

Country Name	The Project for Supporting District Education Plan Institutionalisation Programme
Republic of Malawi	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>After introduction of the National Decentralization Policy (NDP) in 1998 and the Education Sector Decentralization Guideline in 2001, the responsibility of primary education and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) was transferred from the central government to district government level. In the new policy, the district assemblies were mandated to prepare and implement the District Development Plans (DDPs) which was composed of development plans of all sectors including the District Educational Plans (DEPs). However, the quality of DEPs varied depending on the districts and no guideline was established. In such circumstance, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) started the study for the National School Mapping and Micro-planning Project (2000-2002) and the National Implementation Programme for District Education Plans (2003-2005) with the support of JICA, aiming to enhance the capacity of local government officials at district level. As a result, DEPs were developed in all the 34 districts of the country and implementation of the DEPs was piloted in 6 districts. However, there was still a certain necessity to support especially in the capacity development for both MoEST to institutionalize the DEP process and the district officials to plan/update quality DEP.</p>												
Objectives of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: District Education Plans (DEPs) are utilised as a basis for budgeting and implementation in all Districts. Project Purpose: Quality DEPs are developed and regularly reviewed in all Districts. 												
Activities of the project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project site: Nationwide (all the 34 Education Districts) Main activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline survey, 2) development of DEP guidelines and manuals, 3) training and workshops on developing and reviewing DEP for targeting officials from the MoEST including Divisional Education Planner, District Education Manger (DEM) and officials from the local governments, 4) trainings on marketing skills for core trainers and district officers Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Malawian Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) Experts: 3 persons</td> <td>1) Staff allocated: 32 persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Trainees received: 15 persons</td> <td>2) Land and facilities: Project office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) Equipment: Vehicle, office equipment (PC, printer, software, projector, etc.) for provincial and district education offices.</td> <td>3) Cost for Salaries of counterpart staff, workshop for DEP updating</td> </tr> </table> 					Japanese Side	Malawian Side	1) Experts: 3 persons	1) Staff allocated: 32 persons	2) Trainees received: 15 persons	2) Land and facilities: Project office	3) Equipment: Vehicle, office equipment (PC, printer, software, projector, etc.) for provincial and district education offices.	3) Cost for Salaries of counterpart staff, workshop for DEP updating
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Ex-Ante Evaluation	2006	Project Period	December 2006 – December 2010	Project Cost	208 million yen								
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)												
Cooperation Agency in Japan	None												

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance
<p>This project has been highly relevant to Malawi's development policy of "promotion of decentralization of educational service in Malawi" as set in policy documents including the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy I (MGDS I) (2006-2011), MGDS II (2011-2016), and the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) (2008-2017), as well as to development needs of strengthening the capacity of both MoEST to institutionalize DEP process and district officials to plan/update high quality DEPs at the time of both ex-ante and ex-post evaluation. It is also consistent with Japan's Country Assistance Plan for Malawi (2006) at the time of ex-ante evaluation. Therefore, relevance of this project is high.</p>
2 Effectiveness/Impact
<p>Based on the results of precedent JICA's studies, the project developed DEP guidelines and manuals, conducted training and workshops at central and district government offices for developing and reviewing DEPs, and trainings on marketing skills for core trainers and district officers. Through these activities, the project aimed at capacity development of the counterparts for developing and regularly reviewing quality DEPs in all districts in Malawi. Furthermore, the implementation of DEP components with sufficient budget support in all the 34 districts in Malawi was expected.</p> <p>The project purpose was achieved by the time of project completion. During the project period, DEPs were regularly developed. The project successfully developed DEP 2008-2010 and DEP 2010-2012 in all the 34 districts. The annual plan of these DEPs were reviewed and developed every year. According to the survey results conducted by the project, it was confirmed that DEP 2010-2012 of all the 34 districts met the criteria of quality DEP¹ (see the indicator 3 of Project Purpose in the chart below).</p> <p>After the project completion, the DEP 2013-2017 was developed for all the 34 districts in line with the second Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP II) (2013-2017) which was an implementation plan of the National Education Sector Plan</p>

¹ The criteria of quality DEP are (i) critical analysis of issues, (ii) linkage with MGDS and NESP, (iii) priorities (clarity, degree of reflecting respective district needs), and (iv) realistic costing.

(NESP). Also it is observed that DEP 2013-2017 of all the 34 districts still satisfy the criteria of quality DEP because they were prepared according to the quality checklist as well as in line with DEP guidelines, manuals and the format developed by the project. The manuals, guidelines and simplified formats² have been utilized continuously to develop, review and update DEPs together with the use of data from the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) database. DEP marketing activities were implemented in all the 34 districts after the project completion. However, the training system for core trainers developed by the project has not been continued at the time of the ex-post evaluation. According to DEMs interviewed, instead, core trainers, DEMs and local government officers, who acquired the technical skills from the project, have been transferring the skill and knowledge to new officers through their interactions.

The overall goal was partially achieved. Only 393 out of 1,052 projects proposed in DEP 2010-2012 of the 34 districts were actually implemented, which count for 37% of total proposed projects. Only 8 out of the 34 districts successfully implemented more than 50% of the projects proposed in DEP 2010-2012. The common reason for this low achievement is a limited budget for implementation. The ex-post evaluation could not verify whether at least 2 prioritised activities in DEP are integrated into the DDP or not, because of the weak monitoring capacity of District Education Managers (DEMs) and insufficient communication between the local government office and the DEMs. This is compounded by the fact that the DDP and the DEP are formulated at different timing and using different process and/or sources of information for their formulation. It was confirmed that all the 34 districts allocated the necessary budget for supporting DEP cycle (planning, marketing and monitoring), although the implementation budget is limited.

Some negative impact on the natural environment was observed in many districts such as cutting down of trees to burn bricks for school construction and rehabilitation projects. Regarding this issue, the government has encouraged the stakeholders including local communities to use the stabilized breeze blocks made of sand and cement instead of the fire burnt bricks.

Therefore, effectiveness/ impact of the project is fair.

Achievement of project purpose and overall goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
(Project purpose) Quality DEPs are developed and regularly reviewed in all Districts	(Indicator1) DEP is regularly developed (at least twice within the project period)	(Project Completion) Achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEP 2008-2010 and DEP 2010-2012 of all the 34 districts were developed. (Ex-post evaluation) DEP 2013-2017 was developed for all the 34 districts. The new DEP is a five year plan. It was changed from a three-year plan in 2013 to match with the Education Sector Implementation Plan II (ESIP II) period (2013-2017).
	(Indicator2) Annual plan is regularly reviewed and developed (at least twice within the project period)	(Project Completion) Achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEP Annual Plans for FY2009 and FY2010 for all the 34 districts were developed. (Ex-post Evaluation) DEP Annual Plans are reviewed and developed every year in all the 34 districts, and are used as a monitoring tool to assess progress of the DEP implementation and to address emerging issues.
	(Indicator3) 70 % of DEPs meet the following criteria of "quality" DEP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical analysis of issues Linkage with MGDS and NESP Priorities (clarity, degree of reflecting respective district needs) Realistic costing 	(Project Completion) Achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEP 2010-2012 of all the 34 districts obtained more than 70% of quality score. (Ex-post Evaluation) It is considered that DEP 2013-2017 of all the 34 districts satisfy the criteria of quality DEP as they were prepared in line with DEP guidelines, manuals and the format developed by the project.
(Overall goal) DEPs are utilised as basis for budgeting and implementation in all Districts	(Indicator 1) 50 % of DEP projects are implemented	(Ex-post Evaluation) Not achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 8 out of the 34 districts implemented more than 50% of the projects proposed in DEP 2010-2012. In DEP 2010-2012, total 1,052 projects were proposed in all the 34 districts, and 393 projects, which count for 37% of total proposed projects, were actually implemented. The common reason for this low implementation rate was poor funding for implementation of DEP projects. In addition, the Development budget is still under the central office.
	(Indicator 2) At least 2 prioritised activities in DEP are integrated into the DDP	(Project Completion) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the questionnaire survey, half of the districts answered that they integrated more than 2 activities of DEP into DDP in FY2009. At the same time, most of the districts indicated that DEP is utilized for DDP and Socio-Economic Profile (SEP) preparation (Ex-post Evaluation) N.A It was difficult to verify the achievement of this indicator because most of the District Education Managers (DEMs) did not have the information about how many of their planned priorities in DEP were actually integrated into the

² Based on the project's recommendation at the time of Terminal Evaluation, the DEP format was reviewed and simplified to reduce redundant items in the format.

		DDP.
	(Indicator 3) Resources earmarked for supporting DEP cycle (planning, marketing and monitoring) been secured in local assembly and MoEST budget	(Ex-post Evaluation) Achieved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the 34 district allocated a budget for the activities of DEP review, marketing and monitoring.

Source : Terminal Evaluation Report, Project Completion Report, Interviews with counterparts

3 Efficiency

Although the project period was within the plan (ratio against the plan: 100%), project cost exceeded the plan (ratio against the plan: 108%). Therefore, efficiency of this project is fair.

4 Sustainability

With regard to policy, there is no significant change in the education sector policy and the MoEST continues to promote the decentralization of educational services in Malawi by strengthening the function of district level. The 2001 Education Sector Decentralization Guideline mentioned that the DEP is a subordinate plan of the NESP and should have a direct link with the NESP.

Institutionally, there is no significant change in the structure of educational administration. The MoEST head office is mainly responsible for development of national educational policies and monitoring their implementation. The Policy and Planning Section in the Directorate of Education Planning of the MoEST has been functioning as a focal point in reviewing and updating of all DEPs. The Education Divisional Office (EDO) and the District Education Office (DEO) supervise the implementation of the education policy in their respective areas. The local government of each district is in charge of planning and implementation of pre-school education, primary education and distance education including development and implementation of DEPs with supports from EDO and DEO. Though core trainers trained by the project have continued to work at EDOs, the training system for the district government offices by the core trainers has not been functional at the ex-post evaluation due to budgetary constraints. There is a total of 18 officers in the Directorate of Education Planning of the MoEST and a total of 847 staff members in the DEO of all the 34 districts. This number of staff is adequate to conduct the required activities related to the development and implementation of DEPs.

Technically, the planning staff of the MoEST head office as well as Education Divisional Officers and District Education Officers have appropriate knowledge and skills to develop, review and update DEPs. Manuals and guidelines developed by the project have been utilized.

On the financial aspect, the MoEST's budget provided by the Ministry of Finance (MOF) is still limited to sustain the training system for core trainers. Also, the budget for implementation of proposed DEP projects is not sufficient mainly because of poor funding resource and/or a delay in transferring the development budget from the central government to district governments.

From these findings, it is observed that the implementing agencies have some financial problems. Sustainability of the project is, therefore, fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project purpose of "developing and regularly reviewing quality DEPs in all districts in Malawi" was achieved by the time of project completion. The project successfully developed DEPs in all the 34 districts, and the annual plan of the DEPs were regularly reviewed and developed every year. The developed DEPs of all the 34 districts obtained more than 70% on the quality score. At the time of ex-post evaluation, the DEP 2013-2017 which satisfies the required criteria of quality DEP was developed for all the 34 districts in line with the Education Sector Implementation Plan II (2013-2017).

The overall goal was partially achieved. Majority of the 34 districts did not implement 50 % of their DEP projects proposed in DEP 2010-2012 due to a limited budget. It was difficult to verify whether at least 2 prioritized activities in DEP are integrated into the DDP or not, because of the weak monitoring capacity of District Education Managers (DEMs) and insufficient communication between the local government and the DEMs. On the other hand, it was confirmed that all the 34 districts secured the budget for supporting the DEP cycle (planning, marketing and monitoring), though the budget is not sufficient to implement the proposed DEP projects. Therefore, effectiveness/ impact of the project is fair.

Regarding sustainability, the implementing agencies had some financial problems to implement some activities. As a result, the training system for the district government officers by the core trainers has not been functional. Besides, financial sources to fund the activities of the DEPs are still limited at district level. Therefore, sustainability of the project effects is fair.

In light of the above, this project is evaluated to be partially satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing agency:

According to the Education Sector Decentralization Guideline of 2001, it was mentioned that the DEP is a subordinate plan of the NESP and expected that the DEP should be integrated into the framework of the NESP. However, the linkage between the DEP and the NESP is not clear and therefore the MoEST needs to develop a mechanism which should ensure that the DEP feeds into the NESP. This should be done for the next sector plan (2018-2028) to ensure that it becomes possible to use the DEP for monitoring the NESP.

Lessons learned for JICA:

- Sometimes it is desirable to integrate a project's developed education plan with the existing plans/policies at the upper administrative levels in order to secure the necessary budget for its implementation. In such a case, the project should formulate formats of the education plan that can be easily integrated into the format of the upper administrative plans/policies. In Malawi, the future of the DEP depends on ability of the local government to embrace the DEP process

and apply it in DDP process. The project should have taken into consideration the existing planning process that the DDP follows to address the challenges of integration.

- When a project is implemented amid decentralization efforts, it should monitor the decentralization process in key ministries, particularly when and how relevant budgets are decentralized to the local government. The project was implemented before the MoEST was ready to decentralize the development budget. This means that the project needed to consider how the MoEST could decentralize its development budget as a key factor for the DEM planning and implementation of the DEP projects.



(A school block of two classrooms at Kalambwe primary school constructed as one of the DEP projects in Nkhata Bay District)



(Desks were procured and provided to Ndinde Primary school in Nsanje District as one of the DEP projects)