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## Towards Integration of Dzaleka Camp Refugees' Education in National Systems in Malawi

Policy Brief  
April 2019

### Key messages and recommendations

- 1** Through the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), to implement the New York Declaration (2016), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016, the Government of Malawi has committed to support immediate and ongoing needs of refugees including in the areas of protection, health and education.

**Recommendation:** The Government is being commended for this positive development and is called upon to accelerate roll out of the CRRF in Malawi which aims to integrate refugees into national systems across the board. The United Nations stands ready to support the Government of Malawi in this endeavour.
- 2** Education infrastructure and services at Dzaleka Camp in the district of Dowa are overstretched and therefore unable to absorb all children and youth in need of learning. Currently, only 37% of children of school going age are enrolled in primary and secondary school.

**Recommendation:** The Government is called upon to consider integration of refugee education into Malawi public education system. Integration will bring mutual benefits to children from the refugee camp and from surrounding host villages. This will be achieved, for example, through strengthening of the capacity of schools in host communities jointly by Government, and development partners including the UN. A good model is there already from Luwani Camp where integration was almost 100%.
- 3** Quality of learning at Dzaleka Camp is compromised by large class sizes as well as high qualified teacher-pupil ratios. Primary school qualified teacher-pupil ratio, for example, stood at 1:88 in 2017 compared to the national average of 1:71.

**Recommendation:** As a short-term measure, the School Management at Dzaleka Camp are encouraged to consider double-shifting for all classes and to urgently recruit additional teachers to improve quality of learning. Additionally, volunteer teachers, along the lines used by UNICEF in Luwani camp, could be a model to follow before full-time engagement and deployment of teachers.
- 4** The education costs for each child enrolled in basic and secondary education in Dzaleka Camp is double the costs in other public schools (based on average cost estimates from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology).

**Recommendation:** The high costs for refugee education is one key reason for the Government to consider integration of refugees' education in the national system. This will help to ensure available resources are pulled together for the benefit of all children in Dzaleka Camp and the hosting areas.
- 5** Majority of resources financing education at Dzaleka Camp are coming from development partners, mainly UNHCR and the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS).

**Recommendation:** The Government is encouraged to support schools at Dzaleka Camp with additional teachers as well as small grants (such as the school improvement grant) to assist with other recurrent transactions, especially for basic and secondary education.

## PART 1 INTRODUCTION

**This policy brief seeks to make a case for the integration of refugee education for children and youth residing in Dzaleka Camp in Dowa into national systems.** To achieve this objective, the policy brief analyses trends in refugee education spending at Dzaleka Camp and highlights key policy and operational issues to be considered by the Government. The aim of the brief is to provide evidence that will contribute to dialogue between Government and development partners on the integration of refugee education of children and youth into national systems. The brief is mainly focused on basic and secondary education. To show trends over time, the brief analyses data from fiscal year 2013/14 to 2017/18.

**The development of this policy brief entailed various processes.** First, information about the situation of education at Dzaleka Camp was collected by UNHCR using an excel spreadsheet, targeting the school management and teachers. Secondly, data about education expenditures was collected from the school management and JRS using a cost-capturing tool guided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) budget classification system. Third, another tool was developed to collect education statistics and cost information from neighboring schools through the Dowa District Education Office. Fourth, and lastly, additional information was collected from the review of program data from the MoEST contained in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) as well as Education Sector reports. EMIS was particularly useful in terms of general education statistics and cost of education per child.

## PART 2 OVERVIEW OF THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN MALAWI

**Education is a top spending priority of the Government, although budget allocations are insufficient to meet the growing demand for education services.** In fiscal year (FY) 2018/19 the education sector received the highest share of the total Government budget (MK345 billion). This is equivalent to 23.7% of the total Government budget and 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III), the Government committed itself to improving access and quality of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education for all people in Malawi without discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability and other socio-economic circumstances. The Government also committed itself to “up-scale support and involvement of refugees in national development programming and implementation”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Peace and Security section of the MGDS III,

**Education is a key investment for child survival, growth, development and well-being.** Education also contributes to higher incomes, individual empowerment and decreased poverty levels. Improving the quality of learning contributes to economic growth. For Malawi and its neighboring countries to reap the demographic dividend there is need to prioritize investments in all levels of education. Education enhances the productive capacities of refugees and migrants.

**Malawi has significantly improved access to basic education, but challenges remain with secondary education.** Whilst approximately 88% of all eligible children are enrolled for basic education, net enrollment rate at secondary school level is very low, estimated at 16% (EMIS 2017). Total enrolment in secondary school was 372,885, against total primary school enrolment of 5,073,721 in 2017. The pupil-qualified teacher ratio in primary school is currently 1:77. The national average for pupil qualified teacher ratio in secondary school stands at 1:45. One of the biggest challenges to enrolment is the limited number of secondary schools. In 2017 Malawi had 1,411 secondary schools compared to 6,065 primary schools (EMIS 2017).



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## PART 3 REFUGEE EDUCATION IN MALAWI

**Refugee education in Malawi is mainly provided at Dzaleka Refugee Camp.** Due to restrictions in freedom of movement and the encampment policy, education and other services are offered to refugees in a camp set up, parallel to the national education system. Existing arrangements fall short of the principle of “leave no one behind” underpinning the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) as well as UNHCR’s Global Education Strategy. The UNHCR’s strategy aims to promote equitable access to quality education for both refugee children and of host communities.



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### Box 1: Education Statistics at Dzaleka Camp

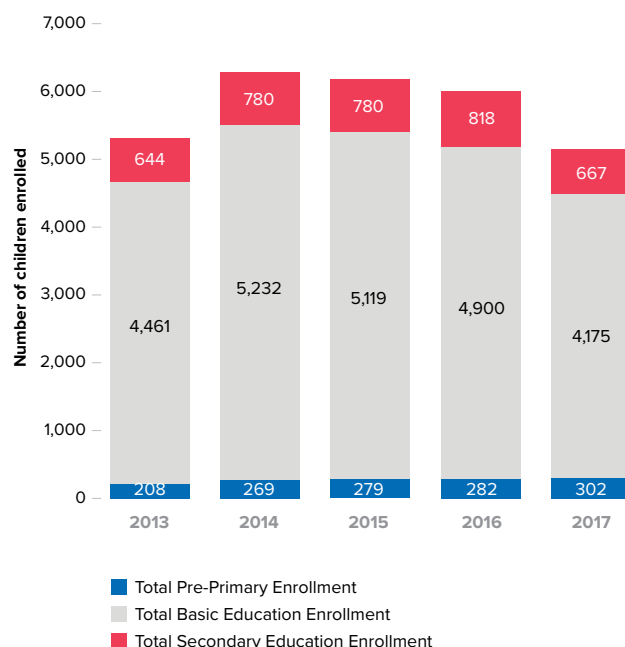
Total Population (2017)	38,000
Child population (Below 18 years)	18,500
Percentage of Eligible Children in School	37%
Primary School teacher-pupil ratio	1:77
Secondary School teacher-pupil ratio	1:60
Gross Enrollment in early childhood development at Dzaleka (2018)	(8%)
National Gross Enrollment in early childhood development (2017)	(47%)
Gross Enrollment in primary school at Dzaleka (2018)	(50%)
National Gross Enrollment in primary school (2017)	(136%)
Gross Enrollment in Secondary School at Dzaleka (2018)	(19%)
National Gross Enrollment in Secondary School (2017)	(24%)
Proportion of learners from host communities	10%

Source: UNHCR (2019) and EMIS (2017)

### Dzaleka Refugee Camp provides basic, secondary and tertiary education to refugee children and young people.

Although the school at Dzaleka Camp is managed by development partners, the curriculum used, and examination processes are the same with other public schools. The Camp is host to approximately 38,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi and Rwanda. At least half of the camp population (18,500) are children, 49% of whom are girls. Regrettably, only 37% (6,826) of eligible children are in school. Approximately 10% of the learners at Dzaleka Camp are from the surrounding villages.

**Figure 1**  
Enrolment by Level of Education at Dzaleka Camp



Source: UNHCR, 2019

### Education infrastructure and services at Dzaleka Camp in Dowa are overstretched and therefore unable to absorb all children and youth in need of learning.

Due to limited space and resources, it has not been possible to expand school infrastructure to a level commensurate with the demand for education at Dzaleka Camp. This is the reason why an estimated 63% of children of school going age in the Camp are out of school. The Government of Malawi, realizing the importance of integrating refugees into national systems, agreed to adopt the CRRF to guide its efforts. Building on this foundation, the Government is encouraged to accelerate the process of rolling out of the CRRF to ensure both Malawi and refugees enjoy the mutual benefits of the new framework.

**Box 2: 71/1. New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants**

**39** We commit to combating xenophobia, racism and discrimination in our societies against refugees and migrants. We will take measures to improve their integration and inclusion, as appropriate, and with particular reference to access to education, health care, justice and language training. We recognize that these measures will reduce the risks of marginalization and radicalization.

**81** We are determined to provide quality primary and secondary education in safe learning environments for all refugee children, and to do so within a few months of the initial displacement.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Resolution (A/RES/71/1) adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016

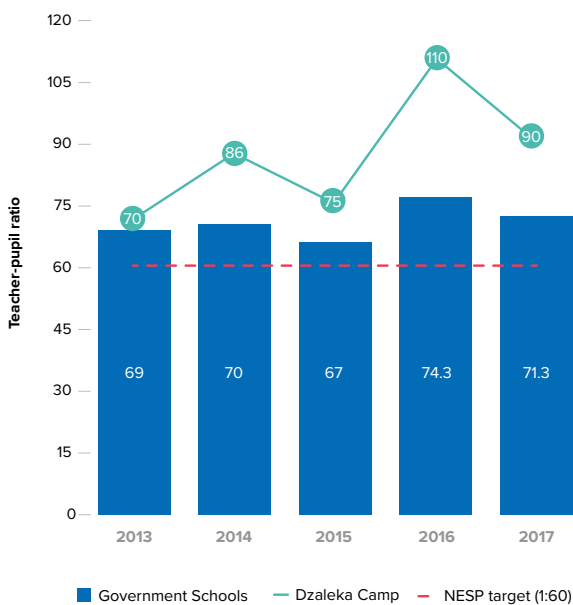
**Quality of learning at Dzaleka Camp is compromised by large class sizes as well as high teacher-pupil ratios.**

Primary school teacher-pupil ratio, for example, stood at 1:88 in 2017 compared to the national average of 1:77. Figure 2 and 3 shows that teacher pupil ratios for both primary and secondary school are higher than national averages as well as the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) targets. Due to shortage of classrooms and teachers, children in standard three and four, for example, go to school in the afternoon. The same teachers manage both shifts which makes it difficult for them to give learners sufficient attention as required by the current Government emphasis on “interactive learning”.



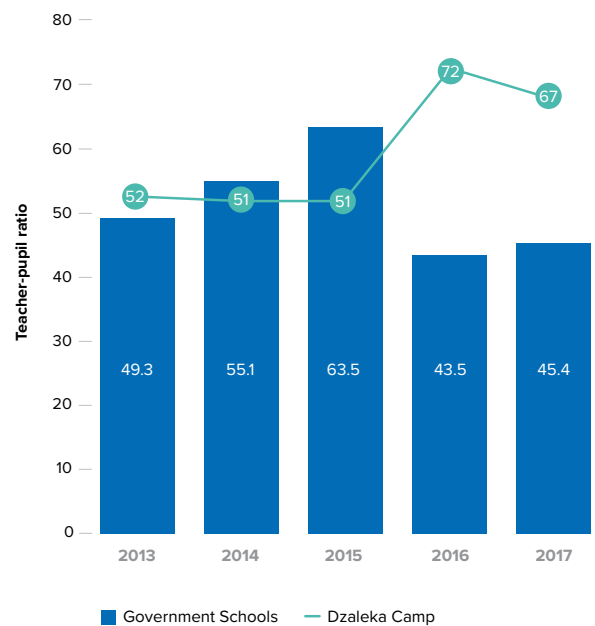
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**Figure 2**  
Primary School Teacher - Pupil Ratios (TPRs)



Source: EMIS (2017) & UNHCR (2018)

**Figure 3**  
Secondary School Teacher-Pupil Ratios (TPRs)



Source: EMIS (2017) & UNHCR (2018)

## PART 4 WHY INTEGRATION INTO NATIONAL SYSTEMS?

**Integration of refugee education into national systems holds the possibility of improving access and quality of learning by refugees and migrants.** Integration will enable refugee children to attend neighboring public schools and will also ensure synergies with various key actors in improving conditions of learning for both refugees and children from surrounding host communities. Refugees and host communities alike will benefit from established education systems.

**The Government and people of Malawi also stands to benefit from a skilled refugee population.** Data collected by UNHCR and the JRS has shown that amongst refugees at Dzaleka Camp, there are people with knowledge and skills in medicine, digital technology, arts, languages, agriculture and many other areas. For example, there are many French speaking refugees who could be teaching French in public and private schools in Malawi. If harnessed, skills possessed by refugees can immensely benefit citizens and the economy of Malawi.

**Integration is also a key step in reducing xenophobia, racism and discrimination of refugees and migrants.** All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. In line with international human rights law, everyone has the right to non-discrimination of any kind regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

**There is in-country evidence to show that integration of refugee education is possible and cost-efficient.** For example, during an emergency influx of Mozambican asylum seekers in 2016, UNICEF, UNHCR and the Ministry of Education supported Mozambican children to attend a public school in Luwani. The three partners collaborated to expand the capacity of the school by building classroom blocks, teachers' houses, and renovating some old school structures.

### Box 3: Government of Malawi and UN partner to provide education to refugees in Luwani

Conflict between the Mozambican government and the opposition resulted in the influx of refugees into Kapise village in Mwanza district of Malawi mainly from Mkondezi, Monjo, Mtengachiti, Namikoko, Nagulu, Ndande, Chitsanja, Musa and Chinyaje villages in Tete Province<sup>3</sup> since July 2015. UNHCR data indicated that by end February 2016, Kapise village was reportedly holding over 7,000 refugees<sup>4</sup>. This rapid flow of refugees necessitated the need for a joint inter-agency contingency planning for assistance to the Mozambican refugees.

The Education cluster led by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and co-chaired by UNICEF resolved at its coordination meeting of 10th February 2016 to respond immediately to the refugee emergency by providing teachers, tents and teaching and learning materials in order to integrate refugee education in neighboring schools. In order to respond appropriately, MoEST in collaboration with UNICEF, UNHCR and other partners, conducted an assessment to identify the immediate education needs of the refugee children in Kapise camp.

Arrangements were later made to strengthen the capacity of an existing school in Luwani and have the Mozambican asylum seekers integrated. Approximately 998 refugee children were enrolled at Luwani primary school as of September 2019. The UN supported with construction of 8 new school structures, hired additional teachers, constructed 3 teachers' houses, renovated 3 old school blocks and supplied additional teaching and learning materials.

Integration in Luwani involved several stakeholders. These included MoEST, UNICEF, Neno District Education officials, Department of Social Welfare, Teachers Union and civil society organizations. To guide the entire process towards inclusion of refugees in national public schools, an education cluster coordination mechanism was established, led by the District Education Management (DEM). From the Luwani experience, stakeholders learnt that a multisectoral approach which ensures involvement of various stakeholders is key in integration programs.

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR Operational update report, 16 February 2016  
<sup>4</sup> UNHCR Registration data, 28 February, 2016

**The United Nations stands ready to support the Government to integrate refugee education into national systems.** Building on experience gained in Luwani and in other countries, the UN is committed to supporting the Government to plan and execute the transition from education in camp to inclusive education within host communities. For several years, the UNHCR and the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) have paid for all education costs at the Camp. To facilitate transition, the UN will collaborate with Government to improve education systems and learning conditions for both refugee and host community children in conventional public schools.

**There are also several guidance documents and tools that Malawi can readily use to integrate refugee education into national systems.** One such framework, introduced earlier, is the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) developed by the UNHCR in collaboration with relevant States, UN agencies and other stakeholders. The framework represents a new way of assisting refugees and migrants through burden sharing between host Government, development partners and other stakeholders. The CRRF is designed to ensure: rapid and well-supported reception and admission measures; support for immediate and ongoing needs (including protection, health and education); assistance to national and local institutions and communities receiving refugees; and expanded opportunities for durable solutions, including the right to education.

**The Government of Malawi is commended for reiterating its intention to apply the CRRF in its national development plans.** As highlighted earlier, in the MGDS III, the Government recognizes the need to incorporate refugee issues into the national development agenda. The Government has already developed a National Migration Policy and has reviewed the Refugee Act (1989), but both have not been finalized. Following the review of the Refugee Act, in 2012, with support from UNHCR, the Government developed the Refugee Amendment Bill and a Refugee policy, which are yet to be adopted.

**Malawi is a state party to the 1951 Refugee Convention.** However, it has made reservations to nine articles in the 1951 Refugee Convention including: exemption from reciprocity, movable and immovable property, rights of association, wage earning employment, liberal professionals, public education, labour legislation and social security, freedom of movement and naturalization. While Malawi generally complies with its international obligations on admission, these reservations pose complex challenges to refugees, as they are not entitled to live or work outside of designated camp settings. The restriction on movement has resulted in congestion in Dzaleka Camp, with schools reaching maximum capacity. Given the foregoing, lifting of the above reservations is a key enabler for the integration of refugees into public schools to take place.



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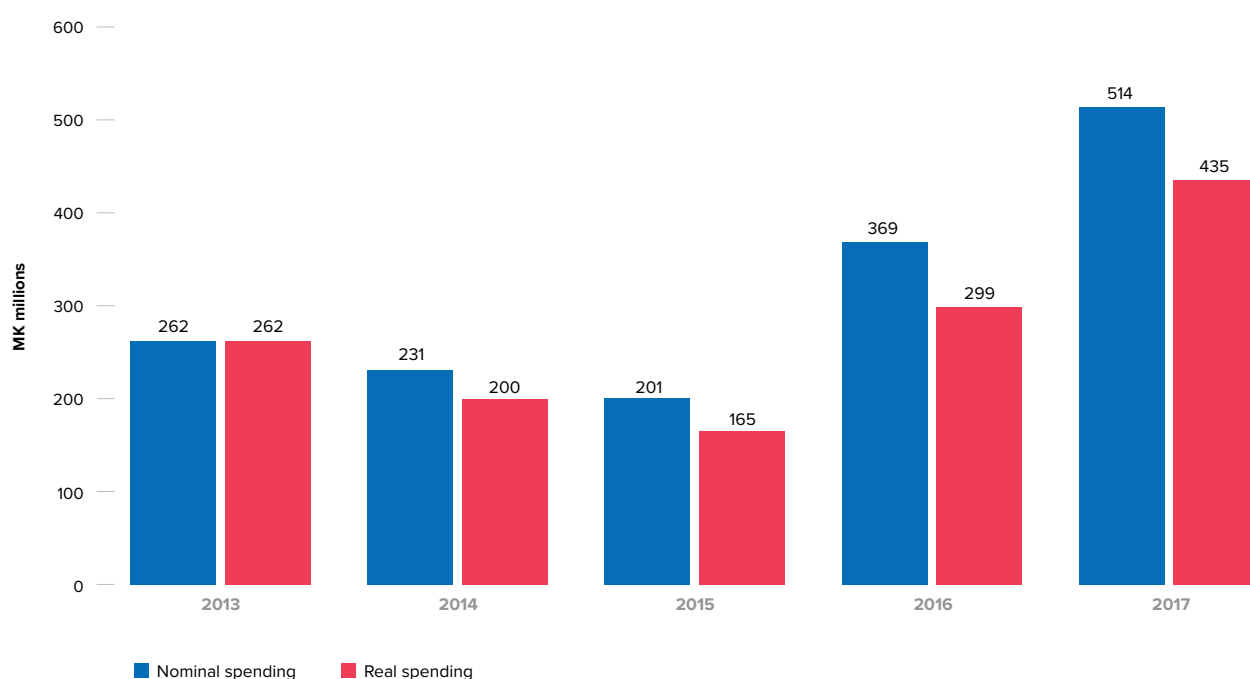
## PART 4 SIZE OF REFUGEE EDUCATION SPENDING AT DZALEKA CAMP

**Refugee Education spending at Dzaleka Camp, mainly by development partners, has steadily increased in real terms in the past few years.** In FY2017/18, the total education expenditure was MK514 million up from MK369 million in 2016/17. Compared to 2016/17, this represents a 39% nominal

increase and 18% increase in real terms<sup>5</sup>. The increase in education spending was observed across all levels, with pre-primary education experiencing the highest expenditure growth of 187%. Between 2012/13 and 2015/16, education spending in Dzaleka Camp trended downwards (Figure 4).

<sup>5</sup> An inflation adjustment factor of 0.85 was used, which was calculated using Consumer Price Indices for 2016 and 2017, with 2013 as the base fiscal year.

**Figure 5**  
Total Education Spending at Dzaleka Camp



Source: UNHCR (2018)

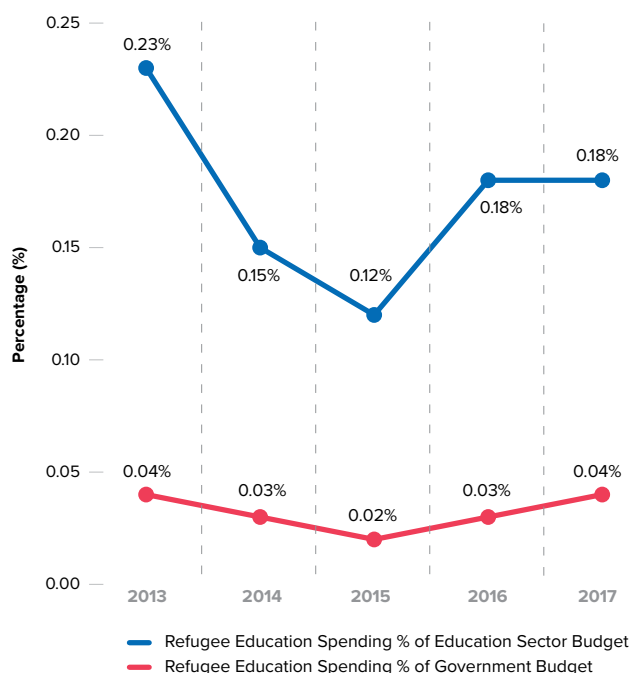
**Table 1** Annual Spending by Level of Education at Dzaleka Camp in MWK

Education Level	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pre-Primary Education	4,710,960	5,173,332	3,912,714	4,673,410	13,414,297
Basic Education	161,619,370	136,034,786	110,954,013	267,931,263	377,540,920
Secondary Education	79,424,750	89,595,480	86,339,247	90,911,241	116,726,436
Tertiary Education	16,706,460	-	-	5,816,000	6,775,922
<b>Total Education Expenditures at Dzaleka Camp</b>	<b>262,461,540</b>	<b>230,803,598</b>	<b>201,205,974</b>	<b>369,331,914</b>	<b>514,457,575</b>

Source: UNHCR (2018)

The total education expenditures in 2017/18 translates to approximately MK100,000<sup>6</sup> (US\$137<sup>7</sup>) per each enrolled child per year. This represents 62% nominal increase from MK62,555 in 2016 and about 37% increase in real terms. Average cost per each enrolled child are high at secondary education (MK127,000), followed by basic education (MK45,000) and pre-primary education (MK23,000). Compared to 2016, per child spending increased by 57%, 65% and 165% in primary and secondary and pre-primary education, respectively in 2017.

**Figure 6**  
Share of Education Spending at Dzaleka



Source: UNHCR (2018) and Government Budget Estimates

Education spending at Dzaleka Camp has averaged 0.2% of the total education sector budget between 2013 and 2017. As a share of the total government budget, education spending at Dzaleka Camp has averaged 0.03% (Figure 6). This means that a sizeable amount of resources are being contributed by development partners to refugee education at the Camp.

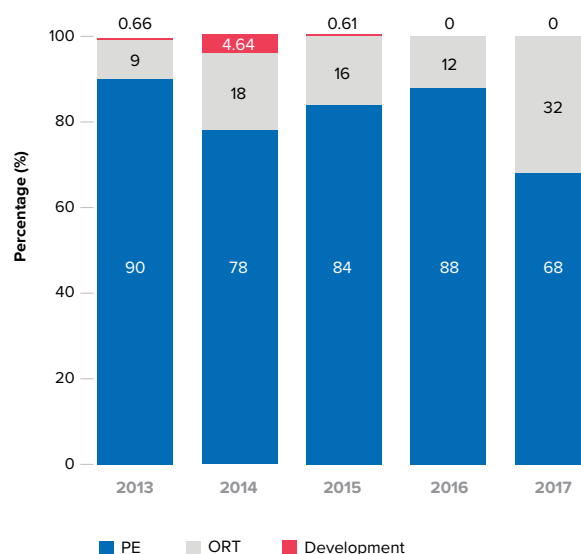
<sup>6</sup> This calculation is based on actual number of children enrolled in school at Dzaleka Camp (5,144 in 2017).  
<sup>7</sup> An exchange rate of USD1:MK730 was used for the currency conversion.

## PART 5 COMPOSITION OF REFUGEE EDUCATION EXPENDITURES

A majority of refugee education expenditures are absorbed by personnel emoluments (PE). PE costs have averaged 72% of total expenditures at the primary level and 82% at the secondary education level for the period 2013/14 to 2017/18. Although declining, the share of PE remains high, especially at secondary education level. In FY2017/18, PE accounted for 68% of total secondary education expenditures at Dzaleka Camp. Other recurrent transactions (ORT), including teaching and learning material, have received relatively low resources. In 2017, the share of ORT going towards primary education was at 17% and 32% for secondary education.

In the past few years, basic education has received the highest share of education resources going to Dzaleka Camp. In 2017, for instance, 73% (MK377 million) of total education expenditure were for basic education followed by secondary education (23%). Pre-primary education received the lowest share at 2.6% in 2017. Encouragingly, pre-primary education spending experienced the highest growth of 187%, from MK4.7 million in 2016 to MK13.4 million in 2017. Tertiary education is the least funded program, accounting for only 1.3% of total education expenditure in 2017. This is partly because of the small number of students enrolled. Figure 9 shows education expenditure by educational level the period from 2013 to 2017.

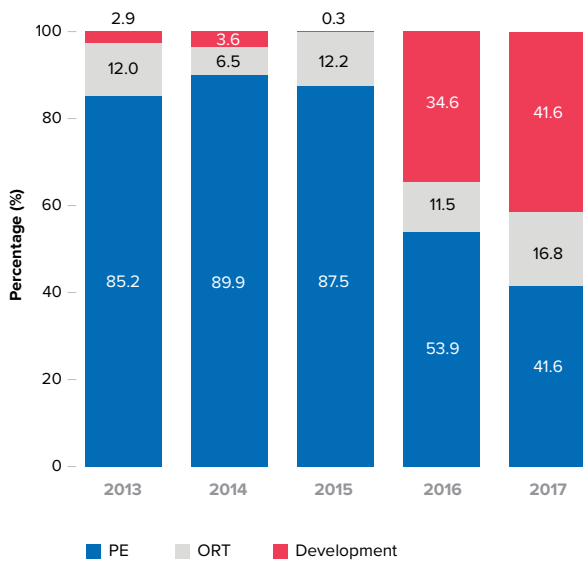
**Figure 7**  
Composition of Secondary Education Expenditures



Source: UNHCR (2018)

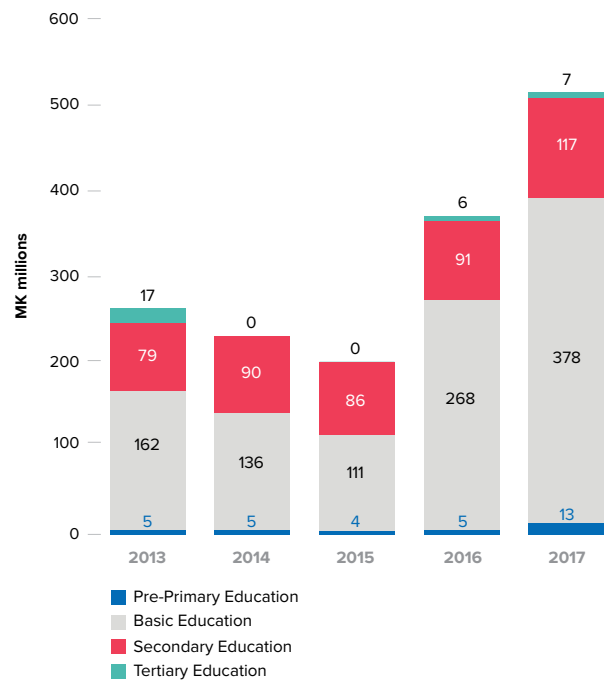


**Figure 8**  
Composition of Basic Primary Education by Economic Classification



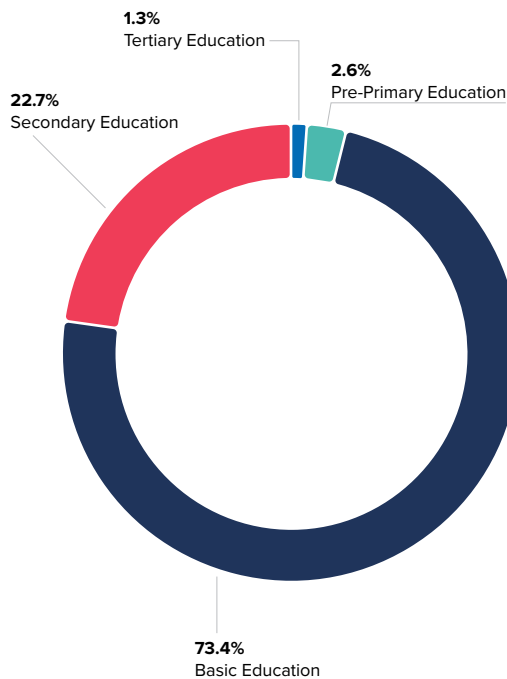
Source: UNHCR (2018)

**Figure 9**  
Total Spending by Level of Education



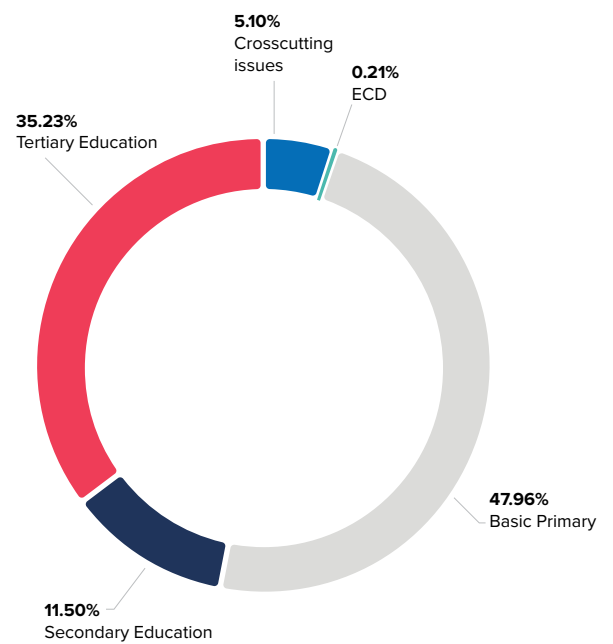
Source: UNHCR (2018)

**Figure 10**  
Composition of Dzaleka Education Expenditure, FY2017



Source: UNHCR (2018)

**Figure 11**  
National Composition of Government Education Expenditure, FY2017/18



Source: UNHCR (2018)

The composition of education expenditure at Dzaleka assumes the same pattern as public schools in Malawi (Figure 10&11). Nationally, employment costs also consume the largest chunk of education sector resources. In FY 2017/18 employment costs accounted for 56% of the total education budget. At the same time, basic education has also been receiving the highest share (48%) of the total Government education budget as shown in Figure 11, with pre-primary education getting the lowest share of 0.21%. However, the share of the budget at Dzaleka Camp spent on secondary education (22.7%) is almost double the proportion of resource spent at the national level (11.5%).

## PART 6 COST OF EDUCATION IN DZALEKA CAMP COMPARED TO GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

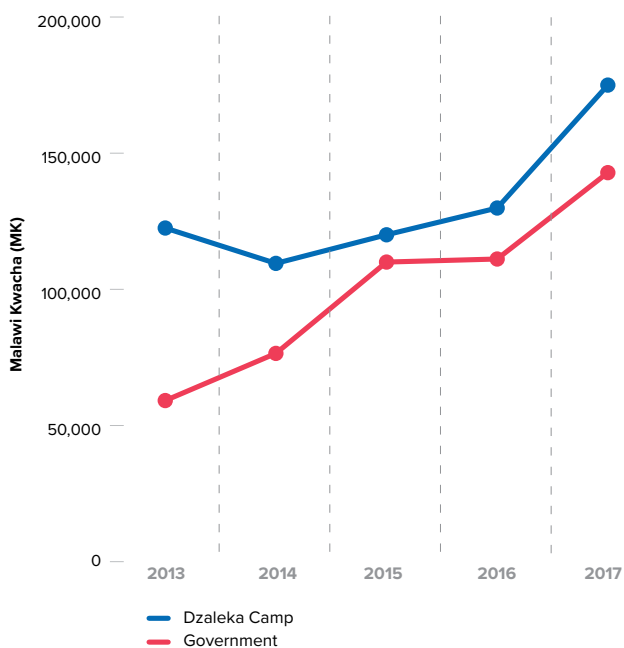
There are relatively more resources being spent per child at Dzaleka Camp compared to public schools in Malawi. In 2017, for instance, Dzaleka Camp spent MK53,000 in recurrent expenditures per each enrolled primary child, more than double the amount spent by Government of MK22,000.<sup>8</sup> The same trend is observed in secondary education where MK175,000 was spent per child in Dzaleka Camp, compared to about MK143,000 in Government schools.

<sup>8</sup> The per capita spending analysis consider recurrent expenditures only to align it with data from EMIS, which excludes development spending.



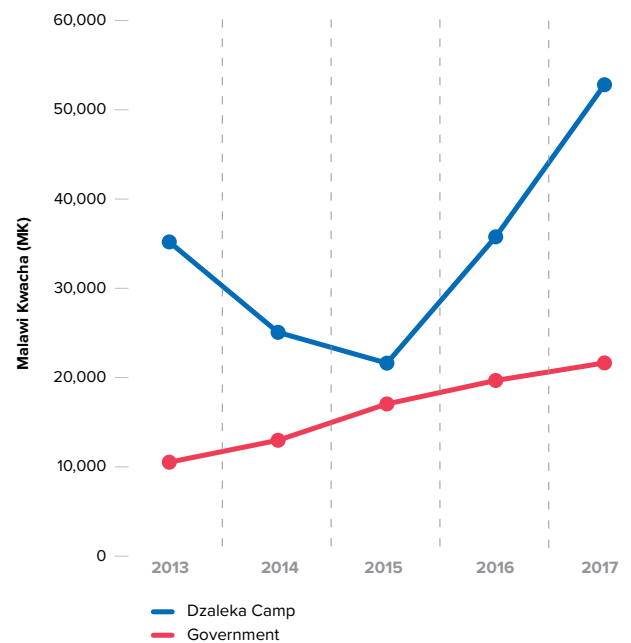
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**Figure 12**  
Recurrent unit cost per secondary school child



Source: UNHCR (2018)

**Figure 13**  
Recurrent unit cost per primary school child



Source: UNHCR (2018)

**There is potential for Government to do more with available resource if refugee education is integrated into national systems.** The above figures show that the current model where refugee education is provided in camp is not only expensive, it is also not sustainable. It can be concluded that 'in-camp' refugee education cost more than other government schools. Additionally, there is risk of tensions between refugees and host communities if current situation continues.

## PART 7 POLICY ISSUES TO CONSIDER

To move towards integrated refugee education, there are several policy and transitional issues to be considered.

### a) Enabling Policy and Legislative Framework

**Integration of refugees into the public education system requires enabling policies and laws.** Malawi localized the SDGs which were translated into the national agenda in which the universal principle is to “leave no one behind”. With this universal principle, Malawi, for the first time, included refugees in the MGDSIII as a way of emphasizing her commitment to inclusiveness. In addition, Malawi’s education policy aspires to provide equal access to all children residing in Malawi, as this is considered one of the basic human rights for children. These together with other policy frameworks described above provide a conducive environment for integration of refugees into national systems.

### b) Refugee Data and Statistics

**Refugee registration and statistics are currently managed by both Ministry of Homeland Security and UNHCR.** Reliable data on refugees is available, and they are also provided with relevant identification documentation which allow them to access various services in the camp and nationwide.

Refugee’s will continue to use these documentation as they are valid and accepted by Government and the nation at large, until such a time when Government gives a new directive.

### c) Enhancing the Capacity of Neighboring Schools to Absorb New Learners

**Considering that the education sector in Malawi is already over-burdened, the Government and development partners should work together to improve capacity of neighboring schools to absorb new learners.** To begin with, an assessment of the schools around Dzaleka Camp will be needed to be able to determine their capacity to integrate refugee children. Presumably, the schools would require some rehabilitation, additional classrooms and teachers and provision of teaching and learning materials. It would be also be important to assess the education needs of refugee children.

**In most public schools in Malawi, pupil-classroom and pupil-teacher ratios are very high.** The permanent classroom-pupil ratio for primary school, for example, stood at 1:122 in 2017. At the same time primary school qualified teacher-pupil ratio is 1: 77. This means that there is need for both Government and development partners to increase their investments in neighboring schools. A comprehensive marginal costing of additional infrastructure, human resources and other services required to increase capacity of neighboring schools will be required.

Malawi localized the SDGs which were translated into the national agenda in which the universal principle is to “**leave no one behind**”. With this universal principle, Malawi, for the first time, included refugees in the MGDSIII as a way of emphasizing her commitment to inclusiveness.



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