

## Researching the girls drop-out rate in Malawi.

Why girls drop-out of primary schools and in what way this rate can be reduced.



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## Foreword

What a great experience to get the chance to go to Malawi. It's indescribable how such an experience will be an experience that can't and shouldn't be forgotten. Cycling through the different villages, getting all the help I needed at the schools, and going to the girls houses to interview them and their parents about the drop-out.

Although I was thinking of going to Africa for a longer time, I didn't expect it to happen this year. That's why I'm really thankful that the teachers of Master Special Educational Needs (SEN) made it possible for me to do my research in Malawi. They guided me through a quick planning, so I could finish my competences before May. I needed to work hard, but it all was for a really good goal.

In April I finished the competences of Master SEN, except for research and report. That's the job I needed to do in Malawi. The Teachers Training College (TTC) of Loudon asked for someone to do a research about why girls drop-out from primary school. From May until July I worked there. I went to different primary schools to get as much information as possible.

Since I lived in Malawi for almost 3 months, it wasn't my only job to do the research. Besides that I also experienced the way of living in an African country. Of course this is a whole different way than I'm used to, but I was willing to make adjustments and experience the kindness of Malawi. Because of the differences between The Netherlands and Africa, it wasn't all easy to do. Although the people were willing to help me, not everybody understood me properly. Sometimes it was hard to communicate, but I always got help with translating. As the people from TTC Loudon asked me to do: I try to forget about the tough situations and keep in mind the fun and joy I had of being in Malawi.

Some people need a special word of thanks, because of helping me to let this dream of me come true. As already mentioned, the teachers of Master Sen for giving me this opportunity, although it isn't part of the training to go to a foreign country. I would like to thank Mr. Haring and Mrs. Kooiker from Ex-change for giving me the possibility to do my project in Malawi. Especially to be in Embangweni.

And then I have to thank all this people who helped me with doing the research down in Malawi. The people from ACEM, Mr. Aurelian for giving me information about the educational system in Malawi and for the reports, Mrs. Banda for bringing me to Embangweni and introduced me to the TTC students. And for making an appointment with Fawema, thanks to Mrs. Esther for giving me information and reports about girl drop-out in Malawi.

Special thanks for TTC Loudon to let me be at their college, at their dorms, at their dining, just let me be one of them. Providing me in my basic needs, but also helping me to get in touch with the students who were based at different primary schools where I had to go to do the interviews for my research. And from there on, thanks to all the student teachers. Some escorted me to their schools, some made food for me, some gave me a place to stay for one night, everybody being so friendly to me and trying to help me in every way that was possible. Also the head teacher, teachers at those primary schools for giving me the information I need, escorting me to the drop-outs, helped me with interviewing and translating the girls and their parents. Thank you so much!

## Table of contents

Foreword	2
Table of contents	3
Summary	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 Project goals	5
1.3 Research questions	5
1.4 Overview of chapters	6
Chapter 2: Theoretical background	7
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 The educational system in Malawi	7
2.3 Outcomes of researches about absenteeism and drop-out	8
Chapter 3: Research Method	11
3.1 Introduction	11
3.2 Planning	11
3.3 Instruments	12
Chapter 4: Findings	13
4.1 Introduction	13
4.2 Results on interviewing girls drop-out and their parents/guidance	13
4.3 Results on interviewing teachers	16
4.4 Life Skills	21
4.5 Fawema	23
4.6 Mother groups	25
Chapter 5: Discussion	27
5.1 Introduction	27
5.2 Conclusions	27
5.3 Noted in the results	28
5.4 Recommendations for future research	28
References	29
Appendix 1: Description of the visited primary schools	30
Appendix 2: Head teacher questionnaire	31
Appendix 3: Teachers questionnaire	33
Appendix 4: Student teachers questionnaire	34
Appendix 5: Girls drop-out questionnaire	35
Appendix 6: Parents of girls drop-out questionnaire	36

## Summary

There's a high drop-out rate in Malawi. Especially the girl drop-out is a big problem. In 2008 totally 360771 learners were enrolled at primary schools of Malawi. Of those learners 67,37% drop-out, from standard 5-8 it was 39,51% of the learners. Considering the girls 83,59% of them drop-out, from standard 5-8 it was 55,1%. (Source: Educational Statistics 2008)

Girls stop their education because of different reasons: early marriages and pregnancies, poverty (orphans), lack of parental care, bad school condition and health problems. Although sometimes parents and teachers are trying to get the girls back at school, they're still refusing. That's because the girls mostly don't have role models and don't say the positivity of finishing their education. "What's the point of studying hard, when your future vision is 'just' to become mother and housewife?"

To decrease this high drop-out rate, the Ministry of Education and some educational organization introduced different kind of intervention. Civic education (talking to parents and learners trying to get some awareness for the importance of education) and mother groups are some of those interventions.

Since there is still a high rate of drop-outs, more interventions are needed. When asking the teachers, they can name lots of ways to reduce the drop-out rate. Not all these interventions are realistic, some of them needs more money and time then possible.

Recommended is to improve the ways of intervention Malawi is working with now. Better civic education and more often to the whole community can be a very good improvement. Also the training for every mother group in order to activate the women can make a big difference. If the women are really trying hard, and enjoying their work they can improve the future of lots of the girls in their community.

For all the reasons, intervention and recommendations considering the girl drop-out rate in Malawi, this report can be read.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction

In Malawi there's a high rate of drop-out. Especially girl drop-out. TTC Loudon specifically asked Edukans (through ACEM) for a student to investigate this drop-out rate. Since Malawi is a development country, I have to work with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). These MDGs have arisen in 2000. The governmental leaders from 189 countries have agreed to address major global problems before the year 2015. There are eight specific goals. My project will be part of two of those goals: goal 2 "Achieve universal primary education" and goal 3 "Promote gender equality and empower women". Targets of these goals are "ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling" and "eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015" (United Nation, 2009)

To work on these goals, I will interview lots of people. Girls who'd drop-out, parents of these girls. But also head teachers from primary schools, teachers and student teachers. To get some quality information and reports I will work with ACEM (Association of Christian Educators in Malawi) and Fawema (Forum for African Women Educationalist Malawi).

### 1.2 Project goals

To create a list of possible causes of drop-out among girls in Malawi is the main objective. To create this list, information will be found in interviews with several organizations, primary schools (head teachers/ teachers and student teachers), girl drop-outs and their parents. Besides this list the questions are also based to get information that will lead to recommendations that will be able to ensure that the number of girl drop-outs in Malawi decreases. Besides researching what makes the girls to drop-out, it's also important to try to get information in what way this can be reduced.

### 1.3 Research questions

Investigating reasons why girls drop-out is the main thing of my research. In advance the main research question was formulated: "Why do girls in Malawi aged 10-12 years drop-out of school?" After being in Malawi for some while, I experienced the difference in educational system and the fact that age isn't an important thing. It don't matter how old you are, you can repeat a standard time and time again. That's why I had to change the main research question as following:

"Why do girls in Malawi, from standard 5-8, drop-out of school?"

These main question leads to the following parts:

"What knowledge does the organisation Fawema has on this area?"

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) is a pan-African Non Government Organization founded in 1992 by five women ministers of education to promote girls' and women's education in sub-Saharan Africa in line with Education For All. The organization's members include ministers of education, university vice-chancellors, education policy-makers, researchers, gender specialists and human rights activists. FAWE's goal is to increase access and retention as well as improve the quality of education for all girls within the school system and for women in universities.

“Why do teachers think the girls aged 10-12 drop-out?”

Teachers know information about other years then just this one time the interview will be. They can give information about the differences between boys and girls drop-out and how they are trying to reduce the drop-out rate.

Since many schools don't have enough qualified teachers, the gaps are filled with student teachers. Their opinions can be refreshing, since they are just new in the schools.

“What are the reasons, according to drop-outs and their parents?”

Next to the information from teachers and organization, it's important to get some first-hand information. From the drop-outs themselves and also their parents.

In the questionnaires for the drop-outs there are question about the drop-out, but also about the future plans of the girls and about the possible influence from others (like friends and family).

In the questionnaires for the parents of the drop-outs there are questions added about the education the parents had themselves, but also about the education of other children.

#### **1.4 Overview of chapters**

In chapter 2 an overview of the researched literature will be given. After the literature study, the design and justification of research will be given in chapter 3. The results will be given in chapter 4 and in chapter 5 the conclusions and discussions will be presented.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Introduction**

In Malawi lots of girls drop-out. Some of them even don't finish their primary education. The Teachers Training College (TTC) of Loudon has asked Edukans to investigate this. It's necessary to do research for the causes of the drop-out, but also the consequences. There is a need for recommendations to reduce girls drop-out in Malawi.

Malawi, a south-eastern African country, is one of the poorest countries of the world. According to data from the United Nations Development Program, nearly 63 percent of the population in Malawi has to get by with less than 2 dollar a day (World Bank, 2008a). Schooling is considered to be one of the most important levers for increasing the populations living conditions in Malawi. However, the educational situation is poor. Schools with a teacher-to-pupil ratio higher than 1:100 are no exception. Schools, and especially rural schools, lack facilities like a shortage of classrooms, teaching and learning materials, and even toilets. The Dutch organisation Edukans is working together with the Malawian non-governmental organisation Association of Christian Educators in Malawi (ACEM) to improve the Malawian educational situation.

Improving the Malawian educational situation is also a goal from the list of Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This list is the result of the commitment that the leaders of 189 countries made in the year 2000 to tackle the most important problems in the world before the year 2015. Problems like poverty and hunger, the inequality between men and women, pollution of the environment and HIV/Aids are the part of the MDG's. Also there are plans to improve the access to education, health care and clean water. These goals are summarized in a list of 8 different goals. The second goal is to be ensured that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education (United Nations, 2009).

### **2.2 The educational system in Malawi**

The educational system in Malawi has an 8-4-4 structure consisting of primary school, secondary school and university education (ICCO, 2007). This means that pupils spend eight years in primary school, 4 in secondary and another four at tertiary education. Current capacity at secondary schools only absorbs 30% of the eligible primary school leavers. Tertiary education (four years) absorbs only about 4% of the eligible secondary school leavers (ICCO, 2007).

The primary school has eight standards. Pupils start their primary education at the age of 6, enrolling at the infant level (standards 1-2), and working their way up through junior level (standards 3-5), and senior level (standards 6-8) from which they can graduate when passing the primary school leaving certificate exam (PSLCE). This examination is also as a selection tool for places in the secondary schools (MoEST & the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2004).

It is encouraged by the government to teach the first primary school standards (1-4) in the local language. However, English and Chichewa are taught as a subject in these standards and in the higher standards (from 5 onwards) English is the language of instruction (MoEST & the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2004).

The pupils are supposed to be promoted from one standard to another every year, but the dropout and repetition rates are very high: the highest in Standard 1. The Ministry of Education suggested the cause of these high rates is mainly by the great number of pupils in these classes, and the few qualified teachers. (MoEST & the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2004)

The lack of qualified teachers is an overall problem. In general the pupil-qualified teacher ratio is estimated to be 118:1. The pupil-teacher ratio, which includes qualified and unqualified teachers, is 66:1. Variations exist between urban and rural areas. In urban areas there are more teachers (MoEST & the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2004).

The high number of unqualified teachers is the result of the introduction for Free Primary Education (FPE). Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in Malawi in 1994, in response to the global call for Education for All (EFA). Through the abolishing of school fees and school uniform costs, the provision of free instructional materials and the establishment of schools within reasonable walking distance for every community in the country, schools became accessible for all children (Chimombo, 2005; MoEST & The Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2004). This led to an increase in enrolment of one million pupils (Chimombo, 2005; Al-Samarrai & Zaman, 2007; Ndalama & Nsapato, 2007).

The introduction of FPE made the shortage of classrooms, teachers and teaching and learning materials even more acute. Therefore the Ministry of Education recruited 18,000 untrained additional teachers, along with 4,000 retired teachers. The untrained teachers were posted to schools and enrolled in the two-year Malawi Integrated Teacher Education Programme (MIITEP) certification course (MoEST & the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2004). The MIITEP programme ended in 2005 (MoEST, 2008c), and was succeeded by the Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE) Programme. The IPTE programme is a two-year programme, with the first year of residential training followed by a year of school-based training. At the moment, there are five government Teacher Training Colleges (TTC's) and three private TTC's (MoEST, 2008c).

The current vision of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is stated in the National Education Sector Plan (2008): "The mission of education is to provide quality and relevant education to the Malawian nation. Such education should enable people to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, expertise and competencies to perform effectively as citizens, workforce and as leaders of Malawi, thereby reduce poverty amongst the people of Malawi". In essence, the sector wishes to ensure the equal access of education for all members of the society, male as well as female, boy as well as girl (MoEST, 2008).

### **2.3 Outcomes of researches about absenteeism and drop-out**

Although the equal access, there's a high rate of learners repetition and drop-out. Causes of the drop-out are investigated in several studies.

The study by Holmes (2003) found out that overall; females receive less education than males, and they tend to dropout, or are withdrawn earlier for both economic and social-cultural reasons. The study further argues that the opportunity cost of sending female children to school in rural areas, where girls are married quite early, is high because benefits of their schooling will not accrue to their parental household.

Also the long distance the girls often have to travel to get to school is also deterrent to their participation and achievement in school, particularly in rural areas for example in Tanzania and Mozambique (World Bank, 2008). There's a concern about the length of distance and the energy children have to expend to cover the distance, often on empty stomachs.

Students whose parents monitor and regulate their activities, provide emotional support, encourage independent decision making and are generally more involved in their schooling are less likely to drop out of school (Astone and McLanalan, 1991; Rumberge et al., 1990; Rumber 1995; Odaga and Heneveld, 1995; and Russel, 2001). Taking into account of the gender dimension of dropouts, UNICEF, (2005) notes that girls

are more likely to drop out of school than boys and that pupils whose mother's have not attained any level of education will most likely dropout of school.

In another study by MoEST (2001), the rates of drop out in all government-aided schools for girls and boys are almost equal. The total number of male dropouts for 2001 was 164,986 (50.6%), while that of females was 160,932 (49.4%) giving a national total of 325,918. In an account for the gender disparity in primary school drop out, Nyanzi (2001) put forward that marriage, pregnancy and sickness are major causes of drop out among girl children while amongst the boys, they include; jobs, lack of interest, dismissal and fees.

A study for the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) concludes the following reasons for pupils drop-out: inexperience of (unqualified) teachers, Peer pressure to engage in anti-social behaviour and lack of discipline were also some of the push factors within the schooling system. Conditions within the home and the community also pull learners out of school. These include financial difficulties by way of direct costs (school fees), indirect costs (transport, books, uniforms), and opportunity costs of education (having to work to support the family, household chores, and taking care of siblings). Young people also cited health concerns (teen pregnancy and caring for parents and siblings infected by HIV) as reasons for 'drop-out'. Underpinning these factors was limited parental support to cope with both the technical and social aspects of schooling (Panday, 2008).

Interventions were made to make sure pupils where getting into school. Those where interventions like Free Primary Education. This is not the end of the story; the children need to stay at school, all the way until their final exams, gaining an education that makes a positive difference to their lives.

Interventions must recognise that pervasive and chronic poverty underpins the reasons for learners' not completing school. Furthermore, the sectional insularity that currently characterises service delivery must change. As outlined the reasons for 'drop-out' reach beyond the borders of the school yard and are part economic, part social, and part personal. As such, learner retention cannot be the sole responsibility of the Department of Education. An integrated and cross-sectional approach is a prerequisite (Panday, 2008).

To make sure pupils won't drop-out; interventions must be applicable within the borders of the school yard. Therefore motivation of the pupils as well as teachers is important. The Department for International Development (DFID) made a new curriculum which teaches the Malawian children to enjoy learning. This new curriculum rolled out in 2007 and puts the needs of pupils first. It encourages their social as well as academic development, and gives them an active role in the learning process. Goals for this new curriculum are: lessons designed around children, pupils feel at home in school and getting teachers and parents on board (DFID, 2007). This new curriculum (funded by the United Kingdom's DFID) was introduced in all primary schools at the 8th of January 2007 (MoEST, 2007).

Not only drop-out is a problem for the education in Africa. Also learners absenteeism is a big issue. In 2007 the Community Agency for Social Enquiry and Joint Education Trust (in order to the Department of Education) investigated the learner absenteeism in South Africa. The purpose of the study was to investigate the incidence of learner absenteeism in the country, the reasons why learners absent themselves from schools and examine the systems that exist to monitor and reduce learner absenteeism.

The reasons for learner absenteeism reported in the literature are varied, but generally fall in three broad categories. Firstly, there are reasons for absenteeism associated with personal factors, such as illness, age, gender and learning difficulties.

Secondly, absenteeism may be caused by socio-economic factors relating to food insecurity, problems with transport to school, the impact of HIV/AIDS on children and families, teenage pregnancy and situations of child labour. Finally, there are a range of reasons relating to schools that may contribute to learner absenteeism. Inability to pay school fees may lead to absenteeism, poor learner educator relationships contribute to absenteeism, as do poor school facilities.

It is argued that learners who are frequently absent are at risk of not achieving their educational, social or psychological potential and their future career prospects are limited. These learners may become socially isolated, place themselves at risk of harm during periods of absence, be more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable and/or illegal activities, have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts, feel insecure in the school environment, be more likely to leave school early, be over-represented in the juvenile justice system, be the victims of bullying and harassment.

Although these reasons and consequences are giving for absenteeism, the reasons and consequences for drop-out will not be very different from these conclusions. These conclusions are important for the investigation for the high rate of girls drop-out of primary school in Malawi.

## Chapter 3: Research method

### 3.1 Introduction

This study is an investigation to the reasons for girls in Malawi to drop-out from primary school. At ten schools from the Northern Region of Malawi, schools who are involved with TTC Loudon, the head teachers were interviewed. After these interviews, six schools were selected for further research. The selected schools were the schools with the biggest problems, concerning girl drop-out.

### 3.2 Planning

	Goal	Week
1	Literature searching and reading. Writing theoretical background.	13-17
2	Writing questionnaires.	21
3	Interviewing head teachers. Selecting schools for further investigation.	22-24
4	Interviewing drop-outs/ parents/ teachers/ etc.	26-28
5	Data processing	31
6	Results/ conclusion	32
7	Writing report	32-34

After making a decent planning, I've started with searching for literature. Different reports about drop-out, absenteeism and education in an African country were read. After that a selection was made to get the right reports to answer some of the questions. With that literature the theoretical background was made. In that chapter good information is given about the educational system in Malawi and also some outcomes of earlier researches about drop-outs.

Next thing to do was making the questionnaires. I've decided to do that after reaching Malawi, so the locals could help me with making the questions. This decision was made, because in Holland drop-out isn't a problem, so I wanted to use the knowledge of the Malawian students when making the questionnaires. These questionnaires are described in the appendixes.

When going to the primary schools, the first step was to interview the head teachers. In that way some basic information about the school was given. After that interview dates were picked to come back and do the other interviews (with the teachers, girls and parents). With those interviews the girls and their parents were visited in their own homes (at first they were supposed to come to my at the schools, but since that wasn't very work full, I decided to visit them). The head teacher, or depute head escorted me to the villages and helped me with translating the questions. At first, I wasn't sure about the numbers. I've decided to interview as many people as possible. The numbers of interviewed people are described in chapter 4.

After processing the data, there were still lots of unanswered questions. That's why another interview with Fawema and ACEM was planned. These organizations have got the knowledge about the whole country. It was clearly that the people of the village (rural area) didn't have all the information and possibilities just as the organization of the capital (urban area).

### **3.3 Instruments**

To get enough information about the reasons for girls in Malawi to drop-out of primary school, there were different questionnaires used to get this information.

Fawema, an African organization who's promoting girls' and women's' education, was interviewed twice. In the beginning, so I knew what to expect when starting the interviews and at the end, to get information about the questions I've got during the research.

From 6 different schools I've interviewed (student) teachers, drop-outs and their parents. I

The questionnaires were developed in cooperation with TTC Loudon. Together with the student teachers the questions were made up and checked afterwards by 2 of the teachers of TTC Loudon.

## Chapter 4: Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the study are presented according to the research questions stated in Chapter 1.

Based on the interviews with the drop-outs and their parents, in section 4.2 the reasons for drop-out are described. Also information about the future vision of the girls, influence from others what could cause the drop-out and the highest level of education of the family is described. All this information together will give a total view about the families in Malawi and their education.

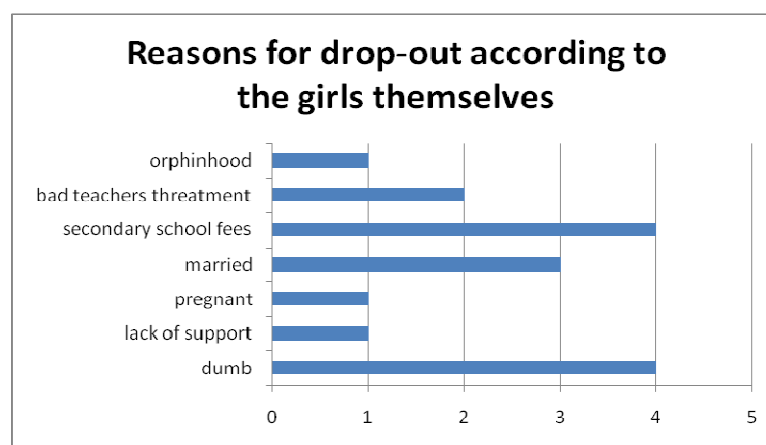
According to the head teachers, student teachers and qualified teachers in section 4.3 information will be given at school level. The difference between boys and girls drop-out, the comparison between drop-outs and absenteeism of the learners and also the teacher's absenteeism and their behaviour will be described. All together this section will give a view about what could cause and stop drop-out at school level.

Besides the reasons, it's also important to reduce the drop-out. Of course the government is hard working on this. That's why in 2000 the subject life skills was introduced at the school. More about this subject will be given in section 4.4.

Also Fawema is an organization who is trying to empower women and girls in Malawi. FAWE is a pan-African organization; Fawema is the part of Malawi. More information about the goals and achievements of this organization is described in section 4.5. One of those achievements is inventing "mother groups". This a group of women from a village, who are voluntary working with the girls, trying to get them (back) at school and let them enjoy school so they will stay. In section 4.6 the work of such mother groups will be described.

### 4.2 Results on interviewing girls drop-out and their parents/guidance

In total 16 drop-outs from standard 5-8 were interviewed. Mostly the girls drop-out from standard 6-8 (1 girl from Standard 5, 3 girls from Standard 6, 4 girls from Standard 7, 4 girls from Standard 8). Also 4 drop-outs from secondary school were interviewed, to compare the problems girls are facing at primary school and at secondary school. All these secondary school drop-outs, stopped in the first year, form 1. Besides the drop-outs themselves, also parents were interviewed (N=13). Sometimes it was the guidance of a girl (an orphan), sometimes they grandmothers (because the parents were working/farming). It wasn't always possible to also interview the parents, that's why there is a difference in number of drop-outs and parents.



Reasons for drop-out, according to the girls themselves (N=16).

There are 3 main reasons for girls to drop-out. All the girls from secondary school, drop-out because they can't pay the school fees (100%). Also 17% of the primary school drop-out were fearing the school fees. Those girls thought it's better to search for a man or a job instead of finishing primary school and facing these problems a year later.

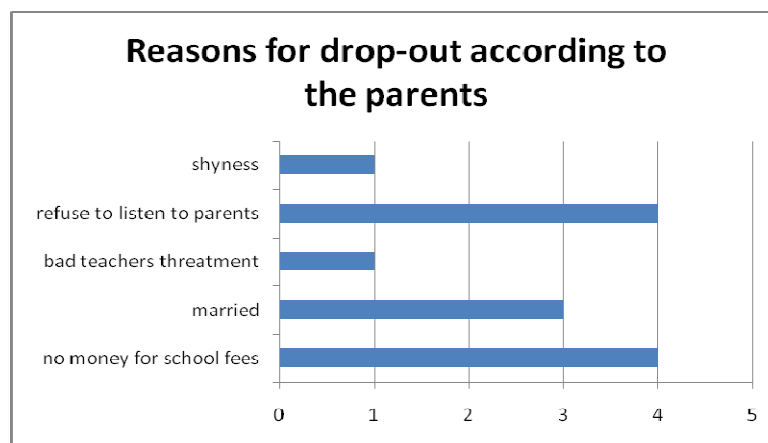
For 25% of the interviewed drop-outs, marriage was the reasons. Girls get married really early, because they don't see how their future life will be different if they wait to get married. Also unwanted pregnancies lead to marriage.

And then you have the girls who don't think they do well at school. These girls, 25% of the total, are facing trouble with writing and reading in English. Sometimes they have repeated one standard for 3 times, what means the girl will be the oldest of the class. And because of that oldness, girls get shy and drop-out of school. All these girls who are facing learning problems said they will be back at school, when they've learned how to read and write English. One of them got extra lessons from a boy in her village. That boy was in form 2 of secondary school and agreed to help her. One of the girls got lessons from an aunt of hers. One of the girls is waiting till somebody of the school of village is willing to help her.

Besides the main reasons, 17% of the girls drop-out because of bad treatment by their teacher. One girl said her teacher beat her, she said that no one listened to her story, but the school was complaining to not be aware of this situation, so they couldn't help it. These happened 2 years ago and now the girl got married and pregnant and said she don't want to be educated. The other girl said her teacher were telling her everyday to leave school and go home, which eventually made her drop-out. Her mother confirmed this story and also the school was aware of the problem. This teacher was dismissed, so next term the girl could come back and finish school after all.

Also one girl drop-out because of her pregnancy. When her child gets older, the grandmother said she takes care of the baby, so the girl can finish her primary school.

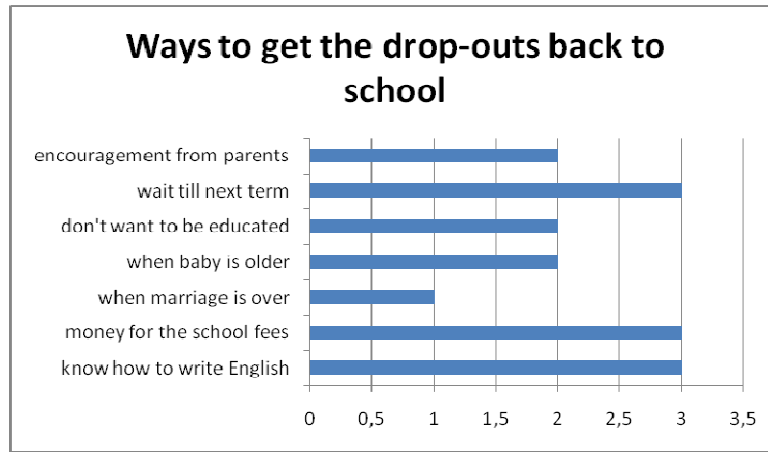
The other drop-outs, complained to get lack of support of their environment. Both of these girls, so 17%, were orphans. Normally the family (uncles and aunts) are responsible to take care of their cousins when they get orphans. But most of the time, those family also have children of their own. That's makes the orphans at half substitute.



Reasons for drop-out, according to the parents of the girls (N=13).

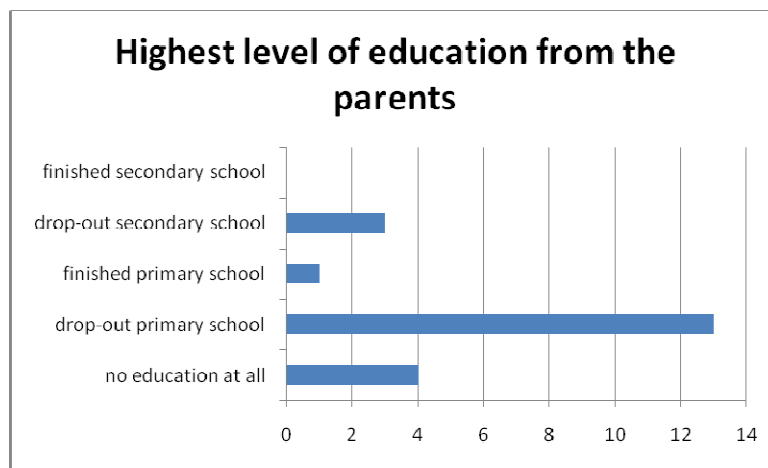
When asking the parents about the drop-out reasons, there is a little difference. The main reasons according to 31% of the parents, is that the girls are refusing to go to school. Although the parents told the girls to go, they didn't go. The other main reasons are the same: 23% of the parents said their daughters were married and another 31% of the parents were facing problems with paying secondary school fees.

After drop-out, according to the parents all the girls (100%) are just staying at home and doing nothing. Not all the girls agree with this. One girl told me about the little business she had, selling mandasi's (kind of food in Malawi). Three other girls were telling that they helped their parents with farming.



Ways to get the drop-outs back at school (N=16).

The most girls told that they will go back to school and finish their education, but there were also two girls who said they don't want to be educated. Besides those, one girl said she could go back, after her husband's agrees (what probably won't happy, so that makes her to go back after her marriage is over, according to her teacher). 17% of the girls had to wait until their baby is a little older, and 25% have to wait till they find some family/organization which give them money for the secondary school fees. The other 42% of the girls said that all they have to do is wait till the next school term is starting, so they can go sign in at school by then.

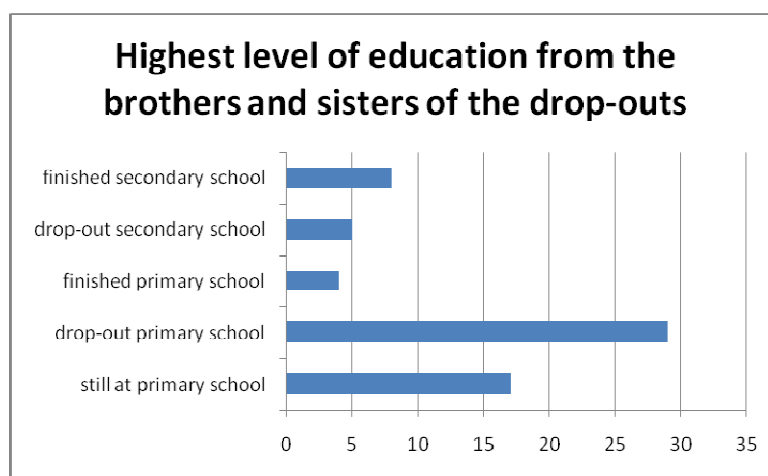


Highest level of education from the parents (N=16).

Besides the education of the girl who drop-out, also the parents were questioned about their own education. None of the parents finished secondary school, but there were some who'd drop-out from secondary school, which means that 19% of the parents did finish primary school. One other said he finished primary school well, but didn't go to

secondary school. Unfortunately 81% of the parents drop-out at primary school, in all the different standards and even 25% didn't had any type of education at all. For all the parents (100%) who drop-out, from both secondary and primary school, the problem was the school fees.

In the time they went to school, you also had to pay fees for the primary school. And since Malawi is a poor country, finding money for fees is very difficult. In 1994 Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in Malawi. Through the abolishing of school fees and school uniform costs, the provision of free instructional materials and the establishment of schools within reasonable walking distance for every community in the country, schools became accessible for all children (Chimombo, 2005; MoEST & the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO, 2004).



Highest level of education from the brothers and sisters of the drop-outs (N=63).

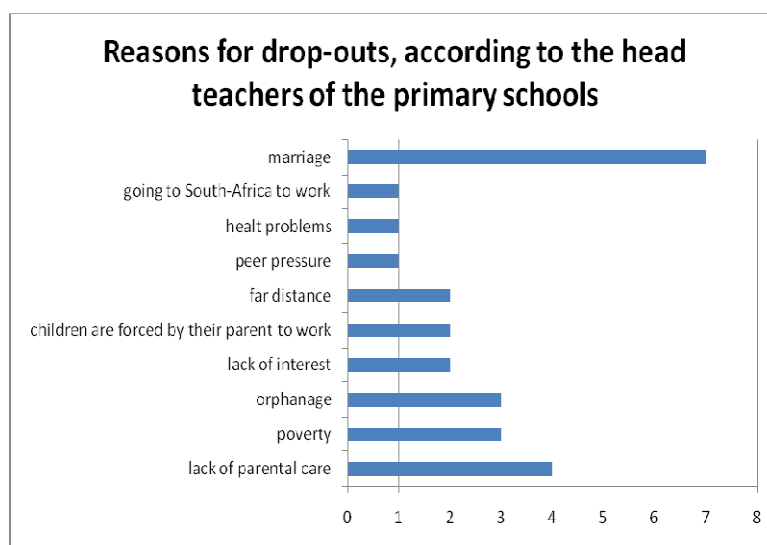
When the number of the education of the parents and their children are compared, the effectiveness of FPE is clearly. All the parents together have 63 children in total. From those, 30% of the children are still at primary school, those are the younger children, aged 7-15. Some children, 6%, finished their primary school and stopped their education after passing the exams, also 12% finished secondary school and started working after that. Because of the secondary school fees, 8% of the learners drop-out in secondary school. Unfortunately there's still a high rate of learners who drop-out from primary school (46%), mostly of poverty or other family problems. After drop-out most boys go searching for work and the girls are trying to get married.

#### 4.3 Results on interviewing teachers

In total, the head teachers from 9 different primary schools were interviewed. The questionnaires were about the drop-out, but also comparison with absenteeism.

The absenteeism rate is the highest in the infant classes (standard 1 and 2). Reasons for the absenteeism are.... The schools are trying to reduce this high rate by.... A good thing is that all the head teachers told that the absenteeism doesn't lead to drop-out.

The drop-out rate is the highest in standard 6-8 (67%). One school had the highest drop-out rate at standard 1-4, but that was a boarding school. That means that the learners from standard 5-8 are boarded nearby the school, what reduced the drop-out rate. The other schools didn't have an overview of the drop-out and claimed it was in all the different standards.



Reasons for drop-out, according to the head teachers of the primary schools (N=9).

Most of the reasons which were given by the head teachers are for both, boys and girls. A typical boy-reason to drop-out is that they (11%) are going to South-Africa to work over there. A typical girl-reason (77%) is to get married.

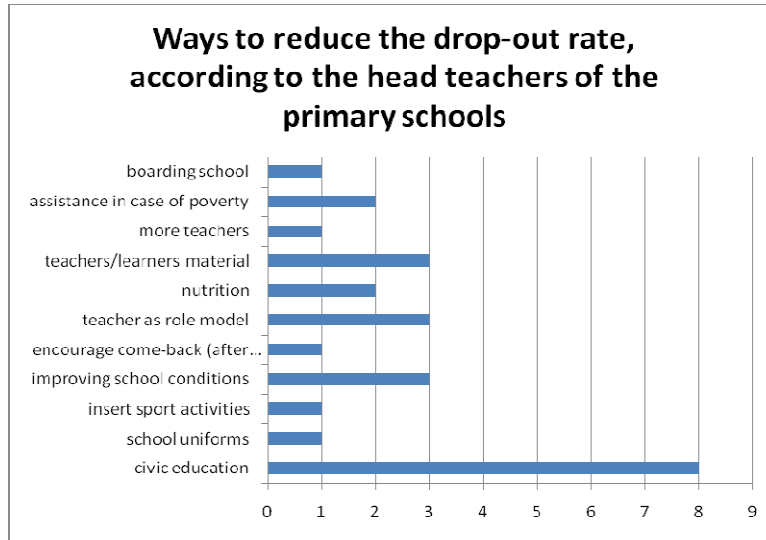
The other reasons are:

- Lack of parental care (44%)
- Poverty (33%)
- Orphanage (33%)
- Lack of interest (22%)
- Children are forced by their parents to work (22%)
- Far distance (22%)
- Peer pressure (11%)
- Health problems (from learners themselves or their parents) (11%)

Since this high drop-out rate is a problem, the schools were already trying in different ways to reduce the rate. All the schools were trying to do that by giving civic education. This means they tell the parents the importance of education. Also 33% of the head teachers told their staff to behave as role models). And one school introduced sport activities to make school more fun to go to.

Although the schools are trying their best, still the drop-out rate needs more attention so it will be reduced. The head teachers gave different ways what could reduce the drop-out rate:

- Improving school conditions (33%)
- School uniforms (11%)
- Encourage girls to come back after pregnancy/marriage (11%)
- Give the learners food at school (22%)
- Get more/better teachers and learners materials (33%)
- Assistance from government/organizations in case of poverty (22%)
- Employ more teachers (11%)
- Boarding school (11%)

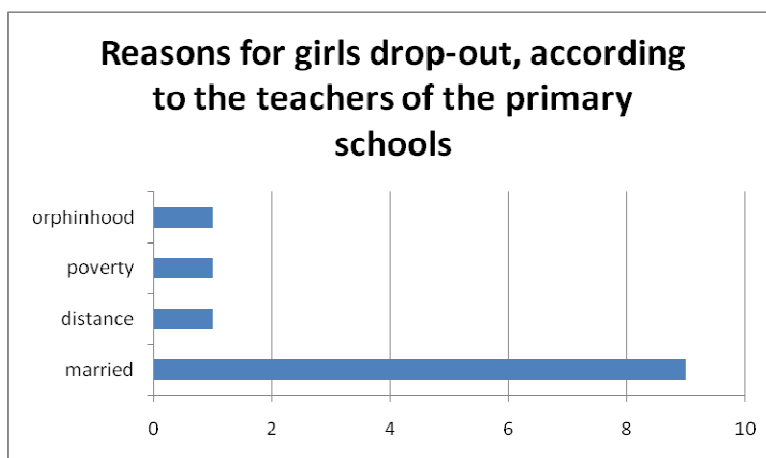


Ways to reduce the drop-out rate, according to the head teachers of the primary schools (N=9).

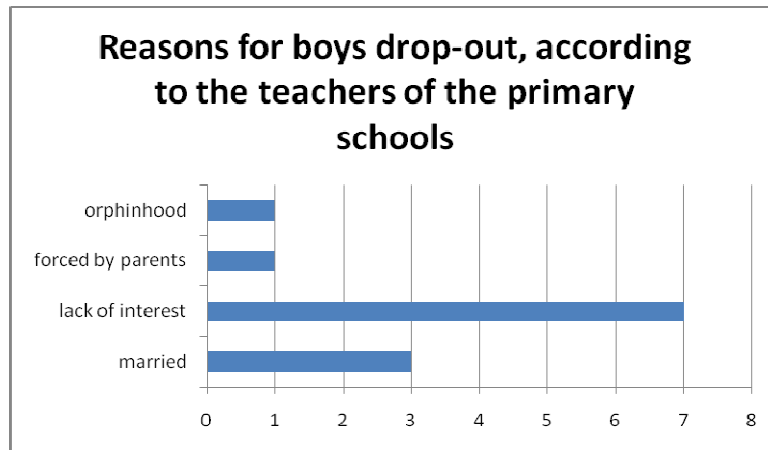
In total 14 teachers were interviewed. 7 of them were qualified; the others were student teachers of TTC Loudon. Remarkable is that, from the qualified teachers, their highest level of education is Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE). This means passing the exams of the secondary school. The qualified teachers only had a training to become teacher, reaching for this training is that Teachers Training Colleges are in Malawi since...

All the interviewed teachers were in their favourite standard. They like to teach in standard 5-8, because learners of those classes understand English, have more knowledge and are easier to communicate with. The student teachers couldn't really answer this question, since it's their first year to teach so they don't have any experience in other standards.

Mostly 2 or 3 learners drop-out from one standard. The teachers were specifically asked for boys and girls reasons, so this could be compared. Although it were two different questions, sometimes the answers for the boys and the girls were the same.



Reasons for girls drop-out, according to the teachers of the primary schools (N=14).

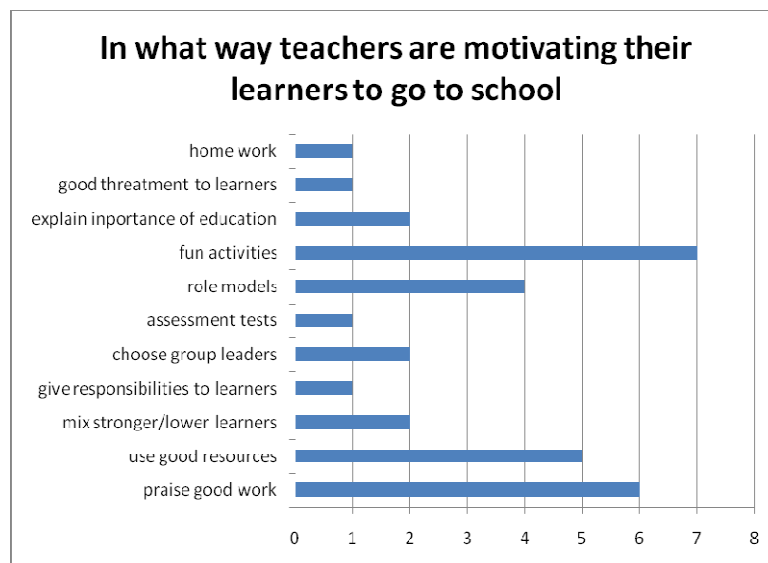


Reasons for boys drop-out, according to the teachers of the primary schools (N=14).

After a learner drop-out, most teachers (75%) go visit the parents of the drop-out. The teacher will talk to both: the parents and the learners, about the goodness of education. Sometimes it's hard to do this, because learners moved away (42%). This is especially happening when a girl gets married to a boy from a different village (It's their culture tradition that after marriage the wife is supposed to live in the village of her husband). Even sometimes it's hard to talk to the parents, because they may have forced their children to drop-out (17%).

The student teachers (50% of the teachers) claimed it's hard for them to track down the drop-out. That's because it's their first year of working as a teacher and they're already facing a lot of other problems. In that case, tracking down the drop-out is the responsibility of the head or qualified teachers.

Being a teacher means that you have to make your learners enjoy school. When a learner enjoys, he or she will not be thinking about being absent a lot or drop-out. The interviewed teachers were asked in what way they are trying to motivate their learners to come to school.



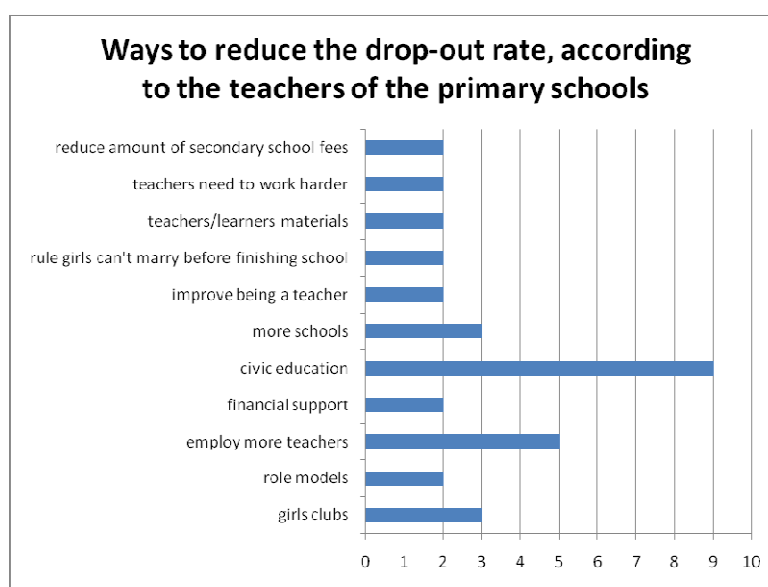
In what way teachers are motivating their learners to go to school (N=14).

Creating more positivity at schools is one good thing which makes learners enjoying going to school. The teachers explain several positive things, like: fun activities, praise good work, use good resources and give a good treatment to the learners. Besides the positivity it's also important that learners understand the importance of school, teachers are helping the learners understanding this by give them responsibilities, give tests and home work, choose group leaders and invite role models to come over at school and talk about the goodness of education.

Besides the teachers have the responsibility to motivate their learners, they are also supposed to act as a trustful person. When learners facing problems at home, they should feel like they could discuss those problems with their teacher. In Malawi children are told to be shy. This means they will not come to their teachers with the problems, because of their shyness. That's why the teachers should go to the learners.

Most teachers said they are doing this. When a learner is absent, he or she will be taken out of the classroom (individually, so not all the classmates know about the problems) and then the teachers will ask about the reasons. Also when teachers hearing rumours about the possible problems at a learners home, he/she will be individually asked about this.

Sometimes the problems Malawian children could face at home are the topic of the subject life skills. In that case the teacher will be talk about this with the whole class. More about the subject life skills and the topics will be found in sector 4.4.



Ways to reduce the drop-out rate, according to the teachers of the primary schools(N=14).

According to the teachers, civic education is the most important thing which will help in reducing the drop-out rate. The staff of the school, often in cooperation with Parents Teachers Association (PTA) should organize the meetings for civic education. Civic education is about telling the parents/guidance (and sometimes also the learners) about the goodness of school. At least these meetings should be once a year, before the school year starts. In that way the parents will be reminded why school is important. To make the civic education even more useful, meetings should be organized once before every next school term starts (so in total that means three times a year). In that way the

parents and learners are reminded even more often about the goodness of education. This could really help reducing the drop-out rate, and even reducing the absenteeism rate.

Besides civic education, there is a high responsibility for the government. They should employ more teachers, build more schools, give financial support in case of poverty or orphanage and reduce the amount of secondary school fees (or even better: introduce free secondary education). To employ more teachers, it's important that there will be more TTC's in Malawi. At the moment there are 5 schools to become a teacher. When the number of TTC's will be increased, the number of teachers should automatically be increased as well.

Also the school has some responsibilities. They should create girls clubs, so girls could debate with each other about the importance of education. Also they should invite role models, so the learners can see the effectiveness of education. The learners should be guided well and the teachers have to work hard. That means the teachers have to give a good treatment to their learners, explain the importance of education very often and track down the learners when someone drop-out or is absent a lot.

When the government of Malawi, educational organizations and the primary schools are all working together -trying to improving the situation- the drop-out rate will be reduced very shortly.

#### **4.4 Life Skills**

The subject "life skills" is introduced at school in 2000; one of the goals of this subject is to reduce the drop-out rates at primary schools. In order of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE).

In the beginning the lessons of life skills were given in the first ten minutes of a school day, when this way working didn't had any effect, life skills becomes a subject of his one. For standard 1 to 4 it's been teaching in Chichewa (language of Malawi) and for standard 5 to 8 in English. From 2010 there will be also an exam for this subject in primary school.

Life skills are abilities that enable individuals to effectively deal with demands and challenges in everyday life. The life skills enable learners to understand themselves and the world around them. Life Skills (LS) as a subject aims continuity and extending the development of the skills that the learners bring from home with a focus on the promotion of the holistic development of the learner. Nurturing the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, creative and spiritual growth of the learners and society, which forms the basis for facilitating all other learning? For example, through life skills, learners will learn to organise and manage their lives; develop a team spirit regardless of their cultural and religious backgrounds; avoid prevalent diseases such as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's), HIV and AIDS; develop positive self esteem; identify and cope with problems of adolescence and other challenges in life, as well as prepare for the world of work.

In Malawi the foundation of the primary school curriculum is the philosophy of outcome-based education (OBE). OBE focuses on the results that are expected at the end of each learning process.

The development outcomes are over-arching; they are what the learner is expected to achieve by at the end of the primary cycle. Next to the development outcomes there are primary outcomes. The primary outcomes are derived from the developmental outcomes. These outcomes are what learners should know, should be able to do and the desirable attitudes that they should display by the end of the primary cycle for each learning/subject area. The primary outcomes and core elements for the subject LS are:

- Health promotion  
The learner will be able to make informed decisions and demonstrate health-promotion behaviours in personal life as well as in his/her community and wider environment with particular attention to prevalent diseases such as malaria, STI's, HIV and AIDS.
- Social development  
The learner will be able to live and work effectively as a member of a family, a group, a community and a nation with respect for gender equity and show some understanding of individual rights and responsibilities within the wider society.
- Moral development  
The learner will be able to demonstrate some understanding of diverse cultures through a commitment to moral values, human rights and the rule of law.
- Personal development  
The learner will be able to use positive self esteem for achieving and extending personal potential to respond effectively to daily challenges.
- Physical development  
The learner will be able to demonstrate and understanding of how physical growth is linked to social, emotional and personal development through participation in activities such as plays games and sports in order to contribute to the development of positive attitudes, values and self esteem.
- Entrepreneurship and world of work  
The learner will be able to understand the world of work in its widest sense and demonstrate how to access further knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for work.

Essential life skills are: decision-making, identification of the challenge, identification of the choices, problem solving, effective communicating, self-esteem, assertiveness, peer pressure resistance, coping with emotions, coping with stress, interpersonal relationships skills, planning, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, creative thinking, empathy and peaceful conflict resolution.

The best way of teaching and learning these life skills is to use participatory methods. These methods involve the active participation of the learner in teaching and learning process, include the following: games, posters, future's wheels, role play/drama, case studies, brainstorming, debate, panel and group discussion, storytelling, songs, field's trips, research/interviews, project, values-clarification, child-to-child. (Source: teachers guides for Standards 5 to 8, 2007)

The topics which the students from TTC learn about are:

- Introduction and importance of life skills
- Individual potentialities and talents
- Demands and challenges in life
- Personal hygiene and sanitation
- Safety in the home and at school
- Communicable and non-communicable diseases
- Sex and sexuality
- STI (Sexually Transmitted Infections)
- HIV and AIDS
- Guidance and counselling in life skills (Source: IPTE Life Skills for TTC, 2008)

#### 4.5 Fawema

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) is a pan-African Non Government Organization founded in 1992 by five women ministers of education to promote girls' and women's education in sub-Saharan Africa in line with Education For All. The organisation's members include ministers of education, university vice-chancellors, education policy-makers, researchers, gender specialists and human rights activists.

FAWE's work shows that the lives of African girls can be changed if there is a strong voice articulating their concerns and continuously reminding educational authorities and other stakeholders of their responsibility to bring about gender-responsiveness in education.

FAWE's vision is that gender disparities in education will be significantly reduced and more girls will have access to schooling, complete their studies and perform well at all levels.

FAWE's mission is to work, together with its partners, to create positive societal attitudes, policies and practices that promote equity for girls in terms of access, retention, performance and education quality, through influencing the transformation of education systems in Africa.

FAWE's goal is to increase access and retention as well as improve the quality of education for all girls within the school system and for women in universities.

FAWE Malawi Chapter was founded in 1993 and has a total of 200 members. From Fawema the coordinator Mrs Esther Msowoya was interviewed. The questions were about reasons for girls to drop-out, how to prevent girls from doing this, and the future of a drop-out and the work of Fawema considering girl drop-out.

There are a lot of reasons for girls to drop-out. Mostly known are the early marriages and pregnancies (and afterwards no interest in finishing school). This is from cultural perspective. When girls get into her puberty, it means she is ready to get married. And when a girl starts her menstruation, it means she is reading to giving birth. This cultural perspective also leads to initiation ceremonies. Some tribes in the central of Malawi organises meetings (the initiation ceremonies) for the youth, where they tell the youth how they can become good mothers. Often one man is being invited to have sex with all the girls.

Since the future vision of the girls, is the future as a housewife (traditionally), the girls don't see the importance of education. In most villages all the women are "just" housewives, so the girls don't have a role model to encourage them to go to school. This future vision makes some girls drop-out, because they have lack of interest. When being a housewife will be their future, it's easier to just wait till the right man comes and marry you.

Also poverty is a reason for girls to drop-out. Even from the cultural perspective, when a family is poor, but does have enough money for the education for one of their children it will be the education for the son. This is because the future of a man is to work and for a wife it is household. Poverty can mean that parents don't have enough money to provide their children in the basic needs: food, soap, clothes. Very often the children have to work to get some more money. But not only the basic needs can be a problem, after finishing primary school you are supposed to go to secondary school. Supposed to, because that isn't possible in every family, since you have to pay school fees for secondary school. In case of a poor family, this isn't possible.

The pandemic of HIV/Aids is a reason to make the girls drop-out. It leads to poverty, often to orphans. When the mother (or both parents) died or get to sick to take care of their children the daughters will be heading the homes of their family. This means they have to take care of their sick parents, but also their younger brothers and sisters

and the household. Also when the parents need to work a lot (farming) the oldest daughter has to take care of the household. Partly it's tradition to do; partly the girls are forced by their parents to do so. Besides taking care of sick parents, the girls also can be sick themselves which makes them drop-out of school.

Some learners drop-out so they can start working. In that way they're helping their family with getting money. In some places working for the children means helping the parents with farming: holding cattle, draw water. In the tobacco estates the children really are employed. Off course this is child exploitation. The government tried to stop this, but the law which tells the companies to not employ children less than 18 years, isn't working very well.

Besides all the reasons which have to do with the girls and her family, also the school can be a reason for a girl to drop-out. Sometimes it happens that the teachers abuse the girls. Sometimes the community can stop it, by punishing the teacher. But when the community doesn't know –because parents or girls won't talk about the abuse while she/they are getting gifts or money from the teacher- the teacher can get away with it. And if the bad treatment doesn't stop, most girls decide to stop their education.

When a girl drop-out and doesn't have the opportunity to somewhere or sometime finish her education (after drop-out they're free to come back to school at any time) the future of the girl will not look very bright. The only chance they have is find a husband, become a mother and take care of the family and the household.

To help in trying to get the drop-outs back at school, mother groups were introduced at several schools. The women of the mother group will be trained by Fawema. When a girl drop-out (or is absent a lot) the mother group will talk to both: the girl and her parents/guidance to try to get the girl back at school.

Getting back after drop-out is not really easy to do. Therefore Fawema is trying to prevent girls from drop-out, so their future can look bright.

To prevent drop-out, Fawema is empowering the communities. This means they talk to traditional leaders, tell them about the negative influence of some cultural practices. Tell them that times had changed and also the traditions should change. Especially the initiation ceremonies, because unsafe sex can lead to HIV/Aids. Fighting against negative cultural practices (like initiation ceremonies and early marriages) is a big goal of Fawema.

Besides empowering communities, also girls clubs are created. These are clubs where the girls come together and talk about life know, school and their future visions. In this way the girls are helping each other to generate school interest. In these clubs the girls are also encouraged to do their best at science. Science is one of the subjects you need to do well, when you want to become doctor. Visits of exchange between these clubs are organized, to get the girls even more motivated. These visits are often with role-models of different professions. In that way girls can see the future of a woman in Malawi doesn't have to be a "household-future", this may motivate the girls to do their best at school.

Mother groups were introduced in 2001 at several schools. All the zones Fawema is working have those mother groups. Now also the Ministry of Education realised the goodness of those mother groups, so every school is supposed to have a mother group. That maybe will take 2-3 years. At least having a mother group is part of the BESP (Basic Education Sector Plan) now. The women of a mother group need to get a proper training, so they will be equipped well to do a good job as a mother group. Giving this training is the job of Fawema, in cooperation with Unicef.

Teachers need to behave differently, so learners won't drop-out because of them. In order to get good teachers behaviour, teachers are trained in how to behave

gender. Sometimes Fawema is going to the schools to train the teachers, but also the students of the TTC's are trained in how to behave gender. Eventually only one training will not guarantee that a teacher won't abuse his/her learners anymore. Therefore Fawema is working together with the Ministry of Education to create a Code of Conduct for teachers.

One of the reasons (which the girls and teachers can't help) is the far distance between some hometown and the school. That's why Fawema is fighting for more boarding schools, so the distance to get to school won't be far. The far distance will leads the learners to be exhausted before even start at school, sometimes the distance can be dangerous and also some learners aren't even trying to face the distance and just stay at home.

Since Fawema is working really hard on empowering girls and women in Malawi, they've all ready achieved a lot.

The best example is that the mother groups are introduced and even the Ministry is seeing the success of those mother groups. Also introducing come-back after pregnancy of marriage is cooperation between Fawema and the Ministry.

Also there's some more awareness in the whole country, about the importance of girls-education. Still girls-education isn't as important as boys-education, but nowadays the Malawian people understand that education leads to a better future, also for the girls.

It's hard to find role models. Role models are really good to use as a way of motivation for the girls. To get some more role models, Fawema funded 6 girls op from form 1-4 and those girls are at the College of Medicine now. This hopefully will show other girls the importance of the subject science and technology

The goal that Fawema want to achieve in the future is the girls to be aware themselves about the importance of going to school. Let them talk to other girls about it. Encourage girls meetings, where they can talk and make plans for the future. Kind of girls conferences for all: primary, secondary and tertiary schools.

“Because the youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow”

#### **4.6 Mother groups**

After Fawema introduced the mother groups in 2001, now the Ministry is seeing the success of it and told all the primary schools to get a mother group. There are 10 women (all mothers) in such kind of group. These women are chosen by the village. The work they do is volunteering. They're organizing meeting for girls to talk about the importance of education. Some active mother groups also organize sport games, activities, life skills and clubs.

Because not all the mother groups had the training, not every group is as hard/good working as they should be. This mother group-training should be given be Fawema in cooperation with Unicef.

That training is about being a mother group (the objectives, activities, roles and responsibilities), the teachers Code of Conduct, the mobilization of a mother group, how to deal/talk about HIV and Aids, career guidance, stress management, human growth/reproduction and relationships, gender based violence, gender and HIV/Aids and about girl friendly schools.

The topics of this training are also the topics the mother group should discuss with the girls, when they are organizing the meetings.

Once properly empowered, women realize their potentials and use them effectively in the implementation and scaling up of Mother Groups. Seven (7) attributes of mothers play a significant role in this:

1. The closeness between mothers and daughters makes the mother to have greater influence on daughters than fathers have. Using this opportunity, mothers can influence daughters to enrol, remain in school and complete school if well sensitized.

2. Mothers, in most cases, are the ones that burden daughters with house chores and farm activities. If well trained in gender they can distribute chores fairly and ensure that daughters have time for school work.

3. In Malawi, the majority of mothers like to talk about marriages, babies, and entice daughters with such things. If well sensitized about the socio-economic advantages of girls' education and the dangers of early marriages and pregnancies, then they can talk more about the importance of education to girls than other things.

4. Mothers are always worried about vulnerability of daughters, especially adolescent girls to sexual harassment, sexual abuse and rape. They are more affected psychologically and sociologically than fathers, when such things happen to their daughters. That is why they persistently advise their daughters against such atrocities. If properly sensitized, they can effectively extend this advice to other girls at school and girls' clubs.

5. Mothers wish their daughters a better life than themselves. That is why the best thing that pleases them is when their daughter is not only happily married but is married to a hardworking man or a rich man and of good behaviour, and also when the daughter has children. This should be turned into an opportunity by sensitizing them on how education enables girls to become income generators themselves and reduce their dependency on men or husbands as well as reducing mortality risks of their children.

6. Mothers are analytical in assessing possible situations of harassment and hygiene issues and needs of girls, especially for adolescent girls in the school. Their experiences assists them to advise on the need to have toilets in appropriate areas, the need to have urinal/bathrooms for adolescent girls, the need to keep the classrooms, facilities and the entire premises clean. They are also able to pick out teachers and boys who are perpetrators of sexual harassment because they are watchful.

7. Mothers are at pain when children are mistreated by teachers or by fellow pupils at school and even when fathers or parents in families and the communities mistreat children, Malawian mothers do rebuke such cases. When properly trained in child rights, they will be able to monitor and report child abuse in the home, school and community on rights of children and encourage child protection.

Because of the potential and the effectiveness of implantation of mother groups, the mother groups have carried out various activities. These include:

- Returning dropouts (girls and boys) to school
- Campaigning/influencing provision of gender sensitive sanitation facilities in schools
- Reporting abuse and sexual harassment and ensuring that disciplinary measures are implemented
- Assisting needy children with personal needs
- Identifying and bringing to school special needs children and orphans
- Initiating school feeding activities at school and sensitizing mothers to prepare for the school going child every morning

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the conclusions of this study. First the conclusions per study will be presented. After that the notes in the results will be given. At last recommendations will be presented for further research about the girl drop-out in Malawi.

### 5.2 Conclusions

In this part the answer is given to the question "Why do girls in Malawi, from standard 5 to 8, drop-out of school?" Different persons and organizations who are involved with girl drop-out were interviewed.

There's a big different between primary school drop-outs and secondary school drop-outs. Those who drop-out at primary have several reasons, but from secondary school all the drop-outs (and their families) have problems with paying the school fees.

For primary school the reasons varied a lot. Sometimes it's the decision of the girls themselves, but sometimes they just can't help the situation there in. Also some girls drop-out because of influences of other people (such as their parents, friends or teachers. In these three "situations" the reasons are divided:

When it's the decision of the girl herself:

- Early marriages and pregnancies (sometimes because of peer-pressure or forced by parents)
- Lack of interest from the learners (also named as laziness, parents name this refusing to go to school)
- Working (sometimes in South-Africa, often forced to work by parents)

When the drop-out can't help the situation she is in:

- Orphans
- Distance
- Poverty
- Health problems (from learners themselves, or from parents which make the girls needs to take care of the family)
- Shyness of oldness (girls explain this as feeling dumb, because they've repeated a standard more than once)

When influence of other persons are part of the reason:

- Bad teachers treatment
- Lack of parental care (also includes lack of support)
- Peer pressure

Since the drop-out is a big problem in Malawi, the Ministry of Education and some educational organizations are already hard-working to invent ways which may reduce the drop-out rate. Introducing the subject Life Skills, where topics considering the problems the learners can face at home will be discussed. Introducing mother groups, with women who are voluntary hard-working trying to get the girls at school and let them stay at school (even talk to them after drop-out trying to get the girls back again). Make the arrangement that girls can come back after drop-out, which means that an early marriage or pregnancy won't make the girls bright future vision disappear. Introducing a law which is saying that companies aren't allowed to employ children under 18 year, farming for the family isn't include in this law so it may need some improvement. Making a Code of Conduct for the teachers, so they can't abuse or mistreat their learners anymore. Some schools are part of the School Nutrition Plan, so the learners get some food at school, which is a good way to motivate the learners to come to school (unfortunately the organization of this School Nutrition Plan didn't include all the schools

in Malawi). Also the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE) is hard-working in Malawi, besides this organization some schools (in cooperation with their PTA) themselves are given civic education to their community.

### **5.3 Noted in the results**

Considering most of the information is given through interviews, this brings a risk with it. Factors which can diminish the internal validity of this study are:

-Researchers' effects: the effects of the interviewer on the interviewee. Intensive contact can lead to social desirable behaviour and answers of the interviewee. It is important for the interviewers to be alert to these reactions. That is why the interviewer asked for explanations and not just accepted a positive answer.

-Translators: in the interviews with girls and parents translators were needed. These translators can be a threat to the validity of the study. It is possible answers of the interviewees are not properly translated or there appear differences due to a cultural difference between the interpreter and the interviewer.

-Interests: the interviewees could have had personal interest in the continuation of the project. Therefore, the answers given by the participants could have been adapted to their interest in a possible follow-up research about the girl drop-out in Malawi.

### **5.4 Recommendations for future**

Although the Ministry and the educational organizations are hard-working to reduce the drop-out rate, still some improvement can be made.

First of all it's very important all the mother groups get a qualities good training. After that training, it's more likeable that all the different mother groups are working as an active as needed. This means that besides organizing meetings for the girls, also some fun activities and teaching life skills (such as sewing and knitting).

Besides that the civic education need some improvement. As a teacher said "it's better to organize a meeting in start of every school term, to get some awareness". This means three times a year a meeting, organized by the school (teachers) in cooperation with the Parents Teachers Association, for the whole community (so both parents and children- the learners as well as the drop-outs). When the civic education is organized more often and for the whole community, the effect will be better.

As the government concerns, it's important they make sure that the schools in whole the country are getting the some possibilities. Good teachers and learners resources and a good school condition (class rooms, pit latrines). For as far as possible, more teachers are needed (and maybe more schools so the distance won't be so far).

For the following-up student team of Edukans, it's recommended to work either with the mother groups or the civic education. These two ways of intervention are made by Malawian people, so something new isn't needed. It's better to improve the situation than to discover a new solution.

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## Appendix 1: Description of the visited primary schools

### Edingeni Model School – Edingeni

898 learners, 482 boys and 416 girls

9 teachers, 3 male and 6 female (also 1 male volunteering teacher and 6 male student teachers in standard 5, 6, 7)

38 drop-outs, 26 boys and 12 girls

### Etchiyeni F.P. School – Etchiyeni

350 learners, 196 boys and 154 girls

5 teachers, all male (also 5 female student teachers)

21 drop-outs, 10 boys and 11 girls

### Ephangweni Model School – Ephangweni

507 learners, 264 boys and 243 girls

8 teachers, 4 male and 4 female (also 1 male volunteering teacher and 6 female student teachers)

5 drop-outs, 1 boy and 4 girls

### Esigondhlweni F.P. School – Esigondhlweni

620 learners, 310 boys and 310 girls

3 teachers, all male (also 4 female student teachers and 1 male volunteering teacher)

8 drop-outs, 4 boys and 4 girls (from standard 8, all married to each other)

### Kavyeyo F.P. School – Kavyeyo

380 learners, 240 boys and 140 girls

6 teachers, 5 male and 1 female (also 1 male volunteering teacher for standard 4)

15 drop-outs, 5 boys and 10 girls (in different standards)

### Loudon F.P. School – Embangweni

2019 learners, 1010 boys and 1009 girls

26 teachers, 9 male and 17 female

35 drop-outs, 15 boys and 20 girls (in standard 1-4)

### Mabiri Model School – Mabiri

562 learners, 283 boys and 279 girls

7 teachers, 4 male and 3 female (also 3 female student teachers and 2 male volunteering teachers)

11 drop-outs, 4 boys and 7 girls

### Mbawa F.P. School – Mbawa

744 learners, about 370 boys and 370 girls

8 teachers, 3 male and 5 female (also 4 female student teachers for standard 6 and 7)

4 drop-outs, 1 boy and 3 girls (in standard 6-8)

### School of Deaf – Embangweni

172 learners, 103 boys and 69 girls (144 of them are present)

14 teachers, 12 male and 2 female

8 drop-outs, 4 boys and 4 girls

### Thoza F.P. School – Thoza

540 learners, 251 boys and 289 girls

7 teachers, 5 male and 2 female (also 7 male student teachers)

40 drop-outs, 15 boys and 25 girls

## Appendix 2: Head teacher interview

### **ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS IN MALAWI (ACEM) Questionnaire for Head teacher**

TTC Loudon specifically asked Edukans (through ACEM) for a student who would come to TTC Loudon and to do a special research about the girls drop-out in primary school. The research will be finding place in the primary schools which are involved with TTC Loudon. There will be a choice for the primary schools, which will be part of the research. Therefore is this questionnaire to find out which schools have real issues with girls drop-out. At the end of the research, the report on the reasons for girls drop-out and the advice for improvement to reduce the rate of girls drop-out will be send to TTC Loudon. From there on, all the primary schools involved with the TTC will get this report to do his benefit of it.

#### School Data:

1. School:
2. Zone:
3. District:
4. Number of pupils:
  - a. Boys:
  - b. Girls:
5. Number of teachers:
  - a. Male:
  - b. Female:
  - c. Volunteers:
  - d. Student teachers:
6. Rate of drop-out:
  - a. Boys:
  - b. Girls:

#### Personal data:

1. Sex: male/female
2. Age:
3. Highest level of education:
4. Years of experience:
5. Years of experience in this school:

#### Interview with Head teacher:

##### About drop-outs:

1. What is the general standard learners drop-out?
  - a. Boys:
  - b. Girls:
2. What are the reasons giving for the drop-out?
  - a. Boys:
  - b. Girls:
3. Do you've all ready made some changes in your school to reduce the drop-out rate? Please name them.
4. What changes you think should be made to reduce the drop-out rate?

About absenteeism:

1. Is there a lot of learner's absenteeism (percent)?
  - a. Boys:
  - b. Girls:
2. What are the reasons giving for absenteeism?
  - a. Boys:
  - b. Girls:
3. In what standard is the absenteeism rate the highest?
  - a. Boys:
  - b. Girls:
4. In what way you are trying to reduce this absenteeism? And is it working?
5. How often are teachers absent (percent)?
6. What happens with the class (children) when a teacher is absent?
7. What are the consequences for the teachers when they are absent?
8. In what way you are trying to reduce this absenteeism? And is it working?

## Appendix 3: Teachers interview

### **ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS IN MALAWI (ACEM) Questionnaire for teachers**

This interview is about girl's drop-out of primary school. It's about the reasons for the girls to not finish primary, but also about the changes that should/could be made so they CAN finish primary school.

School data:

1. Name:
2. Zone:
3. Standard:
4. Number of pupils: (boys/girls)

Personal data:

1. Name:
2. Sex:
3. Age:
4. Town:
5. Highest level of education:
6. Years of experience:

Interview the teachers.

1. What standard you like most to teach and why?
2. If you're not at your favourite standard, why not?

The following questions are about the differences between boys and girls drop-out:

3. Approximately, how many drop-out girls do you have in your class/ school?
4. Do you know what the reasons are?
5. Do you know what the drop-outs are doing nowadays?
6. Approximately, how many drop-out boys do you have in your class/ school?
7. Do you know what the reasons are?
8. Do you know what the drop-outs are doing nowadays?

The following questions are about the learner's absenteeism:

9. Is there a high rate of learner's absenteeism?
10. If learners are absent, when the next day or week they do come to school, do you ask them what the reasons were for not coming to school?
11. If you ask them, what are those reasons?
12. If you don't ask them, why?
13. Does absenteeism often lead to drop-out and how do you respond to it?
14. If someone of your class drop-out, how you react?

The following questions are about how you, as a teacher, think about the drop-out:

15. What subjects do you teach?
16. How you try to motivate your learners to go to school?
17. Do you tell your learners about the value to go to school and in what way?
18. Do you ask your learners about the problems they face at home, in what way?
19. How you think the girls drop-out rate at primary school can be reduced? What changes should be made?

## Appendix 4: Student teachers interview

### **ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS IN MALAWI (ACEM) Questionnaire for student teachers**

This interview is about girl's drop-out of primary school. It's about the reasons for the girls to not finish primary, but also about the changes that should/could be made so they CAN finish primary school.

Personal data:

7. Name:
8. Sex:
9. Age:
10. Town:
11. Student of TTC, year 1.

Interview with student teacher.

20. What do you know about the reasons for learners to drop-out?
21. Is there a difference between boys and girls drop-out?  
Tell me about it:

The following questions are about the influence of other people:

22. How can parents be a part of the reason to drop-out?
23. How can friends be a part of the reason to drop-out?
24. How teachers or the school can be part of the reason to drop-out?

The following questions are about the changes that should be made:

25. What changes should be made, so girls can finish primary school?
26. How do you, as a student teacher, think you can motivate your learners to finish school?

## Appendix 5: Girls drop-out interview

### **ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS IN MALAWI (ACEM) Questionnaire for girls drop-out.**

This interview is about girl's drop-out of primary school. It's about the reasons for the girls to not finish primary, but also about the changes that should/could be made so they CAN finish primary school.

Personal data:

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Zone:
4. District:
5. School:

Interview with girls.

27. Why did you drop-out?
28. What are you doing now?
  
29. Are you married?
30. Do you have children?
31. How far did you need to walk to get to school?

The following questions are about the time you did go to school:

32. What subjects did you like in school?
33. What subjects you dislike in school?
34. Till what standard you did go to school?
35. What change could make you finished primary school?

The following questions are about your future:

36. What kind of job you used to want to, when you were younger?
37. How do you think your life will look like in about 5-10 years?
38. How do you think it would look like if you didn't drop-out and finished school?

The following questions are about the influence of other people:

39. What are your friends doing: school, work or something else?
40. What do your friends think about you drop-out?
  
41. What do your parents/guidance think about you drop-out?
42. Did you talk about your problems with your teacher and how did he/she respond to it?
43. Did you ask anybody (other than your parents) for help, so you could continue education?
44. What change could make you go back to school and finish it?

## Appendix 6: Parents of girls drop-out interview

### **ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS IN MALAWI (ACEM) Questionnaire for parents of girls who drop-out.**

This interview is about girl's drop-out of primary school. It's about the reasons for the girls to not finish primary, but also about the changes that should/could be made so they CAN finish primary school.

Personal data:

45. Name:
46. Age:
47. Zone:
48. District:
49. Highest level of education:

Interview with the parents:

1. Why isn't your daughter at school?
2. What is she doing now?
  
3. What do you think the value of education is?
  
4. What should change in education to get your children to school?
  
5. How do you see the future of your children?

The following questions are about your other children:

6. How many children do you have?
7. Are they boys/girls and what are their ages?
8. Did they finished their education and what are they doing nowadays?

The following questions are about your own education:

9. Did you went to school, finished your education and why you did or didn't?