MASEDA is a standardised software application that allows users to (a) organise and document statistical data on the situation of human development in the country, and (b) to present this information through a variety of presentation tools, including: tables, graphs and maps like the ones shown in this brochure were directly extracted from the MASEDA application. Making life easier for Planners and Policy makers. The following are some of the key features of the Malawi socio-economic Database:

- A user-friendly software application for storage and retrieval of core socio-economic indicators for Malawi
- Improved methodology for reporting, archiving and exchanging detailed, up-to-date information on the situation of human development in Malawi
- Easier access to quantifiable indicators for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at national and sub-national levels
- Greater consistency in use of data throughout government institutions and departments
- Information that can easily be distributed to interested external parties (NGOs, private sector, donors, media)
MASEDA has been adopted by Malawi Government for the monitoring of the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper indicators. It has been widely publicised within and even outside Malawi, up to the point that Malawi is taken as a role model to the rest of African countries when it comes to implementation and use of the database. MASEDA has been derived from the ChildInfo database (used by UNICEF) which is now being converted to DevInfo, since it has been adopted by the United Nations to monitor indicators in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

MASEDA, Version 2.0, contains data for a total of 245 indicators while version 1.0 contains 147 indicators. The version 2.0 has tried to touch each and every sector of the economy critical to socio-economic development and poverty reduction. The data is organised by sectors and themes and provides updated time-series as well as multiple estimates from various sources, desegregated down to district level and Traditional Authority (TA) level by sex and urban/rural strata wherever these are available.

MASEDA mainly contains national level indicators, but some indicators have data by district and TAs. However, MASEDA aims to capture desegregated data, not only by geographical location, but also by other characteristics e.g., gender, age and educational status, in order to enhance the utility of MASEDA and support policy discussions, planning and monitoring exercises.

Apart from facilitating regular updates of existing indicators, MASEDA allows for expansion of the number of indicators uploaded into the system according to demand from participating institutions and the availability of quality data. The aim is to have an increasing number of indicators loaded into the system and to expand the inclusion of desegregated data.
The NSO is responsible for maintaining MASEDA. A National Technical Working Committee composed by representative from line ministries, NGOs, academic institutions, and the UN country team under the leadership of NSO and UNICEF is overseeing the development of MASEDA. There is also a Task Force composed of people with the technical expertise regarding data collection and analysis at NSO to oversee the recommendations made by the TWC. Being the co-ordinating institution, NSO ensures that the database is updated regularly and new versions released and disseminated accordingly.

As described above MASEDA can facilitate storage of data from a wide range of indicators, and hence be a valuable tool in keeping track of data flowing from administrative records, vital registration, routine reporting systems such as HMIS on EMIS, surveys, etc... Furthermore, the design of MASEDA allows for fast and easy retrieval of data, and provides the tools for presenting the data in forms of tables, graphs and maps.

**MASEDA as a Planning and Monitoring Tool**

By making use of the uploaded data and the presentation tools, MASEDA provides planners with inputs to inform the decision making process. For instance, if geographical desegregated data are available for an indicator or a series of indicators, interventions can be targeted to areas in most need of resources.

It can also be used as a monitoring and evaluation tool for different projects being implemented by various organisations, government departments and institutions in the country, through keeping track of all the relevant indicators in question, how they have been affected since the implementation of the projects in question.

In the map example given below, we are looking at infant mortality rates in all the districts in Malawi as depicted in the 1998 Census. It gives a view of where resources should be targeted with a view of reducing infant mortality rates.

**Quality of Data**

A prerequisite for use and consistent maintenance of MASEDA is high reliability of the uploaded data. Procedures to ensure quality standards for the data have been formulated, placing NSO in a key position to supervise the process of uploading data. A standard definition is formulated for each indicator and uploaded data is linked to a recognised source. During retrieval of data, both the indicator definition and the data source is displayed, allowing the user to countercheck the data.

Each of the participating institutions has appointed staff to work on MASEDA, who will be trained in managing the database system. This individual will be responsible for identifying data and for making regular updates of the database, which they then send to the NSO. An archive with hard copies of all data uploaded into MASEDA is being maintained by each of the data providing institutions as well as NSO. NSO is responsible for making additional quality check of the data, and to merge the databases produced by the various institutions into one national database.

**The Future of MASEDA**

At the moment updated versions of MASEDA are being distributed through CD-ROMs containing the uploaded data and the software tools to operate the database. However, as mentioned above initiatives are being made
to have MASEDA featured on the Internet. This is expected to widen the scope for sharing statistical data on
the situation of human development in Malawi considerably, not least by ensuring public access to MASEDA.
The Web version of the database is expected to be operational early next year.

MASEDA in DevInfo and Web-enabled version

The MASEDA version 2.0 is in DevInfo format. DevInfo is an accepted corporate software tool for the monitoring
of the MDGs by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). DevInfo is based on the ChildInfo software from
which the MASEDA 1.0 is a generic product. The UN has adopted the software corporately to facilitate data
consistency and provide a more cost effective solution for individual countries. Since DevInfo will facilitate data
consistency it is designed in away that it contains already a defined list of MDG indicators which all countries will follow.
But individual countries or offices are allowed to have an unlimited number of user defined indicators added on top of the
existing MDGs without modifying the MDG indicators.

It is on this DevInfo technology that the web version will is based. Since Malawi and Tanzania are ahead of all the
countries in the world in terms of the implementation of the socio-economic databases, these two countries have
been identified to carry out the piloting of the DevInfo web version. This is being carried out and comments are being sent
to make sure the right and efficient product is produced before the launch in mid 2005.

MASEDA can be accessed on-line on the following website with a password and username given:
Site: www.maseda.info, Username: test@test.com, Password: test

TRAINING

Several training programmes have been outlined by the MASEDA Unit at NSO since its inception. Officers
from all the District Assemblies (Data clerks and Directors of Planning & Development) have been trained in the Data Administration (where they could create their own databases for use at the district level) and the Users module (how to use the application).

Also people from Youth and Human Rights organisations, members of the MASEDA Technical Working Committee, the University and IT institutions have been trained on how to utilise the application.

Trainings for the data officers from different government departments, people from the UN Country Team, and a monitoring visit to all the district Assemblies to evaluate the usage of MASEDA are some of the programmes in the pipeline for this year.

We are very grateful to UNDP and Unicef for their continuing support in the implementation of the Project. On top of all the support they have done to make the project operational they have also funded the setting up of a computer laboratory at NSO with 15 state of the art computers to help in the trainings of stakeholders.
FUNDING
MASEDA has been in operation with support from the Malawi Government through the National Statistical Office, from Unicef, UNDP and DFID which are the main collaborating institutions, being supported by representatives from different government departments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), United Nations Country Team, Civil Society Organisations (CSO), and all the development partners.

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Malawi Socio-Economic Database