0-5 years were sleeping in the same hut as their parents. Older children are traditionally expected to live in a different hut from that of their parents, if they are younger (or not initiated) they are expected to sleep in another hut together with other children or with their grandparents. Older children usually sleep in separate huts known as ‘gowelo’ for girls and ‘mphala’ for boys. In the homesteads visited, girls were more likely than boys to sleep in the same hut as the grandparents particularly after their 11th birthday. Significantly more boys than girls were sleeping in ‘mphala’ and for over half of the boys above 16 years this was their main sleeping arrangement. The evidence presented here suggests that children are expected to form their own ‘households’ (i.e. live on their own with very little parental control) as early as 11 years when most of them are still in school and in most cases still attending the lower classes. Discussions with some of the parents during the observations revealed that this cultural practice makes it difficult for parents to monitor the behaviour of their children particularly at night. As such they are unable to monitor whether their children do indeed study after retiring to their hut.

One parent in Kasungu noted that *‘some children like Chikondi (his 12 year daughter in standard 5) sleep with their grandmother. Grannies are not usually able to exert enough control over the children. Chikondi is able to go and play with her friends at night without any resistance from her grandmother. This practice afford girls a chance of meeting boys and forming illicit liaisons and getting pregnant in the process and thus leaving school prematurely.’*

Table 17 Sleeping Arrangements in the Households Observed by Sex and Age Group

Sleep in the same hut as:	0 – 5 years		6 – 10 years		11 – 15 years		16+ years		Grand total = N	
	%F	% M	%F	% M	%F	% M	%F	% M	F	M
Parents	100	80	62	65	48	50	38	30	46	41
Other Children	0	0	12	10	7	12	13	9	7	7
Grandparents	0	20	15	15	31	12	24	4	17	8
Gowelo/mphala	0	0	8	20	14	27	19	52	9	22
On their own	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	1	1
Total observation	10		26		29		16		82	80

Some of the households took it upon themselves to change the traditional sleeping arrangements in order to promote schooling of their children. In one household it was reported that all out of school children (all boys) were sleeping in the same hut while the two school going children (a boy and a girl) were sleeping in the same hut as their parents. This was done because the boy was continuously disturbed by the out of school children and for the girl the parents wanted to ensure that she studies before going to bed. In another household it was reported that after discovering boys in girls' 'gowelo', all the girls now sleep in the same hut as the parents. However their 3 boys still sleep in their own 'mphala'. While it is noted that some parents were sceptical of the cultural practice in the majority of households a higher proportion of the older girls and boys were reported sleeping in such type of arrangements. Older children were more likely to sleep in 'mphalas' and 'gowelos' and in the same hut as their grandparents.

Workloads and the Division of Labour in the Homes

Children are an important source of labour within the majority of households. For most poor families sending children to school can be a major cost because of the labour forgone. The opportunity costs of sending girls to school are said to be even higher primarily because the gendered division of labour that exists within homes leaves the bulk of domestic chores to girls thereby decreasing their chances of attending school.

Direct observations of tasks performed in the home by gender were made during the home observations. This provided a more direct and relatively accurate measure of estimating the opportunity costs of schooling for boys and girls. Households selected were observed over a period of four days and the various chores performed by different members of the household and the duration of the activities were recorded. The results are presented in Tables 18 and 19. The results strongly support and confirm findings from earlier research that the demand for child labour at home is high and that the division of such labour within the households is also gendered. Table 18 shows that a higher proportion of girls than boys carried out domestic chores such preparation and processing of food, hauling water and firewood, cleaning and washing and caring for others. On the other hand boys were more likely than girls to be involved in carrying out activities such as cultivating, herding animals, cutting firewood, 'ganyu', running errands and playing and relaxing.

Table 18 Household Chores Carried Out by School Aged Girls and Boys Between 6 and 18 Years Old.

Activity	Girls		Boys	
	N	%	N	%
Food preparation/cooking	23	7.5	1	0.6
Cleaning/washing/sweeping	44	14.4	10	6.0
Processing food e.g. pounding	30	9.8	0	
Fetching firewood	21	6.9	1	0.6
Hauling water	49	16.0	1	0.6
Cutting firewood	0		6	3.6
Herdng and looking after animals	3	1.0	18	10.7
Cultivating (subsistence)	12	3.9	18	10.7
Other subsistence production e.g. vending, weaving, fishing	2	0.7	5	3.0
Employment outside the family e.g. 'ganyu'	2	0.7	4	2.4
Caring for children/elderly/sick	16	5.2	4	2.4
Run errands/ send messages	1	0.3	11	6.5
Go to market	4	1.3	6	3.6
Study/ do homework	26	8.5	22	13.3
Social activities e.g. parties, family gatherings, religious etc	29	9.5	13	7.7
Play/ relax	44	14.4	46	27.4
Total	306	100	168	100

Thus, girls were more likely to be engaged in tasks that centred around the home whilst boys tasks were more frequently centred outside the home. One of the explanations given by members of one household observed was that boys are usually sent out to run errands or go to the market because usually they have nothing to do. It was noted during the observations that girls carry out most of the work compared to boys as the following observation of one household from Mangochi indicates.

Most of the activities were done by the 15 year old girl – Tupoche, the only child in the family who goes to school and is in standard 4. The other two school going age children were dropouts (a boy of 13 years and a girl of 10 years) and one girl had not yet enrolled in school yet, though she was 7 years old. Before going to school Tupoche fetched water, swept around the house, prepared breakfast- this took her about an hour or so but usually went to school late (the school is about 5Km away). After school she did all the cooking and washing (as her mother is pregnant) for about 3 hours. She also prepared the evening meal. After dinner Tupoche went out to play (night dances) and came back at 9 pm. One night she returned home from a night out in the early hours of the morning. This was on the eve of releasing the initiates from 'chinamwali' (initiation ceremony), she had gone to attend the celebrations. Tupoche did not have the time to concentrate on her school work during the period of observation.

Very few households (only 3 in this study) shared the work equally between boys and girls. It was also noted that in some households female dropouts carried the bulk of the household chores thereby relieving school going children of a considerable portion of the work. This was only possible where the dropouts were female and were old enough to carry the activities. The case of Tupoche above demonstrates this- she does most of the household chores even though there are two dropouts in the house because one of the dropout is boy and the other was a younger sister. In one of the households in Kasungu, it was observed that most of the work in the household was done by those who do not go to school. The school going children went to school without performing any of the household tasks mentioned and after school they concentrated on doing their school work for about an hour after which they sat, relaxed and played.

Most of the girls perform various chores before going to school for periods ranging from 30 minutes to 2 hours. This means that for some of the girls their school day starts very early in the morning. Activities performed by the girls before going to school included hauling water, cleaning, preparing food and in some cases collecting firewood. Activities like hauling of water and firewood can mean travelling over fairly long distances with considerable loss of energy which might affect participation in class. The gendered division of labour means that older boys can not assist in such activities because of the cultural beliefs and values about which activities are suitable for men and women. From the unstructured interviews carried

out with some household members during the observations it was clear that women's work is undervalued and believed not to be suitable for men. In one household it was believed that men are superior and intelligent because the tasks that they perform bring income into the family e.g. fishing and that women do most of the household chores because they are inferior to men. Because of such kind of views girl living in households where most of the children are male (or younger siblings) face a double burden as they cannot share the household chores with other siblings. The following case from Mangochi shows the double burden girls living in such households encounter.

Sigele a 15 year old standard 6 girl is the only girl in a household with 6 other children who are all male (two brothers and 4 nephews). Three of the grandsons are older than Sigele (between 16 and 20) whilst both her brothers are younger than herself. Only Sigele and her two brothers attend school. Most of the household chores were carried out by Sigele with the assistance of her mother who is 52 years old. Sigele's day began at 5.30 am when she woke up and together with her mother carried out some domestic duties such as washing dishes, sweeping the surroundings and fetching water. At 6.10 am she left home for school and returned at 2.20 pm. After school she went to fetch water and washed dishes- this took her about an hour. At 4.30 pm she did her homework together with her brothers who had just been playing since their return from school. After studying Sigele like her two brothers also go out to play for about an hour. After this she started preparing supper for another hour. During all this time two of the older male members of the family were just idling while the third one was herding cattle from 9.30 am to 3.40 pm.

In some of the households the reason given for allowing girls to miss classes was that the activities concerned were all women's jobs and it would be pointless to ask boys to miss classes because they would be home just doing nothing as they are not supposed to carry out such activities. Such was the insensitivity of some parents to girls' schooling needs.

The gendered division of labour observed amongst the adults in the homes mirrored that observed for school going age children. Adult women were more involved in food preparation, cleaning, processing, hauling water and firewood and caring for the children, the sick and aged. Male members of the households were on the other hand more likely to be doing such activities as cutting firewood, cultivating going to the market and other social

activities. It is apparent that girls and boys learn their gender roles from their parents given that the tasks performed by the children closely reflect those carried out by older household members of the same sex as Table nn1 indicates.

Table 19 Household Chores Carried Out by Female and Male Adults over 18 years of Age.

Activity	Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%
Food preparation/cooking	33	14.7	2	2.0
Cleaning/washing/sweeping	28	12.5	1	1.0
Processing food e.g. pounding	27	12.1	0	
Fetching firewood	25	11.2	3	3.0
Hauling water	28	12.5	0	
Cutting firewood	5	2.2	13	13.0
Herd and looking after animals	0		5	5.0
Cultivating (subsistence)	27	12.1	24	24.0
Other subsistence production e.g. vending, weaving, fishing	16	7.1	8	8.0
Employment outside the family e.g. 'ganyu'	1	0.4	9	9.0
Caring for children/elderly/sick	13	5.8	1	1.0
Run errands/ send messages	1	0.4	3	3.0
Go to market	3	1.3	10	10.0
Study/ do homework	0		3	3.0
Social activities e.g. parties, family gatherings, religious etc	13	5.8	11	11.0
Play/ relax	4	1.8	7	7.0
Total	224	100	100	100

School Attendance

School attendance was erratic in almost all the households covered during the home observations. Only two of the households reported that their children had not been absent from school for the past two weeks including the week the observations were made. In the

rest of the households it was noted that one or more children had been absent from school during the past two weeks. From the reasons that were given for absenteeism it is clear that the majority of parents do not enforce school attendance as they were in most cases responsible for initiating that absenteeism. In the case of girls absenteeism was mainly caused by the parental demand for their labour in fulfilling various household chores as the following case demonstrates:

Atupele is 12 years old and currently attending standard 2 at a nearby community primary school. She lives with her mother who is also the head of the household and there are other 6 children in the house four of whom also attend school with Atupele. All the 5 children attending school in Atupele's household had been absent from school for various reasons in the past two weeks before the observation was made. Bamusi an 8 year old boy had missed school for the whole two weeks because he was undergoing 'jando' the male initiation ceremony and he was going to be there for two months from August to October. The other two boys Jalasi and Manuelo had missed school for 3 days because they were sent to buy medicine for the mother who was sick. Atupele did not also go to school for 3 days because she had to help do the household chores since the mother was ill. The previous week she had also been absent from school for one day for no apparent reason'.

Table 20 Reason for Children's Absenteeism from School

Reason	F	%	M	%
Illness of self	9	28.1	5	31.3
Sickness in the family	3	9.4	1	6.3
Funeral in the village	2	6.3	0	-
Doing household chores	6	18.8	3	18.8
Late to school	1	3.1	1	6.3
Had no clean clothes	4	12.5	3	18.8
Went to the lake	0	-	2	12.5
Lost interest in school	0	-	1	6.3
Ganyu	1	3.1	0	-
Laziness	4	12.5	0	-
No reason	1	3.1	0	-
Teacher Absent	1	3.1	0	-
Total	32	100	16	100

Table 20 indicates that in the households observed girls were just as likely as boys to be absent from school and the reasons for absenteeism did not differ significantly by gender. However, girls were more likely than boys to be absent from school because of the sickness in the family, attending funerals and laziness. The same proportion of boys as girls were absent from school because of the demand for their labour at home. During the observations it was noted that while the girls were absent from home in order to fulfil domestic activities mostly related to their perceived roles such as caring for others and food production, going to the maize mill, the reasons for boys absence also tallied with the activities they performed in the household. One boy for example had been absent from school for one month because he was herding animals whilst another boy had been absent for three months because was undergoing jando the male initiation rites among the Yaos.

The main keys issues in this section are:

- Very few children were observed doing school related activities
- Fewer households had resources beyond those provided by the school
- Sleeping arrangements in the households means that parents have very little control over their children's school life
- Divisions of labour is such that it is the girls who do most of the bulk of the household chores.
- Gender differentiated division of labour means that some household chores will only be done by school girls even when there are older boys who do not go school.
- Parents are insensitive to girls' schooling demands
- Demand for children labour especially girls' is one of the main causes of absenteeism

5.2.0 CLASSROOM FACTORS

The classroom is the focal point where the teaching and learning takes place. Factors in the classroom include everything that goes on during the teaching and learning process as well as the classroom environments. The classroom factors which have been identified to affect girls learning in this study include gender relations in the classroom, inappropriate methodologies, communication and language problems, the class environment and teacher fatigue. Although some of these factors affect both boys and girls, their impact on girls has been noted to be more significant resulting into low classroom participation, high absenteeism and dropout by girls.

5.2.1 Relations in classrooms

Two issues in relation to gender are discussed. These are the sitting plan and the gender power dynamics.

5.2.2 Sitting Plans

Gender relations in the classroom can manifest themselves in many ways including the way pupils are seated. In some schools pupils were sitting in gender segregated sitting plans – girls sat on one side of the classroom and boys on the other. Examples of this were observed in standard 3 classes at Chipereka, Mdala-Makumba and Taliya Schools in Mangochi district. This type of arrangement limited pupil interaction to same sex only i.e boys only and girls only.

There were some classes where boys and girls were arranged in a mixed sitting plan. In such cases it was also noted that during class discussions boys preferred to work with boys and girls with fellow girls – segregation by gender was again evident. For example, in a standard 6 English lesson at Chapeta in Nkhatabay, a mixed sitting plan was noted at the beginning of the lesson. After one minute, the pupils were asked to do some silent reading in which they were to share a textbook, and at this point boys moved to where boys were seated and likewise girls went to sit where fellow girls had a book. In one extreme case, a boy who had a book with a girl, moved to another desk where boys were seated, leaving the girl with no book to read. At the end of the lesson, the sitting plan had transformed to desks with mostly same sex pupils sitting together. It would appear that although teachers may try to implement the mixed sitting strategy as imposed on them, pupils still prefer or are comfortable to sit with same sex members. The question then becomes why is this so?

The main issues noted here were:

- Most classrooms still have gender segregated sitting plans
- Pupils prefer and are comfortable to sit and work with same sex members during classroom learning.

5.2.3 Gender and Power Dynamics

In most classroom settings, it was noted that more boys than girls were in control. Girls were usually shy, and unwilling to ask any questions. For example, in a mathematics

lesson in Std 7 at Chapeta (Nkhatabay), boys could easily snatch a ruler from a girl and the girls could do nothing but go and sit next to a fellow girl that had a ruler. A similar observation was also made in a Std 6 English lesson at Chivumu. The boys were more at liberty to grab from the girls those things that would enable them participate fully in the lessons. Furthermore, it was also noted that in some classrooms boys were used as group leaders more frequently than girls. For example in a Std 3 reading lesson at Chipereka Primary School, only boys were used as the permanent group leaders. In a Std 4 lesson at the same school, only one group out of four had a girl as the leader. And in a std 3 lesson at Champhenvu on measurement, it was observed that only one group out of the five groups in the class had a girl as its group leader. Such practices allow boys to develop leadership roles and assume power over the girls. In contrast, the girls develop a subordinate status, which makes them unable to participate fully during classroom learning. The main issue in this section is:

- Girls in most classes assume a subordinate status, which does not empower them to take control of their learning.

5.2.4 Teaching Methodologies

The quality of teaching in most classes is very poor. Teachers are not conversant with the appropriate methods of teaching. The level of classroom discourse and questioning styles are of a low standard. In this section, we look at the inappropriate methodologies, classroom questioning, communication and language problems classroom environment and T/L materials.

5.2.5 Inappropriate Methodology

Most teachers still use traditional methodologies where they confine themselves to the front only. The only time that the teacher interacts with the pupils is when pupils are answering questions or the teacher is marking exercise books. Furthermore it was noted that in most classes, about half of the lesson time is spent with the teacher marking exercise books rather than teaching. At Chapakama for example, a temporary teacher in standard 4 only taught for the first five minutes (including preparations) and spent the rest of the time marking an exercise.

It was also noted during the classroom observations that teachers do not make any effort to stimulate learning thereby making classroom experiences dull and monotonous. Teaching of infant classes (standard 1 and 2), for example, needs teachers that are well trained and experienced. We noted that dropout is evident even as early as standard 2 due to poor handling of the young pupils during learning. There were however a few exceptions. For example, a very experienced head teacher at Mbachundu displayed the importance of experience in handling the infant classes. In addition to being gender sensitive by rotating his questions to boys and girls, the head had strategies to energize his class (std 2) going through all the rows of the class and making sure that he had seen what every pupil was doing. At the end of the observation, the researchers left the class satisfied that some learning had taken place. Similarly, at Chapakama in Std 2, the teacher used singing and clapping of hands to stimulate the pupils. Such efforts were lacking in the upper classes.

Boys in some classes are used as permanent group leaders. In these classes, the leader disciplines fellow pupils, nominates readers in turn and corrects their reading. In fact, in some cases, the leaders substituted the teachers. For example, at Chipereka a standard 3 group leader controlled the flow of an English reading lesson while the teacher remained idle. It would appear that while some of our teachers may want to try some good teaching methodologies (e.g. assignment of leaders), lack of orientation to these ideas means that they are not able to implement these innovative ideas effectively.

Some lessons observed in standards 5 and 6 did not have any introduction to the lesson. Students were expected to understand the concept being taught without any proper link to the previous lesson or any explanation to the current topic. During a comprehension lesson at Chivumu, a standard five teacher merely asked his pupils to open the English book on page 124, asked them what they saw on that page and then asked the pupils to read the story in silence. After about five minutes, he started asking them questions to check if they had understood the passage. This teacher had obviously not prepared for the lesson. At Chapeta, a temporary teacher in std 6 who was teaching a lesson on Directions started the lesson without any introduction to orient the pupils to the sense of direction – West, East, North and South. It was clear from the pupils' participation that they did not fully follow the lesson. These teachers clearly displayed a lack of knowledge on the appropriate teaching methodologies for effective learning.

The issues noted in this section are:

- There is limited teacher - pupil interaction, and limited pupil participation in most lessons especially by girls.
- Most lessons are dull and monotonous.
- Most teachers lack knowledge of appropriate teaching methodologies

5.2.6 Classroom Questioning

Questions are an integral part of any teaching and learning experience. If questions are not phrased and used appropriately, learning is not smooth. In this study, it was noted that questions were gender biased, -in most cases favouring boys. A typical case was at Chipereka in a standard 3 lesson where 70% of the classroom questions were answered by boys. At Sungusya in standard 4, the questions and reading assignments were distributed randomly in the class. The teacher tried to nominate girls even when they did not raise a hand, but their participation was still not satisfactory because only six of the sixteen questions had been distributed to girls despite the fact that there were more girls than boys in the class. Furthermore, this was a class with more girls than boys.

It was also noted that the majority of questions used during teaching were of a low cognitive levels. In isolated cases, high level questions were used, but in these cases the questions were mostly directed at boys. Furthermore, it was also noted that teachers frequently nominated the same pupils to answer their questions – those perceived to be more intelligent. These also usually happened to be boys. At Chivumu for example, a standard 5 teacher's questions were all directed to one boy, when the boy failed to answer the questions, the teacher answered them himself. In a standard 3 lesson at Chipereka primary school, the teacher nominated more boys to answer questions despite the fact that there were a lot of girls also raising their hands. It seems that teachers were more interested in the continuity of the lesson rather than ensuring that the concepts had been understood by everyone in class. This is why they nominated more boys because they were perceived to be more intelligent than girls. The teachers mostly just rushed through the lesson in order to finish their work. Because of the same reason, in almost all the classes, teachers relied on choral responses from the pupils.

The issues noted in this section are:

- Boys participate more during lessons by answering more questions
- Low level cognitive questions are used more during teaching

- Boys are perceived to be more intelligent than girls
- Teachers direct more questions to pupils perceived to be more intelligent because they are more interested in completion of the lesson rather than pupils' understanding of the concepts.

5.2.7 Communication/Language Problems

The majority of teachers visited in this study had a hard time expressing themselves in English. Their grammar was poor and they usually pronounced English words wrongly. This had the tendency to mislead the learners. In some cases such problems disrupted the learners because of lack of proper vocabulary to communicate a point. This was common not only in Std 5, 6 and 7 where English is used for communication but also in the lower primary levels during English lessons.

Communication breakdown also occurred when the teacher's and pupils' mother tongue were different. For example, a Chewa speaking teacher was unable to effectively communicate with his Yao speaking pupils in Mangochi. This showed that although the government had instituted the teaching in vernacular language policy, the implementation of such a policy is so complex and probably impossible for a poor country like Malawi. It requires that teachers must be conversant with the language of the areas they are to teach, and more serious perhaps, it requires the preparation of books, etc in the various languages of the country and this is a tall order.

The issues in this section are:

- Most teachers are not conversant with English
- The 'teaching in vernacular policy is complex

5.2.8 Classroom Environment

The classroom environment in most schools is not conducive to learning. Most classrooms are dirty and dusty. The normal class cleanliness practices seem to have been lost. Such environment is not healthy for children. All schools visited in this study had some pupils sitting on the floor. Sitting on the floor is especially difficult for girls when they have to stand up to answer a question. It is also difficult when writing on their laps since they can not raise their knees as boys do, due to their dressing. In addition to these observations, it was also noted that when chairs were not enough, which was very often the case, the

available chairs were used by boys rather than girls. In a standard 5 class at Chivumu, for example, there was only one long bench on which eight boys squeezed themselves. All the girls sat on the dirty dusty floor in front. Such sitting arrangements also make the boys feel like they are more superior than the girls and this obviously gives the boys the much needed confidence in the classroom.

Some classes were also run in pathetic and hazardous conditions: without windows, or with a blown off roof or with collapsed walls. At Chapakama for example, where there were classes up to standard 6, only standards 1 and 2 were in the UNICEF blocks and the remaining 4 classes were outside. At this school, two classes were being run in roofless blocks with some walls collapsed. A total of 19 classes out of 55 classes were being held on the open in the ten schools visited. Twelve of the 55 classes were in temporary sheds. Some of these areas are windy and as such, the wind and dust are felt in the room making it uncomfortable for proper teaching and learning. And at Chivumu, five classes are run in temporary shelters which were dirty and also very dusty in summer and muddy during the rainy season. Here, the shelters do not provide any protection from the rain. Such learning environments were hazardous to children's health.

The issues in this section are:

- The class environment in most schools was not conducive to learning
- Poor class environment made it uncomfortable for girls to actively participate in learning

5.2.9 Teaching/Learning materials

Teaching and Learning materials are an indispensable feature of the classroom interaction. The most readily available teaching/learning resource used in the schools was the textbook. Availability of textbooks varied from classroom to classroom and school to school. Some schools were well supplied with textbooks such as at Chivumu, Mdala Makumba and Taliya. In these schools almost each pupil had a textbook. On the other hand there were schools such as Mbachundu which had very limited supply of books and large numbers of pupils had to share a single book. In most infant classes (Std 1 and 2) each pupil had a textbook. However, in upper classes, it was observed that these were in short supply. Pupils had to share textbooks during reading activities as well as when they had a to do a written exercise. In some classes there were too few text books to the extent that sharing

disrupted learning. For example at Chapakama in std 5 there were 12 English text books to be shared amongst 51 pupils. At Chapeta in Std 7, there were 7 rulers to be shared by 30 pupils in a mathematics lesson. In most cases, boys who were more aggressive tended to utilize the resources more than girls, thereby jeopardizing the girls' ability to do well in class.

In schools which had an excess of books, a problem of storage of textbooks was noted. In most cases textbooks were stored on a pile in the corner of the classrooms, where they could easily get lost or be torn. There is need for proper storage facilities in the schools if the books are to last long. It was also noted in the schools that only prescribed texts are available. No supplementary books were available in any of the schools visited.

The main issues in this section are:

- Some classes have no textbooks
- Pupils have problems learning when they share textbooks
- Supplementary reading materials are not available

5.3 SCHOOL BASED FACTORS

The third set of factors to be considered are those that are to be found in the school. Here, three main factors are identified- the quality of the learning environment, the demand for girls labour contributions and harassment of girls.

5.3.1 Quality of the Learning Environment

In terms of the learning environment, we discuss the location of the schools, school features, school facilities and teacher quality and quantity.

5.3.2 School location

All the schools were located in vulnerable areas where full primary schools are very far away. In this respect, they are indeed serving the purpose of reducing distance to school for the young boys and girls. However, it would appear that not much consideration was made to the siting of some of these schools since they are poorly located with regard to terrain and weather. For example, schools such as Chipereka and Sungusya in Mangochi are located in wind prone areas while Chivumu in Nkhatabay and Mdala-Makumba in

Mangochi experiences floods during the rainy season. These conditions are not ideal for any learning environment and their negative impact on girls in particular, were noticeable. For instance, when it was very windy, girls had to hold on to their skirts lest they get embarrassed. The main point in this section is:

- Poor location of schools disadvantages pupils. Girls are particularly affected by the windy conditions in most of the school especially Mangochi.

5.3.4 School Features

The availability of a good learning environment is desirable for any teaching and learning situation. This view was expressed by both the pupils and their parents. For example, when asked what the three characteristics of a good school were, parents ranked good condition of school buildings as the first. This was followed by presence of highly qualified teachers, then availability of learning materials and availability of sanitary facilities such as water and toilets. This information is displayed in table 21 below.

Table 21: Characteristics of a good school

	Frequency	Percent
Highly qualified teachers	148	15.1
Experienced teachers	123	12.6
Availability of learning Materials	149	15.3
Good condition of school Buildings	216	22.1
Availability of sanitary Facilities(water/toilets)	145	14.8
Good examination Performance of pupils	113	11.6
Involvement of parents/ Community in school affairs	11	1.1
Enough teacher houses	40	4.1
The school should be closer to home	6	.6
Enough classes and school Blocks	8	.8
Teachers good behaviour	6	.6
Should have a clinic	11	1.1
Adequate teachers	977	100.0
Total		

The parents were then asked to rate the school that was in their community. The results showed that 42.8% of the parents rated the schools that were in their communities as average while 28.7% rated them as bad and 27.9% rated them as good. What this shows is that the schools that were visited are not up to the standard expected by parents. It can be assumed that if parents are not happy with the condition of the schools, then they may not be as eager to send their children to school because they do not see them as serious places worthy investing their children's time.

The views of the parents on the schools in their communities make sense because it was observed in the study that almost all the schools visited had only one school block with two classrooms. Although the school blocks in Kasungu, Mchinji and Nkhata-Bay were relatively solid, the sheds which were constructed as supplements to the two blocks in these districts were of very poor quality to qualify to be called classrooms at all. None of the sites in Mangochi had made any effort to supplement the two blocks and yet this is the district where the school blocks were dilapidated; had iron sheets blown off, had very dirty whitewash, and some had cracked walls due to the cheap labour that was used in their construction. These results show that communities have varied perceptions of their schools.

The provision of an incomplete school on the other hand, is viewed as inappropriate by pupils, parents and teachers. This is evident by the expansion of the visited schools to standard 4 and beyond – within the constraints of limited classrooms. As a result of this, some classes in most of the schools visited were held outside under a tree or in temporary shelters. Some schools do not even have trees under which pupils have to sit and the children end up being scorched by the hot sun (Chapakama for example). The situation is made worse during the rainy season so that some classes are not held at all. Attendance registers showed that at Mbachundu, there was no school for two consecutive days in February because of rains. If absenteeism due to rains is prolonged, it leads to poor performance and subsequently repetition, a condition particularly undesirable for girls. In addition, the incomplete schools give the pupils a limited vision of schooling. Many of them drop out after completing the number of classes available in their school because they see it as complete. For instance, at Mbachundu school, there were a lot of pupils especially girls who had dropped out after finishing standard four since the other school (Chiwoko) was very far.

The unavailability of some features within the school makes the work of teachers difficult. In order for the teachers to do their work properly, they need a desk and a chair from which to write their lesson plans; a staff room where they can sit and discuss professional issues; a library to expand their knowledge beyond the prescribed textbooks; a storeroom to store their teaching and learning aids and above all they need to live in comfortable houses. What was observed during the study was that most schools do not have these facilities (see table 4). The absence of teachers' houses within the school community is worth particular mention because it has a considerable influence on teaching. In this situation, teachers live very far away from the school (up to 10km in Taliya, Mdala-Makumba and Champhemvu Schools) which is not a good walking distance. The teachers therefore rely on the use of bicycles which may sometimes break down. In addition, one would not be expected to cycle to school when it is raining. The result of all this was frequent absenteeism by teachers from school which was mourned by both pupils and parents. As a result, pupils got bored of sitting the whole morning without learning anything and they may lose interest in school. For instance one girl who dropped out of school at Chapakama in Mchinji mentioned this as one of the causes of her dropping out of school. Teacher absenteeism affects girls more than boys especially if parents are aware of it. The reason could be that as argued earlier, the labour demand for the girls at home is always high. If parents lose confidence in what the school is able to offer, they would prefer to have the girl at home to do the household chores than let her go to school and play. It was also observed that if teachers were accommodated within the community surrounding the school, their houses were usually substandard. This gives the teaching profession a low status and the teachers no longer act as role models to the pupils. The main points under school features are;

- Some school blocks are poor so that parents may not see the schools as serious places of learning.
- Incomplete schools give limited vision to the pupils and cause more dropout problems.
- Absence of a staff-room, library and supplementary books may lead to poor professionalism in the teachers.
- Lack of teachers' houses leads to a lot of teacher absenteeism.

5.3.5 School facilities

In order for teaching and learning to take place smoothly, there is need for some good sanitary facilities for the people involved. These facilities include toilets, water and sporting facilities.

The provision of toilets was found to be inadequate in some of the schools visited. For example, 50% of the schools had no staff toilets and yet the teachers are supposed to be at the school the whole morning. In addition, although all the schools had boys' and girls' toilets, their numbers were not adequate. For instance, 50% of the schools had one toilet for boys and one toilet for girls while 30% had two for each group and only 20% had four for each group. The one toilet for each group scenario caused a lot of commotion of the pupils. In this situation, girls are the more disadvantaged than boys. In addition, girls need more time and privacy to take care of themselves. This is not always possible if the girls have to queue for the toilet. As a result girls may get discouraged with the situation at the school and decide to remain home where they are more comfortable especially during menstruation periods.

One school facility that was missing in some schools in Mangochi (Chipereka, Sungusya and Taliya) were water boreholes. This made the teachers to assign roles of hauling water for drinking to the girls. The water is hauled before school starts or during the first period and kept in the classroom. Some girls therefore start their classes with dresses partly wet because of this activity. In addition, drinking water in this way leads to poor hygiene because pupils have to use one or two cups. The system of hauling water was not practised in Chipereka school but the absence of water meant that the pupils would disappear to their homes during break time and some would not come back afterwards. Girls were also used by teachers to haul water for their families. At Chivumu for example, a teacher whose wife was away used two standard six girls to haul water for him while lessons were in progress.

The pupils mentioned that they liked playing as one of the activities at school. The need for schools to have appropriate materials was exemplified by a group of girls at Chapakama. The girls were playing netball using a locally made ball. When their teachers gave them a good ball the research team was amazed by the level of enthusiasm and excitement of the girls that ensued. In fact these girls continued playing with the ball even when the bell for entering

classes had gone. They had to be chased into their classes. At Champhemvu, one of the oldest boys at the school who had dropped out of school asked his teachers if they could allow him to play football when the school had acquired one. The teachers told him that he could only play football if he returned to school. The boy did return to school and was still in school at the time of the survey. The team had the occasion to watch him play the game he loved most. The availability of sports facilities would therefore be ideal for any school. Although the majority of the visited schools had football and netball grounds¹, these were usually not in good condition. As argued earlier, the sports fields were dusty, rugged, uneven and of dubious dimensions. At Sungusya and Chapeta, attempts to make good fields were unsuccessful because of the poor terrain.

The sporting fields are supposed to be accompanied by sports equipment if they are to be used. It was noted with concern that the few schools that had good sports fields did not have the right sports equipment. These may have to be supplied to the schools to keep pupils particularly girls, in school. The main points regarding school facilities are;

- Lack of boreholes in some schools forces teachers to use girls to haul water for drinking and brick construction purposes.
- Inadequate toilets for teachers and pupils cause discomfort.
- Lack of or uneven absence of sports grounds and equipment makes the school environment unattractive to the pupils.

5.3.6 Teacher quality and Quantity

This section discusses the teaching personnel in terms of numbers and quality.

5.3.7 Number of teachers versus number of streams

Research has shown that education quality is affected not only by the quality of the learning environment but also the availability of teaching and learning materials as well as the quality and quantity of teachers. This finding is shared by the parents in the communities visited in this study since they rated the availability of highly qualified teachers as the second most important characteristic of a good school (see Table 5).

¹ Chapeta school however did not have a ground. They were using the open ground around the classes which was a bit disturbing

As noted, the number of teachers in some of the schools visited was problematic. For example, Chapakama, Mdala-Makumba and Taliya schools had fewer teachers than the number of classes that are currently present. What this meant was that some classes did not have teachers assigned to them. At Chapakama and Mdala-Makumba for example, the head was not able to give us the class register for standard 5 because shortage of teachers meant that teachers were sharing this standard and hence they neglected it. It was observed that sometimes, pupils in these standards spend a whole morning without learning and the consequence of all this is that children may lose interest in schooling. In Mdala -Makumba school for instance, three classes had no teacher during the three days the school was visited and the pupils in these classes were disturbing the other classes. When asked why there were only fewer teachers in some of these schools, it was learnt that many teachers run away because the schools are remote areas and there is no any other incentive for them. Perhaps a good house could be one of the consolations that these teachers may need to be provided with in such areas.

Poor allocation of teachers could also be one of the causes of inadequate quantity of teachers in particular schools. For example, Champhemvu and Mbachundu Schools were oversubscribed in terms of numbers of teachers versus numbers of classes. Paradoxically, with nine teachers (the largest in the sample) and only four standards, Mbachundu had arranged for a shift system, which was the only one in the sample. And indeed, despite having surplus teachers, this was also the only school where it was reported that the district office had refused the community to have the standards extended beyond standard four. As it is discussed elsewhere in this report, parents were very bitter about this scenario.

5.3.8 Teacher quality

Teacher quality also affects education of pupils in general and girls in particular. If teachers are not well qualified, their teaching methodologies are not up to date and if this happens, classroom activities may not always lead to meaningful learning. For example, as argued earlier, it was noted that the unqualified teachers direct their questions to intelligent and aggressive pupils who were usually boys. One teacher at Chipereka used group work as one of his methods. The groups had a permanent leader and these were boys for all the groups. As observed earlier, the role of the group leader was to decide who to read from the textbook and check how well he or she was reading. The impression that one can get here is that the group leaders are taken as mini-teachers and the fact that they were all boys

shows that the teacher regarded them as superior, in terms of ability, to the girls. These kinds of methodologies favour the aggressive boys in enabling pupils' participation more than the girls.

Many of the teachers observed were using these types of methodologies because they were not trained. As shown earlier, 65.5% of all the teachers in all the visited schools were untrained and most of these were teaching the senior classes (standard 5 – 7). While all the other schools had at least one trained teacher, Taliya School did not have any. This made the teachers' position difficult because they had no mentor. Champhemvu, Mdala-Makumba, Chivumu and Chipereka had only one trained teacher and the rest had at least two trained teachers. During both FGDs and a wrap-up meeting, parents at Chivumu pointed out the need for the teachers at their school to be trained; pointing out that untrained teachers were ineffective.

Table 5 also shows that the majority of the teachers in the visited school were male (70.7%). Taliya school had no female teacher at all. The situation would give a bad impression to the girls since female teachers act as immediate role models for them. The presence of fewer female teachers could therefore perpetuate the societal belief that boys are intelligent and usually continue with school unlike the girls. On the other hand, it was noted that most of the female teachers were teaching infant classes (standard 1-2). For instance, at Sungusya school, there were four female teachers and two male teachers. It was disappointing to note that the four female teachers were teaching standards 1 and 2 leaving standards 3 and 4 to the male teachers. Teachers at Chapeta, Chivumu and Mbachundu were also following the same trend. The reasons for this could be that the female teachers want to knock off early while the male teachers do not mind knocking off late. However, this situation works to the disadvantage of the girls because they lack role models as they go to upper classes and yet this is the time the girls need them most. The main points under teacher quality and quantity are;

- There is poor allocation of teachers with some schools having more teachers than the number of streams while the other schools had fewer teachers than the number of streams.
- There were more unqualified teachers than qualified ones which leads to poor methodologies.

- There are fewer female teachers than male teachers which leads to fewer role models for girls.
- Female teachers teach infant classes leaving the senior classes to male teachers.

5.3.9 Demand for Girls Labour Contribution

Many primary schools in this country rely on children's labour in order to carry out school development and maintenance works. The visited schools demanded on the pupils' labour because the schools capitalise on community participation. If the contribution of the parents does not reach the required level, the pupils are used as substitutes for their parents. The labour contribution of pupils is in the form of daily chores and punishments. It was observed that when pupils are performing the daily chores and punishments, there is a lot of gender stereotyping thereby reinforcing or even exaggerating societal attitudes. This observation is in line with the findings of GABLE SMC (1997). For example, girls are expected to sweep and mop classrooms, haul water for drinking, moulding bricks, mop or sweep teachers' houses etc while the boys construct toilets, hoe in teachers' gardens and sometimes remove tree stumps from school grounds. Much as both boys and girls are doing chores, those for girls are everyday chores. The girls usually start the school day while already tired because most of their chores are done before classes begin. The girls are at a greater disadvantage in this respect because by the time they come to school, they would have already undertaken similar chores at home.

Both boys and girls confirmed the gender stereotyping of chores as well as punishments given to them. In addition, they complained of harsh punishments such as removing stumps, moulding bricks, cleaning toilets, whipping etc when they are late to school or after break. This leads to absenteeism which have sometimes resulted in dropouts in some sites. For instance a dropout from Chapakama school said that she hated school because of the punishments since she was late most of the time. The reason why she was late was that she had to haul water for bathing for herself and siblings, sweep the house and prepare porridge, otherwise she would go to school hungry. Two other dropouts at Taliya and Chapeta schools also recalled how they hated punishments that were to be undertaken while classes were in session. The punishments and daily chores seem to have a greater impact on the schooling of girls because they become overloaded after doing similar chores at home before going to school. In addition the girls easily get emotionally disturbed if

they receive heavy punishments from teachers. The main points on girls' labour contribution are;

- Girls do a lot of chores both at school and at home which affect their physical and mental well-being.
- Girls easily get emotionally affected with heavy punishments and this sometimes leads to dropping out.

5.3.10 Harassment of girls

Harassment of girls is one issue that was reported in almost all the sites visited and was highlighted by all the girls whose life histories were constructed from Mchinji, Kasungu and Nkhata Bay. Although harassment was mentioned in focus group discussions with boys and girls in Mangochi, individual life histories with girls did not highlight this as an issue. The possible reason for this difference could be that the girls in Mangochi are prepared for the kind of attraction that takes place between boys and girls during their initiation ceremonies which usually take place when the children are between 8 and 10 years of age.

The harassment of girls was in form of verbal abuse about girls' physical appearance and physical abuse such as bullying, touching breasts, waist and back sides. In some schools such as Mbachundu, bullying went to the extent of snatching food, pens and rulers both within and outside the classroom.

The main perpetrators of harassment of girls were boys. When asked why they did this, the boys said that the girls provoke them either by word of mouth or by wearing beads in their waist and short dresses/skirts. Our observations in the schools did not reveal any indecency in the attire of girls to justify the boys' allegations. Male teachers were also mentioned in some sites as perpetrators of harassment of girls. This was particularly true in schools whose classes had gone beyond standard 4. Unfortunately, girls do not report their predicament to anybody so that the perpetrators are not punished. It would therefore be ideal to institute formal procedures of reporting this in order to minimize the incidence of harassment.

Harassment of girls has a negative impact on their schooling. For instance some girls are not free in class and in the school because they are apprehensive of the behaviour of the

boys. This makes them assume a subordinate status, which leads to poor participation in class. There are some girls who absent themselves from school because they are scared of the boys. For example, a girl from Mbachundu School who was identified by her teacher as being usually absent, said that she was doing that because she feared boys who always chased her to touch her breasts or uncover her skirt to see her under wear. Another dropout girl from Chapeta succumbed to the pressure of persistent proposals from boys which led to her pregnancy and withdrawal from school while she was in standard 8. She said that the boys would not leave you or even threaten to beat you until you accepted one of them. The main points under harassment of girls are:-

- Harassment takes place in all the sites visited although the girls in Mangochi seem not to be affected in the same way as the girls in the other districts.
- Girls reach the extent of dropping out either because they are scared of boys and teachers or they get pregnant.

5.4 SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

This section of the report looks at the socio-cultural factors in the complex problem of low participation of girls in education. In order to explore these factors, the study examined the dynamics and interlockedness of such aspects as cultural practices, beliefs and attitudes, religion and gender and power relationships in the household and how all these influence girls' schooling. In examining cultural practices, beliefs and attitudes the study sought to investigate parental and community attitudes towards the education of boys and girls, views on the appropriate age for marriage, and initiation ceremonies.

5.4.1 Parental and Community Attitudes Towards Education

Findings from separate focus group discussions that were conducted with men, women, teachers and with school going children revealed that generally parents' and communities' attitudes towards the education of both boys and girls are very positive. Communities indicated that they realised that both educated boys and girls were not only a source of pride to the community but also good for the development of the community and the country as a whole. Except in one site in Mchinji, where men indicated preference for educating boys to girls, reasoning that "*chances of getting financial support from girls were slim*", practically all sites visited acknowledge that although in the past boys education was valued more than girls', the trend had changed in recent years. In principle,

parents admitted that they recognised their moral obligation to provide equal schooling opportunities to their children, regardless of sex, because, as they put it, “*you do not know who will assist you in future*”. With specific regard to girls’ schooling, parents and communities acknowledged the importance of extending special emphasis on girls’ education, perceiving it as enabling the girl child to attain self-reliance.

Ironically however, the positive attitudes towards equal schooling opportunities between boys and girls notwithstanding, the reality was that most parents did not “practice what they preached”, largely because they themselves did not go to school.

In Mangochi for example the majority of the parents especially the mothers had no education while in the other 3 districts the majority had not completed primary schooling. This was perceived as a constraint because the parents themselves did not have much vision as to what benefits can be accrued from education. The respondents realised that ignorance of the value of education contributes greatly in the ability of parents to encourage their children to go to school. As it were, whatever encouragement they offered was not forceful enough to enable the full participation of girls in education.

This ignorance also was a limiting factor in the ability of the parents to facilitate and organise conducive environments in the home. Only 319 household (23.6%) said that they checked school work everyday. In the homes the reality was that the household work distribution tended to overburden the girls more than they did with the boys. The respondents to the household questionnaire were asked to indicate the various types of chores in the family. Table 22 shows the distribution of chores performed by boys and girls.

Table 22: Household Chores Performed by Boys and Girls

Activity	Girls	Percentage	Boys	Percentage	Both	Percentage
Work in the garden	50	5.1	242	24.8	685	70.1
Drawing water	844	86.3	4	.4	130	13.3
Cooking	856	87.4	5	.5	118	12.1
Care of siblings	753	77.1	27	2.8	197	20.2
Fishing	12	1.2	955	97.6	11	1.1
Piece work	9	.9	652	66.7	316	32.3
Care of livestock	29	3.0	828	84.7	120	12.3
Vending	124	12.7	385	39.5	465	47.7
Collecting firewood	846	86.5	7	.7	125	12.8
Go to grinding mill	692	71.0	36	3.7	247	25.3
Go on errands	86	8.8	426	43.7	463	47.5
Care for the sick	511	52.5	57	5.9	405	41.6
Sell farm produce	101	10.4	339	35.0	529	54.6
Washing dishes	650	66.5	16	1.6	311	31.8

The message from Table 18 is that even if the parents are aware of the importance of educating their daughters, girls will “by nature” do more household chores than boys. Girls will cook, draw water, collect firewood, care for the sick and wash dishes. In the settings in which the schools operate, these tasks are defined by the society as feminine and therefore have got to be performed by girls. As indicated earlier, these tasks are performed before going to school, after school and in the evening before going to bed. The impact that these can have on the schooling of girls can be substantial indeed. On the other hand, the chores done by boys are not necessarily labour intensive and are mostly done after school. This seems to largely account for the difference in response to schooling between boys and girls. The extract from a life history tells part of the story.

Mpeyani was a Std 2 girl at the age of 11. She had repeated Std 1. On this particular day, Mpeyani was absent from school because her clothes were dirty. Her mother was admitted at the hospital for two months now. As a result, Mpeyani was given the responsibility of taking care of her young sister (sibling) who was 2 years old. Her father died a year ago.

Mpeyani was also absent the previous day because her aunt, who the children stay with, had asked her to accompany her to the grinding mill. Mpeyani says that her aunt refuses to take care of her young sister. This meant that Mpeyani was essentially a guardian to her young sister. Mpeyani has a brother, Chikaiko aged 16, who was in Std 4, and a younger sister Yamikani (5 yrs). Yamikani was also absent on this day because she had woken up late.

Even more ironical, parents were admittedly very happy with their children; particularly girls being very hardworking at the household level, believing that those household skills were indispensable to their (the children’s) own livelihoods. This was emphasized during wrap-up meetings e.g. at Champhemu School. However, by over-emphasizing household skills, the parents were unwittingly sending mixed messages to their children and thereby discouraging them from working hard at school. This was clearly evident by the inordinately higher rates of absenteeism among girls than boys in some locations. When asked why they were absent from school, most girls said that they had been asked by their parents to either accompany them to the grinding mill or had been asked to take care of the house when the mother was away. We see here that girls’ behaviour and activities are

shaped by the expected roles they are to play in their future life. The major problem seems to be that schooling does not offer much alternatives in the lives of these girls as most of them end up being mothers.

5.4.2 Views on the Appropriate Age for Marriage by Sex

The findings of the study revealed that parents generally felt that both boys and girls should marry after finishing school, where finishing school meant reaching form four. Between boys and girls, parents indicated that girls should marry at an earlier age relative to the boys. The specific age ranges mentioned were: 18,20+ for girls and 25,28,30+ for boys. Communities felt that girls should marry earlier than boys largely because girls mature earlier enough emotionally, psychologically and biologically than boys and besides a boy needs to find a job, establish himself and become self reliant so that he can support himself and his family and this usually does take time. The above ideal notwithstanding, the reality on the ground revealed that girls and boys were marrying as young as 13 and 15 respectively.

Separate focus group discussions with men and women in Mangochi revealed that sometimes parents encouraged their daughters to get married earlier than normal because the family felt that they could no longer afford the continued upkeep of the girl child, or simply fearing that the girl would get pregnant out of wedlock. In these communities, continued keeping of an unmarried girl in the household is considered a liability as it exposes the girl to the possibilities of falling pregnant out of wedlock which is considered a disgrace to the family. When this happens there are a lot of repercussions. For example in one location when a girl becomes pregnant out of wedlock the village headmen charges each of the families of both the responsible man/boy and the girl K300 plus a goat, a basketful of flour, one chicken and a bundle of firewood. This is quite a heavy penalty to pay and so the parents opt to marry off their daughters even at an early age of 10 years. Fear of potential loss of income among parents also manifested in the overzealousness of the parents to marry off their daughters to “affluent” businessmen purely for financial gains. Thus, although the girl is a major source of labour in the household, all these considerations far outweigh the continued keeping of the girl in the household.

5.4.3 Initiation ceremonies

The findings of the study revealed that the effect of initiation ceremonies varied from region to region. In Mangochi, for example, there are two types of initiation ceremonies: Nsondo for girls and Jando for boys. Both boys and girls go to their respective initiation ceremonies at the age of about 7 – 8 years, which in most cases is some years before puberty. The ceremonies are conducted in the months of August through October, when school is already in session. Participation in the initiation ceremonies is mandatory for the Yao boys and girls. Those who do not are stigmatised and not considered genuine part of the Yao tribe. The boys and girls themselves look forward to the initiation ceremonies because of the social hype around them and the attention they get.

5.4.5 School calendar

There are enormous adverse consequences to both boys and girls for participating in the initiation ceremonies, largely because the ceremonies clash with the school calendar, which automatically means that the girls end up failing in class for having missed over a month of schooling. During the time of the study, it was reported that in one of the areas of Mangochi, one Jando had extended to more than two months while the school was in session. Invariably, their failure at this critical age triggers the logical repeat - eventual drop out – failure to re-enter pattern. In some extreme cases, girls do not even return to school altogether, perceiving themselves mature enough to get married as a result of having gone through the initiation rites. Moreover, the contents of the initiation rites are such that even in instances when the girl does return to school, she almost invariably engages in early sexual experimentation, which results in pregnancy/early marriage and eventual drop out.

Further, the counselling which girls receive changes their behaviour towards the various members of the community and how they perceive themselves in relation to the whole community. In class they are no longer children and therefore teachers need to be careful in handling the newly elevated members of the community. The girls are now considered as grown ups and therefore are not expected to behave as children. The interaction with the younger pupils in the classroom takes a new turn because the grown ups are not expected to play with children. This new status has obvious adverse effects on the learning and

participation of girls in education as they struggle to readjust to their new status. In the wider community they are to be considered important members, it is very difficult to accept advice since they can now make their own decisions. This attitude is carried over into the classroom and the school as a whole and since the school may not be able to deal with this sudden change the girl feels she no longer can fit into this uncompromising community. The girl then ends up dropping out of the system. Unfortunately the girls are in standard 2 and 3 at the age of 7-9 years or even older. This then may explain the sudden drop in participation of girls as early as Std 2 or 3.

Focus group discussions with parents in Mangochi, revealed that although they (the parents) supported the initiation ceremonies, perceiving them as strengthening the cultural fabric of the Yao tribe, they were concerned with the high rates of school drop out among their children associated with the initiation ceremonies. However, they blamed the status quo on the chiefs for not being considerate enough in setting more convenient times and sticking to them. The apportionment of blame notwithstanding, the high levels of school drop out among girls in Mangochi are depressing considering the massive GABLE campaign that has been carried out in the district specifically to encourage girls persistence. It reveals, in large measure, the heavy entrenchment of cultural practice in the district and suggests intensified culturally sensitive and participatory methods in dealing with the problem.

On the other hand, initiation ceremonies do not have (obvious) adverse consequences in other regions/cultures. In Kasungu and Mchinji, for instance, girls are not adversely affected because there are no lengthy formal initiation ceremonies per se. Initiation ceremonies that involved separating girls from other sectors of society for an extended period of time have since ceased to exist. When a girl reaches puberty, church elders and leaders of the community are called to counsel her on proper morals. If the girl is not Christian, selected women from the village (*anankungwi*) who may include her grand mother, isolate her for counselling. This usually takes place at a household other than her own and normally lasts in a matter of a few hours. In some areas, e.g. in Nkhata Bay, the girl is confined for counselling for a week at the onset of puberty and for another week on second menarche. There are no specific times for these ceremonies, rather they are carried out as and when the girl reaches puberty. The limited duration of counselling also obtains for the boys. On their reaching puberty, the boys are taken to *dambwe*, for their initiation.

Unlike in the Yao setup, going to *dambwe* is not mandatory in the latter setup. Moreover, the initiation ceremony lasts barely a week as a result it does not seriously disrupt their schooling.

5.4.5 Entertainment

The study also examined the various forms of traditional entertainment, which is mostly in the form of dances with a view to expose the extent to which they impacted on girls' schooling. Focus group discussions revealed that communities have traditional dances which are held on festive seasons, e.g. during Christmas, the installation of Chiefs, weddings and other village festivities. The dances are Nanyache, Beni, Mbwila, Manganje, Chioda, Gumbagumba (modern disco) in Mangochi and chitelera, chintali, Mganda and Gulewankulu in Mchinji and Kasungu.

The major finding was that the dances are mostly performed at night. The negative impact is that most of the girls may spend inordinate time practising the dances and thus render themselves absent in school the next day due to tiredness and late nights. Furthermore, since the dances are practiced at night, the girls tend to get free rein to engage in premarital sex. However, in other parts, like Nkhata Bay, these ceremonies are far apart in between and largely performed during vacations such that their impact in education is almost negligible.

5.4.6 Religion

Different kinds of religions were identified as existing in the study areas. These were Roman Catholic, CCAP, Islam, Abraham, Baptist, Church of Christ, Last Church, Jehova's Witnesses, among others. The contribution of the religions in children's education varied from area to area. In Kasungu for example, aside from offering teachings that helped to mould boys and girls into God fearing and morally upright children, the church alleviated the shortage of school blocks by offering prayer houses to be used as classrooms. In Mchinji, the Roman Catholic built actual schools. In almost all sites visited, discussants acknowledged the role the church played in encouraging the children to go to school and to refrain from premarital sex. Churches were also hailed for using their platform to talk about HIV/AIDs. However, the study also elicited the following negative church influences as impacting on girls' education:

Some communities expressed concern that some church activities, such as choir practices, were conducted almost daily and in some instances ran well into the night. Communities expressed concern that these practices tended to put the girls' school livelihoods in danger, as they tended to waste too much time in these extracurricular activities at the expense of their school pursuits. Also the nocturnal gatherings exposed the girls to the proclivity of engaging in premarital sex, which invariably resulted in pregnancy and drop out.

5.4.7 Power and gender relationships

Reflections on the configuration of power and gender relationships varied from region to region and between men and women depending on whether the community was matrilineal or patrilineal. Men in Mangochi for instance, which is a very matrilineal society felt that women were very powerful and hence very influential on the girl child's schooling. The men argued that in a matrilineal culture, the woman controls everything at the family level as she is at her home while the man is a "guest" (*mkamwini*), so to speak. In such a set up, the man has no authority over his children, especially girls. As a result the girls are coerced by their mothers into subtle prostitution, by encouraging them to go to the lake to sell firewood to the "affluent" fishermen. The men also felt that women (mothers) discouraged girls from going to school by giving them too much household chores on the belief that they are moulding future mothers and encouraging them to get married at an early age for reasons advanced earlier. In all this, the man just watches for fear of being sent packing or "divorced or poisoned".

In addition to this, it was pointed out that the girl is always in close contact with the mother doing various household chores. The greatest influence must naturally emanate from such an interaction. The men are out in the field or at the lake most of the day and the amount of contact with the girl child is very minimal so that the influence the man might have is also minimal.

This, together with the community's tacit approval, the girl child herself does not discharge herself to schooling having been socialised into viewing (early) marriage and the care of her own family as a logical conclusion to her upbringing. Men felt that to improve girls' education, the ideal leadership setting in the family should be one of balance. Furthermore,

the matrilineal setting should be flexible and more accommodating of the man. These kinds of problems were also reported in the pilot district of Dedza.

It therefore appears that family cohesion is an important aspect of a girl's schooling. A family which does not have a common stance on the education of the girl child has problems impressing the girl of the need for schooling. The parents find it difficult to encourage the girl to go to school. Their control over the girl is also compromised and the girl gets a free rein over her life. The following life history tells part of the story.

Rose is one of the few girls in Std 4 at Sungusya. She is quite big in size in comparison to the majority of the girls at the school. She is repeating Std 4 because last year she had to drop out due to lack of adequate appropriate clothes. She had only one short dress which was becoming too small for her enlarging bust.

A look at her family showed that Rose was the youngest in the family. Her three brothers and one married sister attended school as far as std 6. The father has been away in South Africa for some years and the mother does piece work hauling water for moulding bricks to fend for the family. The brothers and sister also do piece work moulding bricks. Each member of the family is expected to fend for himself or herself and this affects Rose. No one in the family was prepared to provide Rose with her needs. Rose had to quit school in the third term of std 4 to work at a brick kiln, hauling water. From the money she received she bought herself her basic requirements which included two dresses, one pair of shoes and 2 petticoats.

Unfortunately she could not return to school the same year because the term and the year had ended. Resolved to continue with school she returned the following year repeating std 4. From this experience she learned that she could not rely on her family to support her in her schooling and that she should work during the school holidays not during school to buy her needs.

This example shows that if a family works as one unit with a common goal it is possible to support and encourage girls to attend school but in the absence of this girl is vulnerable to all kinds of pressures to the detriment of her schooling. Therefore family cohesion has a considerable impact on girls schooling. The priorities identified in a family as a unit determines whether the girl receives support to enable her participate and perform well in school.

Women discussants across the cultures, on the other hand, felt that men have power both in the community and in the household. The women further indicated that even in cases where a woman was a chief, men still wielded so much power that they influenced matters in the

community. The women observed that this arrangement was both natural and traditional and they thought that it was futile to fight it.

As regards to whether the configuration of power in the community and household had any adverse impact on girls' education, the women had mixed responses. Women in Nkhatabay who primarily described the configuration of power in the household and the community as tipping on the side of men, tended to deny that the power configuration had any effect on the education of children. They also could not establish the ideal gender and power relationships in the community in order to improve girls' education. They indicated that there was no effect. On the ideal configuration of gender and power relations in the family, they indicated that it did not matter whether the leader was a man or a woman as long they both worked together for the benefit of the girl child.

Women in Mangochi district, however, admitted that the configuration of power in favour of men had adverse effects on girls' education in that the men did not support girls' education as they did for the boys. They spent time fishing and showed no interest in the girl child.

Women in Nkhata Bay had a different view. They said that in the community, it is the chiefs who have the power. They exert a lot of influence on their subjects and they have been seen to influence enrolment in schools. They can also affect changes in some of the socio-cultural activities that clash with schooling-they decide on when the initiation should take place and for how long. However, they admitted that it does not matter whoever has power in the community or household since the responsibility lies in the hands of the parents to encourage their children to go to school. These differences reflect the degree of differences in the awareness of the importance of education in the various parts.

5.4.8 Poverty

Appendix 1 shows the results of some of the PLA activities we did in the areas. The first part of the appendix shows the number of times a problem was ranked from number 1 to 9 and the second one shows whether the problem was mentioned in an area as being prevalent or not. In all the sites poverty was mentioned as the underlying cause of the many socio-economic factors which impinge upon the education of the girl child. It was also ranked as the number one problem in all the sites. However, a look at the other factors which were

mentioned such as hunger, lack of proper dressing, early marriages, teen pregnancies, household chores, conducting business at the lake and others it is found that they are all linked to lack of adequate resources to keep the girl in school. Therefore poverty is an overarching factor but individual households and girls are affected differently by its various manifestations. In the same communities where poverty reigns supreme there are also individuals who still persist in school. This then calls for a treatment which looks at each of the factors attributed to poverty separately.

In summary the main issues arising in this section are

- The communities accept in general that girls need to go to school
- In reality parents have little education and this results in
 - little or no encouragement to girls
 - uncondusive home environments where too much work is given to girls relative to boys
 - parents vision for girls is limited to household activities
 - girls lose interest in school
- Initiation ceremonies seem to cause
 - clash with the school calendar
 - early sexual experimentation
 - discomfiture in class due to the newly acquired status
 - early pregnancy
 - early marriages
 - limited classroom participation
- Entertainment results in late night dances and tiredness in class and premarital sex
- Religious activities like choirs and ceremonies occur during school time and there is also premarital sex
- Family power relationship
 - women have more influence on girls and in the process they overburden them with household chores and pressurise them into early marriages.
 - loose family ties lead to loss of control of girls
 - generally there is little interest in girls education because of continued absence of men in the home.

- Chiefs have power which is sometimes negative and most times do not wield it to benefit girls
- Poverty is an overarching issue, which manifests itself in different moulds, in different families.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the main findings of the study. It relates the specific factors to the wider issues to explain the contexts in which the problems exist. Major issues discussed in this chapter are: classroom interaction, the socialisation process, teaching and learning environments, community participation and mobilisation, benefits from schooling, the thinning down of enrolments, the diverse nature of the problem and the question of survival.

6.1.0 Classroom Interaction

The most striking feature of the classroom observations in the schools is that of a strong ritualisation where a teacher asks questions and organizes exercises, and pupils listen to the teachers, answer the questions and do the exercises. The questions asked by teachers are mostly closed in character requiring only one correct answer, which could be taken directly from the pupils' textbooks or from what the teacher had previously said. Verbal interaction consisted almost entirely of monologues from the teacher or of exchanges between teacher and pupils of the well-known question/answer/evaluation type. There were a few or no verbal initiatives from the pupils' side. In fact only at one school did we find pupils asking questions and indeed even correcting the teacher when he had made a mistake on the board².

Results show that teaching in Malawi primary schools is characterized by remarkably little pupil participation in verbal exchange or other classroom activities. The teacher occupies as much as 90% of all speaking time. Most of the speaking done by pupil is simple confirmation (yes, no) or repeating short sentences from the teacher or textbook. The team observed only two lessons out of the 20 lessons that had involved the pupils in reading from their textbooks. The dominant citing involving the pupils is of course responding to

² It is interesting to note that such an interaction was initiated by one of the bright girls at the school and this was the school where girls outperformed boys.

the question from the teacher. However, in one such lesson, the observations showed that such methods of teaching left much to be desired. In this lesson, which was on comprehension, the teacher just asked the pupils to read a passage (on Goat traps) and five minutes later the teachers started asking the pupils some questions to check if they had understood the passage. As it turned out, none of the pupils answered a single question and the teacher ended up answering all the questions himself.

These conditions are providing a sterile and stultifying learning environment and surely questions the type of literacy skills being imparted to our pupils. This calls for the need to redefine our notion of education to involve a closer attention to learning and the quality of learning, as distinct from the provision of more schools in Malawi. While the government has succeeded in attracting many girls into school as evidenced from the equal number of boys and girls in the first two standards, it would appear that classroom conditions are not conducive enough to enable the system keep these girls in the schools.

Our research has shown that the base for the definition of quality education will vary from zone to zone and from school to school and indeed from district to district. But if quality is to be improved, ensuring at least minimum resources for all the schools is an absolute priority for any educational policy to succeed. Merely expecting schools to become effective when the resources are not there is being unfair to our teachers many of whom are untrained and who are struggling to deliver under bare conditions. The results have shown that girls have a low propensity to persist under these bad conditions.

6.2.0 The Socialisation Process

The development process of an individual takes place under several dimensions: socio-cultural, personal and economic among others. Our understanding of the socialisation process as children grow in Malawi shows that this process is defined by the “mwambo” that defines what men do and what women should also do. This *mwambo* is the pivot of a total ritual that defines the boundaries of individuals' dispositions in society. The ‘mwambo’ (secret knowledge), is the ancestral wisdom that everyone learns at puberty and that is the unique possession of each person’s rank and gender. Adult men have their *mwambo* and adult women have theirs too. The boundaries of secrecy around these bodies of ritually transmitted knowledge assert and reify the principal social categories of the community (Serpell 1993, Chimombo 1999). It also demarcates and differentiates within

them the categories of gender, age grade and rank. This is the central point made by our study. It points to the fact that as the state attempts to touch and influence the lives of its people at the periphery, its forces are weaker relative to the boundaries as set by the *mwambo*.

The results of our analysis have shown that the probabilities of boys and girls attending school are affected by an interplay of factors. Whether schooling is free, or is situated in the village (i.e. no problem of distance), the major challenge to the advancement of girls' education is how to challenge the traditional gender division of labour existent in our society. As observed by Chimombo and Chonzi (1999), we must always keep in mind that in these societies, girls are always expected to fetch water, and firewood and will always have to cook for their families. These are their roles as defined by the '*mwambo*' of the village. It will take time before such traditional practices are eliminated. As we attempt to promote girls' education we should always keep in mind that girls have these extra responsibilities assigned to them by the environment in which the school operates.

Gender differentiated roles also manifested in the distribution of work in the schools. While we were working at one school, we found parents who were working on some development work at the school. Women were bringing thatching grass while men had brought poles etc for the construction of the roof of a teacher's house. At another school, manual work involved boys filling pits with broken bricks while other were clearing the ground with hoes. Girls were smearing the floor of two classrooms without roofs while others were mopping the floor of the two UNICEF classrooms. At yet another school, the allocation of different roles demonstrated how girls could be affected by these gender-differentiated roles. Here, boys were asked to climb on top of the roof and remove litter (a five minute job) while girls were asked to mop the floor of one of the classrooms. Girls were still doing their job 30 or more minutes after boys had left for home. If it is considered that it is the girls who will also perform more household chores when they get back home, it can be appreciated how much little time these girls have at their disposal for school-work outside schooling time.

It can be seen that these socialization processes create gender differences from childhood and inhibits the participation of girls and women in education and training programs. Women's lives are generally structured by and around those of men. Girls are expected to

prepare for and accept this life. In these communities a major accomplishment of the family is to mold their girls into respected and influential women. In these traditions, a respected woman is the one who is able to perform the duties of a woman as defined by the society. Every family aims at imparting these skills for fear of being laughed at in future. At one of the wrap-up meetings, parents stressed on the importance of passing on the skills to their young ones in case they will be rebuked in future by others -“*Adakasatitsa Ambuyako*”. These skills are vital in the lives of these people and as long as the school does not offer other alternatives to life, it is difficult to see how these people can change their life patterns.

The socialization process also seems to introduce a paradox to the whole school cultural interface. Teachers indicated the fear of social turbulence that would follow in encouraging the mixing of boys and girls. While our teaching methods are encouraging the principles of mixed group teaching, it appeared that as pupils grow older, there develops a natural distance between the boys and girls. Teachers in a focus group discussion observed that the behaviour of girls in the classroom completely changes once they come from initiation ceremonies. It is therefore probable that forcing boys and girls to mix in the classrooms is counter to the *mwambo* of the village. The result of this may be that the more schools enforce these teaching strategies, the more they are pushing pupils, especially girls, away from the school environment. Teachers narrated to us countless stories of how difficult it is to emphasise this mixing principle and this is also what we observed in the classrooms as indicated above.

6.3.0 Teaching and Learning Environments

The conditions in which the teaching and learning is taking place in most schools of Malawi are very pathetic and illusionary. As we moved across schools, we observed half finished classrooms, with no windows, classes under trees, on the open under very harsh conditions (heavy wind, on dusty floors, under scorching sun etc) and/or in *sheds that looked as if they were meant for keeping animals*. We then wondered whether anyone could say with confidence that there was learning taking place under these circumstances.

As the description of the study sites have indicated, while the overall objective of the UNICEF projects (Keeping kids in School and Closing the Gender Gap) was to improve the quality of primary education and ensure access to educational facilities within walking

distance, especially for girls, the evidence showed that the provision of such quality education was far from ideal. School block (the most crucial factor in the eyes of parents) in inadequate and teacher houses are far too few, and in some schools, material provisions are so few that it is feared that some pupils may simply choose to stay at home where their time can be better utilised.

Perhaps the critical question to be addressed is what constitutes quality education? For sure, the notion of quality must include the consideration of the school in its totality. In addition to having a classroom block, a school must have enough well qualified teachers who have a place to stay.³ What was obvious to us was that the provisions made by UNICEF did not allow for the attainment of such quality education. Unless the quality of teaching and learning improves, Malawi is unlikely to reverse the pattern of repetition and dropouts that have characterised the system for a long time now. The MoE needs to seriously think about what constitutes a school and indeed what constitutes education. We need to set minimum acceptable educational standards for the country and to identify the resources needed to achieve quality educational goals. Our analysis has showed that, in the eyes of the parents, a school must have good buildings and it is possible that the absence of these building put off many parents as they do not regard these schools worth of any serious consideration.

Further, the evidence indicated that the notion of quality must change in some very fundamental ways. A quality education must include learning the basics and learning how to learn in a safe, secure, gender-sensitive, healthy, and protective learning environment. Our conviction was that the problems of girls' education might have their roots in the awful conditions in which the teaching and learning are taking place. Further, as we observed the interaction between the boys and girls, we witnessed massive bullying, teasing and even beating of girls by boys. At one school, a girl was persistently harassed by two boys who were demanding that the girl give them her roasted maize.⁴ At another school, a life history girl narrated the terror that was being inflicted in girls' minds by schoolboys who considered themselves as "kings" of the area. These boys could touch any girl's breast at

³ At one school (Mbachundu in Mchinji), where there is no single teachers house, there was no schooling in February for two consecutive days because teachers were not able to come to school in the rains.

⁴ The research team later saw the same girl crying when she had been beaten by one of the big boys at the school.

will, they could throw their books away, they could karate them or even beat them up. All these are the conditions, which are driving away the many girls who start school.

This then lends support to the fact that the lack of progress in achieving EFA is partly due to the specific socio-economic problems in the environments in which education operates, an indication that education alone cannot solve our problems of poverty, but that changes in the political, social and economic areas are also necessary. Girls' education is more than an education issue. It is deeply influenced by such things as poverty, tradition, habit, systems and discrimination- all requiring political will, not only just to educate girls, but also to eliminate those non-educational obstacles.

Another related problem in the teaching and learning environment concerns the poor conditions in terms of teaching materials. In addition to overcrowded classrooms, with some classes in excess of 100 pupils and of varying age range, some classrooms rarely had pictures or other visual aids on the wall, no storage cupboard or book boxes. Available chalkboards were in various states of dilapidation and consumables were few. There was need for clean drinking water in some schools and as pupils often had to walk long distances for a drink of water, the teachers reported that some pupils did not always come back to class following their trek to the source of water. All heads complained about a lack of teaching and learning materials. If these conditions are considered together with the fact that most of the teachers are untrained, then the type of teaching and learning taking place in our schools is very questionable. Indeed lack of training means that they have difficulty in finding their own ways of explaining new concepts. They possess extremely limited repertoire of teaching methods. It is no wonder that classroom observations showed that most teachers were not concerned with individual pupils, and that they had no skills and methods to make sure that pupils were learning. Our results have shown that girls are the most victims under these circumstances. In these classrooms, girls are the most inactive participants of the teaching learning process. It would appear that schools as the function in Malawi are a long way towards stimulating girls into active players in the classroom and there are a lot of factors contributing to this.

6.4.0 Community Participation and Mobilisation

One of the strategies for the implementation of FPE was the realisation of the importance of a more community-oriented strategy – one that mobilised the capacity of Malawian

citizens (MoE 1998). This was in part in response to the Jomtien conference's call for an expanded vision and renewed commitment towards EFA. This approach to development has indeed been enshrined in many donor assistance strategies to the development of education in Malawi and indeed the UNICEF schools embraced this strategy. The vision of the Malawi government (PIF 200: 5) observed that at the primary level where problems of poor attendance, enrolment, repetition and dropout are more acute, the intention is to improve enrolment through community mobilization and civic education campaigns. "Regular attendance, which is currently inhibiting children's learning will be addressed through particular strategies developed by community groups such as school committees". This section of the report summarises two aspects of the community mobilization: the soliciting of the communities' labour force and the community mobilisation to induce effective demand for education.

6.5.0 Self-Help/Labour Contributions.

Almost all UNICEF assistance to the communities constituted the provision of the basic materials: iron sheets, cement, borehole, and some school infrastructures such as desks, blackboard, wall clocks, geometrical materials, and many more. As observed above, these provisions varied from school to school with some schools (e.g. Chapeta) being given the block only while others had many other things in addition. The basic principle underlying the construction of the school blocks was that the communities would provide the necessary labour. But what did the evidence show in terms of community participation?

As we visited the areas, we were overwhelmed by the positive response from the communities towards the provision of bricks, sand and the related materials. In all the areas of Mchinji, Kasungu and Nkhata-bay, there were massive stacks of burnt bricks. This gave us the evidence that people have got the message about the importance of education and the need for pupils to have good learning places. At one community with only standards one to four, the community is very eager to have more blocks built. The research team saw a foundation for a classroom block which was dug many years ago that was lying idle⁵. A donor representative had come to the area and promised them that they would help the community to get the started school block finished if there were enough bricks. Hearing this,

⁵ It was reported that this foundation was dug during the 1999 elections campaign.

the community mobilized itself and at the time of the fieldwork, one stack of bricks had already been burnt and another one was waiting to be burnt. They also had collected sand and had moved the burnt bricks around the foundation. However, while the donor representative had promised the community that they would be assisted by June, the people had been going to the District Assembly (DC) office many times but they were consistently turned down.

Our fear, as we witnessed massive bricks which were waiting for promised assistance was that these people were dancing to false tunes of promises which was detrimental to the whole concept of community participation. There were several factors associated with this problem. The first one is the problem of communication between UNICEF and the schools which is through the district offices (DC or DEO). Many schools reported to us that they had not received many of the things which were promised to them. In fact there were reports of many things that went missing once they reached the DEO 's office. There seems to be need for change of strategy here in the way assistance is channeled to the schools. Of particular importance is perhaps the need to empower these communities so that they are able to follow-up things they have been promised. Here, we are inclined to question the capacity of the district offices in effectively implementing approved projects.

We were also puzzled by the helplessness of the communities when the promised aid was not forthcoming. Most of them did not seem to know what to do under such circumstances. There was a clear manifestation of lack of change agents in these communities. Perhaps this is understandable in the absent of local government structures in the districts and one hopes that this problem will be eased with the reestablishment of the position of ward councilors. But we still think that there is a need for these people to be sensitized on how to go about soliciting assistance from the many organizations in the country. This was exemplified by the marked differences in the way the research areas had benefited from the various NGOs in the country.

The evidence lends support to the literature that very rarely does the rhetoric of community involvement go beyond the form of "supporter" of schools, contributing labour and making sure that children attend (Hoppers, 1998). Labour here constitutes the provision of building materials such as water, stones, sand, bricks etc. This casts serious doubts about the extent to which the communities can be involved in the affairs of the school. Analysis of the seasonal calendars showed that socio-economic conditions are forcing these communities to become

pre-occupied with survival and income generating systems and this limits the time available for such other activities as self-help.

6.6.0 Community Mobilisation

The potential for PTA is the provision of a basis for the discussion of substantive issues relating to the education of their communities. Our PRA approaches and FGDs proved to be much more successful in generating opportunities for various consistencies within the communities to express their concerns. It was also observed that where PTAs were effective, they proved to be the most effective route through which problems, say of absenteeism and pregnancies, could be ironed out. It appeared to us that room existed for the establishment of more institutions for the better delivery of policies and more importantly, for the effective management of schools and the much needed basic school maintenance and/or construction.

The evidence also indicated the positive impact of the mobilization campaigns. Together with the political will under the FPE policy, there was every evidence that the public has in general responded to the call for increased school participation. But as we visited the schools and witnessed the conditions under which the schools were operating we wondered why our governments should encourage their people to get their children into schools when there are no resources and there is little capacity to sustain the demand arising from the call. To us, by responding to the calls of the Jomtien and more recently of the Dakar conferences, these governments are putting themselves in a state of predicament in which people respond favourably to their calls but they then do not have the means to satisfy the demand. More importantly perhaps, how can governments make schooling fit together with other, perhaps more urgent concerns in the lives of these people? This then bring into question the whole issue of the credibility of education to which we now turn.

6.7.0 No Tangible Benefits from Schooling.

The pedagogical agenda of basic education is the cultivation of children's intellectual and moral development. But there is also the economic agenda, which has been seen in this study to far much outweigh the pedagogical agenda at least as far as the parents are concerned. This agenda concern education's ability to uplift individual's status in society. Since sending children to school and keeping them there is largely a parental decision in

the absence of compulsory primary education, it is necessary to understand the context in which the decision is made. The evidence has shown that the decisions about schooling are shaped by a complex interplay of socio-cultural and economic factors.

These decisions reflect the rational choices made by parents. Girls' participation in schools is a consequence of rationale decision made by parents based on what they perceive the benefit of schooling to be. In making the decision, they weight up, with whatever available evidence, the economic as well as the social benefit they believe are likely to accrue to themselves and their daughters against the costs incurred.

The social and economic gains of the son seem to naturally outweigh those of the daughter. Male participation in the labour market means that parents place a higher value on the education of boys. Conversely cultural perception of girl's roles and their mobility, reinforced by low expectations of social and economic benefits to the family, strengthen cultural barriers and influence parents in favour of their sons schooling. Long-term benefits such as lower fertility and better child health care are less tangible, and neither the women FGDs nor the girls themselves could readily relate to them. In fact at one PRA and indeed during wrap-up meetings, parents spoke very strongly against the use of contraceptives and indeed the whole idea of going to Banja La Mtsogolo for child spacing. These parents seem to have a very narrow view of the real benefit of sending their children, especially daughters to school; perhaps largely because these derive little benefit from it.

6.8.0 No Appreciation of the Value of Education.

It would seem that amidst the poverty of rural Malawi and the pursuit of economic survival and improved material comfort, what is really needed is the means to realize greater financial benefits from schooling. Schools as they function in Malawi are not yet integrated into the everyday lives of the average person and is therefore yet to become a self-imposing activity in the lives of these people. As observed by Bredie et al. (1998:11), 'with the decline in formal sector employment and growth of informal sector work, parents feel that education is not important for the kind of jobs available in the informal sector'. In these communities, the average girl will end up becoming a mother and every parents therefore strives at imparting in their daughters those skills which will make their daughters "good"

mothers as defined by the *mwambo* of the village. This has a very negative impact on the schooling of girls.

Further, the experience of these people tells them that they have existed and survived without education and they therefore do not see why their children should bother to go to school. After all, the chances for prospering through the education system by those doing so are very slim. Indeed, in some areas, going to school was not a model to copy. In Mangochi for example, those who were prospering, whether they were educated or not, were those who were engaged in business such as going to SA to buy things and sell them in Malawi. In Mchinji and Kasungu, it was the illiterate farmers who were prospering. In the words of one teacher: “the problem is that we have ignorant but wealthy parents here (*makolo opeza bwino koma osazindikira*)”. The evidence showed that wealthy illiterate parents did not care about the schooling of their children. They were happy making money from farming and business even though they had not been to school. They therefore could not appreciate the value of education. 'They actually encourage their children not to go to school so that they can help them with their business' a teacher noted. The important thing to the family was the immediate production or income needs of the family to which children could contribute. Parents' demands for schooling conflicted with short-run income and labour needs involving their children's contribution to the subsistence form of production and the family's cash earnings. The evidence has shown that as mothers strives to meet these income needs, it is the girls who are more prone to working in the homes, and this greatly affects their performance in school.

It is one thing to implement policies which make schooling more attractive and less costly to the consumer, it is another thing to both effectively inform and to demonstrate to the target population that it is in their interest to respond to these changes. This is of particular importance in the context of the poor people since whilst the costs incurred during school participation tend to be immediate, the most significant benefits to be derived from schooling (i.e. the pecuniary ones), tend to be derived much later. In making decisions about the schooling of their children, these people need to be convinced that this schooling enterprise is a worthwhile one. The major problem seem to be that schooling does not play a major role in the lives of these people. It is the cooking, the mopping, the going to the grinding mill that pre-occupy most of their future lives. Problems of girls' dropout and non-persistence have to be understood within these contexts. Identifying individual causes

for dropout without situating them within such a context would not only be insufficient. It would also reduce the complexity of the reality covered by such terms as dropout and thus suggest simplistic or mistaken interpretations, which in their turn would likely lead to mistaken decision-making.

6.9.0 A Thinning Down of Enrolments.

The most disturbing feature throughout the schools visited and indeed in most schools of Malawi was the tendency for enrolment to decrease as pupils progressed to higher standards. In the lower sections, class sizes were largest often by a factor of 5 or more when compared to standard seven or eight. In 1997, the number of pupils enrolled in standard eight at national level was only 17% of the number enrolled in standard one, giving an idea of the magnitude of the attrition resulting from dropout (Kunje and Lewin 1999). The situation seems not to have changed. Kamundi's (1989) examination of dropout found that from 1978/79 to 1985/86, 23% of the pupils reached standard eight, from 1980/81 to 1987/88, only 18% reached standard eight. The evidence showed that girls are still dropping out faster than boys in the schools. The most plausible explanation for this is that in all the ten schools visited, the lowest standards had the worst learning conditions. Shortage of furniture meant that it was standards one to four, which were to sit on the floor, and who had no classrooms. Qualified teachers are disproportionately allocated to the upper standards, which were preparing for the PSLCE. As a result, repetition and dropout rates were greatest in these standards suggesting that learning was least effective at this level. Our results show that the experience of the teachers is vital in handling the infant sections and it seems plausible to suggest that the infant sections need this experience. The strong elimination between standards 1 and 2, if anything, shows that many things are going wrong in the primary schooling in Malawi and this is a challenge to the achievement of EFA. Further, the conditions in schools are varied and these variations also demonstrate that attempts to improve the situations have to bear in mind these varied conditions hence the need for diversity.

6.10.0 The Diverse Nature of the Problems

As we tried to understand the interface between the school and the various traditional practices, we could not help but conclude that it is within these ideological settings that problems of schooling need to be understood. In different regions of the country, the sources of income that children can bring to households to complement the main sources of support vary

substantially. Therefore, in addition to regional cultural differences, perceived returns to education as well as the opportunity costs of sending children to school in the different regions also vary considerably (Castrol-Leal 1996:33). The implication for this is that strategies devised to curb these problems of schooling cannot be the same. There is no single strategy that will work everywhere nor can there be one model of implementation that will cope with different problems. The challenge to planners in Malawi is how to encompass these diverse perspectives.

The problem is that those who live in remote areas, ethnic minorities, girls, and marginal populations have usually been last in our development efforts. It is time to put them first. We need to renew our commitment to provide quality education for all, and put special effort into finding creative solutions to the problems of those living on the frontiers of our national development efforts (Nielsen 1992: 7). Working on the frontiers of education for all requires us to abandon conventional concepts of schooling. Despite continued targeting of such districts as Mangochi for the improvement of girls' education, the evidence shows that not significant improvements have been made. And we ask the question why is this so? It seems that what we need in the frontier are new concepts of the school, the teacher, of school management and indeed communities capable of accommodating our change efforts. These communities are shaped by a variety of activities and our challenge is how to accommodate them all.

6.11.0 A Question of Survival

There is obviously a small section of people where there is lack of effective demand for education. For these people, even if all the calculations were made and provisions made for classrooms, books, teachers and all other T/L materials, they would still not send their children to school. Here, the real problem with the education of girls is that government cannot do anything about absolute poverty. As parents, especially mothers struggle for survival in the homes, their daughters become substitutes for the remaining pieces of work in the households. The lack of persistence of girls in school is largely explained by the labour distribution patterns in the families as they strive for survival.

This explains Malawi's recent drive towards income generating activities (Chilimampungu 1997), which has resulted in much absenteeism and, in some cases, dropout and non-enrolment. This study has shown that in their everyday life, rural people are striving simply to survive. The problem has been that in food-deficit households in the rural areas, which are in the majority, this striving for survival heightens labour demands placed on every member of the

family, including the school children. They are involved in several IGAs that enable the household to survive and between a boy and a girl, it is the girl who is subjected to more work outside school hours. Obviously, economic hardships are limiting the school's attractiveness as the school manifests a weak position relative to the force of the family organisation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

7.0 Introduction

The conclusions drawn in this study emanate from the analysis of the various data collected and the ensuing discussions. Consideration has also been given to the findings of earlier studies to substantiate these conclusions. However it should be realised that our school sample was limited mainly to junior schools especially in Mangochi and therefore the study may not have captured other issues in older girls or in upper standards. Our conclusions are shaped by the three main domains of the study.

7.1.0 Classrooms

The conditions in the classrooms have been seen not to be conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place. Pupils are mostly sitting on the floor and this makes it difficult for girls to fully participate in the classroom, they are learning outdoors and under harsh conditions making the whole teaching-learning process difficult. It appears that the conditions provided by the schools are much more unpalatable than the homes of the children and this makes the schools unattractive. Further, the school environment demands that girls have proper dressing. Many girls did mention that they could not mix with their friends who had better dresses. The inability of parents to provide proper dresses was making some girls leave school to work in order to acquire proper dresses and then come back to school later.

It was also evident that the system is forcing the pupils to interact but when girls come back from initiation ceremonies, their behaviour changes and it appears that our mixed group teaching strategies are counter to the socialisation processes in these societies. Girls seem to be being pushed out of school by these strategies.

In the eyes of parents, a school must have good buildings. The impression we got was that parents were in general not satisfied with the provisions made to these communities. In Mangochi where community participation is very weak, parents did not seem pleased with the structures provided, voicing concern that they felt cheated about the provisions made. In addition, the workmanship is very poor, perpetually in need of repair and in many cases

rendering the blocks a hazard. The result was that teachers chose to conduct lessons outside for the safety of both children and the teachers themselves.

7.2.0 The school

UNICEF has helped in providing schools within walking distance. While UNICEF's provision was aimed at standards 1 and 2, every community had expanded the schools to at least standard 4. However, the complementary shelters provided by the communities were of low quality. The major problem with the provision of incomplete primary schools is that they give the children a limited vision of the schooling concept. A lot of them leave school after completing standard four for example thinking that they have finished the primary cycle. Some communities argued that the situation has in reality not changed since in the past, pupils were starting school late because of distance and stopped after four years because of age. The provision of incomplete schools has meant that pupils start school early but that they stop after four years because there are no other standards.

Further, with one block only, most of the lessons are conducted out doors. In fact even with standard 1 and 2 alone, two classrooms are not enough. Learning outside has a lot of problems, especially in rugged terrain and in harsh weather. Construction of the blocks need to take cognisance of the bad weather and provide appropriate shelters to enable effective teaching and learning to take place.

The provision of facilities is grossly inadequate in some schools. There are no adequate toilets for example so that pupils have to queue to use them. They are mostly constructed by the pupils themselves and in most cases they are not enough and they are of low quality. For girls, this is an important aspect in their lives and when it is not provided they may easily get disillusioned. There does not seem to be adequate attention to the provision of facilities in schools.

It was learnt that the availability of sports equipment is a great incentive for girls to go and stay in school. This is so because the school is the only place in the community where children will have access to footballs and netballs and their provision seem to make a great deal of a difference.

Teachers houses are also grossly inadequate in all schools. Their absence is a big inconvenience to the operation of the schools. Teachers have to walk or cycle long distances to school and this makes them to frequently absent themselves from school. The absence of good teachers' houses is also a disincentive to the attraction of good teachers to these schools and this also makes the teaching profession unattractive. Disgruntled teachers are not in a position to assist in this endeavour.

Working habits of the communities seem to manifest themselves in the schools. Girls are the ones doing most of the work in schools; hauling water, mopping in the classes while boys are usually given much lesser jobs. This is a great constraint to the education of girls. There was also some evidence that girls do not respond well to harsh punishment administered in schools.

In most of the areas, girls are learning as second class pupils. Boys are aggressive. They bully and sexually harass girls and these seem to make the school a very hostile place for girls. In contrast, girls in Mangochi seem to expect this from the boys and did not complain about it. Apparently the culture even condones this behaviour.

7.3.0 The Home.

The major players in the girls' education saga seem to be the parents. Where they are not educated, there is an intergenerational transfer of lack of appreciation of the value of education. It is difficult for parents to impress upon the girls the need to go to school.

Further the nature of the households is that the father is mostly away so that the major influence on the girls' education comes from the mother. Given the low literacy level of the mothers, they unwittingly give mixed messages to the girls. The main goal of the socialisation process is to mould these girls into "good" mothers in future. As a result, mothers give work to the girl such as going to the grinding mill and other household chores even if this means that they have to absent themselves from school. If the girls refuse, they are told that they will '*eat their school*'. The parents, especially the mothers are the vital element in the education of our girls. This means then that the home is the most important domain in the improvement of girls' education.

Homes in rural areas have poor lighting facilities so that the pupils cannot read at night. Ninety-six percent of the households visited used paraffin as their source of light. Secondly given that it is the girls who do most of the work in the homes, they are tired by the time they go to sleep so that reading is almost impossible. It is only between noon and dusk that these pupils may have time to have a look at their books. These circumstances make girls experience schooling at a different playing field from boys.

What seems to emerge is that when the family cohesion is strong or when the father has more positive influence girls have more chances of attending and completing school.

In general these homes are poor. Families must fend for themselves. It is from there that we have problems of girls having to work more than boys, girls having no proper dresses, or being forced by circumstances into prostitution, and indeed the problem of hunger which has its own associated consequences; for example children cannot go to school, and the families have to spend most of their time working in other people's gardens for food and money.

7.4.0 Socio-Economic Dimension

In the communities, it appears that there is nothing positive happening in the lives of those who have gone to school to indicate that they are benefiting from having gone to school. Successful educated people in the areas are rare. For these communities, it is the fishing and the farming that shape their activities and that are making the people successful and those successful farmers or fishermen have never been to school. Until that time when their lives are influenced by education, it is difficult to see how the communities can appreciate the value of going school.

Another dimension worth discussing are the initiation ceremonies. There are three areas here. The periods for conducting them varied from one day to one week and in Mangochi it could go up to three months. This means that there are associated levels of absenteeism from school by the pupils involved and the problem is more acute for those on long periods. They end up failing in school. Secondly, whatever counselling they get from the initiation, the pupils come back changed both in personality and their perception of life in general. They are now grown ups and are expected to participate and contribute fully in the activities of the communities. They are grown ups and are therefore expected not to play with children. The consequence is

that their participation in class and in school in general will change and this affects their performance. Girls are the worst victims on this count. These initiation ceremonies also seem to orientate these pupils towards more sexual activities to the extent that marriage is the immediate thing that comes to their minds and this disturbs their schooling behaviour⁶. Economic circumstances also force girls to help out even to the extent of selling their bodies.

There is the fear among the families that once a girl reaches puberty, she is prone to getting pregnant out of wedlock. Pregnancy out of the wedlock is a disgrace to the family and most of the families will want to avoid it. The result is that the girls are forced into early marriage. Further, these communities are full of teenage mothers who seem to be doing well. There is therefore an associated peer pressure in the school girls to get married. Evidence from life histories for example, showed that girls were happy when they got married and the husbands were supporting them. The following extract from a life history confirms this.

Madalitso Phiri was born in 1982 in a family of two girls. She dropped out of school and got married in 1999 after reaching standard 6. Her elder sister also dropped out after reaching standard six. Madalitso had never repeated a standard before. However, she had stopped school twice before dropping out completely. She stopped in std1 because she was too young and then stopped again in std3 for no reason. Madalitso reckoned that she was quite old in standard 6. The reason for dropping out completely was that she had no support from her parents. They were not going to school when they were called so the head used to send her back. Madalitso liked learning at school especially arithmetic but she did not like Chichewa – it is a silly subject.

Although boys used to harass her by touching her breasts and buttocks, this was not the main reason she left school for. It was really lack of parental care. The parents used to make her work during school time. This was also the main reason that made her elder sister leave school. If her parents were supportive, Madalitso wanted to go up to secondary school and be a teacher. Madalitso thought that her parents should have done better and she also thought that something should be done to encourage parents to support their children in school.

Madalitso however said that she did not regret that she left school because she had a happy marriage. She said that for sure, she got married when she was matured. Although her husband was not working, he was doing piece work and from this, he was able to provide her with everything she wanted – things which her parents were not able to provide.

⁶ We acknowledge the attempts made to get the contents of these ceremonies changed, but the evidence shows

Although some forms of entertainment were said to be affecting the ability of girls to attend school, it seems that these only affect schooling when they take place during schooling time. However, it is apparent that parents are vital in driving and instilling the schooling behaviour in children. Parents will decide to take their children to church meeting even during school time, parents will decide to let their children attend to wedding ceremonies even when they were held on school days. It is therefore difficult to see how the education of girls can be improved if parents are not the active participants of the our endeavours

It is thus the responsibility of everybody, the government, the parents, the communities as well as the chiefs to tackle the problem of girls' education. Solving the problems of schooling cannot be left in the hands of one institution. It requires a concerted effort from all concerned. But it must be mentioned that this concerted effort will not yield results unless these people are provided with schools that look to be serious places of learning in their eyes. We need to provide them with schools with good structures that are secure and where the learning outcomes are abundantly evident.

7.5.0 Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this report are derived from the problem solution matrices conducted with key change agents in the communities and from the analyses of the problems in the various contexts. They are also part of the results of wrap-up meetings we conducted at the end of each site visit. The following are therefore the recommendations from the study but details problems and recommendations for each area are outlined in appendix xi:-

- 1) The schools are located in rural and remote areas where no other schools exist. The provision of only Std 1 and Std 2 limited the vision and scope of education within these peripheral communities. Whatever momentum and interest is generated stalls and halts at Std 2. Beyond Std 3 the education provided is of appalling quality because the facilities available are scrounged from community contributions. It is therefore recommended that any organisation offering primary schools should provide a complete school.

that these ceremonies are still a source of constraints to girls' education.

- 2) Related to 1 above, is the need to provide schools with teachers' houses. The absence of these in schools is causing a lot of problems and is a hindrance to the teaching and learning process. It is therefore recommended that the provision of schools in future should look at a school in its totality.
- 3) Siting of the schools should take into consideration the weather and the terrain. Even more important is consideration of sheltering children the whole period they are at school. It is therefore recommended that in future, UNICEF should spend more time studying the areas before schools are constructed.
- 4) The architecture and construction of the school buildings should attract children and parents should appreciate that indeed the providers of education mean it when they encourage participation of children in education on the various platforms. It is desirable that the schools should be good looking and more habitable than the dwelling places of the children. Underlying this is the question of how the projects are implemented and who actually constructs the schools. The study therefore recommends that school project implementation should be geared towards the construction of attractive and solid structures. And this calls for a change in UNICEF's strategies for implementation.
- 5) Inadequate facilities at the school limit the nature of activities that attract girls. The majority of girls in these areas are simply not interested in school. The provision of simple materials, equipment and sports gear is imperative if the school is to appeal to girls. We therefore recommend that UNICEF should make deliberate efforts to enhanced the provision of these facilities.
- 6) The study also recommends that the curriculum be designed to interest the children in their local activities. It appears the school has failed to interest children because they perceive school activities as alien to their everyday environment. The language and the discourse should then be compatible with what children are familiar with. We therefore recommend that attempts be made by government towards making the school curriculum relate to the activities of the environment in which the schools operate. But this has vast implications for teacher preparations.
- 7) It was also apparent that the learning that goes on in the schools does not capture the interest of the pupils. Furthermore, it was obvious that it does not impress the parents more especially the mothers. It was noted that most of this was as a result of poor quality and inadequate teachers. The study strongly recommends that the

ministry of education must make sure that teachers have the minimum teaching skills that will enable them cope in the classroom.

- 8) It is evident that boys have taken the liberty to impose themselves on girls in and outside the classroom. It is only proper that teachers and the school committees should be empowered to recognise any forms of harassment and deal with them accordingly. In addition, the school system should devise means of discouraging boys from any behaviours which adversely affect girls in school. This can be done by the ministry of education through the intensification of the gender sensitisation programs.
- 9) The study has identified opportunity cost as an important constraint to sending girls to school. Parents are the greatest influence on children and the mother has special influence on girls. She is in a position to provide vision to the girl. Therefore any interventions should target the mother who needs to re orientate her perception towards education of the child. In areas where men seem to have little interest in girls' education the interventions should involve the men folk too.
- 10) Poverty has been identified as another deterrent to girls' education in this study. It was evident during wrap-up meeting that the communities do not want handouts to alleviate their poverty. Rather, they would prefer to have sustainable means of dealing with their poverty. To this effect, they would prefer to have access to credit facilities that would enable them to engage in some form of income generating activity. It is therefore recommended that UNICEF and other organisations interested in girls' education should consider this alternative.
- 11) The incompatibility of the new status of a girl after initiation with the school is a complex one. For sure, girls must be encouraged to start school early. However it is the duty of the teachers and the schools to accommodate diverse characters in the classroom and at the school. Adequately trained teachers would not find such a task daunting. This then reinforces the need to have adequate and appropriately trained teachers at the school. It is therefore recommended that the ministry should make sure that teachers have the skills to handle pupils of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- 12) Chiefs and school committees possess a lot of power which is not wielded to the benefit of school going children. They are the driving force behind the *mwambo* of the village. There is then the need to sensitise these key stakeholders and empower them with appropriate support to take a lead in encouraging girls to participate more

fully in education. When this is done socio-cultural issues that revolve around the chief could be infiltrated and modified to be compatible with schooling needs. All stakeholders in the provision of education should work together in this responsibility.

While it is desirable to impress upon everyone on the need for girls to attend and complete school, the prerequisite for the success of such a campaign is to have the schools and the appropriate facilities. When we have these then can the system start pushing girls into schools. At this point the complex socio-cultural factors that negatively affect girls' schooling can be addressed squarely. The major problem in primary schools in Malawi is the inability of the system to hold on to those pupils who show interest and start school. There are a complex array of factors attributing to this state of affairs.

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Appendix i PROBLEM RANKING FREQUENCIES

Problem/Site	Site								
	Tchesa	Sungusya	Nchema	Mdala/Makumba	Taliya	Chipeta	Chivumu	Mbachundu	Chaj
Poverty	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Household chores	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Absenteeism by teachers					✓				
Inadequate teachers	✓						✓		
Orphanage	✓								
Lack of parental encouragement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Early marriages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pregnancies	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Boy-girl relationships(prostitution)									
Ill-treatment by teachers									
Video shows									
Lack of interest by girls/laziness	✓	✓		✓					
Business at the lake			✓	✓					
Peer pressure			✓						
Gumbagumba dances			✓						
Insubordination of children/girls			✓					✓	
Initiation ceremonies	✓								
Sexual harassment	✓								
Nyau dance	✓								
Teacher-girl relationships						✓			
Punishments from teachers							✓		
Parental sickness								✓	
Hunger							✓	✓	
Distance to school							✓	✓	
Inadequate school blocks							✓		

Problem	Ranking								
	Frequencies								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Poverty	10	1	3	2		1		2	
Household chores		2	2	2	1		2	2	
Absenteeism by teachers			1						
Inadequate teachers			1					1	
Orphanage				3		1			
Lack of parental encouragement/negative parental attitude/lack of interest by parents		4	2	1	2	1	1		
Early marriages		4	1	1	4	2			
Pregnancies	2	1	2	5					
Boy-girl relationships/prostitution			3	2					
School punishments/ill-treatment by teachers		1					1		
Lack of interest by girls/laziness	1	4		1	1				
Business at the lake	1					1			
Peer pressure			3		1				
Insurbodination by girls/children			1				1		
Traditional practices/initiation ceremonies					1		1		
Sexual harassment	1		1		1		1		
Teacher-pupil relationships						1			
Entertainment(gumagumba, video, traditional dances)		1				2			1
Distance to school		1				2		1	
Inadequate school blocks			1						
Lack of learning facilities		1							
Lack of teachers' houses	1								
Diseases(illness)		1			1				
Lack of adequate teacher training					2				

Appendix ii HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire ID Code: _____	[] [] []
Village: _____	[] []
Traditional Authority: _____	[]
District: _____	[]
School Name: _____	[] []
Interviewer: _____	
Date of Interview: _____	
Checked by: _____	

1. Name of Interviewee _____
2. Respondents sex 1. Male [] 2. Female [] []
3. Age _____ years []
4. Marital Status
 1. Never married []
 2. Widowed
 3. Separated
 4. Divorced
 5. Married
5. Level of Education of Respondent []
 1. Never attended
 2. Non Formal
 3. Primary 1-4
 4. Primary 5-8
 5. Secondary 1-2
 6. Secondary 3-4
 7. Tertiary
6. Sex of household head []
 1. Male [] 2. Female []
7. What is your main activity? []
 1. Smallholder Farmer
 2. Trader/Vendor
 3. Clerical Worker
 4. Skilled Jobs

5. Craft
6. Unskilled Jobs
7. Estate/seasonal Worker
8. Professional/Managerial
9. Housewife
10. Other Specify _____

8. What is your secondary activity? []

1. Smallholder Farmer
2. Trader/Vendor
3. Clerical Worker
4. Skilled Jobs
5. Craft
6. Unskilled Jobs
7. Estate/seasonal Worker
8. Professional/Managerial
9. Housewife
10. Other Specify _____

Ask question 11 for all those children aged between 6 and 19 (primary and secondary school going age) who are not in school.

11. Why is the child not in school (give the main reason only)?

No	Name	Cost	Sick /disabled	Lack of interest	Not doing well	Needed at home	Expelled from sch	Too Young	Too old

Codes

1. Cost/ lack of money to pay for school expenses
2. Sick/disabled
3. Lack of interest/didn't want to continue
4. Not doing well/difficulties with schoolwork secondary)
5. Needed at home
6. Expelled from school
7. Too young
8. Too old
9. Death in the family/orphaned
10. Distance to school (too far)
11. Pregnancy
22. Other (specify)_____

Codes for other

12. Needed to work on the farm
13. Marriage
14. Divorce of parents
15. Completed schooling (primary or
16. Initiation or menstruation or puberty
17. Fear of sexual harassment
18. School too crowded
19. Didn't want to repeat
20. Lack of school places
21. Bullying

14. Does anyone in this HH ever check the work your children are doing in school? []
 1. Yes 2. No

15. If yes how often is their work checked in a week? []
 1. once per week
 2. twice per week
 3. at least three times per week
 4. every day

16. In this academic year has anyone in this HH ever gone to school to discuss issues relating to your children? []
 1. Yes 2. No

17. What was the reason for the most recent visit? []
 1. discuss performance of the child
 2. discuss disciplinary issues
 3. other (specify)

18. Who initiated this interaction? []
 1. Parent
 2. Teacher
 3. Head teacher
 4. Pupil
 5. Other (specify) _____

19. How much have you spent on educational materials (pens/pencils, exercise books, and textbooks) on each primary school going child in the past two weeks?

Child's Name	Sex	Std.	Amount (K)

20. How much has the household spent on clothes and shoes for school for those attending primary school? (this academic year)

Child's name	Sex	Std.	Amount (K)

21. How much has the HH spent on school contributions such as school development fund, sports fund, water etc this academic year?

Child's name	Sex	Std.	Amount (K)

22. Has the HH made any non-monetary contributions towards the schooling of their children?

[]
 1 = Yes 2 = No.

23. If yes specify

ATTITUDES TOWARDS SCHOOLING

24. What are the three most important characteristics of a good school? []/[]/[]
 {ask for up to 3 good characteristics. 1 = most important, 2 = second most important, 3 = third most important}

1. Highly qualified teachers
2. Experienced teachers
3. Availability of learning materials
4. Good condition of school buildings
5. Availability of sanitary facilities (water/toilets)
6. Good examination performance of pupils
7. Involvement of parents/community in school affairs
8. Other (specify) _____

25. What are the three most important characteristics of a bad school?
 {ask for up to 3 good characteristics. 1 = most important, 2 = second most important, 3 = third most important}

1. Lack of highly qualified teachers
2. Lack of experienced teachers
3. Insufficient learning materials
4. Bad condition of school buildings
5. Unavailability of sanitary facilities (water/toilets)
6. Poor examination performance of pupils
7. Lack of involvement of parents/community in school affairs
8. Other (specify) _____

26. Basing on your views of a good or bad school, how do you rate the school in the community? []

1. Good
2. Average
3. Bad
4. Don't Know

27. Indicate the respondent's attitude towards boys and girls on the following.

	Attitudes	Boys	Girls	Both	Code
A	Who needs more encouragement to attend school?				
B	Whose education expenditure is higher at the primary level?				
C	Who are more interested in school?				
D	Whose schoolwork is more disrupted with household chores?				
E	Who are more intelligent?				
F	Who performs better at schoolwork?				
G	Who should the family expect more financial support from in the future?				
H	Who has more time to do schoolwork after classes?				
I	Who needs more disciplining				
J					

28. What is the most important reason for girls to go to school? []

1. to gain knowledge
2. To acquire literacy and numeracy skills
3. To obtain certificates
4. To obtain a well-paid job
5. Other (specify)

29. What is the main constraint towards girls' education in this area? []

1. Poverty
2. Lack of interest of the child
3. Lack of parental encouragement
4. Distance to school
5. Unavailability of sanitary facilities
6. Other (Specify) _____

PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS

30. What is the highest educational level you would wish your children to attain?

Education Level	boys	girls
Primary 1 – 4		
Primary 5 – 8		
Secondary 1 – 2		
Secondary 3- 4		
Post secondary		

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

31. Do any members of the household own any of the following?

	Item	1. Yes	2. No
a.	Radio/cassette player		
b.	Bicycle		
c.	Ox cart		
d.	Plough		

32. What is the roof of the house you live in made of? []

1. Grass/thatch
2. Corrugated iron/galvanised iron
3. Concrete/slate/tiles/asbestos
4. Other (specify) _____

33. What are the walls of the house you live in made of? []

1. Mud
2. Unburnt bricks
3. Burnt bricks
4. Cement blocks
5. Other (specify) _____

34. What is the main source of lighting in this household? []

1. fire
2. candles
3. paraffin
4. electricity
5. other (specify)

35. What is the main source of drinking water for members of the HH? []

1. Well inside the compound
2. Tap inside the compound/house
3. Communal tap/well/borehole
4. River/stream
5. Other (specify)

Appendix iii SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET

1. Name of school..... Date established.....
2. Village/Town/City.....
3. District.....
4. T/A.....
5. Main languages spoken (a)..... (b).....
 ©..... (d).....
6. Main tribes (a)..... (b).....
 ©..... (d).....
7. Religions (a)..... (b).....
 ©..... (d).....
 (e)..... (f).....
8. Head teacher..... Qualification.....sex.....
 Experience as head at present school.....
 Experience as head elsewhere.....

9. Enrolment

Std	Boys		Girls	
	Enrolled	Present today	Enrolled	Present today
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

10. Streams

Std	No. of Streams	No. of classrooms	No. of streams Outdoor	No. of teachers
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

11. PEAs Visits Comments

	Date	Purpose of visit	Comment by PEA
1 st Term

2 nd Term

12. Enrolment at end of 1999 school year

Std	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boys							
Girls							

13. Enrolment monthly from January

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Std1 Girls												
Boys												
Std2 Girls												
Boys												
Std3 Girls												
Boys												
Std4 Girls												
Boys												
Std5 Girls												
Boys												
Std6 Girls												
Boys												
Std7 Girls												
Boys												

14. Transfer in this year Boys:

Girls:

15. Transfer out this year Boys:

Girls:

16. Furniture

Std	No. of desks	No. of Teachers' table	No. of chairs	No. of pupils Chichewa Books		No. of pupils Maths Books		No. of pupils English Books		No. of pupils G/Studies Books	
				main	suppl	main	suppl	main	suppl	main	Suppl
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											

17. Last years pass rates

Std	No entered	No passed	
		Boys	Girls
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

18. Repeaters

Std	No. of Repeaters	
	Boys	Girls
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

19. Dropouts

Std	No. of Dropouts	
	Boys	Girls
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

20. No. of passes – End of Last Term

Std	No in class		English		Maths	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						

20. (a) Number of Syllabuses

Std	English	Maths	Chichewa	G/Studies
1 – 4				
5 - 8				

20.(b) Teachers Guide

Std	English	Maths	Chichewa	G/Studies
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

21. Teacher Profile

Name	Sex	Grade	Professional Qualification	Experience	Age	Std Teaching

22. School profile

No. of blocks	
No. of classrooms	
No. of staff toilets Male Female	
No. of Girls toilets	
No. of Boys toilets	
Staffroom	
Storeroom	
Library	
Teachers houses Temporary Permanent	
Water source	
Type of Bell	
No of Sports Fields 1. football 1. netball 2. volleyball 3. basketball 5. other(specify)	
Sports Equipment(specify type and number) 1 2 3 4	

22. Indoor Games

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

23. Pupils Clubs

Clubs	No. of boys	No. of Girls
1		
2		
3		
4		

24. Teacher Committees

Committee	No of Males	No. of Females
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

25. PTA Executive Members No. of Males _____

No. of Females _____

26. School Committee Members No. of Males _____

No. of Females _____

Appendix iv GUIDELINES FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

INTRODUCTION

These are discussions done by a specific group of people in order to share ideas on issue affecting them – and agree on possible solutions. Usually, the group consists of 5 – 12 participants plus at least one facilitator and one recorder. The facilitator has a list of issues to be discussed and a number of guidelines. In this study , Focus Group Discussions will be used to gather data on the following:

- The socio-cultural context of the research locale, problems and issues in girls education formal, non-formal, religious, traditional etc, gender and work.
- School/classroom culture (type of punishment/discipline and relationship to school quality and work, effects on physical and mental well-being
- Parents/teachers attitudes on girls education
- Household work ethics, punishments and relationship to work.

Procedure

- Divide the participants into groups e.g men, women, girls and boys, teachers.
- Greet them with traditional greeting and state the aim of the discussion. Also state that the team is there to learn.
- Introduce an issue in general terms first and then use probing questions to lead the discussion to specific issues.
- Let participants discuss the issue before any conclusions can be drawn
- Carefully lead to sensitive questions.
- Be aware of non-verbal signals because these have to complements the data
- Avoid leading questions and value judgements.
- Be aware of discussants who dominate; encourage those who are not speaking to do so.

GUIDELINES FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH PARENTS

1. Schooling History

- Current position on who goes to school and who does not which is the most affected group of pupils in terms of not going to school
- Reasons for some children not going to school
- Views on appropriate age of entry to school for boys and girls and reasons for any differences
- Repetition rates: how prevalent it is for girls and boys, at what level do most repeat (infant, junior or senior primary)?
- Dropout rates: Who drops out most at the different levels girls or boys? Reasons for girls and boys dropping out.
- Views on who performs well at school girls or boys and at what level?
- School re-entry rate by gender and standard, how prevalent it is.
- Absenteeism by gender and standard; who is usually absent from school- the boy or the girl? opinion on the causes and impact on learning.
- Lateness by gender and reasons for this.

2. Socio-Cultural Factors

(a) Cultural Practices, Beliefs and Attitudes in relation to education

- Current position on community attitude towards the education of boys vs girls.
- Views on the importance of education for boys and girls
- Views on appropriate age for marriage by gender and reasons for any differences.
- Views on the impact of early marriages for girls on their education
- Current position on the kinds of initiation ceremonies for boys and girls; what type, when they are conducted and perceptions on their impact on the education of the children especially girls.
- Views on the kinds of entertainment available; traditional and modern, when they are performed and the impact of these on the education of the children particularly the girls.
- Views on what could be done to overcome the problems that affect girls' education.

(b) Religion

- Views of main kinds of religions existent in the area
- Opinion on their contribution towards the education of children
- Influence on the various religions on the education of girls vs boys; how are girls expected to behave as opposed to boys

© Power and gender relationships

- Views on who has power in:
 - the community/village
 - the household

- opinion on effect of this on the education of girls and boys in the area
- What would be the ideal gender and power relations in the community and household in order to improve girls' education in the area.

3. Household work ethics

- What kinds of work are different people in a family involved in during the day
 - men
 - women
 - girls of school going age
 - boys of school going age
- how long does each spend on each of the activities
- views on whether the activities affect girls' and boys' participation in school
- what kind of punishments are given to boys vs girls when they fail to undertake household activities and the effects this has on their physical and mental well-being
- What solutions can be put in place to solve the problem of household chores for girls?

GUIDELINES FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH SCHOOL-GOING AGE CHILDREN

1. Schooling History

- Current position on who goes to school and who does not which is the most affected group of pupils in terms of not going to school
- Reasons for some children not going to school
- Views on appropriate age of entry to school for boys and girls and reasons for any differences
- Repetition rates: how prevalent it is for girls and boys, at what level do most repeat (infant, junior or senior primary)?
- Dropout rates: Who drops out most at the different levels girls or boys? Reasons for girls and boys dropping out.
- Views on who performs well at school girls or boys and at what level?
- School re-entry rate by gender and standard, how prevalent it is.
- Absenteeism by gender and standard; who is usually absent from school- the boy or the girl? opinion on the causes and impact on learning.
- Lateness by gender and reasons for this.

2. Socio-cultural factors

- Views on appropriate age for marriage by gender and reasons for any differences.
- Views on the impact of early marriages for girls on their education
- What kinds of initiation ceremonies do boys and girls undergo in your community? When are they conducted and their impact on the education of girls and boys.
- Views on the kinds of entertainment available; traditional and modern, when they are performed and the impact of these on the education of the children particularly the girls.
- Views on what could be done to overcome the problems that affect girls' education.

3. School/Classroom Culture

- Views on the kinds of activities for boys and girls when they are at school; how often they do them and for how long.
- Views on the kinds of punishment that boys and girls are given at school, in class? – any gender differences?
- Opinion on the effects of the kinds of punishment on the physical and mental-well being of the boys and girls
- Opinion on the extent of sexual harassment for girls in the school in general and in the classroom; are girls and boys treated differently in the classroom by teachers? Boys? who are the perpetrators of sexual harassment? What form does it take? What punishments are given to the perpetrators?
- Impact of sexual harassment of girls on their schooling.
- What could be done in order to overcome this problem?

4. Performance of girls vs boys

- Views on who is more intelligent than the other; boys or girls?
- Views on who in general does well in class in the lower classes (infant and junior primary) and upper classes (senior primary)

- Reasons for any observed gender differences in performance at the three levels of primary education
- Which subjects are girls generally good at; sciences, languages, or social subjects? Opinion on reasons for this.
- What could be done to improve girls' performance in all subjects and at all levels?

5. Household work ethics

- What kinds of work are different people in a family involved in during the day; men, women, girls and boys
- How long does each spend on each of the activities
- Views on whether the activities affect girls' participation in school
- What kinds of punishments are given to girls vs boys when they fail to undertake the household activities; effects of this on their physical and mental well-being.
- What could be done to solve the problem of too many household chores for girls at home?

GUIDELINES FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH TEACHERS

1. Schooling History

- Current position on who goes to school and who does not which is the most affected group of pupils in terms of not going to school
- Reasons for some children not going to school
- Views on appropriate age of entry to school for boys and girls and reasons for any differences
- Repetition rates: how prevalent it is for girls and boys, at what level do most repeat (infant, junior or senior primary)?
- Dropout rates: Who drops out most at the different levels girls or boys? Reasons for girls and boys dropping out.
- Views on who performs well at school girls or boys and at what level?
- School re-entry rate by gender and standard, how prevalent it is.
- Absenteeism by gender and standard; who is usually absent from school- the boy or the girl? opinion on the causes and impact on learning.
- Lateness by gender and reasons for this.

2. Socio-Cultural Factors

(b) Cultural Practices, Beliefs and Attitudes in relation to education

- Current position on community attitude towards the education of boys vs girls.
- Views on the importance of education for boys and girls
- Views on appropriate age for marriage by gender and reasons for any differences.
- Views on the impact of early marriages for girls on their education
- Current position on the kinds of initiation ceremonies for boys and girls; what type, when they are conducted and perceptions on their impact on the education of the children especially girls.
- Views on the kinds of entertainment available; traditional and modern, when they are performed and the impact of these on the education of the children particularly the girls.
- Views on what could be done to overcome the problems that affect girls' education.

(c) Religion

- Views of main kinds of religions existent in the area
- Opinion on their contribution towards the education of children
- Influence on the various religions on the education of girls vs boys; how are girls expected to behave as opposed to boys

© Power and gender relationships

- Views on who has power in:
 - the community/village
 - the household

- opinion on effect of this on the education of girls and boys in the area
- What would be the ideal gender and power relations in the community and household in order to improve girls education in the area.

3. School/Classroom Culture

- Views on the kinds of activities for boys and girls when they are at school; how often they do them and for how long.
- Views on the kinds of punishment that boys and girls are given at school, in class? – any gender differences?
- Opinion on the effects of the kinds of punishment on the physical and mental-well being of the boys and girls
- Opinion on the extent of sexual harassment for girls in the school in general and in the classroom; are girls and boys treated differently in the classroom by teachers? Boys? who are the perpetrators of sexual harassment? What form does it take? What punishments are given to the perpetrators?
- Impact of sexual harassment of girls on their schooling.
- What could be done in order to overcome this problem?

4. Performance of girls vs boys

- Views on who is more intelligent than the other; boys or girls?
- Views on who in general does well in class in the lower classes(infant and junior primary) and upper classes(senior primary)
- Reasons for any observed gender differences in performance at the three levels of primary education
- Which subjects are girls generally good at; sciences, languages, or social subjects? Opinion on reasons for this.
- What could be done in order to improve girls performance in all subjects and at all levels?

5. Household work ethics

- What kinds of work are different people in a family involved in during the day
 - men
 - women
 - girls of school going age
 - school going age boys
- views on whether the activities affect girls' and boys' participation in school

Appendix v CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

The aim of classroom observation schedules in this study will be to identify patterns of instructional interactions, motivation, management procedures and student-to-student interactions.

1. Coded classroom map

These class observation schedules will be able to show:-

- Area of the classroom where boys and girls are seated.(sitting arrangement and pattern)
- Area of the classroom where the majority of the students that the teacher calls upon to answer questions are.(interaction pattern with teacher)
- Area where the majority of the instructional materials (eg, books) are available.
- Area where the more active students are.

Below is an example of an observation schedule (coded classroom map) which will be developed for each class observed.

Coded classroom map

Key

- + = correct or incorrect answer
- 111 = no. of times teacher calls on student
- B = it has a text book
- ♂ = boy student
- ♀ = girl student

2. TABULATION MATRIX

A tabulation matrix will be used to obtain the following information in the classroom.

- to look for patterns in teacher feedback eg
 - do girls receive more or less feedback from the teacher?
 - Does the teacher tend to use higher level questions with boys more than girls?
 - Do boys give more correct answers than girls?
 - Do boys call out answers more than girls
 - Does the teacher use enabling feedback to prompt students to try harder(and send the message that they can do better)
 - Do boys or girls get more enabling feedback

How to do it

- create the table below to track the exchange that takes place between the teacher and students

Level of teachers question	Student response	Gender of student	Teachers feedback
1	T/C	B	+
1	S/I	G	+
2	CH	CL	+
3	T/I	B	E
2	T/C	B	O
1	S/C	B	P

2. For each question the teacher asks, note the level of the question and indicate it in the column 'Level of Teachers Question:

- 1= literal questions-knowledge and comprehension
- 2= Inferential questions-application, analysis, synthesis
- 3= evaluation questions-opinion, evaluation

3. In the second column labelled 'student response indicate whether the student was called upon by the teacher (T) or the student called out the answer(S), or students gave a chorus answer(CH)
4. In the second column (student response) also indicate whether or not the student response was correct (C) incorrect (I)
5. Indicate the gender of the student by writing a B for boy and G for girl in the third column – Gender of student. If class gave a chorus answer, indicate CL for class
6. In the fourth column, 'Teacher feedback to student' note the teacher's feedback to the student. Indicate using the following codes.

- Positive reinforcements (eg good try, good effort, correct)+
- Negative reinforcements(eg no, sit down, incorrect etc) =
- No response from the teacher regardless of whether the answer was correct or wrong (eg teacher just turns to another student) = O
- Form over substance comments such as 'it looks nice' or 'your handwriting is good
- Enabling comments eg 'can you explain how you did this' = E
- Feedback to pupils response that focus on personal attributes of the student eg 'you are too big for this class'

7. Tally the responses at the end of each observation period.

2. ACTIVITY LOG

An activity log provides information about the kinds of activities that take place in a classroom. The log also allows the observer to determine the frequency in which boys and girls are involved in each activity.

In this study, activity log will be used to answer the following questions:

- Are there certain kinds of chores that girls do or that boys do? If so what are they?
- Are chores assigned to girls on a regular basis, given to boys as punishment?
- Who assumes the greatest percentage of chores? (take into account total numbers of boys and girls to make an accurate calculation)
- Are there differences in the number of times boys or girls are called upon to work on the board or answer a question?

Procedure

1. Develop categories of activities by first visiting different classes and listing down the different class activities and chores.
2. Develop a Table (Matrix) like the one shown below using the chores and activities that you have identified.
3. Each time a boy or girl does an activity, identify on the matrix with a B or G in the appropriate column.
4. Tally the total for each category to find out how gender factors act in classroom settings.

Example of an activity log

	Task	Five minute blocks of Time									
Chores	Clerical	B		G							
	Agricultural				G						
	Running errands		B								
	Cleaning	G			G			G		G	
Student turn-taking	Asking questions	B			G						
	Responding to questions	B	B B	G		G					
	Reading orally	G		B				G			
	Writing on BB	B		B	B						
	Doing on experiment			B							
Seatwork	Writing in ex-book										
	Reading from textbook working in groups										
Discipline	Cleaning			B					B		
	Staffing after school										
	Corporal punishment						B				
Other(specify)											

School Tasks

In the table below indicate the school tasks that are done by boys(B) and girls(G) from oter time of arrival at school (morning) break time or midday(B/M) to the time they knock off(K). Also indicate any observations made.

Time	Who does the task	Observations
Morning		
Break time/midday		
At knock off		

Appendix vi SEASONAL CALENDAR GUIDE

Introduction

This is a calendar showing the main activities, problems and opportunities that occur throughout the annual cycle. It helps identify the months of greatest difficulty and vulnerability or other significant variances which have an impact on people's lives. In this study seasonal calendars will be used to summarise the following:

- ◆ Food availability in terms of the quantity and amounts consumed in order to identify periods of food scarcity, consumption of protein food and coping strategies. The impact of food availability on schooling will be explored, in particular the participation and attendance of boys and girls in school.
- ◆ Gender differentiated workloads and time spent completing tasks based on seasonal changes. The workloads will assist us to analyse the labour demands for women, men and children. For example, the differences in workloads of school boys and girls in school and their impact on attendance and performance will be determined.
- ◆ Income and expenditure patterns, how they vary throughout the year and the impact they have on schooling.
- ◆ Traditional and social activities/ceremonies in terms of occurrence throughout the year and the impact on schooling.

Procedure

- ◆ Divide the participants into groups e.g. men, women, school girls, school boys, out of school girls, out of school boys.
- ◆ The calendar should first of all be drawn on the ground using sticks, stones, leaves, seeds or any other locally available materials that can be used as symbols.
- ◆ Draw a 12 month, 18 month or seasonal (climatic) as appropriate. It need not start in January and should reflect the indigenous seasonal categories. Note: don't impose your calendar. In some cases non-monthly intervals are relevant for the indigenous calendars e.g. wet season and dry season, or planting, weeding and harvesting seasons.
- ◆ In each group one participant should be chosen to draw the chart and participants can take turns drawing to maintain the interest level and to ensure participation of all present.
- ◆ Ask probing questions to find out the different kinds of work that girls and boys do. Such as:
 - what kinds of work do you do during the rainy/dry seasons.
 - Identify periods when girls engage in different work from boys eg leisure, farm work selling produce, household chores etc
 - Identify impact of climate on education of girls/boys eg absenteeism eg road conditions, cold weather etc
 - Identify traditional practices and their impact on education
 - Identify disease prevalence and its impact
- ◆ You can also obtain information from secondary sources.

- ◆ Obtain quantitative information qualitatively. For example, for labour demand: first determine the four busiest months by asking your informants a series of questions such as:
 - what is the busiest month?
 - What are you doing then?
 - What is the next busiest month?
 - What are you doing then?

- ◆ An alternative method is to have participants use seeds, small fruits, stones or other small and seasonal uniform counters to quantify. Sticks can be broken in different lengths and used to indicate relative magnitudes. In this way an entire seasonal calendar can be constructed with sticks, stones and seeds on the ground.

- ◆ Transfer chart to flip chart/paper.

- ◆ Combine all seasonal patterns into one diagram to show correlations between different variables and identify any problem or opportunity times within the year. Do this on the flip chart.

- ◆ Cross-check the and refine the chart seasonal calendar throughout the fieldwork. Watch out for seasonal and non-seasonal variations. Examples of seasonal calendars to be developed in this study are illustrated below:-

Rainy Season Work Loads and Associated Activities

Target Group	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April
Boys	• Digging	• transplanting	• Weeding • Applying fertilizer	• Weeding • Applying fertilizer	weeding	Harvesting
Girls						

Dry Season work Loads and Associated Activities

	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	October
Boys	Making ridges	Planting				
Girls	Initiation ceremonies Making ridges					

Problems of School Girls

Jan Feb March April May	May June July Aug Sept	Sept Oct Nov Dec
Lack of money	Food availability	Work loads
School fees	Diseases	High disease prevalence
Poor Infrastructure	Weather conditions	Food shortage
Dirty unpaved slippery roads	Work loads	
Girls are teased when they fall on ground	Time availability for ground play, rest etc is limited	
Weather conditions result into absenteeism		

Appendix vii PROBLEM PREFERENCE RANKING (PAIR-WISE RANKING) AND MATRIX GUIDE

This method helps to determine the main problems or preferences of individual community members, identify their ranking criteria and compare the priorities of different individuals (eg men, women, young boys/girls, old people etc). In this study, problem preference ranking will be used to:

- Determine the main educational problems of boys and girls in the community.
- Discuss the main educational problems or preferences of boys and girls, and identify their ranking criteria
- Compare the priorities of the different individuals ie. Teachers, parents, boys, girls etc
- Elicit the criteria used by different people when choosing between different alternatives

Procedure

1. Participants should be divided into their appropriate groups eg by gender – man, women, school going boys/girls, non school going boys/girls
2. Identify a set of problems/preferences to be prioritised
3. Prepare a pairwise ranking by listing the problems or preferences on the top and left side of the matrix. Each open square represents a paired comparison of the problems/preferences – listed at the top and extreme left.
4. Write down the problems/preferences on separate cards. Pictures or symbols can be used to represent the problems/preferences
5. Place two of these cards in front and ask which one of them is the bigger problem or more favoured preference. Mark the response in the appropriate box on the ranking matrix.
6. Probe for reasons for their choices. Use of seeds placed on each problem will show the intensity of each problem. You may discuss the effects of each problem in the community in order to establish extent of the problem.
7. Ask the members to suggest criteria that are best and worst in dealing with the problems (Points 6 and 7 should help you develop the communities perception of seriousness of the problem and what they perceive as possible solutions)
8. Present a different pair and repeat the comparison until all possible combinations have been considered.
9. Add up the number of times each problem/preference was identified as more important.
10. List the problems in the order in which the participants have ranked them by arranging them in order of priority.
11. Check with the participants if any important problem/preference has been left out. If there is any, place it in the appropriate position in the ranking table.
12. If more than one item scores highest (or have same scores) complete the ranking session by asking the participants to identify the bigger problem/preference

Appendix viii PROBLEM – SOLUTION MATRIX

Problem-solution matrix is somewhat similar to preference ranking. In preference ranking each individual item is compared directly against the others until they are ranked from highest to lowest, while in problem-solution matrix the items are compared against selected criteria which people use for judging them.

Problem solution matrix is therefore useful for:

- Eliciting the criteria that different people use when choosing between different alternatives.
- Exploring the trade offs made during the process of choosing.
- Highlight the criteria that are best and worst for dealing with any particular problem or preference.

Procedure

1. (same as problem preference)
2. (same as problem preference)
3. prepare problem – solution matrix by listing the problem solutions on the top and left side of the matrix.
4. elicit criteria for ranking the issues by probing with questions. Use of seeds, stones etc placed at each problem will show intensity of problem.

How serious s the problem of teenage pregnancy?

What are some of the effects of teenage pregnancy in this village?

Guiding Questions

In this study problem solution matrix will be used to derive judgements which people make in their everyday life which have an effect on boy’s and girl’s schooling practices. These will include:

- school related problems that the communities have
- school related problems that teachers have
- school related problems that boys/girls have
- possible cause of community problems that have an effect on

Below is an example of a Problem Preference ranking/pairwise ranking

Problem	Lack of facilities	pregnancy	School expenses	Losing traditional values	Distances from home	Early marriage
Lack of facilities		pregnancy	Lack of facilities	Lack of facilities	Lack of facilities	Early marriage
Pregnancy			Pregnancy	Pregnancy	Pregnancy	Pregnancy
School expenses				School expenses	School expenses	Early marriage
Losing traditional values					Distance from home	Early marriage
Distance from home						Early marriage
Early marriage						

Problem	No. of times preferred	Rank	Reasons
Pregnancy	5	1	
Early marriage	4	2	
Lack of facilities	3	3	
School expenses	2	4	
Distance from home	1	5	
Losing traditional values	0	6	

Appendix ix LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DROPOUTS GUIDE

Preamble

Life history is one of the many qualitative research methods. As a research method, life history research concerns the relationship between two inter-dependent worlds: that of the individual with their unique life story and that of the past, present and future contextual world through which the individual travels. These life histories will help us define the schooling histories of the children in the communities. The aim here is to understand the present situation of these boys and girls based on their past experiences. The building of a good life story depends on the researcher's ability to bestride the micro and macro interfaces arising from this experience.

The success of life history approach depends on the establishment of rapport between the researched and the researcher. While having a liberating and democratic ethos, emphasis in life history is on what the individual has to say, how it is said and the meaning made by the speaker to what has been said. In this study, life histories of boys and girls both in school and out of school will also form part of the qualitative data. Life history will be done for four boys and four girls in each district (in and out of school- two each). The age range should be restricted to the definition of 6-19 as used for the study.

Guidelines

How the life history proceeds depends on the case at hand. Thus, questions to be asked will be determined on whether the problematic case is about absenteeism, or pregnancy or orphanage for example. If say the case is on pregnancy, you may want to dwell on the availability of counseling services, the various social activities and traditional beliefs that may lead to incidences of pregnancy. The identification of these cases will need a careful analysis of the issues in the area and a proper location of those pupils whose stories could form an interesting case. We need to get the help of the supervisors and research assistants for a proper identification of these.

Background

This section is intended to provide the basis for understanding the problem better. Information collected include, house hold composition and relationships. Questions asked could be:

- Q1 : When were you born?
- Q2 : Where were you born?
- Q3 : Where did you grow up?
- Q4 : How many are in the household.
- Q5 : How many are you in your family of the same mother?
- Q6 : Are you the eldest, youngest or somewhere in the middle in the household?
- Q7 : How many are older than you?
- Q8 : Do they attend school?
- Q9 : Are you the eldest among the girls/boys?
- Q10 : Do you have any other child staying with you who are not in school?

Q11 : Are there other school age siblings who are not staying here?

Q12 : If yes you could establish their school experiences.

Schooling Experience

This section establishes the schooling history of the pupil. Of particular interest should be those factors that may have lead to draping out. Questions could include:

Q13 : When did you start school

Q12 : Where did you start your schooling?

Q14 : Did you repeat any standard while you were in school? (How many times and which standard?)

Q15 : Did you stop before and start again?

Q16 : What did you like about school?

Q17 : what did you not like most in school?

Q18 : Were there unhappy moments at school?

Q19 : Why did you drop out of school?

Q20 : Did you get any help from your parents on school work?

Q21 : What about from teachers; was the help adequate?

Q22 : What else worried you so much that you had to leave school?

Q23 : Were there other girls/boys like you who dropped out of school while you were there?

Q24 : Why did they drop out?

Q25 : Suppose your problems were sorted out, will you go to school now?

Q26 : Do you feel you could make it in school?

Q27 : Were your parents happy that you went to school?

Q28: Would you say that your parents were supportive when you were in school?

Q29 : What do you think your parents should have done to help you stay in school?

Q30 : Considering your experience, what do you think should be done to help Girls and boys like you stay in school?

Q31 : What do you think school authorities should do to help you in school?

Q32 : Did you think of any career while you were in school? Did you feel like doing some job after school?

Other Issues

Q33 : Would you say that your work at home interfered a lot with your school work?

Q34 : What work do you do now that you have stopped going to school?

Q35 : Could you not have been in school whilst doing what you do?

Appendix x HOME OBSERVATION RECORDING SHEET

Questionnaire ID Code		
Village		
TA		
District		
School Name		
Observer		
Dates of observation		
Checked by		

Please attach all the notes made during the observations to this recording sheet before handing it in to your Supervisor or Principal Investigator.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This section should be filled before starting any observations. The information should be obtained from the household questionnaire but should be verified on the first visit to the household and also during actual observations.

1. Household Composition

H/H member	Sex	Age	Relationship to household head	Schooling status	Current Status
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					

Codes for schooling status (ever been to school?)

1= Yes

2. No

Current status: if in school what standard are they?

If not in school how far did they go in school and what is their main activity?

2. School Status Summary of Household Members

H/H members	Female	In school	Out of school	Male	In school	Out of school
Children 0-5						
Children 6-10 years						
Children 11-17 years						
Adults >17						

B THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

3. Assessment of Learning Environment

Make an assessment of the home environment to see if it is conducive to learning and is girl friendly by making observations of the following:

a. Place of study

Is there a place for study in the house? Who is most likely to use it in the household? Tick the appropriate box. Assess through observation and chatting whether any of the items present are actually used for school related activities i.e. studying for homework. Write notes on separate sheet.

		Female		Male	Both
Chair	[]	[]		[]	[]
Table	[]	[]		[]	[]
Stool	[]	[]		[]	[]
Bed	[]	[]		[]	[]

Others (specify) _____

b. Presence of reading materials in the home.

Are the following reading materials available in the home? Indicate the person who uses them more frequently between male and female members of the household.

	{Tick if available}	{who uses them most}		
		Female	Male	Both
Books	[]	[]	[]	[]
Newspaper	[]	[]	[]	[]
Magazine	[]	[]	[]	[]
Exercise books	[]	[]	[]	[]
Paper/stationery	[]	[]	[]	[]
Pens/pencils	[]	[]	[]	[]
Other	[]	[]	[]	[]

c. Sleeping Arrangements

Where do school aged children (i.e. 6-19) sleep?

Indicate number of children between 6-19 in the household and their ages falling within each of the categories below:

Key for coding age

1. 0-5 years
2. 6-10 years
3. 11-15 years
4. 16 and above

Type	Female	Age group	Males	Age group
Same hut as parents				
With other children				
Same hut as grandparents				
Gowelo/mphala				
Other				

d. Children's School Attendance

For children in school take note of any days they are absent from school and solicit the reason (s) for the absence from the child and the guardians? Any gender differences in absenteeism and reasons for absenteeism. Household views on absenteeism by gender?

Number of children absent from school in the last two weeks?

Child's name	Age	Sex	Std	Number of days absent	Reasons

D. WORKLOADS AND TIMELINE ACTIVITIES BY GENDER

4. Task and Time Allocation

Introduction

From your observations of the household assess the various tasks and activities that different members of the household perform, focussing on the activities carried out by men, women, girls and boys. Take note of the length of time taken to complete the various tasks and note any differences between tasks carried out by children in school and children out of school. For children attending school take note of activities carried in the morning before leaving home for school and in the afternoon after returning home from school and assess how these activities impact on their schooling.

Task and Time Observations Recording Sheet

Task/activity	H/H member(s)	Sex	Age	Time of the day	Time taken
1. Food preparation/cooking					
2. Processing food (e.g. pounding)					
3. Cleaning/washing/sweeping					
4. Fetching firewood					
5. Hauling water					
6. Cutting firewood					
7. Herding/looking after animals					

Task/activity	H/H member(s)	Sex	Age	Time of the day	Time taken
8. Cultivating (subsistence)					
9. Other subsistence production e.g. Vending					
10. Employment outside family (e.g. ganyu)					
11. Caring children/ sick/ elderly					
12. Run errands/send messages					
13. Go to market					
14. Study/ do homework					
15. Social activities e.g. parties, family gatherings, religious and traditional functions					
16. Play/ relax					
17. Other (specify)					

5. DAILY ACTIVITY PROFILE AND TIMELINE

Name of target child: _____ Sex _____ Age _____

Day and Date of Observation : _____ Schooling status: _____

Standard currently in: _____ Name of school _____

ACTIVITY	Total x's	5am	6a m	7a m	8a m	9a m	10a m	11a m	12p m	1p m	2p m	3p m	4p m	5p m	6p m	7p m	8p m	9p m	10pm
School related activities																			
1. In school																			
2. Homework/studying																			
Non-school related activities																			
3. Personal care (including bathing, dressing, eating)																			
4. Domestic duties (including food preparation, cooking, cleaning and washing clothes)																			
5. Fetching firewood and water																			
6. Care of children, the sick and elderly.																			
7. Helping with subsistence production or family farm or business.																			
8. Employment outside the family (including ganyu, wage work and looking for work).																			
9. Going to the market and sending messages.																			
10. Social and recreational (includes play, attending family gatherings, religious activities, parties, meetings, video and radio.																			
11. Resting/sleeping																			
TOTAL X'S																			

Recording sheet no. 2

Name of target child: _____ Sex _____ Age _____

Day and Date of Observation : _____ Schooling status: _____

Standard currently in: _____ Name of school _____

ACTIVITY	Total x's	5am	6a m	7a m	8a m	9a m	10a m	11a m	12p m	1p m	2p m	3p m	4p m	5p m	6p m	7p m	8p m	9p m	10p m
School related activities																			
1. In school																			
2. Homework/studying																			
Non-school related activities																			
3. Personal care (including bathing, dressing, eating)																			
4. Domestic duties (including food preparation, cooking, cleaning and washing clothes)																			
5. Fetching firewood and water																			
6. Care of children, the sick and elderly.																			
7. Helping with subsistence production or family farm or business.																			
8. Employment outside the family (including ganyu, wage work and looking for work).																			
9. Going to the market and sending messages.																			
10. Social and recreational (includes play, attending family gatherings, religious activities, parties, meetings, video and radio.																			
11. Resting/sleeping																			
TOTAL X'S																			

ANNEX xi PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE STUDY AREAS

CHAMPHEMVU SCHOOL

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SIMENSION	SOLUTION	HOW	WHO	WHEN
1. PROMISCUOUS BEHAVIOUR (a) Teenage pregnancy	-Poverty	-Teachers have relationships with female pupils -Girls engage in sex for money -Girls dropout of school due to pregnancy	-Give proper advice to girls - Teachers need disciplining		- Parents - School Committee - Ministry of Education	-As soon as possible -Children should be disciplined all the time
2. LACK OF INTEREST BY CHILDREN	-Laziness	-Children absent themselves from school for no good reason	-Parents to check pupils work -Parents to punish children who are absent from school	-Punishing the culprits at home	-Parents	-Every time a child is absent from school
3. LACK OF INTEREST BY PARENTS		-Parents do not see any problem when the child is absent -Some parents load children with household chores instead of sending the to school	-Encouraged parents to send children to school - Parents should not give chores to children during school hours/times	-Chiefs to check that all parents send children to school	-Chiefs -Parents	-All the times
4. POVERTY		-Lack of food and clothing	-Parents to do some casual work to obtain food and clothing for children	-Casual employment	-Parents	-All the time

CHIVUMU SCHOOL

PROBLEM	CAUSE	DIMENSION	SOLUTION	HOW	WHO	WHEN
1. POVERTY		-Children are absent from school due to lack of good clothes -When hungry, children don't go to school -Lack of soap results in absenteeism	-Buy clothes for children -Find markets for farm produce	-Establishment of markets	-Parents -Government -ADMARC	As soon as possible
2. EARLY MARIAGE	Poverty	-Poverty results into early marriage	-Establishment of employment for parents -good advice to children -Government should put in place strict measures for children that dropout or get pregnant/impregnate others		-Government -Parents	As soon as possible
3. SHORATEG OF SCHOOL BLOCKS	-Shortage of school blocks -Environmental conditions	-School impossible to run in the rainy season due to shortage of blocks and that the area becomes water logged -Children spend time looking outside instead of listening to the teacher	-Bricks are available but there is need for other building facilities		-Government -UNICEF	As soon as possible

CHIVUMU continued

PROBLEM	CAUSE	DIMENSION	SOLUTION	HOW	WHO	WHEN
4. HOUSEHOLD CHORES		-Absenteeism results in order to complete household chores	-Chores to be done after school hours -Parents to do the house chores when it is school time		-Parents	
5. TEACHERS (a) Shortage (b) Unqualified	-Shortage of teachers -Teachers with no training	-Some classes are without a teacher -Unqualified teachers fail to deliver content	-Government to allocate the school more teachers who are also qualified		Government	As soon as possible
6. DISTANCE TO NEAREST HEALTH CENTRE		-Children are absent due to poor health	-The new health centre should start operating -The bridge to the health centre should be maintained		-Government	As soon as possible

MBACHUNDU SCHOOL

<u>PROBLEM</u>	CAUSE	DIMENSION	SOLUTION	HOW	WHO	WHEN
1. HUNGER	-Poverty	-Children help in tilling land for subsistence -Absenteeism is high as children refuse to go to school on hungry stomach	-Distribution of free fertilizers		-Government	-October/November before rains start
2. DISTANCE TO SCHOOL	-School only runs up to Std 4	-Children fail to walk the long distance to next school	-Extend Mbachundu to become full primary school	-Community to mould bricks	-UNICEF	-As soon as possible
3. POVERTY	-Lack of farm inputs	-Lack of clothes -Lack of soap -Too many children to support -Poor children envy richer pupils	-Plant a variety of crops -Hard work in the fields -To introduce school uniform		-UNICEF -Ministry of Agriculture	-As soon as possible
4. LACK OF PARENTS		-Some parents refuse to participate in self help activities -A lot of household chores to children -Parents to advice children the importance of school	-Parents should be informed of the benefits of education	-Village meetings	-Parents -Chiefs -Children -Ministry of education	-As soon as possible

MBACHUNDU continued

PROBLEM	CAUSE	DIMENSION	SOLUTION	HOW	WHO	WHEN
5. LACK OF RESPECT FOR PARENTS/ADULTS	-Lack of cooperation between parents -Lack of cooperation between parents and teachers	-Children are absent from school despite being forced -Parents disagreement force children to follow their own ways -Teachers advices are contradictory from the parents beliefs	-Parents to agree upon what is best for their children -Parents and teachers to meet and discuss issues related to children	-Meetings	-Parents -Teachers	-As soon as possible
6. EARLY MARRIAGE	-As a result of poverty, early pregnancies -Sometimes parents force children so that they receive a bride price (Chimalo)	-Results into school dropout	-Parents should discuss issues related to children education -opportunities for employment should be created so that people see the benefits of school		-Parents -Employers	-As soon as possible

CHAPAKAMA PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROBLEM	CAUSE	DIMENSION	SOLUTION	HOW	WHO	WHEN
1.POVEERTY	-Costly farm inputs	-lack of clothes or food results in absenteeism	-provision of farm inputs by government -reduce the cost of fertilizer	-Government policy	-Government	As soon as possible
2.EARLY MARRIAGE	-poverty -hunger -peer pressure	-most children do not complete primary education	-advice on the value of education -most of them need counselling	Guidance and counseling	Parents	Soon after puberty – should be on going
3.HOUSEHOLD CHORES	-parents' attitudes	- household chores during school	-children should do household chores after school -parents should advise children who absent themselves from school	Parents to do most of the house chores	Parents	From now and onwards
4.CHILDREN'S LACK OF INTEREST	Lack of motivation for school	A big cause of both absenteeism and dropout. Most children decide not to go to school	-children need encouragement	-advice on the benefits of education -providing children with school needs -mobilise community on benefits of education -effecting compulsory education	-Parents -role models -Chiefs -Government	Now
5. INADEQUATE CLASSROOMS	-UNICEF -PARENTS	Most children dropout because they fail to walk to the next full primary school.	-building more school blocks to make Chapakama a full Primary School	-Bricks are already available, but there is need for other services and technical support	-Government -UNICEF	Now

CHAPETA PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROBLEM	CAUSE	DIMENSION	SOLUTION	HOW	WHO	WHEN
1.SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS HOUSES		-Teachers are usually late because they live very far from school -Teachers are usually absent due to distance to school.	-Parents should build teachers houses -Certain materials such as cement, iron sheets etc should be provided to the school	-Self help project	-Parents -UNICEF -Government	As soon as possible
2.POVERTY		-Children absent or even dropout of school when they have no descent clothing -Poverty makes pupils to go to school without writing materials of school note books.	Credit facilities to be introduced in the area	To give out loans	-Government or other relevant organizations	As soon as possible
3.INADEQUATE TEACHING AND LEARNING FACILITIES		Retarded development/learning in a school	-School needs assistance from government	Provision of necessary school facilities	-Government UNICEF	As soon as possible
4.TEENAGE PREGNANCY	Poverty	-Girls indulge in premarital sex in order to get money or other financial support -This leads into dropout	-Giving proper guidance and counseling to girls -Providing them with their needs and try to satisfy their school and everyday needs	-Acquiring a loan to be able to do business and overcome poverty	Parents	As soon as possible
EARLY MARRIAGE	-Poverty -Premarital sex	-Early marriage results into school dropout. -such children are those that do not listen to advice from parents -some believe that marriage will end their poverty	Need for people from outside their community to come and talk to their girls	Through meetings	Role models	As soon as possible

CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.2 Objectives of the Study.....	1
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	2
1.4 Organisation and Structure of the Education System	3
1.5 Socio-Economic Context	4
CHAPTER TWO.....	7
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	7
2.0 Introduction	7
2.1.0 Demand for Education	7
2.2.0. Opportunity Cost	9
2.3.0. School Environments.....	11
2.4.0. Relevance of Education	13
2.5.0. Government Policies	15
2.6.0. Cultural Attitudes and Practices	16
2.7.0 Socio-Economic Constraints.....	18
2.9.0 Gender	19
CHAPTER 3.....	23
RESEARCH METHODS.....	23
3.0 Introduction	23
3.1.0 Sample of schools and communities	23
3.2.0 Instruments.....	24
3.3.0 Procedure	26
3.3.1 Site Identification	26
3.3.2 Training.....	26
3.3.3 Piloting.....	26
3.3.4 Main data collection	27
3.3.5 Data Analysis	28
CHAPTER FOUR	29
THE RESEARCH STUDY SITES.....	29
4.0 Introduction	29

4.1.0	Overview:	29
4.2.0	SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS	29
4.2.1	Siting	29
4.2.2	School features	30
4.2.3	School facilities:	32
4.2.4	Teachers:	34
4.2.5	Enrolment:	35
4.2.6	Absenteeism:	37
4.2.7	Performance:	37
CHAPTER FIVE		39
MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY		39
5.0	INTRODUCTION	39
5.1.0	HOME BASED FACTORS	39
5.1.1	BASIC HOME CHARACTERISTICS	39
5.1.2	HOME OBSERVATIONS	44
5.2.0	CLASSROOM FACTORS	55
5.2.1	Relations in classrooms	56
5.2.2	Sitting Plans	56
5.2.3	Gender and Power Dynamics	56
5.2.4	Teaching Methodologies	57
5.2.5	Inappropriate Methodology	57
5.2.6	Classroom Questioning	59
5.2.7	Communication/Language Problems	60
5.2.8	Classroom Environment	60
5.2.9	Teaching/Learning materials	61
5.3	SCHOOL BASED FACTORS	62
5.3.1	Quality of the Learning Environment	62
5.3.2	School location	62
5.3.4	School Features	63
5.3.5	School facilities	66
5.3.6	Teacher quality and Quantity	67
5.3.7	Number of teachers versus number of streams	67
5.3.8	Teacher quality	68
5.3.9	Demand for Girls Labour Contribution	70
5.3.10	Harassment of girls	71
5.4	SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS	72

5.4.1 Parental and Community Attitudes Towards Education.....	72
5.4.2 Views on the Appropriate Age for Marriage by Sex	75
5.4.3 Initiation ceremonies.....	76
5.4.5 School calendar	76
5.4.5 Entertainment.....	78
5.4.6 Religion	78
5.4.7 Power and gender relationships.....	79
5.4.8 Poverty	81
CHAPTER SIX	84
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS	84
6.0 Introduction	84
6.1.0 Classroom Interaction.....	84
6.2.0 The Socialisation Process.....	85
6.3.0 Teaching and Learning Environments.....	87
6.4.0 Community Participation and Mobilisation	89
6.5.0 Self-Help/Labour Contributions.....	90
6.6.0 Community Mobilisation	92
6.7.0 No Tangible Benefits from Schooling	92
6.8.0 No Appreciation of the Value of Education.....	93
6.9.0 A Thinning Down of Enrolments.....	95
6.10.0 The Diverse Nature of the Problems	95
6.11.0 A Question of Survival.....	96
CHAPTER SEVEN	98
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	98
7.0 Introduction	98
7.1.0 Classrooms	98
7.2.0 The school.....	99
7.3.0 The Home.....	100
7.4.0 Socio-Economic Dimension	101
7.5.0 Recommendations	103
Appendix i PROBLEM RANKING FREQUENCIES	110
Appendix ii HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE.....	112
Appendix iii SCHOOL INFORMATION SHEET	121

Appendix iv GUIDELINES FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS.....	127
Appendix v CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE	134
Appendix vi SEASONAL CALENDAR GUIDE	137
Appendix vii PROBLEM PREFERENCE RANKING (PAIR-WISE RANKING) AND.....	139
MATRIX GUIDE.....	139
Appendix viii PROBLEM – SOLUTION MATRIX	140
Appendix ix LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DROPOUTS GUIDE	143
Appendix x HOME OBSERVATION RECORDING SHEET	146
ANNEX xi PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS FOR THE STUDY AREAS.....	156
PROBLEM.....	156
PROBLEM.....	159

Executive Summary

This study was undertaken at the request of UNICEF to examine the impact of home, school and classrooms factors, which negatively impact on the education of girls in selected districts in Malawi. The selected districts were where there were UNICEF funded projects in Mangochi, Mchinji, Kasungu and Nkhata-bay. Dedza district was used for the piloting of the study. It was hoped that such a study would provide a better understanding of the nature of the problem of girls' education and enable the targeting of girls' needs in subsequent UNICEF programs.

Study Objectives

The study was aimed at shedding more light on the problems of girls' education in Malawi. Specifically, the study had the following five objectives:

- 1) To provide sound analysis on the various practices at home, classroom and school that have negative impact of girls' education and consequently make recommendations through which the negative practices can be addressed;
- 2) To reconstruct life histories of children, both girls and boys, in and out of school, within the context of their homes, schools and communities;
- 3) To mobilise the communities through interactive and participatory research methods, and in the process empower them to think through the problems related to girls' education and formulate solutions to solve these problems;
- 4) To generate action plan together with school personnel, school committees and parents at school level;
- 5) To ensure that findings of the study are disseminated to all the zones in the study

districts.

The study was to provide an assessment through participatory learning and action, focus group discussion, participant observation and interviews of how well the major contributing factors are understood by the key actors in the locality of the study. The use of PLA facilitated the development of solutions to peoples' problems (in the home, school and classrooms) from their own understanding of the problems.

The qualitative methods were meant to establish what the communities believed and perceived as the underlying reasons for the poor performance and limited participation of girls in their localities. The use of a number of approaches enabled the verification and triangulation of ideas generally held by the rural people regarding education of girls in particular. Quantitative methods allowed the study to establish the extent of the problems and how wide they manifested themselves in specific circumstances. To capture fine points in this complex problem, a diverse sample of respondents and participants from a wide spectrum of the society was used.

Instruments

The following instruments were used in the study

1. Household questionnaire
2. School Information questionnaire
3. Focus group discussions
4. Classroom observation schedule
5. Seasonal calendar
6. Problem preference ranking
7. Problem solution matrix
8. Life histories
9. Home observation schedule

These interactive and participatory research instruments provided a way of sensitising and mobilising communities to fathom their socio-cultural-economic status and relate them to the problems of girls' education. In this way mobilising communities to solve the identified problems was facilitated since the communities

themselves generated both the problems and the solutions. One major task which now remains, is to instil and sustain the will-power to effect the suggested changes.

Procedure

The research team consisted of 6 researchers, 2 supervisors, 3 participant observation supervisors, 10 research assistants and 10 local research assistants. These were split into two groups. While the original idea was to use the local assistants only for the home observations, we decided to make use of GABLE trained personnel for these observations in order to increase the reliability of the data from the observations.

Main Findings of the Study

The findings of the are presented following the three domains of the home, the school and the classroom.

The Home

Our understanding of the socialisation process as children grow in Malawi shows that this process is defined by the “mwambo” that defines what men do and what women should also do. This *mwambo* is the pivot of a total ritual that defines the boundaries of individuals' dispositions in society. The ‘mwambo’ (secret knowledge), is the ancestral wisdom that everyone learns at puberty and that is the unique possession of each person’s rank and gender. Adult men have their *mwambo* and adult women have theirs too. The boundaries of secrecy around these bodies of ritually transmitted knowledge assert and reify the principal social categories of the community (Serpell 1993, Chimombo 1999). It also demarcates and differentiates within them the categories of gender, age, grade and rank.

The socialization process also seems to introduce a paradox to the whole school cultural interface. Teachers indicated the fear of social turbulence that would follow in encouraging the mixing of boys and girls. While our teaching methods are encouraging the principles of mixed group teaching, it appeared that as pupils grow older, there develops a natural distance between the boys and girls. Teachers in a focus group

discussion observed that the behaviour of girls in the classroom completely changes once they come from initiation ceremonies. It is therefore probable that forcing boys and girls to mix in the classrooms is counter to the *mwambo* of the village. The result of this may be that the more schools enforce these teaching strategies, the more they are pushing pupils, especially girls, away from the school environment. Teachers narrated to us countless stories of how difficult it is to emphasise this mixing principle and this is also what we observed in the classrooms as indicated above.

The major observations from the home domain are:

Where there are schooling problems, children have a tendency to start school late

- Mangochi has more schooling problems than the other districts
- Girls in Mangochi start school at a much later age than other sites visited.
- Early marriages still remain the main constraint to girls education
- Parents still have an inclination towards favouring boys education than girls education because the education of boys is associated with more financial returns
- Division of labour in the homes mean that it is the girls who will do most of the chores and that some household chores will only be done by girls even if there are older boys who do not go to school.
- Very few were observed to be engaged in school related activities.

The School

It was observed that UNICEF has helped these communities in providing schools within walking distance. While UNICEF's provision was aimed at standards 1 and 2, every community had expanded the schools to at least standard 4. In these cases communities had provided complementary shelters which were of low quality. The major problem with the provision of incomplete primary schools is that they give the children a limited vision of the schooling concept. A lot of them leave school after completing standard four for example thinking that they have finished the primary cycle.

Most classes were being held outdoors. Learning outside has a lot of problems, especially in rugged terrain and in harsh weather. Further, construction of the blocks

need to take cognisance of the bad weather and provide appropriate shelters to enable effective teaching and learning to take place.

The provision of facilities is grossly inadequate in some schools. There are no adequate toilets for example so that pupils have to queue to use them. For girls, this is an important aspect in their lives and when it is not provided they may easily get disillusioned. There does not seem to be adequate attention to the provision of facilities in schools.

It was learnt that the availability of sports equipment is a great incentive for girls to go and stay in school. This is so because the school is the only place in the community where children will have access to footballs and netballs and their provision seem to make a great deal of a difference.

Teachers houses are also grossly inadequate in all schools. Their absence is a big inconvenience to the operation of the schools. Teachers have to walk or cycle long distances to school and this makes them to frequently absent themselves from school. The absence of good teachers' houses is also a disincentive to the attraction of good teachers to these schools and this also makes the teaching profession unattractive.

The main findings from the school characteristics were that:-

- There are more standards than classrooms and
- Almost all schools have only two classrooms even when there are more than two standards
- Harsh weather in the school sites disturbs the smooth running of schools
- There are no adequate shelters and not enough trees around most of the schools to provide temporary learning zones
- Classroom blocks of poor workmanship are a hazard
- Classroom blocks have no verandas/corridors for resting during break periods
- School siting left a lot to be desired

In terms of facilities, the study showed that

- Classroom materials are available in most schools. A few are in dire need.
- Security arrangements are seen as crucial in the storage of classroom facilities.
- Some schools have no water source nearby.
- Schools do not have permanent teachers' houses nearby. Most teachers are living in ramshackle huts far from the schools.

There was also a clear lack of various facilities in schools. It was noted with concern that the few schools that had good sports fields did not have the right sports equipment. These may have to be supplied to the schools to keep pupils particularly girls, in school. The main points regarding school facilities are;

- Lack of boreholes in some schools forces teachers to use girls to haul water for drinking and brick construction purposes.
- Inadequate toilets for teachers and pupils cause discomfort.
 - Lack of or uneven absence of sports grounds and equipment makes the school environment unattractive to the pupils.
- There is poor allocation of teachers with some schools having more teachers than the number of streams while the other schools had fewer teachers than the number of streams.
- There were more unqualified teachers than qualified ones which leads to poor methodologies.
- There are fewer female teachers than male teachers which leads to fewer role models for girls.
- Female teachers teach infant classes leaving the senior classes to male teachers.

The Classroom

Results show that teaching in Malawi primary schools is characterized by remarkably little pupil participation in verbal exchange or other classroom activities. The teacher occupies as much as 90% of all speaking time. In most of the areas, girls are

learning as second class pupils. Boys are aggressive. They bully and sexually harass girls and these seem to make the school a very hostile place for girls. In contrast, girls in Mangochi seem to expect this from the boys and did not complain about it.

The main issues noted under the classroom domain are:

- Most classrooms still have gender segregated sitting plans
 - Pupils prefer and are comfortable to sit and work with pupils of the same sex during classroom learning.
- Girls in most classes assume a subordinate status, which does not empower them to take control of their learning.
- There is limited teacher - pupil interaction, and limited pupil participation in most lessons especially by girls.
- Most lessons are dull and monotonous.
 - Most teachers lack knowledge of appropriate teaching methodologies
- Boys participate more during lessons by answering more questions
- Low cognitive level questions are used more during teaching
- Boys are perceived to be more intelligent than girls
- Teachers direct more questions to pupils perceived to be more intelligent because they are more interested in completion of the lesson rather than pupils' understanding of the concepts.
- The class environment in most schools was not conducive to learning
- Poor class environment made it uncomfortable for girls to actively participate in learning
- Provisions for teaching and learning materials are grossly inadequate in most schools.

These conditions are providing a sterile and stultifying learning environment and surely questions the type of literacy skills being imparted to our pupils. This calls for the need to redefine our notion of education to involve a closer attention to learning and the quality of learning, as distinct from the provision of more schools in Malawi. It is not surprising that the most striking feature of the classroom observations in the

schools is that of a strong ritualisation where a teacher asks questions and organizes exercises, and pupils listen to the teachers, answer the questions and do the exercises.

The Socio-economic and Cultural

The findings lend support to the fact that the lack of progress in achieving EFA is partly due to the specific socio-economic problems in the environments in which education operates, an indication that education alone cannot solve our problems of poverty, but that changes in the political, social and economic areas are also necessary. Girls' education is more than an education issue. It is deeply influenced by such things as poverty, tradition, habit, systems and discrimination- all requiring political will, not only just to educate girls, but also to eliminate those non-educational obstacles. Girls' participation in schools is a consequence of rationale decision made by parents based on what they perceive to be the benefit of schooling. In making the decision, they weigh up, with whatever available evidence, the economic as well as the social benefit they believe are likely to accrue to themselves and their daughters against the costs incurred.

The social and economic gains of the son seem to naturally outweigh those of the daughter. Male participation in the labour market means that parents place a higher value on the education of boys. Conversely cultural perception of girl's roles and their mobility, reinforced by low expectations of social and economic benefits to the family, strengthen cultural barriers and influence parents in favour of their sons schooling. Long-term benefits such as lower fertility and better child health care are less tangible, and neither the women FGDs nor the girls themselves could readily relate to them.

The important thing to the family was the immediate production or income needs of the family to which children could contribute. Parents' demands for schooling conflicted with short-run income and labour needs involving their children's contribution to the subsistence form of production and the family's cash earnings. The evidence has shown

that as mothers strive to meet these income needs, it is the girls who are more prone to working in the homes, and this greatly affects their performance in school.

In making decisions about the schooling of their children, these people need to be convinced that this schooling enterprise is a worthwhile one. The major problem seems to be that schooling does not play a major role in the lives of these people. It is the cooking, the mopping, the going to the grinding mill that pre-occupy most of their future lives. Problems of girls' dropout and non-persistence have to be understood within these contexts.

At the bottom of all these problem is the issue of poverty and the real problem with the education of girls is that government cannot do anything about absolute poverty. As parents, especially mothers struggle for survival in the homes, their daughters become substitutes for the remaining pieces of work in the households. The lack of persistence of girls in school is largely explained by the labour distribution patterns in the families as they strive for survival.

Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this report are derived from the problem solution matrices conducted with key change agents in the communities and from the analyses of the problems in the various contexts. They are also part of the results of wrap-up meetings we conducted at the end of each site visit. The following are therefore the recommendations from the study:-

1. The schools are located in rural and remote areas where no other schools exist. The provision of only Std 1 and Std 2 limited the vision and scope of education within these peripheral communities. Whatever momentum and interest is generated stalls and halts at Std 2. Beyond Std 3 the education provided is of appalling quality because the facilities available are scrounged from community contributions. It is therefore recommended that any organisation offering primary schools should provide a complete school.

2. Related to 1 above, is the need to provide schools with teachers' houses. The absence of these in schools is causing a lot of problems and is a hindrance to the teaching and learning process. It is therefore recommended that the provision of schools in future should look at a school in its totality.
3. Siting of the schools should take into consideration the weather and the terrain. Even more important is consideration of sheltering children the whole period they are at school. It is therefore recommended that in future, UNICEF should spend more time studying the areas before schools are constructed.
4. The architecture and construction of the school buildings should attract children and parents should appreciate that indeed the providers of education mean it when they encourage participation of children in education on the various platforms. It is desirable that the schools should be good looking and more habitable than the dwelling places of the children. Underlying this is the question of how the projects are implemented and who actually constructs the schools. The study therefore recommends that school project implementation should be geared towards the construction of attractive and solid structures. And this calls for a change in UNICEF's strategies for implementation.
5. Inadequate facilities at the school limit the nature of activities that attract girls. The majority of girls in these areas are simply not interested in school. The provision of simple materials, equipment and sports gear is imperative if the school is to appeal to girls. We therefore recommend that UNICEF should make deliberate efforts to enhanced the provision of these facilities.
6. The study also recommends that the curriculum be designed to interest the children in their local activities. It appears the school has failed to interest children because they perceive school activities as alien to their everyday environment. The language and the discourse should then be compatible with what children are familiar with. We

therefore recommend that attempts be made by government towards making the school curriculum relates to the activities of the environment in which the schools operate. But this has vast implications for teacher preparation.

7. It was also apparent that the learning that goes on in the schools does not capture the interest of the pupils. Furthermore, it was obvious that it does not impress the parents more especially the mothers. It was noted that most of this was as a result of poor quality and inadequate teachers. The study strongly recommends that the ministry of education must make sure that teachers have the minimum teaching skills that will enable them to cope in the classroom.
8. It is evident that boys have taken the liberty to impose themselves on girls in and outside the classroom. It is only proper that teachers and the school committees should be empowered to recognise any forms of harassment and deal with them accordingly. In addition, the school system should devise means of discouraging boys from any behaviours which adversely affect girls in school. This can be done by the ministry of education through the intensification of the gender sensitisation programs.
9. The study has identified opportunity cost as an important constraint to sending girls to school. Parents are the greatest influence on children and the mother has special influence on girls. She is in a position to provide vision to the girl. Therefore any interventions should target the mother who needs to re orientate her perception towards education of the child. In areas where men seem to have little interest in girls' education the interventions should involve the men folk too.
10. Poverty has been identified as another deterrent to girls' education in this study. It was evident during wrap-up meetings that the communities do not want handouts to alleviate their poverty. Rather, they would prefer to have sustainable means of dealing with their poverty. To this effect, they would prefer to have access to credit facilities that would enable them to engage in some form of income generating activity. It is

therefore recommended that UNICEF and other organisations interested in girls' education should consider this alternative.

11. The incompatibility of the new status of a girl after initiation with the school is a complex one. For sure, girls must be encouraged to start school early. However it is the duty of the teachers and the schools to accommodate diverse characters in the classroom and at the school. Adequately trained teachers would not find such a task daunting. This then reinforces the need to have adequate and appropriately trained teachers at the school. It is therefore recommended that the ministry should make sure that teachers have the skills to handle pupils of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
12. Chiefs and school committees possess a lot of power which is not wielded to the benefit of school going children. They are the driving force behind the *mwambo* of the village. There is then the need to sensitise these key stakeholders and empower them with appropriate support to take a lead in encouraging girls to participate more fully in education. When this is done socio-cultural issues that revolve around the chief could be infiltrated and modified to be compatible with schooling needs. All stakeholders in the provision of education should work together in this responsibility.

While it is desirable to impress upon everyone on the need for girls to attend and complete school, the prerequisite for the success of such a campaign is to have the schools and the appropriate facilities. When we have these then can the system start pushing girls into schools. At this point the complex socio-cultural factors that negatively affect girls' schooling can be addressed squarely. The major problem in primary schools in Malawi is the inability of the system to hold on to those pupils who show interest and start school. There are a complex array of factors attributing to this state of affairs.

Acknowledgements

This study was commissioned by UNICEF to investigate the classroom, school and home factors that negatively affect girls' education in Malawi. The main aim was to sensitize the communities which are directly affected in the need for them to think through their problems in order to arrive at solutions that might mitigate the situation. Furthermore, the study aimed at mobilising the affected communities to encourage and enhance girls' participation and performance in education.

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